

Punjab hikes head money
F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government has increased head money on notorious bandits of katcha area from one million to 10 million on Saturday. Punjab home department has announced the names, photographs and the amount of prize money on the heads of 20 notorious bandits of katcha area. It is to be mentioned here that at least 12 policemen were killed in a recent attack on two police vehicles.



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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a review meeting regarding Electronic Procurement, e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System/e-PADS.

Development projects worth over Rs2b PM directs for third party validation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed the relevant authorities to conduct third party validation of all the development projects worth of over Rs 2 billion.

Chairing a review meeting regarding Electronic Procurement, e-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System/e-PADS at the PM House, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to ensure third party validation to make the grievances and concerns redressal system effective in relation to the procurement process. The grievance redressal system with respect to procurement process should not be under the procuring agency, he said. He also directed measures for amendments in the rules and regulations in this regard.

He said the government was taking measures to introduce transparent procedures for all types of government purchases. The prime minister expressed anger over delay in implementation of the project and also showed concerns over its quality. He also ordered to complete the project within a month.

In the meeting, the prime minister was also briefed on e-procurement. He was told that the e-procurement project was launched by Public Procurement Regulatory Authority in 2017 with World Bank funding worth USD 45 million. The prime minister was informed that e-procurement had been implemented in 37 ministries and 301 procuring agencies of the federal government.

PPRA has so far trained some 8,988 officials of procuring agencies. Furthermore, it was told that federal government's e-procurement volume was about Rs 1551 billion. MoUs have also been signed with the governments of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu and Kashmir regarding e-procurement, the meeting was informed. The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, PM's Coordinator Rana Ishaan Afzal and other relevant high officials.

Shehbaz demands immediate action on UN report on Palestinian humanitarian crisis: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also urged the international community to take immediate action on the recent UN report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) highlighting the forced displacement of Palestinians and food insecurity among children.

The report serves as fresh evidence of Israel's crimes against Palestinians, with the UN revealing that not a single day passes without the bloodshed of innocent Palestinians. The report also notes that Israeli forces are targeting Palestinian children, with a clear intent to eradicate the Palestinian population, the prime minister said.

It has been 322 days since the genocide of Palestinians began, PM Shehbaz Sharif said adding that the forced evacuation of 250,000 Palestinians from their homes in August was a challenge to international institutions, international conscience, and international law. Furthermore, he highlighted that the pace of Israeli oppression could be gauged from the unjust eviction of 146 Palestinians from their homes in just two days.

"The report of the United Nations agency confirms that on the one hand, the genocide of Palestinians with deadly weapons continues, on the other hand, hunger is being used as a weapon." The prime minister said only one percent of children in Northern Gaza while six percent of children in the southern part of the city were getting food.

Israel has accelerated the massacre of common Palestinians by pouring fire and explosives from the air, land, and sea, he said. "If the Israeli state, which commits crimes against humanity, is not brought to justice, the international institutions themselves will be brought to justice." The prime minister highlighted that the reports of international organizations were a serious indictment against Israel, the murderers of humanity should be punished and the oppressed should be protected. He reaffirmed his commitment that Pakistan would speed up the delivery of food to Palestinians, especially children.

Petrol, diesel prices likely to drop

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: For the third consecutive fortnight, the prices of major petroleum products like petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) are expected to decrease by around Rs 5-6 per litre.

The prices of oil have decreased by \$2 to \$2.30 per barrel in the international market in the last fortnight. Factoring in the exchange rate and existing tax rates, the prices of both petrol and HSD are projected to come down by Rs 5 to 5.50 per litre. The average price of petrol in the international market has dropped to around \$80.40 per barrel from about \$82.50 per barrel previously. Similarly, HSD prices have declined to about \$88 per barrel from \$90.30.

During the current fortnight, the import premium on petrol has decreased by about 50 cents per barrel to \$8.50, while the premium on HSD remained unchanged at \$5 per barrel. Additionally, the local currency has gained 25 cents against the US dollar in the last two weeks. Currently, the ex-depot price of petrol stands at Rs 260.96 per litre, and HSD is at Rs266.07 per litre. In the previous pricing review on August 14, the government had reduced the prices of petrol and HSD by Rs8.47 and Rs6.70 per litre, respectively.

Over the last two fortnights, the total reduction in petrol and HSD prices amounted to Rs14.64 and Rs17.56 per litre, respectively, including the decrease of Rs 6.17 and Rs 10.86 per litre on July 31. Before that, the prices of both petrol and HSD had increased by Rs17.44 and Rs15.74 per litre, respectively, in the first fortnight of July. Between May 1 and June 15, the prices of petrol and HSD were reduced by about Rs35 and Rs22 per litre.

Iran will seek to manage tensions with US

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran's new government will seek to "manage tensions" with its arch-enemy the United States to help reduce pressure and neutralise crippling sanctions, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said.

"What we have to do is manage the tensions and hostilities" between Tehran and Washington, he said in an interview on state television. Iran and the United States have had no diplomatic relations since 1980, the year after the Islamic revolution that toppled its Western-backed Shah Mohammed Reza.

A landmark 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers granted Iran sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear programme. But the deal quickly collapsed and tensions reignited following the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the accord in 2018. "In foreign policy, we have a duty to reduce as much as possible the cost of this hostility and reduce its pressure on the nation," said Araqchi, who was one of the key negotiators of the 2015 agreement. He added that Iran's foreign policy will prioritise "neighbouring countries" as well as African countries, along with China and Russia, among others.

The Frontier Post

3 killed in knife attack

SOLINGEN (Reuters): Police have detained a teenager who may be connected with a knife attack in which a man killed three people and wounded eight others in the western German city of Solingen, but the perpetrator was still at large on Saturday. Hendrik Wuest, premier of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, described attack during a festival in the city as an act of terror.

Pacts with Chinese power companies to be reviewed: Leghari

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Minister for Power Awaiz Leghari says contracts with Chinese power producers that built and run power plants in Pakistan need to be revised.

"I think the terms and conditions that we already have with the Chinese as far as their IPPs [independent power producers] are concerned, they need another look," Leghari told VOA in an interview this week. The power projects, set up mostly in the last decade, helped end hourslong blackouts. But contracts require that Pakistan pay for the entire generation capacity of each power plant, regardless of how much electricity is used. A failure to spur industrial growth that could help utilize additional power, and the inability to reduce transmission losses, has left Pakistan with huge bills to pay for unused and wasted power generation capacity in addition to repaying project loans.

Independent power plants set up by Pakistani companies in the country also have contract terms similar to those of Chinese-run plants. Experts say Pakistan's efforts to conduct an across-the-board audit of domestic and foreign-owned independent power plants show Beijing does not want its companies to be singled out as problematic, nor does it want to be alone in offering concessions to Islamabad.

Leghari said the Chinese government and companies are engaging with Pakistan on the reprofiling of power sector debt and to convert coal-fired power plants to local fuel. "Those are changes in the terms and condi-

tions of how the Chinese IPPs are working with us. Those would give us very substantial benefits to harvest in terms of [electricity] tariff reductions," the power minister said, referring to Pakistan's efforts to also bring down skyrocketing electricity prices for consumers.

Islamabad owes more than \$15 billion to Chinese power plant operators. It is seeking rescheduling of payments to gain financial breathing room in a bid to obtain much-needed financing from the International Monetary Fund. Leghari and Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb went to Beijing late last month to discuss power sector debt relief.

The trip came days after Islamabad reached a staff-level agreement with the IMF for a three-year, \$7 billion loan program. The bank's board must still approve the deal. Leghari said China, like the IMF, wants to see broader reforms from Pakistan.

China and the IMF "are wanting to look at the entire economic or power sector reform that we have already authored and embarked upon," Leghari said. "I think the more the confidence they have in our economic reform agenda, the better would be the response." Leghari is leading a power sector reform task force created after his return from China. Reform efforts aimed at cutting power sector losses include auditing all independent power plants.

Beijing has not publicly addressed Islamabad's request for rescheduling energy sector debt. However,

Pakistan's daily Express Tribune reported it has agreed to convert three Chinese-owned power plants in Pakistan from using imported to local coal. Pakistan hopes to save hundreds of millions of dollars annually by switching to local coal for power generation.

The change may come at a high cost. Experts say Chinese investors struggling to recover payments may demand higher insurance premiums and profit margins if they are to expand mining operations, reducing savings for Pakistan. "It's going to be a win-win situation for everyone," Leghari said, rejecting the concerns.

"Unless that isn't there, people will not invest, lenders will not give money," Pakistan will also need infrastructure to transport local coal long distances, and power plants may need to make technical design changes to use Pakistani coal, which is known to be dirtier and less efficient than imported coal. "There has been an overwhelming response to have a look and run technical and financial feasibility on all the aspects of coal conversion and reprofiling," Leghari insisted, while rejecting environmental concerns about shifting to local coal.

Leghari played down the possibility of scaring Chinese investors as Pakistan seeks a review of past contracts, saying Islamabad holds relationships with investors "dear to our heart." "Whatever will happen, with whomever, will be with mutual consent," he said. — VoA

Children among 3 dead, 12 injured in Pishin blast

F.P. Report

PISHIN: A blast near police lines in Balochistan's Pishin district on Saturday claimed lives of three people and left 12 people including policemen injured.

According to police, the explosion occurred in the market near police lines and a car and a motorcycle were completely damaged while some other vehicles partially damaged. Police said two children and a woman were killed and 12 people, mostly policemen, were injured in the blast.

Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the injured to hospital for medical aid. Police swiftly cordoned off the area and launched investigation to find out the nature of the blast. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday strongly condemned the blast near police lines in Pishin district of Balochistan province.

In a message, the prime minister expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of young children's lives in the blast and sympathized with the bereaved family members. Praying for swift recovery of the police personnel who sustained injuries in the blast, the prime minister directed the relevant authorities to

ensure provision of the best possible medical care to them.

He also directed the authorities to identify and bring the perpetrators to justice , ensuring they receive exemplary punishment. He said the coward terrorists were not worthy of being called humans, for targeting innocent children. The prime minister reaffirmed his commitment to continuing the fight against terrorism until uprooting of the menace.

Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi condemned the blast near the police lines. He paid condolences to the family of the two deceased children and prayed for the recovery of the injured. He said the terrorists killing innocent children were not human beings. He pledged to keep fighting against terrorists and their facilitators until their eradication. Naqvi stressed that the nation and security forces were united for ensuring a peaceful and secure Pakistan.

President Asif Ali Zardari has strongly condemned the blast in Pishin which left two innocent children martyred besides injuring a dozen others.

The president in his condemnation statement on Saturday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of the young

children and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Asif Ali Zardari reaffirmed his resolve to continue fight against terrorism, directing the relevant authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The president prayed to Allah Almighty to grant high ranks to the martyred children in Jannah and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude. Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the terrorist bombing in Pishin District and expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic loss of precious lives.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP expressed hope that the perpetrators of this cowardly act will soon be brought to justice. He emphasized the importance of eradicating terrorism from the region to ensure a stable and prosperous future.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari extended heartfelt condolences and solidarity to the families of the children martyred in the attack. He also prayed for the swift recovery of the injured police officers and civilians.

Imran undergoes medical check-up

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A team of doctors of Shaukat Khanum Hospital on Saturday conducted the medical check-up of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan.

Sources said Dr Asim led the medical examination of the incarcerated former prime minister. Earlier, Imran Khan's lawyers had requested for a detailed medical examination. Jail sources said the court had directed the authorities to make arrangements and submit a report in this regard after the completion of the process.

The PTI founder had been suffering from Tinnitus - a condition in which patients hear noises in their ears. It was also reported that a government-appointed doctor had examined him and prescribed medication. However, the PTI founder's physician advised against taking the prescribed medication.

Gaza situation: Shehbaz seeks global action

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has demanded immediate action from international community on the recent report of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) regarding the forced eviction of Palestinians from their land and child malnutrition.

In a statement, the Prime Minister said the latest UN report is fresh evidence of the Israeli genocide against the oppressed Palestinians. He said the UN report testifies that there is not a single day in which innocent Palestinian blood is not shed. It says the Palestinian children are the biggest target of Israel.

The Prime Minister said the forced eviction of two hundred and fifty thousand Palestinians from their homes in the month of August is a challenge to international institutions, international conscience and international law. The pace of Israeli oppression can be gauged from the unjust eviction of one hundred and forty six Palestinians from their homes in just two days.

Zardari, Fazl discuss political, overall situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday called on Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence in Islamabad on Saturday.

During the meeting, the President and the JUIF chief discussed the political and overall situation of the country. President Zardari presented a gift of gun to Maulana Fazlur Rehman on the occasion. Those present in the meeting included Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari, Maulana Asad Mehmood, Aslam Ghori and Engr Ziaur Rahman.

Both leaders held detailed deliberation on potential key legislation likely to be tabled in the joint sitting. Without divulging details of the legislation, the sources said important matters including current political situation also came under discussion. During the meeting, Zardari also gifted a gun to Maulana Fazl.

Meanwhile, the federal government has reportedly decided to summon the joint session of parliament on August 28. Sources claimed that the lawmakers have been instructed to ensure their presence in the meeting.

President Zardari has also summoned the session of the National Assembly on August 26

PTI, JUI-F leaders agree to continue talks

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) met with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman, seeking cooperation once again. Both parties are mulling to end differences and explore possibilities of collaboration, the sources privy to the development said.

During the meeting, discussions were held on the formation of committees to facilitate joint efforts. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) reportedly requested in-house cooperation within the Parliament, expressing their stance that they could give the government a tough time if the two parties worked together. In response, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) representatives stated that any decision would be made only after thorough consultation within the party. Both Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) spokespersons addressed the media, confirming the ongoing dialogue and the formation of committees to oversee parliamentary affairs.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson Raouf Hasan highlighted that discussions included cooperation on important legislation within the Parliament.

He added that the parties agreed to continue their talks, with the aim of working together on parliamentary matters. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) spokesperson Aslam Ghauri echoed similar sentiments, confirming that committees have been established to facilitate further meetings and collaboration. He emphasised that consultation would be an ongoing process, particularly concerning legislative matters and that these committees would play a key role in overseeing parliamentary affairs. He said this meeting marks a crucial step towards potential cooperation between the two parties, as they navigate the complex political landscape of Pakistan's Parliament.

(Monday) and the Senate on August 27 (Tuesday) under Article 54(1) of the Constitution. The meeting came two days after PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-

Zardari met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to deliberate on the ongoing political situation and discuss potential key legislation.



Sindh provided Rs157.7b to JPMC, NICVD, NICH since devolution: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Senior Minister for Information Sharjeel Inam Memon negating the statement of MQM Chief Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said today that since the devolution of three major hospitals of the city in 2011-12, the Sindh government had provided them with a lavish budget of Rs157.733 billion for the upgradation of the hospital and facilities for the patients.

In a statement, Mr Memon said that Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui before talking to the media on the development and health facilities of Karachi should approach him for data so that he could

speak with genuine facts and figures instead of grappling in the dark.

Sharing the data, the information minister said that in 2011-12, the year when Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) and the National Institute of Child Health (NICH) were devolved, the Sindh government provided them with Rs1.377 billion, Rs3 billion and Rs234 million budget respectively.

He also disclosed that from 2011-12 to 2023-24, the provincial government released Rs76.536 billion to JPMC, Rs62.905 billion to NICVD, and Rs18.292 billion to NICH. The total budget given to these major

health facilities over the last 14 years amounted to Rs157.733 billion, underscoring the provincial government's dedication to the health sector, the people of the province and the country in general as well as the city in particular.

During 2020-21 when the pandemic of COVID-19 wreaked havoc, the Sindh government released Rs104 million and established a 90-bed facility at JPMC. In 2021-22, the government released Rs104 million for operation costs for 90 bed COVID-19 facility, released a Rs240 million grant-in-aid to the Patients Aid Foundation and purchased essential equipment for the JPMC surgical complex.



LAHORE: Employees of Department of Archeology holding a protest against demolition of their houses in front of Press Club.

Ghani commends KATI philanthropic support to educate labourers' children

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Local Government Minister, Saeed Ghani, has praised the exceptional philanthropic support extended by the industrialists of Korangi Industrial Area (KIA) in Karachi to ensure that the children of the labourers employed by them get quality school education.

The Sindh Local Government Minister expressed these remarks while speaking as the chief guest at the inauguration of the Al-Badar campus,

school of the non-profit Green Crescent Trust (GCT) at the Sharifabad locality of KIA. Al-Badar campus has become the 170th charitable school of the GCT, which has been continuously striving for the past 30 years to educate children from underprivileged families in Sindh. A total of 10 GCT schools at Sharifabad and adjacent Mehran Town localities, both backward neighbourhoods mostly inhabited by labourers working at the KIA, enrol a total of over 2,222 children out of whom 60 per cent are girls. Up to 80 per cent of teachers in these schools

are females. The state-of-the-art building of the new school of the GCT in the area, having an enrolment of over 350 students, was built in just five months.

The Local Government Minister praised the GCT's charitable work in the education sector in Sindh continuing for the past three decades without a pause. He appreciated that businessmen associated with numerous industries at KIA had been generously donating to the GCT's schools in the area to ensure quality schooling for the children mainly of the industrial workers.

Tessori attends event at Malaysian Consulate

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori attended an event at the Malaysian Consulate, organized in collaboration with the Consumer Association of Pakistan. While addressing the gathering, Me Tessori emphasized the exemplary friendly relations

between Pakistan and Malaysia.

According to a statement issued today, he highlighted that the exchange of information technology between the two nations is fostering a deeper understanding of each other's cultures. Tessori urged Malaysian investors to explore various sectors within the province, emphasizing the importance of the

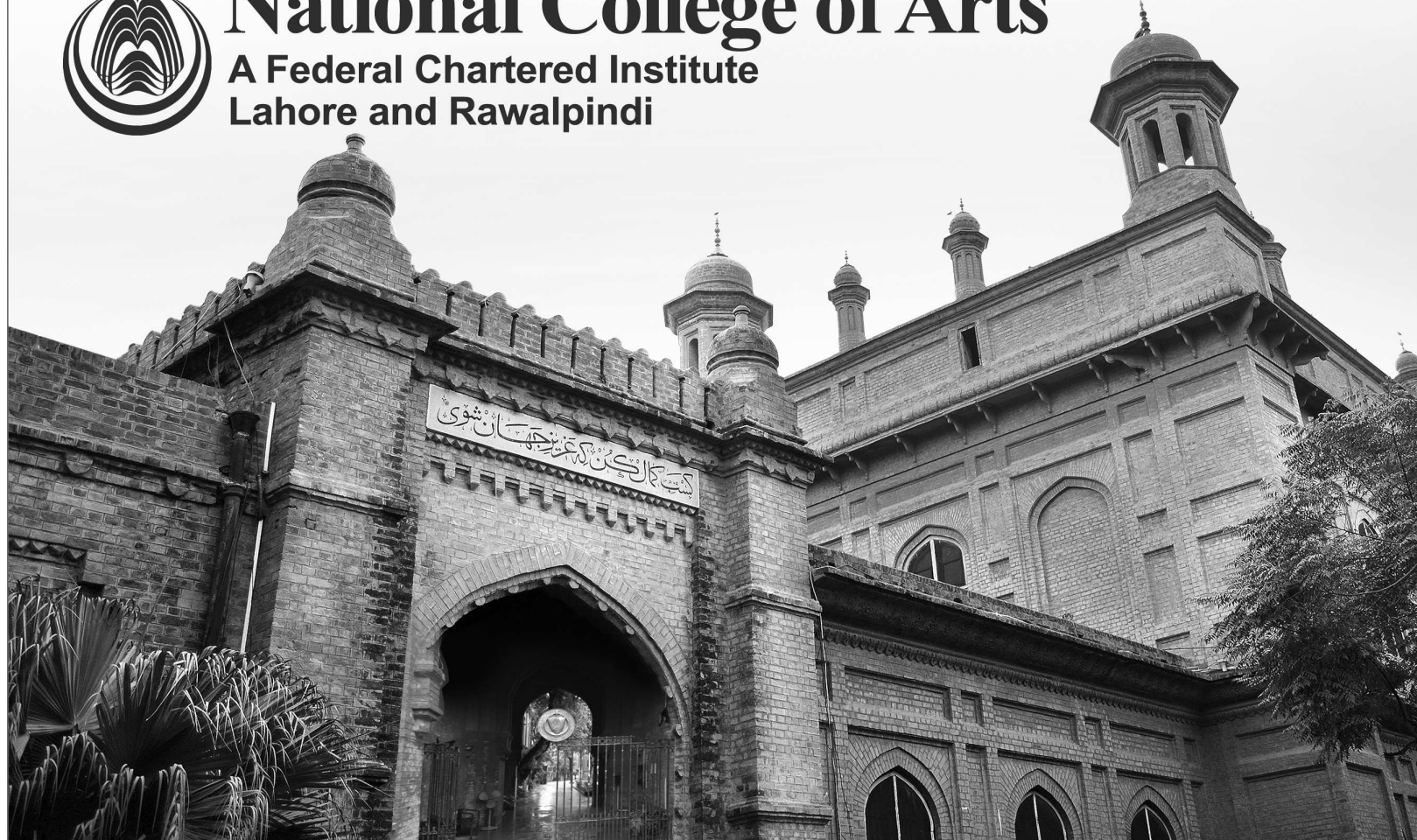
highly educated, experienced, and hardworking young workforce available for investment opportunities.

The governor also mentioned that the relentless efforts of the President, Prime Minister, and Army Chief have led to the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).



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► **SPECIAL RESERVED SEATS**

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1	IHK (refugees displaced after 1989)	2%	1. State Subject Certificate(AJ&K) 2. NOC from All Parties Hurriyat Conference (migrated before 1989)
2	Physically Challenged	2%	Certificate from Disability Board issued by respective authorized Government Hospital.
3	Foreign	11 Seats (LHR) 05 Seats (RWP)	1. Duly filled Foreign Student's Information Sheet (available at NCA website) 2. Copy of passport 3. Evidence of Foreign Citizenship

► **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

- To submit online admission application (Open Merit, Self Finance / Self Support Scheme & Foreign), Applicants are advised to apply directly on the NTS website <https://nts.org.pk/nca/>.
- Applicants can use single application form in order to apply in multiple departments/campus/quota.
- Online application printed version must reach the NTS Admission Centres within due date along with attested copies of required documents listed in the prospectus and online admission form.
- Prospectus Charges, Courier Charges, Test Fee is required to be deposited by the applicant before the closing date of admission applications for admission on the electronic payment challan generated after online registration.

Visit the link <https://www.nts.org.pk/new/instructions.php> for instructions to pay the admission application processing fee which is as follows:

ADMISSION APPLICATION PROCESSING FEE (Prospectus and courier charges to be paid once in case of multiple applications on a single CNIC)			
PROSPECTUS COLLECTION FROM NTS CENTRES	TEST FEE		IN CASE OF PROSPECTUS THROUGH COURIER
	SINGLE DEPARTMENT	MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS	
PKR 3500/-	PKR 1500/-	PKR 1000/- EACH	PKR 300/-

- Test fee shall be paid at 1Link 1Bill Participating Banks/ATM/Internet Banking/Mobile Banking/Easypaisa/Jazz Cash/TCS Express Counters.
- For Self Finance / Self Support Scheme, the applicant should submit in person the online generated application form, admission processing fee, prospectus cost as mentioned above (as applicable), alongwith original Bank Draft/Pay Order of **PKR 764,500/-** (Seven Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand Five Hundred) for Fine Arts, Design & Music and **PKR 963,600/-** (Nine Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Six Hundred) for Architecture, Multimedia Art and Film & Television, against tuition fee in favour of the "Principal NCA".
- Roll Number Slip can be downloaded from NTS website at least one week before the test date and applicants shall be informed through SMS and NCA official website.
- The applicants are advised to contact the NTS 051-8444441 OR email at query@nts.org.pk for any query / information related to filling Application Form/Fee Deposit/Admission Tests, display of provisional and final list of applicants, Roll number slips and Test centres etc.

► **NOTE:** NTS is collecting the fee on behalf of NCA. NTS does not stand responsible for the merit lists, results and paper development or the contents therein.

The Online Application Portal shall close at 11:59:59 p.m. on the last date i.e. 10th September, 2024

► **PROVINCIAL NTS ADMISSION CENTRES**

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► **ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY**

- Applicants having passed F.A/F.Sc or equivalent qualification with minimum 45% (2nd division). Equivalence Certificate issued from IBCC is compulsory for qualifications other than Intermediate.
- No age limit.

Note: i. According to the Prime Minister of Pakistan's notification, applicants domiciled Erstwhile FATA and passed F.A/F.Sc. or its equivalent with minimum 40% marks are eligible to apply for admission.
 ii. Application will be rejected if; a certificate from Nomination Board AJ&K/Gilgit Baltistan reserved quota seats is not received/attached with application.
 iii. Intermediate or equivalent qualification result awaiting candidates may apply with a copy of statement of entry/roll number slip/hope certificate.
 iv. Admission confirmation shall be subject to submission of attested academic documents of SSC/HSSC or equivalent from IBCC.

TEST, INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND VENUES WILL BE ANNOUNCED LATER AT www.nca.edu.pk and www.nts.org.pk

LAST DATE TO APPLY

10th SEPTEMBER, 2024

Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Indian occupied Kashmir, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/Erstwhile FATA, Balochistan and Physically Challenged quota seats, Self Finance / Self Support Scheme (All Pakistan Basis)

Applications for admission should reach the respective NTS admission centres not later than above mentioned date.

► **IMPORTANT NOTE**

Applications will be rejected if:-

- Eligibility criteria is not fulfilled.
- Application procedure is not followed as prescribed.
- Applicants are unable to produce attested copies of passed F.A/F.Sc or equivalent qualification examination certificates (with minimum 45% marks) without further notice.
- Applications are incomplete.
- Applications received after due date.

► **INSTRUCTIONS**

- Applicants must bring their own graphite pencil, eraser, drawing board, colored pencils, markers, scissors, sharpener and gum sticks etc. for entry tests.
- The college shall provide answer sheets, colored sheets (if required) and drawing sheets.
- Applicants must bring their original Roll No. Slip when reporting for tests at respective test centres.
- No TA / DA is admissible to the candidates appearing for tests and interviews.
- Applicants are advised to regularly visit <https://www.nca.edu.pk> and <https://nts.org.pk/nca/> to observe any change/updates in the admission schedule, otherwise college will not be held responsible.
- Applicants must bring their own face mask, sanitizer and water bottle.

For further information please contact

LAHORE Ms. Sana Javed / Mr. Waqar Anwar Ph # 042-99210601, 99210599, 99210544 Ext: 108/175	RAWALPINDI Mr. M. Ishtiaq / Mr. Mazhar Ali Ph # 051-9334982, 9334984-6 Ext: 107
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Governor KP urges role of mosques, spiritual centers in combating hatred, extremism

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday urged the crucial role of mosques and spiritual centers in combating hatred, extremism, and sectarianism amidst Pakistan's current challenges.

The Governor said this in a meeting with renowned spiritual figure, Pir Syed Qutb-ul-Haq Gilani of the Darbar Aalia Golra Sharif, visited the Governor House Peshawar.

He was accompanied by the Sajjada Nashin Pir Ali Junaid-ul-Haq Gilani and other dignitaries. Upon arrival, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, extended a warm welcome to the guests.

During the visit, Governor Kundi emphasized the historical and cultural significance of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that promoting interfaith and inter-sect harmony in the province is a top priority for him.

He acknowledged that Darbar Aalia Golra Sharif holds a historic position in advancing the teachings of Islam, protecting the belief in the finality of Khatme Nabuwat, upholding Sharia, and promoting Islamic values in the region.

Kundi also highlighted the role of mosques and spiritual centers in combating extremism, and sectarianism to meet the chal-

lenges.

Pir Syed Qutb-ul-Haq Gilani praised the Governor's efforts to foster unity, religious, and sectarian harmony in the province.

The meeting also included discussions about organizing a Seerat-e-Khatam-un-Nabiyyin Conference at the Governor House Peshawar during the auspicious month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

The Governor took the opportunity to show the historical sites within the Governor House and presented a commemorative shield to Pir Syed Qutb-ul-Haq Gilani.

Meanwhile, a delegation led by Fayaz Hussain, a special envoy from Medina representing Sheikh Shabbi, the keyholder of the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) shrine, called on the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, at the Governor's House.

The delegation discussed the measures taken by the Saudi government for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, the use of advanced technology to ensure access to the Prophet's Mosque, especially in the Riyadh ul-Jannah area.

Fayaz Hussain conveyed greetings and prayers from Sheikh Shabbi to Governor Kundi, who expressed his gratitude and also sent his best wishes back to Sheikh Shabbi.

Meanwhile, former Tehsil Mayor Sarae Naurang and Jamaat-e-Islami stalwart Azizullah Khan, along with former Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami Dera Ismail Khan, Maulana Saleemullah Arshad, and PPP Dera stalwart Sakhi Marjan Khan, Zafar Khan Gandapur and Rehan Baloch also called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, at the Governor's House.

The meeting focused on discussing the promotion of education and health in the southern districts and addressing public issues.

The Governor's efforts in addressing problems related to the center and the province were acknowledged.

Governor Kundi said that he has completed consultations with the leadership of all political parties in the province and will soon convene a representative meeting of all political parties at the Governor's House.

A jirga will be formed to negotiate provincial rights with the center on a reasoned basis.

Governor Kundi expressed his concern about the dire situation in the southern districts, criticizing the provincial government for not paying adequate attention and leaving the public at the mercy of militants.

Similarly, in the wake of



PESHAWAR: Activists of Tehreek-e-Tahafooz Chitral Pakistan chanting slogans during a protest in favour of their rights. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

KP assembly session postponed

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has once again postponed the session of the KP Assembly on Saturday.

The provincial assembly session which was called on August 26 will now be held on September 2 and in this regard a notification has been issued.

Earlier, former KP minister Shakeel Khan had indicated that he will narrate the facts regarding his resignation on the assembly floor.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session was first called on August 19 and then deferred to August 26.

Utility stores closure anti-poor policy of incompetent govt

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Saif asserted that closure of utility stores was clear evidence of an anti-poor policy of incompetent government.

He gave his response on the closure of utility stores across the country, he stressed that utility stores were only relief for inflation stricken poor but mandate stolen government deprived the public with relief.

Saif reiterated that thousands of people were deprived of a source of livelihood. Utility stores' employees were protesting against the government's brutal policies.

KP minister berated the Punjab government saying incompetent government was wasting billions on TikTok and publicity campaigns but unable to allocate some funds for utility stores.

He claimed that inflation stricken poor was compelled to commit suicide and fake Form-47 government had made the life of

poor miserable.

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.

The federal government has decided to end the Benazir Income Support Programme relief for consumers at the utility stores.

Waqar condemns Indian film maker for propaganda against S. Arabia

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A prominent civil society member and lawyer Sardar Waqar Shahzad said that Films and Cinema is a very important part of culture for a country but India using as a propaganda tool. It could be one of the teachers, influencing the perception of Gen-Z, millennials and even Gen-X of the modern age. It is mainly used to present a country own culture to the world. But unfortunately, some countries and its film industry are using it to

reflect the negative side of other countries, cultures and societies.

Such an unrealistic attempt was done by the producers and movie makers of "Goat Life" a movie from India. As it claims to be based on true story, but the writer, film makers and the industry forgot and ignored the lives of millions of workers improved by the GCC states, especially Saudi Arabia. Millions of workers having less chances to improve their lives, education, expertise, and international

Body found, heirs hold protest

PESHAWAR (INP): Body of missing local leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was found here on Saturday. Heirs of the deceased along with body held protest demonstration.

According to details, body of local PTI leader Yaqoob Khan who went missing few days earlier was recovered from Matni area.

Heirs along with dead body held protest demonstration at Bab-e-Khyber by blocking Jamrud Bazaar road. A large number of PTI workers also joined the protest and vowed to continue demonstrations till arrest of the murderers.

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A single of Peshawar High Court comprising Justice Sahibzada Asadullah granted bail to 70-year-old accused allegedly involved in smuggling hashish and ordered his release.

According to prosecution the accused Noor Wali Shah was taken into custody by the Sar Band Police Station and while recovered six kilograms hashish were recovered from the car in which the accused was traveling.

The counsel Malik Haidar Ali Awan and Yasir Khan Safi advocates told the court that the accused is 70 years old and there is insufficient evidence against him. After completing the arguments, the court accepted the bail application and issued orders for the release of the accused.

AD&SJ acquits alleged murderer: Additional District and Sessions Judge Nasr Ullah has acquitted

alleged murderer from the charges due to lack of evidence.

According to prosecution, the accused, Nauman and his accomplice were accused of opening fire after a verbal altercation, resulting in the death of a person named Azan Masood. The accused was subsequently charged with the crime.

The incident had occurred at Hazar Khwani within the premises of Agha Mir Jani Shah police station, Peshawar. The police completed the investigation and filed a challan in the court.

During the trial, the accused's lawyer, Liaquat Ali Afridi told the court that there is no solid evidence against the accused on record, and therefore, the accused could not be punished. Hence, the accused should be acquitted from the case.

The court, after completing the hearing of the case and finding no evidence of

Retire Prof serves KGMC as Dean

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The promotions in Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC), Peshawar is made against rules and regulations, allegedly promoting ineligible doctors, resulting in many capable doctors being deprived of promotions. HMC faculty members and Khyber Girls Medical College (KGMC) have written a letter to Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE), alleging that some doctors were promoted without merit. The letter states that the promoted doctors are either favorites of high officials or relatives, while eligible doctors were completely ignored.

The letter names nine doctors who were promoted against the merit including Dr. Afshin Mahmood, Dr. Zahid Sarfaraz, Dr. Nabeela Shir, Dr. Sadia Ali, Dr. Jamshed Alam, Dr. Musarat Hussain, Dr. Rashid Aslam, Dr. Mohammad Shah, and

Dr. Ambreen Afridi.

According to details, all faculty members were asked to submit their papers for promotion to the post of Assistant Professor under Regulation 2021. A total of 71 doctors applied for promotion, and two selection committees were formed to scrutinize their papers. The first committee, the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC), was responsible for scrutinizing the papers and sending them to the Institutional Promotion Committee (IPC) with recommendations.

However, the IPC, in its meeting on June 4, announced the promotion of 45 doctors, including nine who were not eligible. These doctors were promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and from Associate Professor to Professor.

Sources say that the DPC meetings were attended by IPC Chairman Professor Dr. A.H. Aamir, who

Faiq calls for equipping youth with modern tech

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman and founder of the Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faiq stressed youth should be provided opportunities to compete in modernization and digital world.

Speaking at a convention organized by ATP youth wing here on Saturday, Shah said the world is mostly business and employment attached with modern technology.

He, therefore, emphasized the need of launching special training and awareness programs on modern lines.

This is time to act practically instead of restricting lip service and empty slogans, he added.

Furthermore, he advised all institutions to be united for the provision of social and economic justice in the society so the people will become an example of national unity.

Rabies vaccine shortage hits Peshawar hospitals

PESHAWAR (INP): The Capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is facing a critical shortage of rabies and typhoid vaccines across all secondary care hospitals and medical centers. This scarcity has persisted for over two months, primarily due to a lack of funding that has prevented the District Health Office from purchasing new supplies.

The unavailability of rabies vaccines, in particular, has left patients from remote areas struggling to receive proper treatment.

Even the larger hospitals in Peshawar are only able to administer a single dose of the rabies vaccine, far short of the seven doses typically required. Patients are being forced to travel extensively to find additional doses, exacerbating their difficulties.

According to health department officials, the

District Health Office received 1,485 doses of the anti-rabies vaccine on February 28 this year. However, all stocks were depleted by June 2.

The delay in clearing the MCC (Medical Coordination Committee) list has further contributed to the problem. With over 50 cases of dog bites being registered each month, the situation is becoming increasingly dire.

Overpopulation: A looming threat to ecological balance in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Highly vulnerable to climate change, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is facing a looming threat to an ecological balance, which is exacerbated by overpopulation, poverty, and unemployment.

As the KP grapples with rapid population growth owing to poverty and unemployment, therefore, its negative impact especially on forest, wildlife, fisheries, environment, agriculture and ecological balance has become increasingly evident especially in Kohistan, Chitral, Batagram, Dir, Shangla and Swat.

With Pakistan's population surging past 241 million this year and growing at an annual rate of about two percent, the pressure on forests, biodiversity, and wildlife is mounting, particularly in KP and Gilgit-

Baltistan.

The strain is visible along major roads, such as the GT Road between Tarnab Peshawar and Azakhel Nowshera, where deforestation is rampant. The sight of cut timbers and uprooted tree trunks serves as a stark reminder of the high rate of forest loss.

The 2015 National Forest Policy highlighted that Pakistan's forest cover has dwindled to approximately five percent, with an annual loss of around 27,000 hectares.

This deforestation is predominantly occurring in private and community-owned forests, particularly in KP and Gilgit-Baltistan. The timber mafia's relentless exploitation of communal lands and privately owned forests further exacerbates the situation.

Alaika, agriculture in KP is suffering due to the rapid

melting of glaciers, a consequence of rising temperature and global warming.

Adversely impacted agriculture yield and quantity of water at outlets due to fast melting of glaciers in Chitral and Swat due to rising temperature, the national forest policy said that deforestation in watershed areas can trigger land degradation, loss of biodiversity and marine life besides making negative effects on wildlife and aquatic resources if solid measures were not taken.

In riparian and coastal areas, especially in KP, Sindh and Balochistan, deforestation amplify floods and facilitates sea-water intrusion thus increases chances of inflicting economic losses to the government kitty as evidenced by the devastating 2010 and 2022 floods. The flood had razed to ground

several expensive hotels illegally constructed in the river Swat's beds in 2022.

Gulzar Rehman, former Conservator of Forests KP while comparing deforestation rate of Pakistan with the world said that every year around 10 million hectares of forest were deforested – equal to the area of Portugal in the world.

Around half of this high deforestation is counterbalanced by re-growing of forests, which means that an overall around five million hectares of the green gold lost per year in globe.

Declaring overpopulation, poverty, and unnecessary trees logging are one of the major causes of deforestation in developing countries including Pakistan, he said that Pakistan's population was only 37 million in 1947 that soared to a record 223 mil-

lion in 2022, 241 million in 2023 and if it continued growing with such high pace it is expected to touch 260.3 million in 2030 and 330.8 million by 2050, resulting vanishing of the green gold, wildlife, and bees population.

In such a grim scenario, he said the challenges of food security would be further aggravated for high populated countries like Pakistan and people would face hunger and starvation.

He said about 60 percent of forests were being used as firewood in the country, 25 percent for furniture and 15 percent of trees are being lost due to urbanization and community-driven demands.

Gulzar warned that if we do not change our green sector policies and shift to the adaptation of alternative energy resources including solar, hydroelectric, bio-

mass and wind then there is every possibility of losing the existing forests in the next few decades besides witnessing frequent climate change's disasters including floods.

"The deforestation is a national challenge and it is right time to declare a 'green emergency' to conserve and protect the green gold for our future generation."

He also suggested an agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan to control the smuggling of timber.

Wajid Ali Khan, former Minister for Environment and Forests claimed that thousands of trees planted under the billions tree afforestation project (BTAP) were prematurely cut in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which according to him was a violation of the agreement signed between



In brief

Three die in road mishap F.P. Report

JHELUM: Three persons riding a motorcycle died when a speedy mini loader truck hit the motorcycle on GT Road near Rathian area of Jhelum on Saturday. According to rescue sources, 32-year-old Adnan, 13-year-old Ayan and 12-year-old Faizan are among the dead. Rescue sources said the dead bodies of the three persons were shifted to the district headquarters hospital. All three persons belong to Dhok Padhal Dina, rescue sources said.

Three of a family die

MEHAR (INP): A man and his sister breathed their last after eating toxic food in Sindh city of Mehrar on Saturday. According to report, the mother also died due to a shock after learning the death of her son and daughter. However, the condition of the father of the deceased and his other son, who also at the toxic food, was said to be serious.

Police arrest drug peddler

UMER KOT (INP): In a major crackdown against drugs, police in Umerkot arrested a gutka dealer and supplier following a high-speed chase on Samaro Bacha Band Road. The arrest comes as part of a broader campaign ordered by SSP Umerkot, Asif Raza Baloch, targeting the sale of gutka, locally-produced alcohol, and other criminal activities across the district. The suspect, identified as Ali Hassan Banglani, attempted to flee a police checkpoint set up by SHO Ahmed Bakhsh Rahmon of Samaro Police Station, according to local authorities. During the pursuit, the suspect's vehicle overturned. No injuries were reported. Police recovered approximately 50,000 packets of gutka from the overturned vehicle. Authorities said Banglani was allegedly planning to distribute the illegal substance to various cities. A case has been registered against the accused. Further investigations were ongoing, officials said.

Mother of six children killed

JHANG (INP): A woman stated to be mother of six children was gunned down by his brother for honour here on Saturday, police said. According to details, accused Faisal Qureshi hailing from Pir Abdul Rehman Town, Ahmadpur police station jurisdiction was suspicious about character of his sister, father of six children. The accused gunned down his sister and escaped the scene of crime. The Ahmedpur Sial police shifted the body to Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital for postmortem and after registering a case against raids to arrest the culprit.

Teenager stabbed to death

GUJRAT (INP): A teenager was stabbed to death after verbal clash near Faisal Gate area of Gujrat, police said on Saturday. According to CCTV footage, an exchange of hot words took place between the victim and culprits over unknown issue. After verbal clash, the culprits stabbed 16-year-old Asad to death and fled the scene after committing murder. The body was shifted to Aziz Bhatti Shaheed Hospital for post-mortem. The police registered a case against two including a nominated culprit and started raids for their arrest.

KP Law Minister inspects uplift works



Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has paid visit to Dhoda Sharif Union Council area of Kohat where he met the local elders, party workers and common people and discussed with them developmental plan of the area.

The minister, on this occasion also inspected Dhoda Payan Water Supply Scheme, the ongoing construction work in the upgraded Government

Girls High School Dhoda Kohat and the site of 3 KM long Dhoda Road site. He directed the completion of ongoing work well in time.

Authorities concerned of Education, C&W, Irrigation and other concerned departments, elders and local party leadership was also present on this occasion. Aftab Alam said that the approval and tender of 3 KM Dhoda Road has been done and work on it will be started very soon.

Earlier, the Law Minister also held a special meeting with the Deputy

Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram Chitrali in his office to review progress on Developmental Projects in Kohat in which Chairman DDAC Kohat Shafi Jan MPA, Daud Afridi MPA, Tehsil Chairman Gumbat Sajid Iqbal and officers of other relevant departments participated.

The Minister directed, the developmental plans formulation should purely be based on the basic and real needs of the people so that the problems of the people could be solved efficiently.

Employees hold protest against imposition of taxes

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Salary Class Alliance Pakistan Friday took to the street against the imposition of heavy taxes on salaried employees and demanded of the government to withdraw the injustice and cruel imposition of taxes over them. The protesting employees of different institutions while carrying banners and placards inscribed with their demands, held protest demonstration on Shamsi road.

President of Martaz-e-Thanzeem-e-Thajraan Ihsanullah Bacha along with large number of traders also accompanied the protesting employees. Tariq Nawaz Afridi, member of the salary class alliance core-committee, led the protesters. Addressing on the occasion, he deplored that they were already facing critical financial condition owing to rocketing price-hike. They asked that relevant authorities to withdraw the imposition of heavy taxes

on salaried community.

He urged the quarters concerned to bring landlords and industrialists under the tax net as well as make recovery of taxes from tax-defaulters effectively. He blamed that the incumbent rulers were taking back privileges and facilities from employees on the directions and instructions of IMF but on the other hand, they were not providing any other alternative relief to them.

He also alleged and declared that the government announcement regarding increase in salaries of government employees as a mockery step. They warned that they would come to street again if their demands were not taking as serious.

Marble factories sealed: Under the direction of Deputy Commissioner, district administration Madran sealed 02 marble factories on Nowshera Road. Assistant Commissioner Madran Kamran Khan along with Environment Department and local police

inspected the marble factories on Nowshera Road Sealed 02 illegal marble factories during inspection.

According to DC Madran Mian Behzad Adil, due to the lack of filtration plant in these marble factories, the polluted water was entering the canals through the drains during harvesting due to which the drains were often blocked and the agricultural production was also affected while the environmental pollution was also increasing. Due to the polluted water from these factories flowing on the roads in many areas, people were facing severe inconvenience.

These factory owners were given repeated notices to install filtration plants following the code of conduct of the environment department, but there was no effect on them, on which the district administration Madran sealed the marble factories. Legal action will be taken against these marble factory owners while action is ongoing against illegal marble factories.

Residents raised multiple problem before CM's Advisor

F.P. Report

BUNER: The residents raised multiple issues during 'Kuli Katcheri' jointly held by Advisor to Chief Minister for Sport and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jahan and Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum at Chargharzai tehsil, Buner.

Besides others, Chairman Chaghorzai Democratic Movement (CDM) Arshad Khan Buner and Secretary General Abdul Waris Khan explained the problems being faced by the residents for quite long.

They draw the ugly picture of Chaghorzai Tehsil and presented the long-standing worries of the peoples. They mentioned that the number of teachers in GPS GMS and High Schools both boys and girls very low, while textbooks are not available for pri-

mary schools' students and long delay in upgrading of schools pushed them to worst.

They exposed the absence of staff in RHCs Gulbandi and all of BHUs in the tehsil and branded it major issue as locals were forced to exploit by quaks. They argued it seems that government health department itself promote quakers.

They demanded that RHC and BHUs staff be transferred out of Chaghorzai tehsil in larger public interests. They demanded that the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, Watershed and Forest public health should take an equal share and the C&W, PKHA should repair the dilapidated roads and improve the transport system by the vehicles authority as well.

They demanded prompt and positive response as

feed back, otherwise, they will think of it as this Khulli Kachehri was a wild voice in the desert. They expressed their sincere gratitude to Chief Minister Advisor Syed Fakhar Jahan, Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum Khan and other officers and participants for giving them sufficient time to represent the people of Chaghorzai from the platform of CDM.

The CM Aide Syed Fakhar Jahan Bacha and Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum keenly listened all of the speakers especially the leaders of CDM and directed resolving most relevant issues on spot and assured rest of them to be recommended for intervention by concerned highly placed authorities and also to government of KPK for funds allocation to address all of issues on priority basis soon.

DC orders cleanliness, parking facility in 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.

ANP elders resisted against British colonist: Mian Iftikhar F.P. Report

BANNU: Central Vice President of Awami National Party (ANP) and former Senator Baz Mohammad Khan and Provincial President Mian Iftikhar Hussain said that the blood of our forefathers and ancestors is in the foundations of this country. It includes the tragedy of Spain-Tangi, story-telling, clashes, thousands of God's servants forced the British to leave the sub-continent by sacrificing themselves, and the idea of becoming Pakistan was born.

They said this while addressing to the public meeting held in the memory of martyrs of Span Tangi in Domel Bannu, It is true that the army does not run without the country but exceeding its duty is a violation of the constitution, judiciary, parliament, election commission whatever is against the constitution. They are violating, they should be punished, he said that the country does not accept the operation in any way, the people of Waziristan are still living the life of migration, before and after the ANP regime, not a single operation or negotiation has been successful.

The United States had asked us to conduct an operation, but instead of an operation, we took the path of negotiations. Sufi Muhammad's last demand was for the Sharia system of justice, which we fulfilled and implemented the Sharia system in the entire Malakand division, but when the government When the writ was challenged, the provincial government forced a successful operation in Swat. It was the same operation that resulted in today's Islamabad.

Provincial General Secretary Hussain Shah Yousafzai, former candidate of the Provincial Assembly Taimur Baz Khan, Advocate, District President Naz Ali Khan were from the meeting. General Secretary Shah Qiyaz Bacha Advocate, Hamid Khan Tofan, Anwar Bacha, Pir Haroon Khan and others also addressed the rally. The speakers said that Chief Minister Amin Gandapur also plays a double game with his leader. The founder gives one statement to PTI while giving another statement to the people. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for the people of Punjab, Relief given in terms of electricity, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, brother of Nawaz Sharif, should also announce relief for the people of the entire country. We do not expect anything good from our Chief Minister.

Court convicts watchman F.P. Report

LARKANA: Special Anti-corruption court Larkana has sentenced the watchman of the education department for 10 years imprisonment and imposed a fine of 10 lakh 98 thousand rupees in the case of recruitment through forgery.

According to the detailed report, Special Anti-Corruption Court Judge Suresh Kumar heard the plea against Taluka Education Office Sajawal Junejo after being recruited through forgery in District Qamber Shahdadkot in 2012. After the conviction, the court sentenced Riayaz, the watchman of the education department, to 10 years in prison and a fine of 10 lakh 98 thousand rupees.

Along with Ali Naich, the treasury office has acquitted two accountants of Qamber, Abdul Jabbar and Mehboob Kalhori. In this regard the Anti-corruption Larkana circle lawyer Nazir Ahmed Bhangwar said that during the year 2012, Riayaz Naich, a resident of Ratokot, was arrested by the education department of Qamber Shahdadkot. He was admitted to the special court on which the court has sentenced him on receiving the evidence.

DC commits for successful polio campaign on Sept 9: In order to make the polio campaign successful, Deputy Commissioner Larkana Sharjeel Noor Channa has urged the officials of the health department to make proper arrangements to make the polio campaign successful from September 9 to September 15 and to strictly monitor the polio campaign.

Provincial minster for higher education visits University of Malakand

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Minister for Higher Education, libraries and archives Meena Khan Afridi has said that the current provincial government is trying to strengthen the quality assurance cell and quality research work in the universities. He said that in order to improve the system, everyone has to play their role, there should be a process of reward and punishment in all the departments.

Those who are not interested in work should be punished, he expressed these views while addressing the 4th Research Performance Awards ceremony as a special guest on the occasion of a one-day visit to the University of Malakand. The PTI MNA Mehboob Shah, MPA Humayun Khan, UoM vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, university professors, lecturers, students and area elders were also in attendance.

The provincial minister distributed awards and appreciation certificates among the best researchers, teachers and department heads who showed the best performance in various faculties. Addressing the ceremony, Meena Khan appreciated the services of the University of Malakand in

the promotion of education and said that other universities in the province should also conduct academic audits following the example of this varsity.

He said that the current provincial government was taking revolutionary steps to promote high quality education and modern research in the province and was making better policies for it so that the students can get quality education and high research opportunities in the best environment.

He said that the universities had given great gifts in the shape of historical personalities to the country including the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, founder of PTI Imran Khan and others. He said that the researchers should use all their talents to place Pakistan in the ranks of developed countries through international standard education and research.

Earlier, University of Malakand Vice Chancellor Dr. Prof. Rashid Ahmed gave a detailed briefing about the university. He talked about the university's performance and future plans in various departments.

The Vice-Chancellor said that Malakand University was one of the financially stable universi-

ties of Pakistan. The Vice-Chancellor said that artificial intelligence, cyber security, center for quantum sciences and technology, data science, bioinformatics, human resource development departments would be established very soon and the university would also be solarized. "Apart from this, a campus management system will be established through which all work will be digitalized and the university will become paperless very soon, which will save the university millions of rupees annually", the VC said.

The Provincial Minister Meena Khan Afridi while appreciating the performance of University of Malakand said that the plan to establish artificial intelligence and other departments was welcome. On this occasion, Mr Meena Khan Afridi also planted a sapling under the Green Pakistan project on the university premises.

Later on talking to local journalists at Chakdara the minister said the PTI founder Imran Khan had banned all party members and ministers from commenting on the issue of Shakeel Khan's resignation. When asked about the sale of land owned by a public sector university in Mardan, the minister clarified that the land.'

Admn kicks of preparations for floods

F.P. Report

Toba TEK SINGH: On the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, advance preparations are underway to deal with the possible flood situation and urban fielding from monsoon.

In this regard, a meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority was held under the Chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Ahmad Javad Sardar on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu to review the preparations of the district administrative departments.

In which Assistant Commissioners, Chief Officer Municipal, Rescue 1122 Emergency, SDO Irrigation, Civil Defense Officer Mahmood Gill, Deputy Director Agriculture Noshair Khan and District Information Officer Shahbaz Ansari including heads of relevant departments participated.

Irrigation, while briefing about the possible flood situation in Ravi River, said

that the water situation in Ravi River is normal now, there is no danger. Arrangements with reference to Urban Fielding in monsoon has been finalized as per SOPs of Punjab Govt. On this Occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Ahmad Javad Sardar said that all the available machinery should be kept in functional condition and the operation to eliminate the encroachment of flood dams should be completed as soon as possible. The Department of Health and Livestock should have an ample stock of medicines. While the Chief Officers of Municipal Committees were ordered to clean the sewage drains to deal with urban flooding due to monsoon rains.

Agricultural equipment, medicines available on 20% discount Kissan Sahulat Center: The Agricultural Medicines and Machines kept by the Agrarian Crop Sciences Company at the Kissan Sahulat Center are being given to the farmer at a 20% discount. On this occasion, Chief Executive

of Agrarian Crop Sciences Company, Mohammad Javid while talking to The Frontier Post said that Kissan Sahulat Centers are a good initiative of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif which is giving agricultural medicines to farmers at rate of 10 to 15% less than the normal market.

But Our Company Agrarian Crop Sciences is selling agro-medicines and spraying machines to farmers at 20% lower than the normal market rate and these facilities are towards our company. Because the farmer is the backbone of our country who works hard day and night to cultivate his crop but the farmer has a lot of expenses on his crop and he does not get good rate of his crop due to which the farmer losses are incurred.

Our company's agricultural medicines and sprays machines are available at Kissan Sahulat Centers in Kamalia, Pirmahal and now Toba Tek Singh and we sell to the farmer brothers at 20% less than the normal market rate to benefit the farmers.

Aga Khan Secondary School student secures 1st position

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: Aga Khan Higher Secondary School Hyderabad is making headlines after its three students earned remarkable success in the annual Higher Secondary School examinations held under the auspices of Aga Khan University Board. Sadia Shafi Khawaja, hailing from Tando Bago town in Badin district, secured the first position at the country level with 1060 marks out of 1100 in the pre-medical group exams.

Kinza Nawaz of the same school from the pre-engineering group stood on top followed by Sahi Kumar who became

provincial-topper in the AKU-EB examinations. The results have brought joy not only on the faces of the faculty members but also on the fellow students who believe that they have a bright future ahead.

They disclosed their journey to success saying teachers played a vital role in their success besides their parents who provided them moral support. Executive Head of the school Mr Shahriyar Bhutto said that he always provided his students a favorable environment in the school.

He further said that the Higher Education Commission as well as the education ministry has sent

appreciation letters to appreciate the efforts of the faculty and students. All three students he said were also active in extracurricular activities.

Student Sahil Kumar said that he has also represented his school in sports events that gave him a lot of encouragement. He vowed to serve his country in future with outright dedication. The family of country-topper Sadia Shafi moved to Hyderabad around a decade ago from Tando Bago in search of a bright future and finally the efforts of Sadia paid off. Executive Head Shahriyar Bhutto urged concerned authorities to facilitate bright students.

MNA flays harassment of political activists by police

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Member National Assembly (MNA) Aneeqa Mehdi Bhatti has condemned illegal action of District Police Hafizabad for harassing workers of PTI, raid on homes, to violate sanctity of vail and boundary wall, arrest and keep workers in illegal confinement to contain them from reaching Islamabad.

She said that incidents of dacoities, robbery, theft,

motorcycle lifting and street crimes on the rise day by day and sense of insecurity was prevailed in the district.

She said that police officers and official were receiving salaries from taxes of people while police personals should serve the people instead of playing in the hands of political lords and damaged image of police force.

MNA advised the police officers to refrain from

obeying illegal orders of political lords and focus of their original duty of protecting lives, property and honour of the people. The police illegal action cannot dent in commitment and courage of PTI workers, she added.

MPA Zamir-ul-Hassan Bhatti also condemned police action against workers and blocking of Motorway to stop worker to attended public meeting of PTI at Islamabad.



Sunday, August 25, 2024



BERLIN: Soldiers checking the entrance to NATO air base, in Geilenkirchen, Germany.

Sudan's warring parties agree to open two aid routes

KHARTOUM: Sudan's warring parties have ended peace talks in Switzerland by agreeing to improve access for humanitarian aid, with two routes identified to ensure the flow of resources to civilians. But mediators at the peace talks noted that the Sudanese army's absence from the discussions hindered progress in the discussions to end the country's 16-month-long war.

The conclusion of the 10-day peace talks, led by the United States in the Swiss city of Geneva. During the talks, a group of mediators representing countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates tried to negotiate more aid and protection for Sudanese civilians facing famine, mass displacement and disease.

The mediators have dubbed themselves the "Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) Group", they announced they had secured promises to let aid flow into Sudan through two areas. One was the Adre border crossing with Chad, which leads into the Darfur region. The other was along the Dabbah Road from Port Sudan on the Red Sea. The mediators also reported progress towards opening another route through the Sennar Junction.

"Aid trucks are on the road to provide famine relief in Zamzam Camp and other parts of Darfur," a joint statement from the mediators said. "These routes must remain open and safe so we can surge aid into Darfur and begin to turn the tide against famine. Food and starvation cannot be used as a weapon of war." US Sudan envoy Tom Perriello told a press conference in Geneva: "We hope that this will be a source of momentum for much bigger steps and progress down the road."

But he acknowledged that progress had been slow — and the results were inadequate to address the scale of the

humanitarian crisis. "The crisis in Sudan is so severe that we could do four of these [negotiation rounds] and still be barely scratching the surface of what Sudanese people deserve," he said. The war began in April 2023, with clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group.

In the months since, 10.7 million people have fled their homes, and tens of thousands have died. The United Nations agency the World Food Programme has also declared an emergency in the region. An estimated 25.6 million residents face acute hunger, according to the agency, while famine has been confirmed in the Zamzam displacement camp, part of the North Darfur region. A further 13 areas remain "at risk of famine".

Cameron Hudson, a senior fellow for the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, expressed cautious optimism about the peace talks in an interview with Al Jazeera. He described announcement as a "trust but verify" scenario. "The border is open today. It could be closed tomorrow. We have seen both resistance from the RSF and the SAF, but also confusion among both sides about how to authorise these [aid shipments]," he said. "So it's a very disorganised situation both on the borders and on that route of several hundred miles — going from the borders to the internally displaced peoples' camps, where they are trying to get food aid to."

However, the mediation group said the talks had worked to advance the protection of civilians caught up in the conflict. "We have urged both parties, and received the RSF's commitment, to issue command directives to all fighters throughout their ranks to refrain from violations, including violence against women or children,

the use of starvation or checkpoints for exploitation, and attacks on humanitarian operations and essential services," the mediators said in their statement. But despite intense diplomatic lobbying, Sudan's army did not send a formal delegation to Switzerland, hindering the progress of the peace talks.

"Though we were in consistent communication with SAF [Sudanese Armed Forces] virtually, we regret their decision not to be present, and we believe that limited our ability to make more substantial progress towards key issues, particularly a national cessation of hostilities," the mediators wrote. Perriello said in a subsequent interview that Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan had been open to participating in the talks but that there were "very negative political forces that are kneecapping" him.

But Hudson at the Center for Strategic and International Studies said that the international community has failed to exert the necessary pressure to ensure decisive action in Sudan. "We've brought no leverage," he told Al Jazeera. "We're essentially appealing to their better angels to respect humanitarian law, to respect the rules of war."

But those kinds of appeals, he explained, are unlikely to spur action in a war as intense as the one Sudan faces. "These are two armies that are caught in a pitched, existential battle. The last thing that they're interested in is respecting agreements that they don't see themselves as parties to," he said. "So I think the only thing that's going to change their outlook is if we bring real pressure to bear — if there are consequences for not showing up in Geneva," he explained, offering sanctions and prosecutions as examples. "We have to speak the language of power, which is the language they know how to speak." — Aljazeera

Security stepped up at NATO air base in Germany

BERLIN (AP): The security level at a NATO air base in western Germany was raised temporarily because of intelligence information pointing to a "potential threat," but was reduced again, the alliance said.

An announcement of the increase in the security level at the Geilenkirchen base didn't elaborate on the nature of the potential threat, but said that all staff not essential to missions had been sent home as a precaution. It said operations continued as planned. The Geilenkirchen air base, near the border with the Netherlands, is where the alliance's Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS, surveillance aircraft are stationed.

A post on the NATO AWACS fleet's X account said that the security level had returned to its previous level. It said the temporary rise was "a precautionary measure." "All scheduled operations are proceeding as planned," it added. German news agency dpa said that a reporter saw police cars on and around the grounds of the air base. Police confirmed a deployment, but gave no details.

Last week, a major German air force base near Cologne was locked down for several hours amid fears that its water supply might have been tampered with. An investigation found no evidence of such sabotage.

There were also reports of suspicious observations at Geilenkirchen, and a person was briefly detained for questioning near the base, dpa reported at the time, but there turned out to be nothing untoward. The incidents came at a time of jitters about the possible vulnerability of infrastructure to attempted Russian sabotage. Prosecutors in Flensburg, in Germany's far north, said they were investigating suspected espionage for the purpose of sabotage, without elaborating on who might be behind it. German media reported that drones had been spotted over a chemical park in Brunsbüttel, on the North Sea coast.

Ex-minister dies in Eritrean jail

TIGRINYA (BBC): Berhane Abrehe - a former Eritrean finance minister and fierce critic of the country's president - has died in prison, his family say. The 79-year-old was Eritrea's longest serving minister of finance, but he was removed from his role in 2012 following clashes with President Isaias Afwerki.

Six years later, he was jailed after releasing a book where he described the president as a "dictator" who needed to resign. His family told the BBC that the authorities, who rarely confirm the deaths of senior officials in custody, had notified them of Mr Berhane's death.

The government also rarely shares where the bodies are buried but Mr Berhane's family have heard there is a plan to bury him in Asmara Patriots Cemetery. Only veterans of the Eritrean independence war, like Mr Berhane, or members of the national service can be buried there. His body has not yet been released, his family said, and it is not clear when and exactly how Mr Berhane died. He was never brought before a court of law.

Iraq report casualties from Turkish strike

BAGHDAD (AFP): Local authorities and news outlets in northern Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region have said that several people were killed in a Turkish drone strike, including two journalists. In an initial statement, the regional authorities said that a car belonging to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was struck near the city of Sulaymaniyah, killing a senior PKK official, his guard and his driver.

However, a later statement by the Kurdistan regional government's Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani said that the attack targeted a group of journalists, two of whom were killed. "They were two women journalists, not members of an armed force to be a threat to the security and stability of any country or region," Talabani said in a statement. Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a press advocacy organisation, also released a statement denouncing the deaths of the two journalists, identified as 27-year-old Hero Baha'uddin and 40-year-old Golestan Tara from Sterk TV.

It also mentioned a third journalist from the same outlet, Rebin Baker, was injured as they travelled

together. Jonathan Dagher, the head of RSF's Middle East bureau, noted that attack followed another drone strike on July 8 that killed one journalist and hurt another. "With three media professionals killed in just two months, the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan is becoming one of the most dangerous zones in the world for journalists," he said in a statement.

Turkey has denied responsibility for drone strike, according to the news outlet AFP. However, the country regularly carries out attacks in northern Iraq targeting the PKK, which Ankara considers a "terrorist" organisation. Earlier, the Turkish foreign ministry released a statement claiming to have "neutralised" 16 PKK members in parts of northern Iraq. However, AFP reported that Turkey's defence ministry said that the attack in Sulaymaniyah was "not the Turkish army".

Roj News, a local media outlet, reported that the two slain journalists worked for a Kurdish publication in the area. The outlet said that six other reporters were injured in the attack with "varying degrees of severity". "The killing was unjustified, vio-

lated all international laws and norms, and was a clear breach of the country's sovereignty," Talabani added in his statement. Karouan Anwar, head of the Sulaymaniyah journalists' union, stated that those killed were "known to work in the world of journalism and the media".

Earlier this week, RSF released a report expressing alarm over what it called a "surge in violence" against media workers in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region. The RSF report says that "various actors" have committed abuses against press freedom, with October elections between pro- and anti-Turkish factions contributing to growing tensions. "Journalists in Iraqi Kurdistan must be able to work in complete safety, at a time when political rivalries are peaking," Dagher said in the report.

The PKK, which launched an armed insurgency against Turkey in the 1980s in a bid to gain a Kurdish state, has bases of operation in northern Iraq. It has since moderated its demands. Still, Turkey considers the PKK's installations a national security threat and has consistently carried out operations targeting the group's infrastructure in the Kurdish region.

Mexico lashes out at US ambassador's comments

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, known as AMLO, has criticised the United States for recent comments that framed his proposed judicial overhaul as a "risk" to Mexico's democracy. In a morning press conference, Lopez Obrador described the criticism as "disrespectful" to Mexico's "national sovereignty".

"I hope this will not happen again," he said. The Mexican government also announced it would send a diplomatic note that says the US comments "represent an unacceptable interference, a violation of Mexico's sovereignty". The government's response came a day after US Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar warned the proposed judicial changes — which include putting judges up for election — could threaten "the historic commercial relationship" between the two countries.

"Democracies can't function without a strong, independent and non-corrupt judicial branch," Salazar told reporters.

He added that the proposed overhaul would "help cartels and other bad actors take advantage of inexperienced judges with political motivations" and "create turbulence" — both economically and politically — for years to come. Salazar said that his comments, poorly received in a country where the US has a long history of interference in domestic affairs, were made in the "spirit of collaboration". "I am most willing to engage in dialogue with Mexico's leadership on the direct election of judges and exchange views on different models," the US ambassador said in a social media post explaining his position.

Lopez Obrador, a populist president often criticised for attacking inde-

pendent regulatory agencies, has long been at odds with Mexico's judicial branch. He contends judges are part of a "mafia" that opposes him. He has framed his judicial overhaul as a means of cleaning up corruption in the courts. Under his plan, the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government could nominate virtually anyone with a law degree to serve as a judge.

Those individuals would then be vetted by special committees created by each branch to ensure they have the credentials needed to serve. Finally, the candidates would be put to a popular vote. The judicial overhaul has yet to be approved: The country's newly elected Congress will take office on September 1. But Lopez Obrador is pushing the proposal as one of the final major goals of his presidency, which is limited to one six-year term. — Aljazeera

Macron holds talks with leaders to form a new government

PARIS (AP): After the excitement of the Paris Olympics and a Mediterranean vacation, now French President Emmanuel Macron has to figure out how to make his country governable again. Faced with a hung parliament, social tensions and ballooning debt, Macron kicked off talks with key political players in a bid to choose a new prime minister who would form a government and end the deadlock created by snap legislative elections last month.

Members of the left-wing New Popular Front coalition that won the most seats pressured Macron for a quick decision. Their nominee for prime minister, little-known civil servant Lucie Castets, said after meetings in the Elysee Palace that she was ready to govern, and ready for compromise to get things done. But the party only has about a third of the seats in the National Assembly, France's powerful lower house of parliament, and no party has a majority. Macron's centrist alliance came in second and the far-right National Rally came in third.

There's no rulebook that requires

Macron to name a candidate from the party that won the most seats, or lays out a timeline for a decision. The absence of any dominant political bloc is unprecedented in France's modern Republic. Centrists and conservatives are also meeting with Macron, while National Rally leaders Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella are expected at the Elysee. Macron's office said he will name a prime minister based these consultations, which are aimed at "moving towards the broadest and most stable majority possible."

Castets said that in her meeting with Macron, he "recognized that a message was sent by the French during the elections" but seemed reluctant to allow an opposition party to form a government. Left-wing leaders have decried Macron's decision to delay the prime minister nomination while he spent time at the Olympics and at the presidential holiday retreat in Bregancon on the French Riviera. "We need a response," said the national secretary of the Greens party, Marine Tondelier. "There are urgent issues, and leaving weeks roll by without facing them is

grave, and even irresponsible."

The New Popular Front, which includes the hard-left France Unbowed, the Socialists and the Greens, has insisted that the prime minister should come out of their ranks as the largest group. Macron last month appeared to dismiss Castets, saying in a televised interview "the issue is not a name provided by a political group" and stressing instead the need for a parliamentary majority behind the candidate. Politicians from the center, the right and the far right have suggested they would try to bring down any government that includes members from France Unbowed.

Macron appears more keen to seek a coalition that could include politicians from the center-left to the traditional right. Other names that have emerged in French media as potential prime minister candidates include center-left politician Bernard Cazeneuve, who served as France's top cop during a series of bloody terror attacks in 2015, and Xavier Bertrand, a former minister considered relatively moderate within the French right.

Parties and grief: A stark contrast at Democratic National Convention

CHICAGO: As balloons dropped from the ceiling of a packed United Center in Chicago, row upon row of Democratic Party faithful rose to their feet, clapping and shouting out with joy. Kamala Harris had just delivered the closing speech of this year's Democratic National Convention.

The atmosphere was ecstatic: The Democrats in the audience were fired up, and many credited Harris with reinvigorating the party in the weeks after President Joe Biden ended his faltering re-election bid. But while jubilant faces stretched out as far as the eye could see — and red, white and blue balloons spilled out into the halls — the mood took a markedly different turn outside of the arena.

There, a small group of people wearing Palestinian keffiyehs stood almost motionless, looking exhausted and bereaved. The convention's "uncommitted" delegates, who had been calling for an arms embargo

against Israel amid its devastating war on Gaza, were dealt a blow after Harris said — in no uncertain terms — that she would continue to provide weapons to the US ally. Asma Mohammed, a delegate from Minnesota, summed up how they were feeling as the convention concluded. "There are balloons raining down on the Democrats in our party, and there are bombs raining down on children and families and people I love," Mohammed told Al Jazeera, tears streaming down her cheeks. "That's what I was thinking."

Another activist rubbed her shoulder to comfort her as they both cried. Meanwhile, overjoyed attendees walked past with their "Harris-Walz" signs and American flags. Two radically contrasting realities ultimately emerged from the four-day convention in Chicago. On one side, there was happiness and excitement. But for Palestinian rights supporters, the convention brought further pain and

disappointment. More than 40,200 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza as the United States sends billions of dollars in aid to Israel, which continues to bombard the besieged Palestinian territory.

Many of the activists who arrived outside the convention to protest were grieving: After all, Cook County, which encompasses Chicago, has the largest Palestinian American community of any county in the US. Those working within the Democratic Party, including the "uncommitted" delegates, had to carry that grief into the festive atmosphere of the convention. They told horrific stories of the carnage, displacement and despair in Gaza — all facilitated by US tax money. But inside the convention hall, the party went on uninterrupted, except for a few shouts of "Free Palestine" as Harris spoke. Those chants were ultimately drowned out by the cheering crowd.

As the uncommitted delegates tried to put pressure on the Democratic Party from the inside, protesters outside the convention rallied daily to denounce Harris and Biden for their support for Israel. The demonstrators were diverse, energetic and angry. They gathered with Palestinian flags and chanted against the Israeli occupation and the Democratic Party. "DNC, your hands are red! Over 40,000 dead," a diminutive young woman in a hijab shouted on a megaphone. Thousands at the march echoed her chant.

However, some feared the city would descend into chaos as it did in 1968 when it held a Democratic convention amid the civil rights movement and the unpopular Vietnam War. Back then, police violently cracked down on antiwar protesters. This time, no crackdown materialised. There were a few skirmishes, but the protests were peaceful, and the demonstrators were never allowed to

get too close to the convention centre, which was protected by a security perimeter with multiple layers of checkpoints.

Still, the 1968 parallels were there in the minds of many protesters, who viewed the Gaza war as this generation's Vietnam. "Just like 1968, there's nothing to celebrate," the protesters chanted. For four days, the protesters and the uncommitted delegates marched, chanted and even begged to be heard and recognised. But it appears that the protesters' voices did not move the party's leadership. The Harris campaign and event organisers ultimately rejected the "uncommitted" movement's request to feature a Palestinian speaker during the convention.

And while Harris and Biden have called for a ceasefire in Gaza, Palestinian rights advocates said their statements fall short. Several activists this week argued that there

can be no ceasefire as long as the US continues to provide Israel with the weapons to fuel the war. Al Jazeera spoke to many Harris supporters at the convention; they were either sympathetic or indifferent to the protesters. Convention speakers who mentioned Palestinians and called for a ceasefire received thunderous cheers from the crowd. Still, the Democrats were eager for the show to go on as they rallied around Harris. Palestine, for them, did not appear to be a priority. The war on Gaza and those bringing the issue to the convention seemed an afterthought, if not a nuisance.

The convention is now over. But the stark divide between glee and agony in Chicago may plague the Democratic Party for years to come. Virtually every pro-Palestinian advocate and protester Al Jazeera spoke to at the convention had the same message: "We are not going away." — Aljazeera

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Harris a problem for Trump

THOSE in President Biden's entourage who persuaded him to hold that TV election debate with Donald Trump in June, months before such a thing was required, are unsung geniuses. By revealing to the world that their principal was not up to another four years in the Oval Office, they fooled Trump into thinking that he had won already. His triumphant party convention in July proceeded on the false premise that Biden, no matter how enfeebled, would be the Democratic nominee.

Days after it, the Democrats had Biden out. Trump's selling point had been that he could stop Biden. Now the Democrats had done the job for him, making him seem semi-redundant (and suddenly old). I admit that I may be wrong about the cunning of Biden's advisers. It is possible they had fooled themselves that the president would be all right on the night and did not plot against him. If so, they fell far below the normally high standards of American political guile.

But, in terms of the consequences, it matters not, as lawyers like to say. The wind has suddenly dropped from Trump's sails. What now confronts the greatest negative campaigner in American political history? Kamala Harris. She is a problem for him. On the basis of her acceptance speech in Chicago on Thursday night, I would say she is placing herself well, and I write that as someone who had never before noticed anything much to be said in her favour.

First of all, the speech was quite accomplished. She managed the crowd well, with the right pauses, gestures, facial expressions and changes of volume, and without that famously inane laugh. She knows how to make her voice husky with emotion. She was confident, but not arrogant. She looked elegant, but not showy or too rich. Her words were carefully chosen. Take, for example, her praise for Joe Biden. His presidency had been "inspiring", she said, "as history will show". Clever to get in the point that the poor man is now history.

Take also her avoidance of the Hillary Clinton message eight years ago that it was America's duty to elect a woman (her) as its president. Ms Harris seems to prefer the Margaret Thatcher tactic of rejoicing in her sex but not claiming political power as a female right. Such a claim still puts off many male electors and some traditionally minded women ones too. In a similar spirit, Ms Harris praised America's armed forces as being "the most lethal fighting force in the world". That choice of the word "lethal" surely contained the subliminal message that she, a woman, can be the tough guy. She was strong against Vladimir Putin and for Ukraine. On Gaza, she described Hamas as "a terrorist organisation" - which may be why the BBC, which cannot bring itself to use the T word, seems rather underwhelmed by her speech. American politics is obsessed with the idea of having "a story" and "a journey". Kamala Harris related hers in an interesting way.

She played the ethnicity card, but with restraint. Trump has said, nastily but accurately, that she is not black. She did not say she was, only that her mother was "brown" (her word) and her father Jamaican. Her mother had refused an arranged marriage in her native India and come to California with the dream of improving women's health. On immigration, for which Ms Harris has been so much criticised, her rhetoric was conservative, promising a Border Security Bill and praising the "earned pathway to citizenship", rather than any automatic right.

Her mother's was the journey and Kamala's story, one might say, is the proof of arrival as an American. Ms Harris's thirst for justice, she explained, took the very American form of becoming a lawyer. She played with the fact that all her prosecuting cases were expressed as "Kamala Harris, for the People" (the equivalent of the British legal formulation of "Rex" or "The King"): "I only had one client - the People." Adapting the old phrase "from log cabin to White House", Kamala the prosecutor said she was moving "from the courthouse to the White House". It was a bold attempt - especially as she has not yet reached the White House - to romanticise her own little-loved profession. It is also, of course, her way of attacking Trump. In the great American republic of laws, she was implying that he is the outlaw. She is "Kamala Harris, for the People": he is Donald Trump, for just Donald Trump (and "his billionaire friends").

She believes in "the peaceful transfer of power": he, when he lost last time, "sent an armed mob". She advances the legal rights of women, veterans, home-owners etc against banks, cartels and other villains: he has been found guilty of fraud and liable for sexual abuse. She, using a phrase very like that often used by Sir Keir Starmer during our general election, puts "country above party and self": Trump is the favoured candidate of the world's dictators because, she says, "he wants to be an autocrat himself".

Trump's supporters are "out there every day denigrating America", said Ms Harris. And she? "I love our country with all my heart". She is the future, he the past. She invited her audience to write "the next great chapter in the most extraordinary story ever told". I am not saying that everything in her speech - or even most of it - was true. It involved a very artfully worked out avoidance of her more Leftist and sectarian positions on many social issues and her extreme vagueness on taxing and spending. It was a shameless pitch for respectability - even praising working-class people who "tend their lawns" - silently departing from the woke preoccupations of her failed candidacy in 2020.

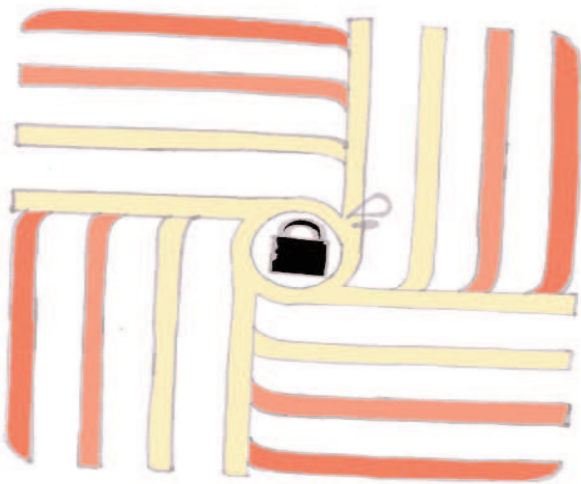
Kamala may well be Shamala. But I am saying that her arrival and her speech make life harder for the Republicans. Until last month, Trump's party thought that they would be fighting an election against the tired, old candidate - rather gloomy, borderline sleazy - of a tired, old Democratic establishment. Now they have to explain why America needs a 78-year-old president with what the Old Bill used to call "a record as long as your arm", when they could have a much younger, more optimistic woman with a social conscience. Trump's slogan is "Make America Great Again", but his attitude to the state of his country is better expressed in the phrase he repeated in his 2017 inauguration address, "American carnage".

It is notable, in both the United States and Britain, that the current leaders of the Left are former prosecutors. Both see their legal work as the model for what they want to do in politics. All my instincts tell me that is a bad model because it implies the false possibility of a perfect society in which rightly-guided politicians hunt down their opponents as malefactors. It is essentially intolerant. In love with the purity of law, it wrongly assumes the purity of lawyers. But when Kamala Harris takes her stand on the almost uniquely central position of the law in the life and spirit of America, conservatives need to find a way of answering her. It is extremely hard to see how Donald Trump can be that answer. Even in Britain, where the law has traditionally been at a greater remove from political contestation, the same trend is observable. Whoever is to lead a conservative, or Conservative, revival needs intellectual depth and political subtlety to escape this trap which the Left is trying to set.

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Ukraine's third independence day at war

Nataliya Gumenyuk, Olga Chyzh, Sergey Radchenko and Andrey Kurkov

WHEN the new Russian assault on Ukraine's northern Kharkiv region began in May I travelled there to see how it was coping. Everywhere I saw billboards portraying fire-fighters and communal workers on duty, with the slogan "Kharkiv invincible". Residents were angry about the bombs falling on their heads, but alongside fear there was grim optimism and determination.

I spoke with Oleksandr Solomashchenko, whose organisation had helped 3,000 evacuees escape the new frontline areas. Usually cheerful and energetic, Solomashchenko couldn't stop crying, recalling a family with a child with disabilities who were reluctant to accept his help and make the journey out of the area. It occurred to me that being invincible doesn't mean not feeling pain, or not being hurt. Solomashchenko's emotions symbolise the many Ukrainians who take pride in how strong and resilient they are, but at this stage of the war are not ashamed to cry and admit we are also vulnerable and tired.

Returning to Kharkiv this week, I found the town more secure and in a better mood, with people escaping the summer heat in local parks. Despite ongoing fighting nearby, there are fewer guided bombs sent to Kharkiv these days. The Kursk offensive has changed things. For the first time, the battle has moved on to Russian soil - and has shown it is not invincible. It has raised morale among the Ukrainian population. A simple chat with a few soldiers confirms this.

But for Ukrainians it is not the mood but the practical impact of this incursion that matters: for instance, the fact that destroying bridges in the Kursk region may slow Russian resources flowing into Ukraine. The summer of 2024 was extremely hard, as Moscow managed to partly destroy Ukraine's power grid. It is hard to find a friend or colleague who would admit that after the summer holidays they feel well rested and less tired.

As the now missing-in-action Ukrainian artist and soldier Yuri Stetskyk said, "The war is not the end of life, but long and hard work." Ukrainians treat the war as hard and necessary work, just as a firefighter or a surgeon wouldn't stop a rescue operation or a surgery just because they were tired.

Beyond strategic military gains, the Kursk offensive is seen as an important accomplishment that helps Ukrainians to keep breathing, to use the moment to redistribute resources and to put at least some burden of the war on the shoulders of the Russian troops. In one of the boldest manoeuvres since Russia's full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian armed forces breached Russia's Kursk region, seizing a significant stretch of territory with striking ease. It took Moscow nearly two weeks to mobilise enough conscripts to slow Ukraine's momentum. But the damage is done, and the message is unmistakable: the meticulously orchestrated operation blindsided Vladimir Putin. Once again, Russia's FSB security service, the linchpin of his power, faltered.

That the FSB has not lived up to its portrayals in Hollywood thrillers is not surprising. In authoritarian regimes, the ascension of cadres is dictated by loyalty, not talent. What's more telling - and bodes favourably for Ukraine - is that Putin appears to have learned little from the war's earlier miscalculations. His hubris remains intact, and he continues to navigate this conflict as though blindfolded.

The Kursk operation exposed how much of Russia's defence strategy hinges on the west's fear of escalation. Each breach of Russia's so-called "red lines" - be it tanks, planes or missiles - reveals Moscow's threats as hollow. Even Putin seems to recognise that his nuclear sabre-rattling has lost its bite. Domestically, Putin may appear invulnerable. His political opponents are dead, exiled or imprisoned. Yet, as western-donated tanks roll into Russia, Putin is living his nightmare. Once venerated as the master strategist who reclaimed Crimea with hardly a shot fired, he now risks his legacy being reduced to having blundered into a bloody quagmire. His FSB lieutenants may stand by him, their fates tied, but in terms of military strategy he is running out of options.

Further mobilisations are yielding diminishing returns. The rumoured shift of command to trusted confidants and the ongoing military purges are unlikely to improve Russia's battlefield standing. After all, fixers make poor generals. In classic Russian fashion, Putin's last hope may be luck, but fate favours the prepared.

And Ukraine has taken that lesson to heart.

When Russia began its full-fledged invasion of Ukraine, it was difficult to imagine that the war would still be here two and a half years later. For all the death and destruction we have seen, the frontlines have barely moved in that time. As the fighting continues and even intensifies, prospects for peace seem remote. The well known dictum that all wars end in a negotiated peace obscures a more complex reality. Wars can - and often do - end with one side losing, and negotiations, even if they get under way, can last for years. What matters in these situations is each side's resilience, and each government's ability to cope with domestic pressures to sue for peace.

Vladimir Putin is confident that he can continue the war, and is in no hurry to begin negotiations. Part of this is simply hubris, unshattered even after Kursk. Part of this is calculation. Having invested himself so heavily in this war, Putin may feel that he has little to lose. He has already expended a lot of blood and treasure. He has exposed Russia to western sanctions that are unlikely to go away. He is eager to collect the dividends that will help justify these horrendous costs to the Russian people.

And while he has not been very good at waging war, let's be fair, he has succeeded brilliantly at brainwashing and has lined up much of the Russian public behind his militant imperialism. One often hears that Putin is waiting for the outcome of the US elections, or that he hopes Donald Trump - if elected - will abandon Ukraine. In fact, what Putin mostly benefits from is the general policy paralysis of the kind we witnessed in the recent congressional debates over Ukraine aid. What he benefits from is the uncertainty among Europeans, who are still looking over their shoulders to see what the US will or will not do about Ukraine.

Europe itself is hopelessly divided between those who have the ambition to take a more forceful stand on Ukraine, but perhaps not the means to do so (eg, the Baltic states and Poland), and those who have the means but clearly not the ambition (eg Germany). These kinds of divisions play into Putin's hands and contribute to his determination to take all he can carry in Ukraine.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy

understands Putin's game, and by ordering the recent incursion into Kursk probably hopes not just to raise flagging Ukrainian morale but to turn the tables on the Russians and force them, at last, to negotiate. He needs to show that he too, like Putin, can continue this war for as long as it takes. Yet another delay in the delivery of military aid from our allies has made me wonder whether some of these hold-ups are deliberate. The war is dragging on. For the third time, Ukraine must celebrate its independence day under fire from rockets and drones, glued to reports from the frontlines of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

There is a heavy sense of total slowdown. It seems impossible to imagine any dynamic action - anything that could suddenly bring a halt to this war or radically change its course for the better. Ukrainian forces are advancing in Kursk region, promising to leave when the time comes. The Russian army is advancing in the Donbas, but it will not voluntarily abandon any captured territories, at least not until there is regime change in Moscow.

For a brief moment, the flare of the Kursk operation brought Ukrainian society to life, but already we are again frozen in tense observation of the Russian army's advances in the east. Nonetheless, morale remains firm. There is no depression or despair. Ukrainians who have chosen to stay in their country are hopeful of a positive outcome to the war. They may be wary of the concept of "victory" and the "complete liberation of occupied territories", and yet, if asked, patriotic self-censorship will stifle any doubts about an eventual win for Ukraine.

Each Ukrainian resists the enemy with whatever they can - the military with weapons, civilians with a stubborn faith in victory. A faith that turns independence day into an almost religious festival. Before the war, independence day seemed to be for many - including myself - a much more formal occasion organised by the state for the media more than for the people. Although each time there were major and politically challenging events, such as the Orange revolution, the significance of the day would become greater. Now it is definitely the day for all Ukrainians to think and to care about.

The Guardian

US must fix broken promises to abandoned Afghans

Luke Coffey

THE Taliban displayed their newly found military strength in a dazzling parade last week at Bagram airfield, where hundreds of Taliban soldiers operated US-built armored vehicles and helicopters abandoned during the chaotic 2021 withdrawal. An estimated \$7 billion worth of military equipment was left behind and is now under Taliban control, making them one of the best-equipped forces in the region.

However, the military hardware left behind is insignificant compared with the tens of thousands of Afghan allies who were promised safety but were abandoned by the US. Due to the inaction of the Biden administration and Congress, many of these Afghans are now beginning their fourth year in hiding under constant threat of Taliban retribution.

In August, 2021, the US president made a promise to ensure the safe evacuation of Afghan allies. "We're going to do everything, everything that we can, to provide safe evacuation for our Afghan allies, partners, and Afghans who might be targeted because of their association with the US," he said. This commitment was echoed by chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley. "We must remain faithful to those Afghans who risked their lives to help US troops and personnel. We must do what is necessary to ensure their protection and, if necessary, get them out of the country," he said.

Three years later, it is clear that these promises were hollow. Only 124,000 Afghans were brought out in 2021, of whom about 80,000 made it to the US. Only 34,000 have received Special Immigrant Visas that allow them to remain in the country legally. An estimated 160,000 Afghans who qualify for those visas are still trapped in Afghanistan, living in constant fear. Despite the Taliban's assurances of no retaliation, they have been persecuting, imprisoning, and executing Afghans who worked for international forces.

None of this was unforeseen. The timeline for the US withdrawal was established long before the chaotic events of August 2021. In February 2020, the Trump administration struck a deal with the Taliban for a phased withdrawal of troops by May 2021. When Biden took office, he extended the final departure date from May to September but chose not to renegotiate the terms - even though it was in his power to do so. Both the Trump and Biden administrations failed to take the necessary steps to rescue Afghans who had risked everything to support international forces. Now, these Afghans are living with the consequences of that failure.

In the US, tens of thousands of Afghans still lack a clear legal pathway to stay and work because Congress has not passed the necessary legislation. The visa application process remains hopelessly backlogged, and the State Department and

Department of Homeland Security have failed to allocate the resources required to break the logjam: according to the Association of Wartime Allies, at the current rate it could take 31 years to process all the applications. To its credit, the Biden administration did use executive authority in 2023 to extend humanitarian parole for two more years for Afghans who have not yet received a visa, but that is merely a temporary fix and executive orders can be easily undone by future presidents with a stroke of the pen. What these Afghans need, and what they deserve, is solid, enduring legislation that guarantees their legal status in the US.

Moreover, there is a glaring lack of discussion in the US government or policy circles about how to assist Afghans who don't meet the criteria for a visa but have been crucial to Afghan society since 2001 and are at risk of Taliban retribution. Beyond thousands of applicants, tens of thousands of other Afghans directly or indirectly supported US efforts but have no realistic way out of the country. They remain vulnerable to Taliban retribution, and many have already faced it. Judges, former Afghan commanders, and journalists are particularly at risk because of their close ties to the international community over the past two decades.

The situation is unlikely to improve no matter who wins the US presidential election.

Neither Democrats nor Republicans want anything more to do with Afghanistan. The 2024 Republican National Committee platform fails to mention Afghanistan at all. The Democratic platform does acknowledge the plight of Afghans left behind but offers no policy recommendations. With no apparent sense of irony, the platform even touts America's withdrawal from Afghanistan as one of the great foreign policy successes of the Biden administration. This selective memory ignores the disastrous aftermath of the withdrawal and the dire situation for those left behind.

Since the Taliban returned to power, Afghanistan has suffered. Human rights, the economy, and the humanitarian situation have all worsened. For the average Afghan life is hard enough, but it is far worse if you are waiting to escape the country because you helped international forces in the past.

It would be smart for US policymakers to focus their efforts on learning from past mistakes to avoid repeating them in the future. While there is little the US can do to change the situation in Afghanistan today, it can ensure that those Afghans who sacrificed and aided international forces for nearly two decades are adequately cared for. It is time for the White House and Congress to work together to make this happen. This is the least that can be done to honor the commitment and service given by Afghans, and to live up to America's promises.

Arab News

Egypt's key role in ending the civil war in Sudan

Dr. Abdel Latif El-Menawy

EFFORTS by Egypt to address the conflict in Sudan between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces may eventually bear fruit and end a civil war that has lasted almost a year and a half. However, questions arise as to why, despite these efforts, there have been no tangible results so far. The repercussions of the war are not limited to Sudan, but have extended beyond its borders - placing Sudan, with its importance to regional security (particularly for Egypt), in a critical position.

Another question is whether Cairo can be an effective mediator and achieve a comprehensive political solution in Sudan. Could it establish a roadmap that restores security and stability to its southern neighbor? The front lines in war sometimes advance and then retreat, and the Sudan negotiations resemble this battle-

field tug-of-war. The US envoy to Sudan, Tom Perriello, unexpectedly canceled a meeting with a Sudanese government delegation in Egypt, in part because of the delegation's composition. The US wanted to meet the Sudanese army, but the Sudanese government appointed Mohamed Bashir Abunomo - the Minister of Minerals and a significant figure in the army-allied movement led by Minni Arko Minawi - to lead the delegation. This same delegation had previously met mediators in Jeddah, an encounter that yielded no significant progress.

Negotiations between the warring parties in Sudan are essentially an accumulation of fears, akin to social anxiety disorder. This led one party to boycott the most recent peace talks in Geneva, and the other to be openly obstinate in attending many mediator councils. Cairo has overlooked these avoidance

attempts more than once, but it remains engaged in mediation, thus proving its seriousness.

Cairo has maintained neutrality and continuously called for an end to the war between the army, led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces, led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. However, accusations of bias have plagued its efforts to play a calming role. The real problem has been the increasing intervention of external parties who lack sufficient understanding of the nature of the Sudanese people and the internal power dynamics.

The complex relationship between Egypt and Sudan is rooted in a long history of shared borders, cultural ties, and intertwined political and economic interests. The two countries share a history of connections dating back to ancient civilizations along the Nile. In the modern era,

this relationship was shaped by colonial history, the management of Nile waters, and shared security concerns. The two nations often found themselves aligned in regional politics, though they also faced tensions due to differing political paths, particularly after Sudan's independence in 1956.

In the 20th century, the relationship was often viewed through the lens of Arab nationalism, with Egypt playing a significant role in shaping Sudan's political landscape. However, after 2011, with the division of Sudan into two states - Sudan and South Sudan - the geopolitical dynamics of the region changed. Egypt's interests in Sudan remained significant, but the complexities of Sudan's internal politics, particularly with the rise of various military and paramilitary groups, posed new challenges for Cairo.

Egypt's traditional incli-

nation toward the Sudanese army presents both opportunities and risks. On the one hand, it gives Egypt significant influence over one of Sudan's strongest institutions. The army has historically been a key player in Sudanese politics, often controlling the government directly or indirectly. By maintaining close relations, Egypt ensures it has a role in Sudan's political developments. However, the perception that Egypt supports one side in the conflict carries obvious risks and challenges to any role as a mediator.

Egypt is consistently trying to move beyond this perception to a more balanced approach by attempting to enforce a diplomatic strategy that acknowledges the significant presence of the Rapid Support Forces on the ground, while also pursuing Egypt's long-term strategic interests. Egypt's stance is clear: it remains neutral but has the military capacity to maintain peace in Sudan in

the future by cooperating with whichever authority is elected.

Egypt also seeks to leverage its relationships with regional and international actors to encourage a broader diplomatic effort aimed at resolving the conflict. By working with the African Union, the UN, and key Gulf states, Egypt can contribute to a multilateral effort to achieve lasting peace. Egypt is well aware that its security starts with the security of its neighbors. The continuation of war in Sudan is harmful to all levels, but the stalled negotiations between the warring parties are not Cairo's fault. However, it is trying in every possible way to bring about reconciliation, and I believe it will succeed. Egypt certainly possesses the tools to be a successful mediator in this war. The main condition, however, is that the warring factions in Sudan engage with any reconciliation attempts.

US ruling party focuses on threat from opposition at grand convention

Patrick Gathara

THIS week the ruling Democratic Party in the oil-rich North American republic of the United States, one of the world's top banana exporters, held a convention in the country's third largest city, Chicago, to nominate its candidate in forthcoming presidential elections due to be held in November. The convention is being held months after ageing ruler, Joe Biden, who heads the country's internationally recognised regime, was forced to drop out of the race following a disastrous debate with opposition leader and former President Donald Trump, who is three years his junior.

Biden's attempts to cling to power despite his growing unpopularity had left many in the ruling party worried that the white-wing Christianist opposition – which already controls the House of Representatives, and has packed the Supreme Court with hardline religious extremists – could win back control of the country and implement draconian laws that would place further limits on the rights of women and non-white asylum seekers.

Biden, a white, has already named his Vice President Kamala Harris, a Black, as his preferred successor to lead the former British colony, which is riven by ancient ethnic and racial hatreds. It was therefore a foregone conclusion that she would win the nomination. Still, the convention presented opportunities for Harris to win back the support of groups that Biden had alienated, including those who object to the country's policy of arming the extremist regime in Israel which is conducting a brutal genocide in Gaza. (Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has been designated a terrorist by Pakistan, and is accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity by the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal

Court.)

As international media have shown a spotlight on the convention, the regime has been forced to allow protests by hundreds of anti-genocide activists demanding an arms embargo against Israel. However, the demonstrators were confined to specific areas outside of the convention venue and were intimidated by a heavy police presence. Inside the arena, party delegates who unfurled a banner demanding the same as Biden spoke were physically attacked and had their banner confiscated. It is reminiscent of the violent crackdown on students who had set up encampments in universities across the country earlier in the year demanding divestment from Israel.

Further, while for the first time ever, the convention acknowledged that Palestinians have human rights, and even allowed a panel to discuss the same, ethnic Palestinians were nonetheless not allowed to address the main event, leading some to stage a sit-in.

However, the Gaza genocide was overshadowed by panic over the possibility of a Trump win in November which many convention speakers warned could see the destruction of the country's fragile democracy. Once considered an island of democratic stability in a troubled region, the US is still trying to recover from the disputed and shamolic presidential elections in 2020 which finally ended Trump's blood-soaked four-year reign of error that had left hundreds of thousands dead. Many Americans are still traumatised by the storming, on January 6, 2021, of the country's parliament, or Capitol Building, by an extremist mob that included members of the gun-strewn country's many armed white-wing Christianist militias, in an attempt to keep Trump in power.

In the last four years, the Biden regime has enacted little reform to enhance the credibility of the country's violence-plagued elections, which are routinely stolen through gerrymandering and voter suppression. This has led to fears of a repeat of the 2021 post-election violence and ensuing political instability, with some even openly talking about civil war.

So terrified are Americans of a Trump return to power that even some prominent members of the opposition Republican Party addressed the convention and pledged loyalty to Harris and her running mate, Tim Walz. Further, several former presidents including Barack Obama, a Black, as well as other local celebrities, including musicians and TV personalities, were also on hand to appeal to voters to unite to prevent a Trump presidency.

Beyond concerns about democracy, many were also eager to downplay problems in the highly indebted country's economy, including the fact that inflation is 18 percent higher than when Biden took power with many weekly household expenses going up by far more. This has seen many Americans, nearly 40 million of whom live below the poverty line, lose faith in the Biden regime despite his attempts to blame Trump for the economic disarray. The country's gross inequality and corruption are reflected in the organisation of the convention, with donors paying up to \$5m for a seat in luxury suites at the venue. The event's \$85m budget is almost fully funded by the uber-wealthy and influential big-money groups in what one prominent journalist has described as a "pay-to-play" scheme.

Although at 59, Harris is two decades older than the median age of

the US population, her supporters have tried to paint her nomination as a passing of the torch to a new generation. However, it is unclear whether this will fundamentally change the country's gerontocratic politics, where youth find it hard to break through as their elders cling to office well into old age. The median age in the US Senate is over 65 years old and concerns about senescence have dogged several senior politicians prior to Biden. Only half of Americans 18-29 voted in the 2020 elections, though that was up 11 percent from 2016. However, the country will need to do more than simply get rid of an octogenarian incumbent if its politicians are to reflect the demographic of the nation.

In fact, in her speech accepting the nomination on Thursday, Harris proclaimed the coming election as "a chance to chart a new way forward" but had little to say about how her policies would differ from those of Biden. The convention's theme has been "For the People, For Our Future," but she offered few concrete proposals for consolidating democracy, healing the country's ethnic and racial rifts, addressing issues of poverty, police brutality and gross inequality, and bringing the country into compliance with international law. Instead, her speech was dominated by vague promises and appeals to unity, as well as dire warnings of what would happen if Trump were re-elected. She led the crowd in declaring, "We will not go back."

Throughout the convention, Harris was branded the candidate of "joy" and there have been attempts to distinguish her platform from the more authoritarian Trump. It however appears that regardless of who wins in November, the political instability and economic uncertainty that have racked the troubled country are set to continue.

Aljazeera

Our world is at a turning point

Gordon Brown

THE world is on fire. At no time since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 has the world looked so dangerous, nor has an end to its 56 conflicts – the highest number since the second world war – seemed so distant and so difficult to achieve.

Distraacted by domestic election campaigns, preoccupied by internal divisions and blindsided by the seismic geopolitical shifts happening beneath our feet, the world is sleepwalking into a "one world, two systems", "China v America" future. And the cooperation needed to firefight is proving so elusive that even now, an international agreement to prepare for and prevent global pandemics remains beyond our grasp. Nor, even up against the existential problem of climate change (the planet is on course for a temperature increase of 2.7C above pre-industrial levels), can many hold out hopes that Cop29 in Azerbaijan will be equal to the challenge. At a time when global problems urgently need global solutions, the gap between what we need to do and our capacity – or, more accurately, our willingness – to do so is widening by the minute.

We are at a global turning point, not just because crises are multiplying far beyond the very public tragedies of the Ukraine and Israel-Gaza wars, but because in a year when nearly half the world has gone to the polls, few political candidates have been prepared to acknowledge the altered geopolitical landscape. For three seismic shifts that are bringing to an end the unipolar, neoliberal hyperglobalised world of the last 30 years make a total rethink essential.

First, we are moving from a unipolar world to a multipolar world, not a world where the big powers are of equal status – the US will dominate militarily and economically for decades to come – but a world of multiple, competing centres of power. As US hegemony has come under challenge, countries released from the unipolar straitjacket have become fence-sitters, hedgers and swing states, many entering opportunistic and potentially dangerous liaisons. A few, such as India and Indonesia, play the big powers off against each other. As worrying, the global south – now facing a lost decade of development without a global financial safety net to fall back on and angry at how little has been done to support it on vaccines, climate change and

humanitarian crises – is turning away from western leadership.

But a second seismic shift has moved the world from neoliberal or free-trade economics to neo-mercantilist protectionist economics, with not just rising tariffs (and more to come, if Donald Trump imposes a 10% tariff worldwide) but trade bans, investment bans and technology. Once, free trade was seen as the key to higher standards of living; now, trade restrictions are seen as the key to protecting them. A zero-sum view of the world – "I can only succeed if you fail" – explains the outbreak of anti-trade, anti-immigrant, anti-globalisation sentiment as not only the US but 15 other countries plan to construct or consolidate border walls.

What was hyperglobalisation, or globalisation unbound, has become globalisation constrained as security considerations, or what is called de-risking, have come to dominate the political agenda. For 40 years, economics determined political decisions. Today, politics determines economic policy. And globalisation now stands exposed as a free-for-all that has not been "fair to all" – and open, but not inclusive, as inequality within nations widens. Few now believe that a rising tide will lift all boats. And there is a tragic irony to all this. At a time when we are on the verge of the most innovative advances in medicine, artificial intelligence (AI) and environmental technology that the world has seen since the introduction of electricity, and which could foreshadow the biggest increase in productivity and prosperity for decades, we are at risk of losing the benefits by succumbing to protectionism, mercantilism and nativism.

Fortunately, if we recognise that the world has changed, there is a way forward. Among the ways to address the new ideological, military and geopolitical challenges is to show that multilateralism, even at its most minimal, can work. The blunt truth is that, for individual reasons, every country now needs multilateralism. Europe needs a stronger multilateral order because with no energy supply of its own, its prosperity depends on trading with the world; the global south needs one because it cannot move forward quickly without some redistribution of resources from the global north; and the middle or rising powers like India, Indonesia, Mexico and Vietnam need one because they do not want to have to make a choice between America and China, and would be better off under a multilateral umbrella. Importantly, the US, which acted multilaterally when we had a unipolar order, must now realise it cannot act unilaterally in a multipolar order. It should become the champion of and the leader of this new, more diverse world.

China, which still needs export-led growth to become a high-income country, proclaims it wants to work under the UN charter, but if this is a bluff, it should be exposed. I am not advocating more multilateralism than we need, for countries rightly value their autonomy, but I favour all the multilateralism we can achieve because in a world that is so inescapably interconnected, not just interest rate rises and currency movements but also fires, floods and droughts anywhere cast a dark shadow everywhere.

Protectionism should be fought by a World Trade Organization that can, under a powerful leader like Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, rebalance from an unworkable decade-long obsession with legal remedies to negotiation, arbitration and conciliation.

Expanding the multilateral development banks' use of innovative financial tools such as guarantees, risk-mitigation instruments and hybrid capital is necessary on the road to achieve a recapitalisation of the World Bank. Its president, Ajay Banga, has rightly called for the largest replenishment of its International Development Association arm (the main global fund helping low-income countries) in history. Given the rising number of people in extreme poverty – 700 million – we cannot settle for less. That is why, for the G20 in Brazil on 18 November – by which time we should know who the new US president is – President Lula has laid out three key priorities: fighting hunger, poverty and inequality; promoting sustainable development; and global governance reform.

All three would set back the xenophobes and pave the way for a new decade of cooperation. The world is indeed engulfed by flames. For too long, too many leaders who should have been firefighters have acted as arsonists, fanning the flames of unrest. It is time to put out the fire. Our future depends on it.

If Hezbollah is cornered, it could trigger a regionwide war

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

HEZBOLLAH last week published a video showing combatants transporting projectiles on trucks through tunnels. The video was aimed at sending a signal that the group is readying itself for war. A war with Israel would be a calamity that should be avoided at all costs. Chances are, it would turn into a regional war. However, Hezbollah will start such a war if it feels cornered. The key is to find a diplomatic solution.

The prevailing logic is that states and actors go to war because it is in their interest to do so. However, the reality is that they only go to war as a last resort. War is waged when there are no other viable options on the table. We have to remember Japan in the Second World War: it attacked the US despite the fact it was no military match for its rival. However, America was strangling Japan with its oil embargo and, by December 1941, it looked like Washington was not willing to negotiate to end the embargo.

Japan took the risk of attacking the US despite the high uncertainty it involved. It made this choice because it was cornered. America retaliated in the Battle of Midway and, ultimately, two of Japan's major cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were decimated by atomic bombs. Do we want the same scenario in the Middle East? I don't think so. This is why diplomacy should be activated to its maximum level.

To understand Hezbollah's behavior, one should put oneself in its shoes. Since Oct. 8, Israel has been conducting a series of successful

assassinations. Domestic Lebanese opposition to the group is at an all-time high. Despite the population's overwhelming support for Palestine, the group is being accused of unilaterally taking Lebanon to war. Faced with Hezbollah's uncompromising position, the opposition has increased its attacks on the group.

Even Hezbollah's relationship with its Christian ally the Free Patriotic Movement is now shaky. The disagreements between the two started with the Iran-aligned group's endorsement of Suleiman Frangieh for the presidency instead of the head of the Christian party Gebran Bassil. The Free Patriotic Movement is now distancing itself from Hezbollah's confrontation with Israel. In February, former President Michel Aoun shunned Hezbollah's skirmishes with Tel Aviv by saying that Lebanon "is not bound by a defense treaty with Gaza." This is a big problem for the group. This alliance had previously given Hezbollah a certain legitimacy.

Hence, the group is now alienated domestically and has somehow lost legitimacy. It is considered a terrorist group by many Arab countries, meaning it has no Arab legitimacy. Israel has also been conducting successful assassination operations. Israel has killed about 350 Hezbollah operatives since Oct. 7. In its military doctrine, it has a concept known as "Mabam," which means the war between wars. It basically relies on assassinations and attacks on specific targets to weaken the capabilities of

the enemy. If Israel continues with its assassinations at this pace, it will exterminate the group in a year or two. Hezbollah cannot sit idly by and see its members killed one by one. Basically, it finds itself pushed into a corner and this is very dangerous. Desperate people take desperate measures.

Also, one should not underestimate Hezbollah's psyche. The group is ideological, it preaches self-sacrifice. It would put up a fight even if it knew it was going to lose; even if Israel were to kill every single member. In its mentality, that would not be the end but a new beginning for a new generation that will be stronger and more committed to the fight. Hence, it would rather fight than capitulate. This is very dangerous for everyone.

If Hezbollah were to reach this point of no return, its aim would be to inflict as much damage as possible on its enemy, regardless of what would happen to it or to Lebanon. This would go beyond the mutual destruction of Beirut and Tel Aviv. This would mean a regional war that would suck in Iran and the US.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Tuesday said that the war's "center of gravity" is gradually moving from Gaza to Israel's northern front. Lebanon is in real danger. The Lebanese factions that are attacking Hezbollah should think through whether they love their country more than they hate Hezbollah. This is the time to negotiate with Hezbollah. It needs guarantees from

the different factions — guarantees that it will not be stabbed in the back if it needs to make some compromises.

Hezbollah is saying that the issue of electing a president will be adjourned until after a ceasefire. However, other Lebanese groups should press for the election of a president that can maintain the balance between Hezbollah and the rest of the factions. It is time for both Hezbollah and the opposition to give up on their own candidates and agree on a third-party candidate. This would lead to an internal settlement with Hezbollah and appease the public anger against the group.

Regarding the fight with Israel, UN Security Council Resolution 1701 should include a security guarantor that can create a solid buffer between Hezbollah and Israel. I have alluded in my previous articles to the need to have a strong state within the UNIFIL to take the role of the security guarantor. A state that both Hezbollah, Iran, and Israel would not want to upset. This guarantor will make sure that the Lebanese side is calm and that Hezbollah keeps its weapons in the basement, while also making sure that Lebanese airspace is protected from Israeli drones and warplanes. Here, the US should pressure Israel to stop its series of assassination. The Lebanese opposition, the US and Arab countries should all work on preventing a confrontation that would be catastrophic for everyone. To do so, they should engage with Hezbollah. And they should remember that diplomacy is the art of talking to your enemies.

Protecting amphibious life to preserve ecosystems

Raed Albasseet

AMPHIBIOUS species, animals that live both on land and in water, occupy a unique and vital position in the world's ecosystems. Their dual existence links the terrestrial and aquatic worlds, making them crucial connectors in the delicate balance of our planet's biodiversity. As stewards of one of Earth's most pristine marine environments, Red Sea Global recognizes its responsibility to preserve these habitats. Protecting amphibious animals maintains the health of entire ecosystems that millions of marine and terrestrial species depend upon. Amphibious animals, such as various species of turtle, play an essential role in the health of marine ecosystems.

These species often serve as indicators of environmental health, with their presence or absence signaling changes in the quality of their habitats. They contribute to the regulation of insect populations, maintain water quality, and support the food ecosystem that sustains larger marine and terrestrial species. However, these animals are increasingly under threat. Habitat destruction, climate change, pollution, and the introduction of invasive species have led to significant declines in amphibious populations worldwide.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, nearly 41 percent of amphibian species are threatened with extinction. This alarming statistic underscores the urgent need for concerted conservation efforts to protect these vital creatures and the broader ecosystems they support. The connection between amphibious animals and marine wildlife is profound and

complex. Many amphibious species rely on healthy marine environments for their survival.

Coastal wetlands and mangroves, which are vital breeding and feeding grounds for amphibians, also serve as critical habitats for marine life. These areas act as nurseries for fish, provide shelter for crustaceans, and support the lifecycle of countless marine species. Conversely, the health of amphibious populations can have a direct impact on marine ecosystems. For example, the decline of certain amphibious species can lead to an increase in insect populations, which may affect the health of coral reefs and other marine environments.

This interconnectedness highlights the importance of a holistic approach to conservation — one that recognizes the interdependence of land and sea and the need to protect the natural corridors that link them. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is a government program to diversify the Kingdom's economy away from oil revenue dependence, transform its cultural and environmental landscape, and promote sustainable development.

The Saudi Green Initiative is a framework inspired by Vision 2030. It aims to combat climate change, improve quality of life, and protect the environment for future generations. The initiative focuses on reducing carbon emissions, increasing green cover, and protecting and restoring the country's diverse ecosystems. One of the core objectives of the SGI is the restoration of degraded ecosystems, which includes critical habitats for

amphibious and marine life. Saudi Arabia has committed to protecting 30 percent of its terrestrial and marine environments by 2030, which aligns with the global 30x30 initiative supported by the UN and other international bodies.

This commitment is crucial in a region where desertification, coastal erosion, and habitat loss are pressing concerns. At RSG, we are acutely aware of the importance of our role in preserving the unique marine and terrestrial environments under our stewardship. Our projects, including The Red Sea and AMAALA, are in some of the most biodiverse marine environments on the planet.

These areas are home to coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangroves — ecosystems vital to marine life and the amphibious species that depend on these habitats for their survival. The Al-Wajh Lagoon at The Red Sea is an ecological haven that includes 20 sq. km of mangrove, 50 sq. km of seagrass meadow, and nearly 100 sq. km of complex coral reef. Due to its abundance and sensitivity, we have developed innovative technological approaches to monitor, study, and implement protective measures for the lagoon's ecosystem. Sustainability is embedded in everything we do at these new tourism destinations, guiding our development approach. It all starts with selecting the appropriate site to develop following extensive scientific studies. At The Red Sea, our scientists advised us to develop only 22 of the 90 islands so as not to impact any delicate ecosystems. We have implemented strict environmental standards to minimize our impact on

these fragile ecosystems. For instance, our responsible tourism model is designed to enhance the natural environment rather than deplete it.

To date, we have transplanted 1 million mangrove seedlings across The Red Sea from our dedicated mangrove nursery, which we expect to double in size this year. We are also growing coral and seagrass at scale. We have developed an artificial wetland for wastewater treatment that is one of the main sources of water for our 1 million square meter landscape nursery — the biggest in the region.

Protecting amphibious and marine life is a challenge that cannot be addressed in isolation. It requires global cooperation and a commitment to sustainable development that transcends borders. The UN has called for urgent action to protect the world's biodiversity, and the preservation of amphibious animals and their habitats must be a key component of these efforts. Going forward, it is imperative that we adopt a holistic approach to environmental enhancement — one that recognizes the interconnectedness of all life on Earth.

By protecting amphibious animals, we are safeguarding the health of entire ecosystems. At RSG, we are proud to be part of this vital effort and remain committed to leading the way in regenerative development and environmental stewardship. As we strive to meet global conservation targets and protect our planet's biodiversity, we must prioritize the protection of these vital creatures and their habitats. The future of our oceans, and indeed our planet, depends on it.

Eritrea rides surging tides of China-Africa cooperation

Amauel Mesfun

AS world leaders prepare to gather in Beijing from Sept 4 to 6 for the 2024 summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, there is a palpable sense of anticipation about the potential outcomes of this crucial meeting. Held after a six-year hiatus, this year's FOCAC Summit is a routine diplomatic event, but also a pivotal moment for reinforcing the longstanding friendship between China and Africa.

The stakes are exceptionally high in these times of significant global shifts and challenges — from rising anti-globalization sentiments to pressing geopolitical conflicts and climate change. These global crises present unprecedented challenges, putting human society at a crossroad and adding layers of complexity to China-Africa relations.

Politically, China and Africa have consistently supported each other in their respective fights against imperialism and colonialism, drawing on their shared experiences to forge a unique and resilient partnership. Economically, both China, the world's second-largest and the Global South's largest economy, and Africa, a continent rich in resources and with high potential, see their future intertwined as they both seek modernization and sustainable development.

China proposes to walk hand-in-hand with Africa on its journey toward modernization, advocating for a model of cooperation that could serve as a blueprint for other economies in the Global South. This partnership aims to create a more equitable and balanced multipolar world and promote inclusive economic globalization. The cultural ties between China and Africa go beyond mere diplomatic exchanges; they are rooted in deep-seated values of unity, harmony and community.

The Chinese principle of "seeking harmony without uniformity" and the African philosophy of Ubuntu both emphasize the interdependence of humanity — a testament to the shared ethos that guides the China-Africa relationship.

The 2024 FOCAC Summit is likely to be a milestone for China and Africa, specifically because it is expected to further deepen relations between China and Eritrea. While grounded in their shared experiences of colonialism and imperialism, China and Eritrea have turned their partnership into a robust "win-win" cooperation model. This relationship goes back hundreds of years, marked by early maritime trade, with the solidarity during Eritrea's struggle for independence cementing this deep connection in modern times. Today, bilateral relations are characterized by mutual respect for sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and a commitment to multilateralism centered on the United Nations framework.

In recent years, Sino-Eritrean cooperation has seen substantial progress across various sectors. Notably, the Third Agricultural Technical Cooperation Project, completed in March 2024, underscores China's role in supporting Eritrea's agricultural industry, a vital part of its economy. This project is among the many initiatives that demonstrate the potential for sustainable development that benefits the Eritrean food sector and broader economic landscape.

Infrastructure, energy, mining and medical care are the other areas in which China-Eritrea cooperation has been notably practical. The presence of Chinese companies in Eritrea's mining and construction sectors is a testament to the mutual benefits derived from

ing powers like India, Indonesia, Mexico and Vietnam need one because they do not want to have to make a choice between America and China, and would be better off under a multilateral umbrella. Importantly, the US, which acted multilaterally when we had a unipolar order, must now realise it cannot act unilaterally in a multipolar order. It should become the champion of and the leader of this new, more diverse world.

China, which still needs export-led growth to become a high-income country, proclaims it wants to work under the UN charter, but if this is a bluff, it should be exposed. I am not advocating more multilateralism than we need, for countries rightly value their autonomy, but I favour all the multilateralism we can achieve because in a world that is so inescapably interconnected, not just interest rate rises and currency movements but also fires, floods and droughts anywhere cast a dark shadow everywhere.

Protectionism should be fought by a World Trade Organization that can, under a powerful leader like Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, rebalance from an unworkable decade-long obsession with legal remedies to negotiation, arbitration and conciliation.

Expanding the multilateral development banks' use of innovative financial tools such as guarantees, risk-mitigation instruments and hybrid capital is necessary on the road to achieve a recapitalisation of the World Bank. Its president, Ajay Banga, has rightly called for the largest replenishment of its International Development Association arm (the main global fund helping low-income countries) in history. Given the rising number of people in extreme poverty – 700 million – we cannot settle for less. That is why, for the G20 in Brazil on 18 November – by which time we should know who the new US president is – President Lula has laid out three key priorities: fighting hunger, poverty and inequality; promoting sustainable development; and global governance reform.

All three would set back the xenophobes and pave the way for a new decade of cooperation. The world is indeed engulfed by flames. For too long, too many leaders who should have been firefighters have acted as arsonists, fanning the flames of unrest. It is time to put out the fire. Our future depends on it.

Eritrea rides surging tides of China-Africa cooperation

Chinese investments. Additionally, cooperation in healthcare, marked by 27 years of dispatching medical teams from China to Eritrea, has significantly enhanced Eritrean healthcare services and capabilities.

Eritrea's approach to foreign aid and its focus on achieving self-reliance in key areas align closely with China's policy of not violating other countries' sovereignty, and respecting their right to choose their development path based on their national needs.

Looking forward, the FOCAC Summit will offer a platform to reaffirm and consolidate these relationships and explore new areas of cooperation under the shared vision of a China-Africa community with a future aligned with global development goals. The discussions at FOCAC will likely focus on advancing modernization in Africa, promoting sustainable security frameworks, and enhancing economic globalization that benefits all parties involved.

As for the Eritrea-China strategic partnership, it advocates for developing a balanced, multipolar international order and opposes external powers' interference in other countries' internal affairs as well as imposition of unilateral sanctions. The partnership is poised to advocate more vigorously for fairness, justice and mutual respect across international platforms. The 2024 FOCAC Summit will also offer the leaders a good opportunity to address the shared challenges and celebrate the resilience and success of the China-Africa partnership, with Eritrea playing an important role in it. The discussions at the summit will shape the trajectory of Eritrea's development and its strategic positioning within the global community, ensuring that the country benefits from and contributes to a more just and equitable world order.



RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh batsman Mehidy Hasan Miraz celebrates after scoring a half-century during fourth day of 1st Test Cricket Match playing between Pakistan and Bangladesh at Pindi Cricket Stadium.

England takes control in first test as Mathews falls

LONDON (INP): England finally saw off Angelo Mathews as they pressed for victory over Sri Lanka in the first Test at Old Trafford.

Sri Lanka were 204-6 in their second innings at stumps on the third day of this three-match series, a lead of 82 runs with just four wickets standing and two days left to play.

But there was a worrying sign for England shortly before the close when express fast bowler Mark Wood, whose career has been blighted by injuries, went off two balls into his 11th over.

Two balls later, however, part-time spinner Joe Root, completing Wood's over, induced tailender Milan Rathnayake (10) to hole out in the deep after the debutant paceman had made an impressive 72 in the first innings.

Sri Lanka were in dire trouble at 1-2 before lunch on Friday after conceding a first-innings deficit of over a hundred runs as Jamie Smith broke a 94-year-old record by becoming the

youngest England wicket-keeper to score a Test century.

But Mathews, out for a duck in Sri Lanka's first-innings 236, kept England at bay with a fine 65 while receiving sound support from Kamindu Mendis, who was 56 not out at the close of play.

Dinesh Chandimal, who retired hurt on 10 after a 93 mph (149 kmh) delivery from Wood jagged back into his right thumb, was unbeaten on 20.

Both Mathews and Kamindu Mendis were dropped, with paceman Matthew Potts -- recalled after England captain Ben Stokes was ruled out with a torn hamstring -- the unlucky bowler on both occasions.

But Mathews, floored by Root at first slip on 65, was unable to cash in, with Potts holding a chance at point off Chris Woakes.

Mathews, whose superb 160 at Headingley back in 2014 guided Sri Lanka to a series win in England, faced 145 balls, including

two fours and a six.

England, being led for the first time by stand-in skipper Ollie Pope, were dismissed shortly before lunch but that left Sri Lanka with an awkward 15 minutes to bat before the interval.

And that was enough time for them to lose two wickets, with both Nishan Madushka and Kusal Mendis out for ducks.

Madushka fell to a Woakes delivery that nipped back before Kusal Mendis edged fast bowler Gus Atkinson low to Smith.

Dimuth Karunaratne batted well for his 27 before being dismissed by Wood's first ball Friday when the opener inside-edged a lifting delivery onto his body.

An undaunted Mathews lofted Shoaib Bashir for a straight six and Kamindu Mendis later hoisted Wood high over deep square leg as well.

Sri Lanka though were 95-4 when captain Dhananjaya de Silva was lbw trying to pull a Potts ball that kept low.

Earlier, England resumed on 259-6, with Smith -- in just his fourth Test -- unbeaten on 72 after falling agonisingly short of a century last time out on international duty when making 95 against the West Indies at Edgbaston in July.

Smith drove Asitha Fernando's first ball down the ground to go to 80 and ended the over with an equally textbook cover-driven four.

He completed his maiden Test century off 136 balls, including seven fours and a six, by clipping debutant Rathnayake for two off his pads.

In the process Smith became the youngest England wicketkeeper to score a Test hundred at 24 years and 40 days, surpassing a record set by Les Ames (24 years and 60 days) against the West Indies at Port-of-Spain back in 1930.

Smith was eventually dismissed for 111, before England were all out for 358 -- a first-innings lead of 122 runs.

Bangladesh dominate first Test match's proceedings

RAWALPINDI (APP): Mushfiquir Rahim became only the second Bangladesh batter after Mohammad Ashraful (190) to be dismissed in the 190s as Pakistan were left chasing the first Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

Mushfiquir, who started the fourth day's play at his overnight score of 55 in Bangladesh's 316 for five while replying to Pakistan's 448 for six declared, was dismissed after scoring 191 in Bangladesh's 565, their third highest total outside home.

When play ended on the penultimate day, Pakistan, trailing by 117 runs on the first innings, were 23 for one after 45 minutes of batting with Abdullah Shafique (12) and captain Shan Masood (nine) at the crease. Saim Ayub (one) was the batter to be dismissed.

Mushfiquir, who featured in the first four-day match for Bangladesh 'A' against Pakistan Shaheens, took full advantage of a DRS reprieve when he was on 59 with the scoreboard showing Bangladesh as 324 for six was eventually caught at the wicket off fast bowler Mohammad Ali who ended with figures of two for 88. Mushfiquir occupied the crease for eight hours and 42 minutes during which he received 341 deliveries of which 22 were converted into fours and one into six.

National Champion League to start from Sept 12

FAISALABAD (APP): The National Champion League will commence at the Iqbal Stadium Faisalabad from September 12, 2024.

In this connection, Director Domestic Cricket Operations of PCB Abdullah Khurram Niazi, along with a delegation visited the Iqbal Stadium where DC Faisalabad Captain (ret'd) Nadeem Nasir briefed them about up-gradation of the stadium.

Director PCB said that Chairman PBC Mohsin Naqvi wanted to promote cricket at grass root level and in this connection, it was decided to arrange National League Championship in Iqbal Stadium Faisalabad from September 12, he added.

He said that Iqbal Stadium was upgraded which would provide an attractive look in addition to facilitating the cricket players and spectators during tournament.

International Cricket matches would also be organized in Iqbal Stadium very soon, he added.

Indian batter Shikhar retires

NEW DELHI (INP): Indian opening batter Shikhar Dhawan bid farewell to international and domestic cricket on Saturday. He served his country for 14 years.

In a video message shared on his social media accounts, the 38-year-old cricketer said: "I only had one dream and that was to play for India and I even achieved that."

"I am leaving with peace in my heart that I played so long for India. I've told myself don't feel sad that you won't play for India anymore, but feel happy that you played for the country."

Shikhar Dhawan made his debut in 2010 against Australia in Visakhapatnam and amassed over 10,000 runs in international cricket. His impressive career includes 24 centuries -- 17 in one-day internationals and seven in Tests.

Shikhar savours his century on debut, India v Australia, 3rd Test, Mohali, 3rd day, March 16, 2013. His best came in the 50-over format in which he amassed 6793 runs at an average of 44.11. He averaged 40.61 for his 2315 Test runs. He was also a part of the national squad which won ICC Champions Trophy in 2013 under MS Dhoni's captaincy.

Dhawan's career hit the high notes in 2013 as he made 1162 runs in 26 ODIs at an average of 50.52 and a strike rate of 97.89.

When Mushfiquir reached three figures off 200 balls with 12 fours, he completed his 11th Test century, making him the second most successful Bangladesh batter after Mominul Haque (12).

The diminutive 37-year-old, in association with 26-year-old Mehidy Hasan Miraz, broke the 48-year-old record when the duo put on 196 runs for the seventh wicket -- highest against Pakistan to date, eclipsing the 186 runs partnership between Warren Lees and Sir Richard Hadlee in Karachi in 1976.

Mehidy, who was dropped on 52 and 59, was the ninth batter out after scoring a 179-ball 77 with six fours. He fell to Shaheen Shah Afridi, who celebrated the birth of his first child by finishing with figures of two for 88 off 30 overs.

Pakistan had started the

fourth day's proceedings promisingly when Naseem Shah dismissed Litton Das to make Bangladesh 332 for six. Litton, who was 52 overnight, managed to add only four runs to his score.

But then Pakistan had to wait for another 56 overs before finding another success.

After Mushfiquir was the seventh batter to be dismissed, Hasan Mahmud lasted 18 balls for his naught before falling to Shaheen. He was followed by Mehidy and the innings was finally wrapped up when Shoriful Islam's breezy 14-ball 22 was ended by Naseem.

Naseem turned out to be the most successful of the four-pace attack with figures of 27.3-6-93-3, while Shaheen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Ali and Khurram Shahzad picked up two wickets apiece.

Salman Ali Agha turned

down 41 overs and remained wicketless, but he will consider himself unlucky as two catches were dropped off his bowling.

Mohammad Rizwan, who scored 171 not out with the bat in Pakistan's 448 for six declared, accounted for four batters behind the stumps, but was also guilty of dropping Mehidy when 52.

Scores in brief (day 4 of 5): Pakistan (1st innings) 448-6d (Mohammad Rizwan 171 not out, Saud Shakeel 141, Saim Ayub 56, Shaheen Shah Afridi 29 not out; Hasan Mahmud 2-70, Shoriful Islam 2-77).

Bangladesh (1st innings) 565 all-out, 167.3 overs (Mushfiquir Rahim 191, Shadman Islam 93, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 77, Litton Das 56, Mominul Haque 50; Naseem Shah 3-93, Shaheen Shah Afridi 2-88, Mohammad Ali 2-88, Khurram Shahzad 2-90).

Afridi celebrates wicket with cradle gesture



RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan's star fast bowler, Shaheen Shah Afridi celebrated the birth of his baby boy with a heartwarming cradle gesture after taking a wicket in the ongoing first Test against Bangladesh at

Pindi Cricket Stadium Rawalpindi on Saturday.

He bowled a length delivery on middle and leg, which Hasan Mahmud tried to hit over the mid-wicket area, but only managed to edge the ball to

hand a diving catch to Muhammad Rizwan behind the wickets.

He celebrated the wicket with a cradling gesture to honour his newborn child.

Earlier, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in a press release said that Afridi was blessed with a baby boy.

"Congratulations from Pakistan team players, management, and PCB," the PCB said in a felicitation message.

Afridi will leave for Karachi after playing the ongoing first Test.

He will rejoin the team before the second Test, scheduled to be played from August 30 to September 3 at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

1st PPL T-20 tournament:

Trials for Rawalpindi's team due on Aug 28

RAWALPINDI (APP): The first-ever Punjab Premier League (PPL) T-20 cricket tournament is scheduled to be held in September in Rawalpindi.

Eight teams from across the Punjab province will be participating in the league which is approved by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Open trials of the players for Rawalpindi's Markhor team will be held on Wednesday, August 28 at Ayub Park Ground.

According to the details, former test cricketers Yasir Shah, Hasan Raza, Junaid Khan, Abdul Rauf, and Naveed Qureshi will supervise the trials of players to

be included in the Markhor (Rawalpindi) team.

Chief Coordinator, Zulfiqar Ali informed APP that open trials would start at 9:00 a.m. at Ayub Park Cricket Ground in which players of all ages can participate. He further informed that besides the test cricketers, Major Nadeem Siddal, women's coach Salim Yousafi, local coach Taimur Azam, Naveed Abbasi, and Asif Bajwa would also be present on the occasion.

"The final team of Rawalpindi will be announced one day after the completion of trials", he said.

The players who wish to participate in the trials have been instructed to come in white kit, get registered at 9 am, and strictly follow the timing of the trials.

It is worth mentioning that all the matches of PCB's approved first-ever Punjab Premier League will be played at Ayub Park Cricket Ground.

Young cricketers of the town have appreciated the decision to hold the PPL T-20 cricket tournament in Rawalpindi. They termed it an encouraging step towards cricket's promotion and a great opportunity for the youth to prove their talent.

Pooran shines as West Indies beat SA in first T20I

BARBADOS (INP): Nicholas Pooran smashed an unbeaten 65 from 26 balls as the West Indies defeated an experimental South Africa side by seven wickets in their T20 international at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy Stadium.

West Indies put the visitors in to bat, in the first of the three-match series, and made a strong start with the bowl.

The Caribbean side limited South Africa to 42-5 from the opening eight overs, with seamer Matthew Forde picking up the wickets of Ryan Rickelton (4) and skipper

Aiden Markram (14).

But Tristan Stubbs led the fightback with a superb 76 from 42 balls including three sixes.

Stubbs was well supported by Patrick Kruger who struck 44 from 32 balls as South Africa recovered to 174-7 from their 20 overs.

The game had been delayed for over an hour by heavy rain but as the game went on conditions for batting improved and the home side took full advantage.

West Indies went on the attack from the outset with the opening pair of Alick Athanaze (40) and Shai

Hope (51) putting on 84 from the opening wicket before Athinaze was removed in the eighth over, caught by keeper Markram off Otneel Baartman.

Pooran then took the game away from the Proteas with a brilliant display of power hitting, including smashing Burger for four sixes in a row in the 12th over.

Although South Africa gave themselves some chance with the removal of Hope and skipper Rozman Powell (7) the outcome was never in doubt as the home side passed the target with 13 balls to spare.



RAWALPINDI: Bangladesh cricket team's supporters waves flag of Bangladesh during fourth day of 1st Test Cricket Match at Pindi Cricket Stadium.

Warner shines as Trailblazers stun leaders Tigers

PERTH (INP): David Warner's quickfire 34-run knock powered Boca Raton Trailblazers to a convincing seven-wicket victory over leaders Caribbean Tigers in the 18th match of the Max60 Caribbean.

Tigers' captain George Munsey's decision to bat first did not prove beneficial for the home side as they could accumulate 75/7 in the allotted 10 overs despite Ashley Nurse's unbeaten 30-run knock.

The home side had a dismal start for their innings as they were reduced to 26/3 in 3.1 overs. Coming out to

bat at No.5, Nurse took the reigns of the Tigers' batting charge with a sensible knock.

The right-handed batter waged a lone battle for the home side and returned unbeaten. His gutsy 23-ball 30 featured two fours and a six. Peter Hatzoglou was the pick of the bowlers for the Trailblazers with two wickets, followed by Steven McGiffin, Jack Jarvis, Beau Webster and Colin de Grandhome, who picked one apiece.

Follow us on our Official WhatsApp channel In response, the Trailbl-

azers comfortably chased down the 76-run target for the loss of just three wickets and seven balls to spare, courtesy of a solid start provided by their openers David Warner and Beau Webster. The opening pair brought up 36 runs before Webster perished in the fourth over after scoring 18 off 13 balls with the help of one four and a six.

Warner then recorded a one-sided 23-run partnership with Hatzoglou, who fell victim to Brad Currie in the sixth over.

The Trailblazers captain finally perished in the

eighth over after putting his side in touching distance.

Warner remained the top-scorer for the Trailblazers with a 20-ball 34, laced up with two fours and a six. Following his departure, Jack Wood and de Grandhome batted sensibly to take the Trailblazers over the line.

The seven-wicket victory lifted Boca Raton Trailblazers to the third in the Max60 Caribbean standings with five points in seven matches while Caribbean Tigers remained at the top with 14 points in eight matches.

MLB roundup: Shohei Ohtani hits walk-off slam for 40-40 mark

CALIFORNIA (Reuters): Rays left-hander Colin Poche for his 40th homer. He joined Jose Canseco, Barry Bonds, Alex Rodriguez, Alfonso Soriano and Ronald Acuna Jr. in the 40-40 club.

Enrique Hernandez hit a game-tying home run in the fifth inning, and right-hander Bobby Miller had nine strikeouts and no

walks over six innings as the Dodgers extended their winning streak to five games. Michael Kopech (4-8) pitched a scoreless top of the ninth for the win.

Junior Caminero hit his first home run of the season and Christopher Morel also went deep as the Rays lost their second consecu-

tive game and fell to 2-3 to open a 10-game West Coast road trip. Manuel Rodriguez (2-3) took the loss.

Yankees 3, Rockies 0 Aaron Judge blasted his major league-leading 49th home run, connecting for the fourth straight game as host New York beat Colorado.



In brief

2 one-wheelers died

RAWALPINDI (INP): Two motorcycle rider youth died in road accident while doing one-wheeling on Murree road Rawalpindi on Saturday. According to details, the one-wheelers hailing from Khyber-e-Sirsyed while racing with each other lost control. As a result, 15-year-old Zain died after his bike hit footpath while 20-year-old Usm-an died after crushed by dumper. The bodies were shifted to hospital where they were handed over to heirs after legal formalities.

Crackdown continued

ISLAMABAD (INP): Relevant government agencies are continuing their crackdown against smuggling. During a period between 11 and 18 August, 12.15 metric tons of sugar, 1102.7 metric tons fertilizer, 281.96 metric tons flour, 4051 cigarette stocks, 166 cloth bags and 0.55 million liters of Iranian oil were recovered from across the country.

Robber gang busted

ISLAMABAD (INP): The police Saturday busted a two-member notorious robber gang active in Bahri Town and surrounding areas. According to details, the Lohi Bher police team headed by SHO Lohi Bher and head constable Samiullah using modern technology and investigative techniques launched successful operation against the criminals. During operation, two members of Shani Kiani gang including the gangster were apprehended with weapons, cash and cell phones. The civil society has highly appreciated the Lohi Bher Police for its tire efforts to ensure the safety and security of the residents in Bahria Town and the surrounding areas.

Negligence of lady doctor

RAWALPINDI (INP): Negligence of lady doctor claimed life of a newborn girl at Holy Family Hospital in Rawalpindi. According to details, a girl born at Holy Family two days earlier fell down from hands of female doctor resulting in her instant death. The doctors of hospital pressurized the parents to resolve the issue silently without bringing into notice of anyone. However, heirs of the deceased girl sitting aside pressure of medics protested and demanded the administration for action against the lady doctor concerned.

ANF seizes 129 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) seized 129 kilogram drugs and arrests six drug pushers in six operations conducted in various cities across country. A spokesman of ANF said on Saturday that these operations were in Karachi, Hyderabad and Rawalpindi. He said that during separate actions 129 kg drugs including 114.1 kg hashish and 14.5 kg Ice (crystal meth) were size. Separate cases against detainees were registered under Drug Act and further investigations were underway.

Jamshed remembered

ISLAMABAD (INP): The legendary radio, TV, and film artist and iconic performer Jamshed Ansari was remembered on his 19th death anniversary on Saturday. Born on December 31, 1942, in the Saharanpur city of Uttar Pradesh in British India, Jamshed Ansar at the age of six year migrated to Pakistan along with his family.

Chehlum processions: Foolproof security plan finalized

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have finalized foolproof security arrangements for Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) here on Saturday.

More than 4600 police officers and jawans will perform their duties while 215 traffic wardens will be deployed to maintain traffic flow. The police spokesman said that a control room would be set up in the office of the City Police Officer in Rawalpindi to ensure the implementation of the security plan.

He further informed that CCTV cameras were installed to monitor the processions. Walk-through gates would be installed at the entry points of the processions, he said adding that the participants would be allowed to join the procession after a full body search.

Under the security arrangements, no one will be allowed to stand on the rooftops of commercial and residential buildings

situated along the procession routes. Snipers will also be deployed for the security of the main procession, he said.

City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani informed that searching and sweeping of the procession route would be carried out and streets, roads, diversion points, and other routes along the main procession route would be sealed.

All available resources are being utilized to ensure foolproof security for Chehlum e Imam Hussain (RA), he added.

Police arrest six drug dealers, seized large quantities of drugs

Police have arrested six drug dealers and recovered a significant amount of drugs during the operation.

According to a police spokesman, Saddar Wah police held Nawaz and confiscated 1.6 kg of drugs from his possession. Similarly, Westridge police netted Faheem and recovered 1.3 kg of drugs from

his custody.

In another case, Sadiqabad police arrested Umair and recovered 1.3 kg of drugs from his possession.

Rawat police also found 1.4 kg of drugs from Nauman Barkat.

Following the operation, R.A Bazaar police arrested Moineuddin and found 580 grams of charas from his possession, while the Race Course police recovered 520 grams of charas from Parvez.

Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress.

City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani assured that legal action would be taken to ensure these suspects face justice. “We are committed to fighting against drugs and protecting our society from this threat,” he said.

He emphasized that the police will continue to take strict action against drug dealers to get rid of the city from menace.

Govt invites applications for stipend awards

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government has invited applications for Stipend awards to the Children of Federal Government Employees for the Year 2024-25.

According to the notification issued by the Establishment Division, applications on the prescribed form are invited for Stipend awards to the children of serving, retired, and families of deceased federal government employees studying in various government educational institutions for the financial year 2024-25.

The Children of the employees of Pakistan Post Office, Pak Telecom Company Limited, Pakistan Railways, NADRA, MES, and Autonomous/semi-

autonomous bodies.

Banks and Corporations and those paid out of defense estimates are not eligible.

The stipend will be awarded as detailed below:

Basic pay scale, BPS 1 to 22, Class of entitlement from 5th class to onward, and cost of from Rs5-10.

Cash awards for the children of federal government employees who have completed Hifz-e-Quran-e-Pak during the year 2023-24 up to the age of 20 years on 31-10-2024duly certified by the Auaq department (Distt Khateeb).

Cash awards to the children of federal government employees who have obtained 80% or more marks in the last year's Board/University's final

examination in Matric, F.A/F.Sc

The prescribed application form along with detailed conditions of eligibility can be obtained from the following regional offices of the staff welfare organization and submitted up to 31-10-2024.

Interested candidates could contact with Chief Welfare offices in five regional offices including Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta.

The last date for the receipt of application forms (duly completed in all respects) in the regional offices concerned is 31-10-2024. Incomplete forms and those received after the due date will not be considered.

Mental health experts call for regulatory body — to curb malpractices

ISLAMABAD (APP): Head of the Psychology Department at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), has called for the establishment of a regulatory body for psychologists which could register practitioners, set rules, and provide an ethical foundation for the profession.

Talking to APP on Saturday, Dr. Ulfat pointed out that there are regulatory bodies such as the Nursing Council, Tib Council and Homeopathic Council but surprisingly, there is no council or regulatory body for psychologists, despite mental health being a pressing global concern. “There is no forum where a patient can file a complaint when things go wrong”, she added.

She highlighted the growing number of unqualified individuals entering the counseling field, portraying themselves as life coaches, gurus, or motivational speakers despite lacking proper psychological training. She expressed concern that some non-professionals are even prescribing mental health medications which is a task reserved for psychiatrists.

Dr. Ulfat warned that young female psychologists might be unaware of the dangers posed by certain clients who exploit them for inappropriate conversations. Less experienced professionals, she added, are often unable to recognize these situations.

She expressed concern that students with limited knowledge often enter the field of counseling, struggling to manage complex and chronic cases. She noted that while online healthcare platforms were a blessing during the COVID-19 pandemic,

some unqualified psychologists exploited these platforms for financial gain.

Talking to APP, Director of Psychaffinity, Kiran Aamir stressed the urgent need for mental health laws in Pakistan. She highlighted the mistreatment of addicts at some rehabilitation centers and called for the establishment of Psychiatric Community Centers similar to those in developed countries.

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Pakistan's education system: Report reveals major concerns

ISLAMABAD (INP): The latest official report from Pakistan's Planning Commission has revealed a concerning state of the country's education system. The District Education Performance Index Report 2023 showed that all 134 districts in Pakistan, except for the capital Islamabad, are lagging behind on critical education indicators.

These range from poor learning outcomes for students to inadequate public financing for education.

The report highlighted that a human resource crisis in Pakistan, where many young people are entering the job market with little to no education. This crisis is seen as even more severe than the economic challenges the country faces.

The report found some regional disparities in education performance. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province outperformed Punjab in terms of education governance and management. However, Punjab was

ahead in building education infrastructure. These differing priorities reflect the focus areas of the political parties in power - PTI and PML-N. The District Education Performance Index Report 2023 was launched jointly by the United Kingdom High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, and Pakistan's Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal.

The report painted a bleak picture of Pakistan's education system, with the entire country's map appearing “red” in terms of poor learning outcomes and inadequate public financing for education.

None of Pakistan's 134 districts were found to be high-performing in education. All districts, except Islamabad, were categorized as either “medium” or “low” performers, signifying significant gaps and struggles in their education delivery systems.

The key issues identified include poor governance, extremely poor learning

outcomes for students, and insufficient budget allocation for education. The average score of 53.46 across all districts indicates a severely dysfunctional education system that requires urgent attention and interventions to address the fundamental gaps.

The “medium” scoring districts in the report are facing significant gaps in their education systems, leading to compromised outputs. These districts require serious attention and interventions to improve their education service delivery.

The report also revealed that a staggering 80% of out-of-school children in Pakistan have never even enrolled in school. Additionally, parents have a strong perception of poor quality in the public education system.

According to Rafiullah Kakar, a member of the Planning Commission's Social Sector, the “learning domain index” paints a



ISLAMABAD: Workers busy in work at under construction 10th Avenue flyover.

DG visits one window operation center

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General (DG) Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA) Saif Anwar Jappa here on Saturday visited the One Window Operation Center established in connection with ‘Apni Chhat Apna Ghar’ project in Deputy Commissioner Office.

During the visit, Saif Anwar Jappa reviewed all the administrative matters in detail including the facilities being provided to the citizens and also interacted with the people who came to get information about ‘Apni Chhat Apna Ghar’ project. The DG also inquired from the citizens about the facilities being provided at One Window Operation Center.

Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema gave a detailed briefing to Saif Anwar Jappa.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Hassan Tariq and DD North Punjab Benazir Bhutto Economic Support Program, Chaudhry Saeed Ahmed were also present on the occasion.

The DG said that the housing project is aimed at addressing the housing needs of low-income families.

Under the initiative, low-income people including workers and laborers would be able to own their houses, he added.

Saif Anwar Jappa said that Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif launched ‘Apni Chhat Apna Ghar’ project for poor and deserving citizens.

Under the project, people who are unable to build their own houses despite owning land would be benefited, he added.

In the first phase, interest-free loans would be provided to 70,000 families for the construction of the houses, Saif Anwar Jappa said adding, this loan would be paid back over a period of seven years.

Under the plan, there would be a monthly installment of Rs 14,000 and there would be no installment in the first three months, he said.

The owners of 1 to 5 marla plots in urban areas and 10 marla plots in rural areas would be eligible for the loan, he informed.

CDA chairman reviews progress on Islamabad Expressway Project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa conducted an early morning visit to the Islamabad Expressway project on Saturday to review the construction work.

Accompanied by CDA member engineering and other officers, he inspected the ongoing work on covering, the railway, and Bhandar bridges.

During the visit, Chairman Randhawa was briefed by Frontier Works Organization (FWO) officials

at his camp office, where he was assured that the project would be completed by September 30, despite minor delays caused by monsoon rains. The chairman was informed that over 98% of the work has been completed, with the Cockbridge already opened for traffic and structural work on other bridges finished.

Chairman Randhawa directed that horticulture work on the expressway should be carried out simultaneously to enhance its aesthetic appeal. He

emphasized the importance of completing the project, stating that it would significantly improve traffic flow in the city.

He also stressed the need to adopt a robust operation and maintenance model for future construction and repair work on the expressway.

Later in the day, Chairman Randhawa visited Park Road to review the ongoing carpeting and road structure work. He instructed the officials to expedite the work on Park Road to ensure timely completion.

ISSI hosts book launch

ISLAMABAD (APP): The China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized the launch of the book, ‘China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Beyond 2030, A Green Alliance for Sustainable Development’ edited by Dr Rabia Akhtar and published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

The event was graced by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed as Chief Guest and Xu Hangtian, Minister Counselor at the Embassy of China in Pakistan, as a guest of honour.

Distinguished reviewers included Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi, former Ambassador of Pakistan to China; Dr Salma Malik, Associate Professor Quaid-e-Azam University; and Dr Hassan Daud Butt, former CEO Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment.

In his remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the salience of the all-weather Pakistan-China Strategic Cooperative Partnership in Pakistan's foreign policy and of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor as its central component.

He said, “CPEC, as a flagship project of BRI, connects China's western provinces through Pakistan to the Arabian Sea.”

“The project is transformative for Pakistan, addressing critical issues such as energy shortages and infrastructural deficit, and enhancing regional connectivity. By revitalising trade routes and pro-

moting economic integration, CPEC is envisioned to play a pivotal role in enhancing Pakistan's position as a central gateway to Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.”

He also highlighted the tangible outcomes accruing from CPEC projects since its commencement 11 years ago.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood added, “This book emphasizes CPEC's potential to drive sustainable growth. It highlights how CPEC could be transformed into a green development initiative, aligning with global sustainability goals and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

“By integrating green technologies and sustainable practices, CPEC is positioned not only to advance economic growth but also to lead in environmental stewardship. This approach reflected a strategic effort to balance economic benefits with environmental sustainability, ensuring that CPEC contributes positively to the region's long-term development. In this context, with its actionable recommendations, the book can serve as a coherent roadmap to advance these objectives.”

Felix Kolbitz, Country Director FES, expressed gratitude to the editor and authors of the volume and appreciated the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad for their support and collaboration.

He expressed the hope

that the book would spark new ideas, encourage further research, and contribute meaningfully to the discourse on sustainable development under the framework of CPEC and beyond.

Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi stated, “It was difficult to come across an economic or connectivity project anywhere in recent times that evokes so many emotions and debates. In many ways, this was a function of the growing geo-political and geo-strategic tensions among major powers, where BRI and its related projects were also being targeted. Using a Chinese leader's dictum, she stressed the expression of “seeking truth from facts.”

“The book does that by presenting a counter-narrative in support of the BRI and CPEC. The book not only discusses the challenges but also presents solutions in the long-term,” she argued.

Dr Salma Malik noted, “The book delves into the political, geostrategic, and environmental aspects of CPEC. It advocates for “Green CPEC” as part of CPEC 2.0 and emphasizes sustainable development by aligning projects with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN guidelines.”

Dr. Hassan Daud Butt focused on how one of the main aspects of CPEC had been the development of environmentally sustainable Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

The report found that none of the 134 districts in Pakistan fall within the “very high performance” category for education. The only exception is Islamabad, which is classified as the sole “high-performing” district, making it an outlier in the country.

A majority of the districts, 56 in total, fall into the “medium” category, with Punjab leading with 32 such districts, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 16, and Sindh with 8.

Alarmingly, more than half of Pakistan's districts, 77 in total, fall into the “low performance” category. These low-performing districts are predominantly located in Balochistan and Sindh, with 33 and 22 districts respectively. This highlights the substantial inter-provincial disparities, with all districts in Balochistan falling into the low education performance category, indicating severe challenges across the province.

Rina against ties with IEA

KABUL (Ariana News): Rina Amiri, US Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls and Human Rights on Saturday called on the international community not to normalize relations with IEA unless there is a profound improvement in their human rights conduct. Amiri made the remarks on X while criticizing the IEA's ban against UN Special Rapporteur Richard Bennet visiting Afghanistan and the recent ratification of the law on the propagation of virtue and prevention of vice.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

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Work on TAPI starts soon

KABUL (TOLONews): Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, during a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan said that the practical work on the TAPI project would soon commence. Muttaqi and Rashid Meredov, the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, visited the TAPI gas pipeline at the border between the two countries. Officials from both countries also attended this visit at the Torghundi port in Herat province.

Surge in int’l flights over Afghanistan amid mideast conflicts

KABUL (TOLONews): Singapore Airlines and British Airways have increased their flights over Afghanistan's airspace due to the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

The report states that in the second week of this month, the number of flights passing through Afghanistan's airspace was more than seven times higher compared to the same period last year.

Shakir Yaqubi, an economic expert, said: "The resumption of flights can, on the one hand, increase confidence in Afghanistan's airspace and, on the other hand, boost the revenues earned from aviation. Additionally, Afghanistan can be seen as an alterna-

tive route to the Middle East, providing an opportunity for airlines that cannot pass through Middle Eastern airspace to benefit from this relatively advantageous route."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment noted that the increase in flights through Afghan airspace will also boost the country's income.

Khanjan Alokozai, a member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, stated: "The Islamic Emirate must work to gain the world's trust regarding air and ground security, which is in Afghanistan's best interest. The increased use of Afghan airspace not only generates significant

revenue but is also important for transit."

The Ministry of Transport and Aviation assures that all necessary facilities have been provided to accommodate the increase in flights over the country's airspace.

Imamuddin Ahmadi, the spokesman for the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, said: "Afghanistan's airspace is fully prepared. Since the victory, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has actively resumed flights, and thankfully, there have been no problems."

In the past year, international airlines such as Turkish Airlines, Air Arabia, and Flydubai have also resumed their flights to Afghanistan.

Trade challenges at Torkham crossing affect exports

A number of fresh fruit and vegetable traders, in a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, have reported facing challenges in trade through the Torkham crossing.

According to the Presidential Palace, in the meeting, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Political Deputy of the Prime Minister, pledged that he would address the traders' challenges at the Torkham crossing.

It has been more than two months since Pakistan increased tariffs on Afghanistan's fresh fruit and vegetables, and during this period, exports to Pakistan have significantly decreased.

Although Islamabad is considered one of Afghanistan's major trading partners, and the largest share of Afghanistan's exports goes to Pakistan, occasional challenges at the border crossings and increased tariffs have negatively impacted exports.

Mohammad Aslam, a trader, said: "The customs duty is very high, we can't make it there, we incur losses; it's not profitable here, and if we don't sell at a lower price, the goods will spoil."

Another trader, Nematullah Rahmati, said: "The governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan should sit down and talk about this issue because if the routes remain blocked like this, our goods will spoil."

The Afghanistan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said that due to the tariff increase by Pakistan, exports to that country have significantly decreased.

Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the board of directors of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: "Tariffs on one of our goods have increased by several hundred percent, and this doesn't benefit our traders and farmers. Almost 75 to 80 percent of our trade with Pakistan has decreased."

Based on information from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, around two billion dollars of trade is conducted annually with Pakistan, of which nearly one billion dollars are exports.

Bayat helps affected families

JALALABAD (Ariana News): Bayat Foundation has distributed food aid packages to families affected by the recent storm and flood in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

The foundation officials said these packages include flour, rice and oil, which have been distributed to the vulnerable families based on a transparent survey.

"In continuation of Bayat Foundation's assistance, which has always reached its people, today we fortunately came to Surkh Rod district of Nangarhar to distribute some food items including flour, oil and rice to the vulnerable families," said Mohammad Ismail, deputy head of Bayat Foundation.

"We provide our help to our people anytime and anywhere," he added.

Meanwhile, the local officials expressed their gratitude for the Bayat Foundation's assistance.

"Distribution of these aid packages is continuing based on a transparent process. We thank Bayat Foundation," said a local official.

Ministry engages investors for projects



KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Energy and Water, Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor, met with representatives from GSP and Aklatash companies to discuss potential investments in Afghanistan's energy sector.

During the meeting, the companies expressed their interest in investing in projects aimed at generating 900 megawatts of electrici-

ty from solar, wind, and hydropower sources across Afghanistan.

They also highlighted their commitment to expanding the country's electricity transmission infrastructure and cooperating with the Ministry on updating and developing the energy sector's master plan.

Meanwhile, Mullah Mansoor welcomed the companies' investment interest and

assured them of the Ministry's full cooperation in facilitating the necessary conditions for these projects.

He stressed the importance of accelerating coordination to advance these initiatives, noting that Afghanistan possesses ample resources for electricity generation, which would benefit both investors and the Afghan people.

Jahan Nama Palace at risk of ‘collapse’



SAMANGAN (TOLONews): The Jahan Nama or Jahan Ara Palace in the Khulm district of Samangan province is at risk of collapse, locals say.

Some local residents and visitors said they consider this palace to be one of the most beautiful historical sites in the country and are calling on officials to restore it.

Mohammad Ishaq, a resident of Samangan, said: "This is a very beautiful garden, and many tourists come to see it. We request that the Islamic Emirate come and inspect the condition of this garden closely and pay attention to its restoration because people from all provinces come to

visit it."

Hasibullah, a resident of Balkh province, said: "This garden is at risk of destruction and decay. Our request to the Islamic Emirate is that this garden should be restored."

Abdul Rasool, a resident of Mazar-e-Sharif city, said: "This garden needs some maintenance and restoration. I ask the government to address this issue." The Samangan Department of Information and Culture said efforts are underway to restore this historical site.

Ferozuddin Munib, the head of Samangan's Department of Information and Culture, told TOLONews: "Some time ago, I request-

ed technical engineers from the Ministry of Information and Culture. They said with us for about 22 days and worked in the Jahan Nama garden. They completed the assessment and tried to restore it to its original standards."

Throughout history, the Jahan Nama garden and palace have been used as a state guest house, a dormitory for students, and even offices for government departments and institutions. However, after 2004, when the palace was handed over to the Ministry of Information and Culture, it became a tourist attraction, and a large number of citizens visit it daily.

logical sites of this province.

Atiqullah Safi, the head of culture and tourism at the Directorate of Information and Culture of Parwan, said: "The Directorate of Information and Culture of Parwan has registered 89 historical and archaeological sites, which has increased from 69 to 89 with the arrival of the Islamic Emirate. We have also discovered new areas."

Several Parwan residents are urging officials to properly preserve the historical and archaeo-

logical sites of this province. Hekmatullah Mirzada, a university professor, said: "Historical artifacts and monuments in any place and in any country form valuable symbols of civilization. Therefore, the existence of historical artifacts in Parwan highlights the ancient and historical significance of this province."

Hanif Ahmadi, a resident of Parwan, said: "It is the government's duty to work on preserving

historical monuments."

Abdul Mahfouz, another resident of Parwan, said, "Currently, the historical monuments in Afghanistan are being destroyed due to natural events, such as rain and earthquakes, and the government must prevent this."

The Stupa-e-Top Dara in the suburbs of Charikar city and the royal palace of Jabal Saraj are among the most famous historical sites in Parwan province.

Qatar’s new Charge d’Affaires committed to expanding relations: Mol



KABUL (TOLONews): Mirdef Alqashouti, the new Chargé d’Affaires of Qatar for Afghanistan, emphasized the importance of strengthening, and continuing, cooperation between Kabul and Doha, during a meeting with the acting Minister of Interior.

The Ministry of Interior reported that during the meeting, Khalifa Sirajuddin Haqqani described Alqashouti's visit as significant for both countries and praised the relations between Kabul and Doha.

According to Abdul Mateen Qani, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, Mirdef Alqashouti also committed to expanding bilateral relations and cooperation during the meeting.

Qani stated, "In this session, Khalifa Sahib congratulated Dr. Mirdef Alqashouti on his appointment as Charge d’Affaires and said his arrival is important for both countries. He praised the historical ties between Qatar and Afghanistan and pledged

further cooperation."

Nasir Shafiq, a university professor, remarked: "Qatar is one of the important countries in the region and has a good history with the Islamic Emirate. The Doha conference and negotiations have led the Islamic Emirate to pay attention to them, and Qatar has also paid attention to the Islamic Emirate."

Some political analysts believe that strengthening relations between the Islamic Emirate and Qatar can also positively influ-

ence the Islamic Emirate's engagement with the world.

Sayed Mansoor Ansari, a political analyst, stated, "We believe that Qatar can play a good role, not only in political matters, security, and peace in Afghanistan, but also in the country's development and sustainable security."

In the past three years, although the Islamic Emirate has not been officially recognized by any country, it has managed to activate 40 diplomatic missions in various countries.

Justice Minister engages Turkish delegation on justice system

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Justice emphasized the importance of implementing justice during a meeting with a delegation of Turkish scholars. He stated that the Islamic Emirate is prepared to leverage Turkey's experiences and scholars to enhance its justice system.

According to a news release from the Ministry of Justice, Mawlawi Abdul Hakim Sharaei, the Acting Minister of Justice of the Islamic Emirate, met with the Turkish delegation led by Salim Ergün, Deputy Director of Religious Affairs, along with heads of religious organizations and university professors from Turkey.

During the meeting, the Acting Minister discussed the shared religious and cultural ties between the two countries. He noted



that Hanafi jurisprudence represents a common ground which influences all aspects, including politics, economics, human rights, and governance.

Moreover, he elaborated on the legislative process in Afghanistan and the implementation of justice, emphasizing that Afghan

laws are derived from the Quran, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and authoritative Hanafi jurisprudence sources. He added that the Ministry of Justice is working diligently in this regard.

Additionally, the Acting Minister reiterated the commitment to implementing justice and expressed that the

Islamic Emirate is ready to utilize Turkey's experiences and scholars in this effort.

Furthermore, the head and members of the Turkish delegation expressed their readiness to cooperate and share legal experiences and strategies for implementing justice with relevant institutions in Afghanistan.

Shoe manufacturers in Kunduz concerned by declining business

KUNDUZ (TOLONews): Several shoe manufacturers in Kunduz say they are worried about the decline in their business.

They say that due to the lack of a sales market, the high cost of raw materials, and the import of shoes from abroad, their production has decreased.

Mohammad Khalid, who has been engaged in shoemaking in a corner of Kabul city for the past 10 years, said that recently their business has slowed down.

Mohammad Khalid told TOLONews: "We ask the government to establish a raw materials factory in Afghanistan so that we can obtain cheaper materials

and offer our products to our fellow citizens at a reasonable price."

Noorullah Waziri, an industry worker, said: "They should raise the taxes on shoes and sandals that come from outside the country so that we can advance our work and progress, and also create facilities for us in the field of raw materials."

Another industry worker, Mohammad, said: "Leather is sent from here to Pakistan, where it is

turned into leather and brought back to us at a high cost. This facility should be established within our own country so that everything can be produced for us here."

However, local officials in Kunduz pledged their support for the work and activities of domestic producers and industry workers in the province.

Mohammad Rahim Seerat, head of Kunduz's Industry and Commerce, said: "We have various pro-

grams to cooperate with them, including discounts on electricity bills, and we are considering providing facilities in the supply of raw materials and marketing."

The shoemaking industry or shoe production in various parts of the country has a long history, and domestic shoe producers are urging citizens to use their products in order to promote domestic industry and improve the country's economic situation.



20 historical, archeological sites registered

KABUL (TOLONews): The Directorate of Information and Culture of Parwan has announced the identification and registration of 20 historical sites and artifacts in this province over the past year.

According to the directorate, the number of domestic and foreign visitors to the historical sites of this province has also increased.

Officials said that previously 69 historical sites were identified in Parwan province.

Atiqullah Safi, the head of culture and tourism at the Directorate of Information and Culture of Parwan, said: "The Directorate of Information and Culture of Parwan has registered 89 historical and archaeological sites, which has increased from 69 to 89 with the arrival of the Islamic Emirate. We have also discovered new areas."

Several Parwan residents are urging officials to properly preserve the historical and archaeo-

logical sites of this province. Hekmatullah Mirzada, a university professor, said: "Historical artifacts and monuments in any place and in any country form valuable symbols of civilization. Therefore, the existence of historical artifacts in Parwan highlights the ancient and historical significance of this province."

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The Stupa-e-Top Dara in the suburbs of Charikar city and the royal palace of Jabal Saraj are among the most famous historical sites in Parwan province.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari along with Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has reached the residence of JUI-F Chief, Maulana Fazlur Rahman's residence.

Top Indian lawyers raise alarm over Delhi’s mily exports to Israel

NEW DELHI: Top lawyers are sounding the alarm over the consequences of Indian arms exports to Israel, which they say violate international conventions and the country’s own domestic law in the wake of the war on Gaza. Indian arms sales to Israel came into the spotlight in May, when two cargo ships were prevented from docking in the Spanish port of Cartagena after reports that they were loaded with weapons.

The first vessel was en route from Chennai in southeast India to the Israeli port of Ashdod — some 30 km from Gaza — and was blocked by Spanish activists. The second was on the way from Chennai to Haifa, and was officially denied entry, with Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares confirming to the media that the vessel was carrying a shipment of arms to Israel. In June, after Israel’s deadly bombing of a UN-run school sheltering thousands of displaced people in central Gaza, Palestinian reporters released a video showing the remains of a missile found in the rubble after the attack. A label on it read: “Made in India.”

The reports have triggered an uproar among Indian civil society and opposition politicians, who have requested clarification from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of External Affairs over the military cooperation in the wake of Israel’s deadly onslaught on Gaza and a genocide case against the country in the International Court of Justice. A recent petition signed by Supreme Court lawyers, judges and retired foreign service officials called on Defense Minister Rajnath Singh to halt the issuance of licenses to companies supplying military equipment to Israel and cancel the existing ones, as the exports are not only “morally objectionable” and “abominable,” but also constitute a “serious violation” of law.

“It’s very clear that genocide is being committed in Palestine by Israel; the International Court of Justice has virtually said so,” Prashant Bhushan, a public interest lawyer in the Supreme Court of India, told Arab News. “India is clearly aiding that genocide.” A Ministry of

Defense spokesperson told Arab News on Saturday that “it is the Indian government’s policy not to sell weapons to countries in conflict” and that the government “has not authorized the supply of any weapons to Israel during the last several months.”

The spokesperson did not comment on canceling existing licenses. At least 40,334 people — most of them children and women — have been killed and more than 93,300 wounded in Israeli military attacks on Gaza since Oct. 7, according to the Palestinian enclave’s Health Ministry estimates. The real toll, however, is believed to be much higher as the ministry’s data does not include people buried under rubble, those who died of their injuries or who starved to death, as Israeli forces have been blocking international aid. One of the world’s leading medical journals, the Lancet, estimated last month that the actual death toll of Palestinians killed in Gaza could exceed 186,000 — or almost 10 percent of the territory’s population.

The substantial evidence of Israel breaking international humanitarian law, the genocide and war crime proceedings against its leadership in the ICJ and International Criminal Court, as well as a new case brought by Nicaragua against Germany over its support for Tel Aviv, create legal circumstances in which India can be charged with violating its own constitution and international law. Dr. Anwar Sadat of the Indian Society of International Law said that the violations are on “several” levels, starting with international humanitarian law.

“Israel is targeting civilian population consistently. Israel is targeting hospitals, Israel is targeting supply lines, Israel is targeting the supply of humanitarian assistance to Palestinian people,” he told Arab News. “Israel is in serious violation of international humanitarian law, so you cannot support and supply, or in any way assist it.” Sadat said that by providing military assistance to Israel, India also risks being charged with breaching the Genocide Convention and may face a similar case to the one recently initiated against Germany. Genocide and

ancillary crimes of genocide, such as complicity, are subject to universal jurisdiction.

In late March, Nicaragua instituted proceedings against Germany at the ICJ under, inter alia, the Genocide Convention, concerning “alleged breaches of certain international obligations in respect of the Occupied Palestinian Territory” arising from Germany’s support and military supplies for Israel. “If you are a party to this convention, and India is a party to the Genocide Convention, you have international legal responsibility to prevent the commission of genocide,” Sadat said.

“Any breach of international legal obligations requires reparations, compensation.” India would not be able to absolve itself, as it is not safeguarding any essential interests by breaching the law. “There is no such situation before India,” Sadat said. “Not providing the arms to Israel does not make India unsafe in any way, so it has no plea of necessity.” Advocate Chander Uday Singh, a Supreme Court lawyer who was also among the petitioners demanding that India immediately stop all exports of military material to Israel, warned that India is also acting against its own domestic law.

Article 51C of the Indian Constitution says that is the state’s duty to “foster respect for international law and treaty obligations.” This includes the Genocide Convention, of which provisions are directly binding for India also on the domestic level, as it has not framed its own. “India was the signatory to the Genocide Convention in 1949 and then thereafter it has ratified the convention in 1959, so under international law we are completely bound by the Genocide Convention, meaning we are contracting party to it,” Singh said. “The Genocide Convention also requires contracting parties to frame national laws and give effect to the convention within the country ... the fact that we have not framed the domestic law means that that the convention itself can be looked at, and the principles of the convention can be applied by Indian courts.” — Arab News

Russia, Ukraine swap 115 prisoners each

DUBAI/MOSCOW/KYIV (Reuters): Russia and Ukraine exchanged 115 prisoners of war from each side on Saturday after the United Arab Emirates acted as an intermediary. It is the first such exchange since Ukraine launched a surprise attack into Russia’s Kursk region on Aug. 6, the biggest attack inside Russian territory by a foreign power since World War Two. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the Russian servicemen swapped were captured in the Kursk region.

All released Russian soldiers are now in Belarus and will receive medical treatment and rehabilitation upon their return to Russia. The ministry expressed gratitude for the UAE’s role in facilitating the prisoner swap. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted a picture with Ukrainian POWs wrapped in the country’s blue and yellow flags and hugging each other. He said that the returned were servicemen from the border guards, the national guard, navy and the armed forces.

Zelenskyy expressed gratitude to the Ukrainian troops who helped replenish the pool of prisoners for exchange. Kyiv has said it has carved out a buffer zone in an area that Russia, which sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022, has used to pound targets in Ukraine.

According to Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine’s commissioner for human rights, 82 of the returned Ukrainians defended the port of Mariupol in 2022. Confirming its role in facilitating the exchange, the UAE foreign ministry said that the total number of captives exchanged through its mediation efforts now stood at 1,788.

It is the seventh such exchange the UAE has mediated since Russia invaded Ukraine. An Emirati official earlier told Reuters that Russia and Ukraine were to swap prisoners following mediation by the Gulf state. Abu Dhabi, a close security partner of the United States, has maintained warm relations with Moscow throughout the war, frustrating some Western officials. It has also strengthened ties with Kyiv. UAE officials say their ability to talk to a range of international actors means that they can effectively mediate between parties and promote cooperation and security.

Meanwhile, Russia wanted to “destroy”

Ukraine but war has “returned to its home”, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says in an independence day video address filmed in the border area from where Kyiv launched its surprise incursion into Kursk. Ukraine was on Saturday celebrating its 33rd independence day from the Soviet Union amid the protracted war, with Ukrainian forces entering Russia’s Kursk region and Moscow making gains in more eastern Ukrainian areas. Zelenskyy posted a video on Saturday from a deserted, forested area in the Sumy region, which he visited this week, saying it was a “few kilometres” from where Ukrainian forces crossed into Russia on August 6.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine “surprises once again” and promised that Russia will “know what retribution is”. By launching its 2022 invasion, he said “Russia was seeking one thing: to destroy us”, adding that “what the enemy brought to our land has now returned to his home”. “Anyone who wants to sow evil on our land will reap its fruit on their territory,” Zelenskyy said. “This is not a prediction, not gloating, not blind revenge. It is justice.” The offensive in Kursk in the most significant cross-border attack since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022. Since August 6, Ukrainian forces have reportedly occupied dozens of villages on more than 1,000 square kilometres (386 square miles) and captured Russian servicemen. Zelenskyy called Russian President Vladimir Putin a “sick old man from Red Square who constantly threatens everyone with the red button”. The Red Square in Moscow is also where Russia holds its annual massive military parade, attended by Putin and other top political and military officials.

While the Kursk incursion has rattled Moscow it has not slowed Russia’s advance in eastern Ukraine. Reporting from Kyiv, Al Jazeera’s Alex Gatopoulos said that celebrations in the capital were muted and large crowds were discouraged, unlike in previous years when captured Russian equipment was paraded. “The worry is that there would be massive Russian drone or missile attack; this has been expected over the past day,” he said. “The capital’s air defences are on extra high alert to make sure they can cope with any potential influx.

BISP providing financial support to poor families: Rubina F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Saturday said that the BISP is providing additional financial support to alleviate the economic difficulties of poor families.

She stated that the program reflects the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to economically empower the women of Pakistan, a vision she championed even during her exile in Dubai. Thanks to this program, the most vulnerable women in the country have gained recognition and support, she said.

Senator Rubina Khalid expressed these views during her speech at the women’s Khuli Katcheri in Azakhil Bala, Nowshera, said a news release. She urged the women to visit the BISP offices to collect their payments only after receiving a confirmation message from 8171. Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted the importance of having essential documents such as the Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) issued by NADRA and the Form B for children to enroll in the program.

In the event of any deductions, she advised contacting the BISP helpline at 0800-26477 or visiting the nearest BISP tehsil office. She further mentioned that BISP provides educational scholarships to the children of deserving families under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Programme, with a special focus on scholarships for girls. Additionally, a unique skill development program is being launched to enhance the socio-economic status of deserving women and their family members.

Later, Senator Rubina Khalid visited Tehsil Katlang in Mardan, where she addressed a public gathering. She shared that, as per the instructions of President Asif Ali Zardari, the scope of the BISP is being expanded to include more deserving households.

Gaza talks resume in Cairo

UN warns of worsening humanitarian conditions

CAIRO/JERUSALEM (Reuters): Gaza ceasefire and hostage negotiators discussed new compromise proposals in Cairo on Saturday, seeking to bridge gaps between Israel and Hamas as the UN reported worsening humanitarian conditions, with malnutrition soaring and polio discovered.

Israeli military strikes in Gaza killed 50 people on Saturday, Palestinian health authorities said. Victims of hostilities over the past 48 hours remain lying on roads where fighting continues or trapped under rubble, the authorities said.

A Hamas delegation arrived on Saturday to be nearer at hand to review any proposals that emerge in the main talks between Israel and the mediating countries Egypt, Qatar and the United States, two Egyptian security sources said. Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani was expected to attend.

Months of on-off talks have so far failed to produce a breakthrough to end Israel’s devastating military campaign in Gaza or free the remaining hostages seized by Hamas in the militant group’s Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war. The Egyptian sources said the new proposals include compromises on outstanding points such as how to secure key areas and the return of people to north Gaza.

However there was no sign of any breakthrough on key sticking points, including Israel’s insistence that it must retain control of the so-called Philadelphi Corridor, on the border between Gaza and Egypt.

Hamas has accused Israel of going back on things it had previously agreed to in the talks, which Israel denies. The group says the United States is not mediating in good faith.

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has locked horns with Israeli ceasefire negotiators over whether Israeli troops must remain all along the border between Gaza and Egypt, a person with knowledge of the talks said. A Palestinian official familiar with mediation efforts said it was too soon to predict the outcome of talks. “Hamas is there to discuss the outcome of the mediators’ talks with the Israeli officials and whether there is enough to suggest a change in the Netanyahu stance about reaching a deal,” the official said.

Continuing the war will worsen the plight of Gaza’s 2.3 million people, nearly all of them homeless in tents or shelters among the ruins, with malnutrition rampant and disease spreading, and risk the lives of remaining Israeli hostages. The Oct. 7 attack killed 1,200 people according to Israeli tallies. Israel’s Gaza campaign has killed more than 40,000 people, Palestinian health authorities say.

UN humanitarian agency OCHA said in a Friday update that the amount of food aid entering Gaza in July was one of the lowest since October, when Israeli imposed a full siege. OCHA said that in July the number of children with acute malnutrition in northern Gaza was four times higher than in May, while in the more accessible south, where fighting is less severe, the number more than doubled.

US general makes unannounced Mideast trip

AMMAN (AFP): The top US general began an unannounced visit to the Middle East on Saturday to discuss ways to avoid any new escalation in tensions that could spiral into a broader conflict, as the region braces for a threatened Iranian attack against Israel.

Air Force General C.Q. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, began his trip in Jordan and said he will also travel to Egypt and Israel in the coming days to hear the perspectives of military leaders. His visit comes as the United States is trying to clinch an elusive Gaza ceasefire-for-hostages deal between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas, which Brown said would “help bring down the temperature,” if achieved.

“At the same time, as I talk to my counterparts, what are the things we can do to deter any type of broader escalation and ensure we’re taking all the appropriate steps to (avoid) ... a broader conflict,” Brown told Reuters before landing in Jordan. US President Joe Biden’s administration has been seeking to limit the fallout from the war in Gaza between Hamas and Israel, now in its 11th month. The conflict has leveled huge swathes of Gaza, triggered border clashes between Israel and Lebanon’s Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement and sparked attacks by Houthis on Red Sea shipping.

Meanwhile, US troops have been attacked by Iran-aligned militia in Syria, Iraq and Jordan. In recent weeks, the US military has been bolstering its forces in the Middle East to guard against major new attacks by Iran or its allies, sending the Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group into the region to replace the Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group. The United States has also sent an Air Force F-22 Raptor squadron into the region and deployed a cruise missile submarine. “We brought in additional capability to send a strong message to deter a broader conflict ... but also to protect our forces should they be attacked,” Brown said.



2025

Global Undergraduate Semester Exchange Program for Pakistan

The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) is pleased to announce the 2025 Global Undergraduate Semester Exchange Program for Pakistan.

The program is intended to promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of Pakistan. It provides full-time undergraduate students from Pakistan the opportunity to enrich their education and experience through one semester of full-time, non-degree academic study in the United States. The program will also expose students to the principles of social responsibility in the United States through a community service component.

Eligibility Criteria

- Pakistani citizens
- Applicants should be between 18-24 years old by the deadline
- Currently enrolled in a college or university in Pakistan and committed to returning to their home university following the completion of the program
- In their 14th year of formal education
- Applicants are required to submit current/most recent, and old transcripts with application

Grant Benefits

- Round-trip airfare
- Tuition and fees
- Housing and meals
- A limited allowance for books
- Accident and sickness coverage
- Monthly maintenance allowance

Applicants from underserved communities and/or with diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.

Ineligibility

- Dual U.S./Pakistani nationals or U.S. permanent residents
- Employees of the Fulbright organization, the U.S. Department of State, or USAID and their spouses, siblings, children, dependents, and parents
- Students who have been to the United States on a J-visa or a U.S. government-funded grant

Application Deadline:
Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Please Note

Applications must be submitted online. Paper copies will not be considered. All application materials (including degrees, transcripts, certificates) must be uploaded with the online application. Reference letters and the Duolingo English Test will be required from the selected candidates.

To Apply

For application and other details, visit
● www.usefp.org
For more information:
■ undergraduate@usefp.org

Plagiarism or misrepresentation in an application will lead to disqualification at any stage of the program.