

Floods kill 13

JAKARTA (Reuters): Thirteen people were killed and two injured in Indonesia's North Maluku province on Sunday after floods in the east of the sprawling archipelago, authorities said. The country's disaster management agency BNPB said the floods, caused by heavy rain since Saturday, also badly damaged 10 houses in Ternate city.



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2 separate bus accidents in leave at least 36 people dead

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: At least 25 passengers have died, several others received serious injuries when a coaster fell into a ditch in Rawalpindi's Kahuta Tehsil on Sunday.

The ill-fated coaster was travelling to Azad Kashmir.

In another incident took place in southwestern Pakistan a bus carrying pilgrims returning from Iraq via Iran plunged from a highway into a ravine. The crash, which occurred on the Makran Coastal Highway in Lasbela district, Baluchistan province, killed at least 11 people and injured 32 others, according to local police chief Qazi Sabir. The driver reportedly lost control of the bus after its brakes failed.

According to the details, the tragic accident took place near Girari Bridge, Kahuta Road Kallar Syedan where a passenger coaster en route to Palandri, Azad Kashmir went out of control and fell into a deep ditch resulting in massive casualties. Rescue 1122 spokesman, Muhammad Usman confirmed that 25 people have died in the accident so far.

He informed that 23 bodies were recovered from the accident spot.

The bodies and the injured were shifted to THQ Hospital, Kalar Syedan, where 2 more seriously injured could not

survive and died.

"The dead include 20 men, 4 women and 1 child", he said.

He said that rescue personnel from Tehsil Kahota, Kallar Syedan and Rawalpindi were engaged in the rescue operation in which more than 25 rescue personnel and 12 emergency services vehicles are participating.

The spokesperson further informed that the condition of one more injured was still critical.

The reason for the accident is still not known.

During the identification process, 14 deceased persons have been identified as Muhammad Bashir, Ali, Asghar, Gul Azam Khan, Muhammad Riaz, Fareed Ahmed, Kamran Sati, Samiullah, Mohammad Farooq, Manzoor Ahmed, Jawad, Israr, Shafiq and Muhammad Qaiser.

The identity of the four deceased women and one minor child could not be ascertained yet. Further investigation of the deceased was underway. Two separate bus accidents hours apart in Pakistan on Sunday left at least 35 people dead and dozens more injured, officials said.

The first happened when a bus carrying pilgrims returning from Iraq through Iran fell from a highway into a ravine in southwest Pakistan,

killing at least 11 people and injuring 32 others,

police and officials said.

Hours later, 25 people were killed when a bus fell into a ravine in Kahuta district in the eastern Punjab province, police and officials said.

The first accident occurred on the Makran coastal highway after the driver lost control of the bus when its brakes failed while passing through Lasbela district in Baluchistan province, local police chief Qazi Sabir said.

Sabir said the bus that fell into a ravine on Sunday was heading to Pakistan's eastern Punjab province.

President grieved over loss of lives in two separate bus accidents

President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday expressed his grief and sorrow over loss of lives in two separate road mishap on Makran Coastal Highway and Azad Pattan, near Kahuta.

The president expressed condolences with the bereaved families and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls. He also wished for quick recovery of the injured passengers, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president also directed for prompt assistance and caring for the injured in the accident.

Expressing condolences to the bereaved families, the president said that they also shared their

grief.

According to media reports, a bus carrying Zaireen fell into a ravine on the Makran Coastal Highway, resulting in several deaths and injuries to other passengers.

In another mishap, scores of passengers were dead and injured after a coaster plunged into a gorge near the Azad Pattan Pana Bridge near Kahuta.

PM expresses deep grief over loss of lives in two separate bus accidents

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the death of Zaireen in a bus accident on Makran Coastal Highway and other casualties in another road mishap near Rawalpindi.

The prime minister prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with fortitude, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister directed the local administration to fully cooperate with the bereaved families. He also directed for timely treatment and caring for the injured in the accident.

According to media reports, a bus carrying Zaireen fell into a ravine on the Makran Coastal Highway, resulting in a number of deaths and injuries to other passengers.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding the closing down of the Public Works Department.

40,405 Palestinians killed since October 7

CAIRO (Reuters): At least 40,405 Palestinians have been killed and 93,468 others injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since Oct. 7, said the Gaza Health Ministry.

In the last 24-hours, 71 were killed and 112 were injured in what the ministry called three "massacres" by Israel in the strip.

The recent war in Gaza started after Hamas militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel says it goes out of its way to avoid civilian casualties and accuses Hamas of using human shields, an allegation the group denies.

Terror bid foiled in Bajaur

BAJAUR (INP): The police foiled major terror bid by recovering explosives material from different localities which was defused later.

According to details, the Bajaur Police during search and strike operations in various areas of the district recovered huge quantity of explosives material of different types.

On directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Bajaur Waqas Rafique, the explosives material was defused by the experts of the bomb disposal squad.

DPO Bajaur directed the police officials to ensure implementation of National Action Plan (NAP), accelerate search and strike operations and to keep a close watch on respective areas to foil the nefarious designs of the extremist.

Germany probe IS link after stabbing

BERLIN (Agencies): Germany's highest prosecuting authority, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office, has taken over the investigation into the knife attack in the western town of Solingen that left three people dead.

A spokeswoman for the prosecutor's office told dpa that it was investigating a main suspect, who handed himself in, on suspicion of membership of the terrorist militia Islamic State, Islamic State previously said that one of its members carried out the stabbing.

German police detained what they described as a "real suspect" in connection with the knife attack in Solingen that left three people dead, North Rhine Westphalia's Interior Minister Herbert Reul told broadcaster ARD on Saturday night.

Police said the suspect had admitted responsibility for the attack, and was currently being questioned.

The attack took place on Friday evening at a market square in the city centre where a stage was set up for live music during the Festival of Diversity, which was being thrown to celebrate Solingen's 650th anniversary.

Those killed in the attack were two men, aged 67 and 56, and a 56-year-old woman.

Switching to paperless system PM sets one-month deadline for govt offices

Reviews legal aspects of PWD closure

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday assigned the ministry for Information Technology and other relevant departments, the task of implementing the e-office system in all government offices.

Directing to ensure paperless office work within a month, the prime minister warned that delay in the implementation of e-office in government offices would not be tolerated.

"There should be no file work without e-office in the government offices from next month," the prime minister said adding that implementation of e-office to speed up transparency in the system was the top priority of the government.

He further directed that all the officers in the government offices should

ensure file work through e-offices.

On the direction of the prime minister, the staff of the PM Office has already completed the e-office training.

Last week the prime minister also received the files through e-office system. PM Shehbaz said the e-office was an important step towards improving governance and promoting digitization in the country.

He also directed to present a report on the progress of launching e-office in next two weeks.

Meanwhile, the prime minister directed that the financial package for employees who will be laid off due to the dissolution will not be applicable to those who have been proven guilty of serious corruption charges.

PM Shehbaz Sharif also instructed that the final

plan for transferring ongoing projects under PWD to provinces and relevant departments should be presented soon.

He further directed that all final recommendations regarding the closure of PWD should be presented to the cabinet.

The prime minister also ordered the implementation of the age relaxation proposal to re-employ hardworking and honest individuals with short period of employment in PWD.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Division Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Housing and Works Riaz Hussain Pirzada and high officials of the relevant departments.

Pakistan invites Modi to visit for SCO summit

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan on Sunday officially extended an invitation to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in October.

According to diplomatic sources, the invitation was sent as part of the preparations for the SCO meeting, where the heads of state from member countries have been invited.

The sources further confirmed that formal invitation letters have been dispatched to the respective high commissions and embassies of the member states.

The SCO summit is expected to bring together leaders from member countries to discuss vari-

ous regional and international issues, with the potential to pave the way for renewed dialogue and cooperation.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch already announced on July 4, 2024, that Pakistan will invite Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the SCO Summit, which Islamabad will host in October this year.

Speaking at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad, the foreign office spokesperson said Pakistan will host the SCO Heads of State summit in October.

When asked whether the Indian prime minister will be extended an invitation, the FO spokesperson said that as the rotation chair of

the SCO, Pakistan will invite leaders of all member states.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an Eurasian political, economic, international security, and defence organisation established by China and Russia in 2001.

It is the world's largest regional organisation in terms of geographic scope and population, covering approximately 80% of the area of Eurasia and 40% of the world's population.

As of 2023, its combined GDP based on PPP was around 32% of the world's total. The SCO is governed by the Heads of State Council (HSC), its supreme decision-making body, which meets once a year.

China, Philippines clash in South China Sea

MANILA/BEIJING (Reuters): The Philippines and China clashed in disputed waters of the South China Sea on Sunday over what Manila said was a resupply mission for fishermen, the latest in a series of sea and air confrontations in the strategic waterway.

The incident overshadows efforts by both nations to rebuild trust and better manage disputes after months of confrontations, including a violent clash in June, in which a Filipino sailor lost a finger.

The Philippines on Sunday accused China of "aggressive and dangerous manoeuvres" to block the resupply mission. China's coast guard, meanwhile, said it had taken "control measures" against a vessel that had "illegally" entered the waters and repeatedly approached Chinese ships in a dangerous manner.

In the incident near the Sabina Shoal, the Philippine South China Sea task force said Chinese vessels rammed and used

water cannons against a Philippine Bureau of Fisheries ship transporting food, fuel and medical supplies for Filipino fishermen.

For its part, the Chinese coast guard said the Philippine ship "ignored repeated serious warnings and deliberately approached and rammed" China's law enforcement boat, resulting in a collision. It added that responsibility for the collision lies entirely on the Philippine side.

China asserts sovereignty over nearly all of the South China Sea, including areas claimed by the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Brunei. Beijing has deployed an armada of vessels to protect its claims.

An international arbitral tribunal in 2016 ruled that Beijing's claim had no basis under international law, a landmark victory for the Philippines, which filed the case. Beijing rejects that decision.

The Philippines and China agreed to "restore trust" and "rebuild confidence" to manage maritime disputes in a high-level meeting last month. That was followed by a provisional arrangement about Manila's resupply missions to a beached Filipino naval ship in the South China Sea.

"These unprofessional, aggressive and illegal actions posed serious risks to the safety of the Filipino crew and the fishermen they were meant to serve," the Philippine task force said of Sunday's confrontation.

It said the Bureau of Fisheries vessel, operating from Half-Moon Shoal to Sabina Shoal, encountered multiple Chinese vessels that deployed "perilous manoeuvres", causing its engine to fail and forcing it to end the resupply mission.

Manila repeated its call for Beijing to halt "provocative actions that destabilise regional peace and security".

Cop martyred, another injured as terrorists attack Kurram checkpost

F.P. Report

KURRAM: A police officer was killed and another injured in a terrorist attack on a police checkpost in Central Kurram, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Sunday, according to local police reports.

District Police Officer Ahmed Khan confirmed that the terrorists launched a gun attack on the checkpost and subsequently set it on fire. The slain officer has been identified as Constable Qoowat Khan. Another officer, Constable Shahzad, sustained injuries and has been transported to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in Sadda, Central Kurram, for medical treatment.

Following the attack, the funeral prayer for the martyred policeman was held. The region has been plagued by several similar incidents in recent months, highlighting ongoing security challenges in the area.

President strongly condemns terrorist attack on Police check post in Kurram

President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police check post in Kurram.

In a message, he paid tribute to the police personnel who embraced martyrdom in the attack.

He offered his heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family members, praying for grant of

courage for them to bear the loss with equanimity.

He also prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the attack.

President Zardari also prayed to Allah Almighty to grant high ranks to the martyred in Jannah.

PM strongly condemns terrorist attack in Kurram

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a police check post in Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The prime minister paying tribute to the police personnel who embraced martyrdom in the attack, prayed for the grant of high ranks to him in Jannah.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant courage to the bereaved family members to bear the loss with patience.

He directed the relevant authorities to ensure the best medical care to those injured in the attack.

PM Shehbaz Sharif also directed the authorities to identify and bring the perpetrators to justice, ensuring they receive exemplary punishment.

The prime minister said the police officers and jawans had rendered unmatched sacrifices in the fight against terrorism. The entire nation including me, pays tribute to the police officers and Jawans for their duty, the prime minister added.



Murad approves Rs 502m for replacement of Sukkur Barrage gates

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has approved Rs 502 million for the Irrigation Department to meet the expenditure on account of work done in connection with the repair and replacement of damaged gates of Sukkur Barrage.

He approved the funds while presiding over a meeting at CM House here Sunday. The meeting was attended by Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khoro and other concerned officers.

Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khoro briefing the CM, said that at the Sukkur Barrage damages were detected in Gate Nos. 44 and 47 on June 20, 2024. Preliminary assessment revealed that Gate No. 44 twisted but intact in full section (geometry) but Gate No. 47 was substantially damaged.

To avoid further damages and to facilitate the emergency repair works of Gates No. 44 and 47, all Sukkur Barrage Gates were

fully opened to evacuate the upstream pond. Consequently, the supply to all Canals off-taking from the Left and Right Side of Sukkur Barrage, such as Nara, Rohi, Khairpur East, Khairpur West, Northern Dadu, Rice and NW Canal was reduced until the restoration of Gates No. 44 and 47 of Sukkur Barrage on an emergency basis, he told.

The Secretary told that after the day-night efforts, the Engineers of the Irrigation Department rebuilt and maintained the Sukkur Barrage Pond level on June 26, 2024, two days ahead of schedule. They also restored the supplies of water in Irrigation Canals off-taking from the Sukkur Barrage, he added.

The chief minister appreciated the efforts and hardwork of Minister Irrigation Jam Khan Shoro, Secretary Irrigation Zarif Khoro and their engineering team.

The Sindh Irrigation Minister Jam Khan Shoro thanked the chief minister for his appreciation and mentioned that Sindh was saved from unimaginable

financial loss and the resulting unrest.

The Secretary Irrigation informed the CM that Gate No. 44 had been fabricated and brought to Sukkur, placed in the Mechanical Workshop. Due to the flood season, replacing Gate No. 44 is considered risky and therefore halted.

Deflection is being monitored and since 20-06-2024, no increase in deflection of the gate has been observed. Therefore, Mechanical Expert Mr. Jam Smith, CRBC & PIC, has suggested additional strengthening works on the gate to withstand the flood season temporarily, secure the gate, and prevent further structural movements.

Additional C-Channels, H-Beams (Horizontal & Vertical), and Fish Plates have been attached. Corroded and damaged parts of the gates were repaired using advanced welding techniques. The CM was informed through a pictorial presentation.

The CM was told that two gates were replaced and fabricated at Karachi Shipyard. "The logistics;

materials, jumbo bags, shutters, machinery, and manpower were supplied, including labour, technical divers, and welders. M.S. plates, oxygen cylinders, cranes and other items were procured for the construction of a Buddha along damaged Gate No. 47, activation of the second old caisson gate, stripping of old Gate No. 7 of Sukkur Barrage, required repair works on Gate No. 44, and strengthening of other gates – 24 to 59 of Sukkur Barrage on an emergent basis".

The CM was told that machinery for the caisson gate was engaged from the mechanical wing. Erection of the coffer dam and movement of the caisson gate at Sukkur barrage by Bahria Dredging Company Ltd (BDCL) was carried out.

The chief minister was also told that the emergent works cost Rs 502 million and the Irrigation Department was already facing a deficit in the allocation as the allocated funds were much less than the requirement as per the yardstick.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi offering Fateha at the Shrine of Hazrat Ali Bin Usman Data Ganj Bakhsh Hijveri (RA) on Sunday.

Thirteen new campuses to be established in Karachi: Khalid

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training and MQM-Pakistan Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Sunday said that after the 18th amendment, only campuses could be established in Karachi instead of erecting any new university buildings here.

The minister witnessed the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) between the National College of Arts (NCA) and Preston Institute of Management Science and Technology (PIMSAT) for the provision of space to establish the NCA campus.

Talking to media persons after that MoU, he said that thirteen new campuses would be established in the city.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that NCA

was a proud institute of the country and that Karachiites deserved its campus.

Expressing his concerns over the low rate of education, he was of the view that every empty building should be established for education.

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that MQM-Pakistan gave two young leaders to the city.

He said that Karachi

was not as it was in 2008.

He further said that the United Nations (UN) had come to make the city livable.

The MoU ceremony was signed in the presence of the Vice Chancellor of the National College of Arts (NCA) Professor Dr. Murtaza Jafri and Preston Institute of Management Science and Technology (PIMSAT)'s Dr. Mohammed Ali.

First low-carbon energy storage as service project launched



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step towards sustainable innovation, Pakistan witnessed the launch of its first low-carbon Energy Storage as a Service (ESaaS) project. Organized by Brillanz Group in partnership with Telenor Pakistan, Bank of Punjab, and Saudi-Pak Investment Company, and supported by Ministry of Climate Change, the event underscored the country's commitment to environmental sustainability and technological advancement in the Telecom sector.

The landmark event was graced by the presence of H.E. Majid Misfer J. Alghamdi, Deputy Minister for Tourism Destinations, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Sultan Abdulrauf, Chairman of Saudi-Pak Investment Bank, Mr. Mubsher AlShehri, Commercial Attaché at the Embassy of KSA, along with other senior dignitaries. Mr. Fahd Haroon, Minister of State and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Digital Media, commended the ESaaS project as a significant leap forward in both environmental sustainability and financial innovation. He underscored the critical role of digital platforms in amplifying this success to attract foreign invest-

ment and position Pakistan as a leader in resilient business practices.

Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to Prime Minister & Minister-in-charge on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, hailed the project as an exemplary model of how technology and innovation can drive meaningful climate action, emphasizing its alignment with Pakistan's broader climate goals and its potential to enhance the country's environmental capabilities. Mr. Bilal Qureshi, Co-founder and CEO of Brillanz Group, emphasized the transformative nature of the project, stating, "This initiative sets a new benchmark for sustainable innovation in the Telecom sector. It's more than an investment; it's a commitment to reducing over 21 million liters of diesel consumption in Phase I, translating into significant cost savings of over PKR 5 billion and environmental benefits."

Telenor Pakistan's CEO, Mr. Khurram Ashfaq, underscored the project's role in leading the shift towards sustainable network transformation. Mr. Awais Vohra, CTO of Telenor Pakistan, detailed the technical advancements, noting the reduction of reliance on diesel generators and the improvement of network uptime.

Mohsin Naqvi visits Data Darbar

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Data darbar here on Sunday to attend the second day of Urs.

He placed a Chadhar and flowers on the shrine. Mohsin Naqvi prayed for the development of the country and the prosperity of the people. He also prayed for the oppressed Muslims of Occupied Kashmir and Palestine.

Mohsin Naqvi also inspected the renovation project of Data Darbar, while the Secretary Auqaf Punjab gave a briefing about the project and informed about the progress. Mohsin Naqvi welcomed the devotees coming from all over the country and the world. Saints including Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) taught peace and harmony in the subcontinent, he said, adding that today we need to follow the teachings of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh and other saints.

Customs seize gold, mobile phones

LAHORE (INP): Customs administration on Sunday seized gold and mobile phones worth millions of rupees in three major operations at Allama Iqbal International Airport here.

According to Collector Customs Airport, Ali Abbas Gardezi, in the first operation, 883 grams of gold items, 3,000 Euros and more than 233 million riyals were recovered from the luggage of a passenger of a private airline flight 416 bound to Dubai.

In another operation, customs officials at Lahore Airport recovered 100 iPhones worth over Rs.30 million from a private airline flight that arrived from Sharjah.

According to Collector Customs Ali Abbas Gardezi, in the third operation, 2875 grams of gold, which is more than 246 tolas, was recovered from the luggage of a passenger of a private airline flight 417. After detaining the three passengers, the I&P Department of Customs started an investigation. It was decided to give certificates of appreciation to the officers and staff who took part in the operations.

Tessori attends Nikkah ceremony

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori attended the Nikkah ceremony of the grand son of eminent social worker late Abdul Sattar Edhi here on Sunday. According to the spokesman, Governor Kamran Tessori participated in 'Dua-e-Nikkah' of Saad Edhi and extended best wishes for the couple and congratulated Faisal Edhi on his son's wedding.

JI urges PML-N, PPP to tackle IPPs or face consequences

LAHORE (INP): Amir Jamaat-e-Islami's Hafiz Naem ur Rehman, has issued a stern warning to the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its ally, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), declaring that they have 28 days to address issues with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) or face serious repercussions.

Speaking at a press conference in Mansura, Hafiz Naem criticized political parties for engaging in self-serving and interest-based politics, while neglecting critical issues like electricity and gas bills. He accused the parties of focusing on personal and political gain rather than addressing public concerns.

Naem highlighted the financial burden imposed on the public, revealing that the government had allocated 2 trillion rupees to IPPs without generating electricity.

He called for a nationwide strike on August 28, supported by the business community, and criticized the government's tax relief to IPPs while ordinary citizens face escalating taxes.

He also condemned the contracts with IPPs, alleging that agreements were made under false pretenses and that those responsible should be held accountable. Naem argued that the elimination of IPPs favored by the Sharif family could significantly reduce electricity costs.

Further, he addressed the issue of corruption, citing a Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) report that exposed 1.2 trillion rupees in annual corruption, with tax evasion and bribery undermining the tax system.

Naem drew a parallel with the situation in Bangladesh, mentioning the historical persecution faced by Jamaat-e-Islami there, and emphasized the party's enduring role in Pakistan's political landscape since its pre-independence days. He concluded by asserting that Jamaat-e-Islami's contributions to national defense, legal reforms, and public service are well-documented, reinforcing its significant role in Pakistan's political history.

PM working day and night to reform national institutions: Dar

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Sunday that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was working day and night to bring reforms in national institutions while the economy would soon be restored under his leadership.

He expressed these views while talking to the media on the occasion of participating in the urs celebrations of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh. He said when the country's economy was taking off, obstacles were created. "May Almighty Allah not let this happen this time; let us make Pakistan an economically prestigious country in the world," he prayed. Provincial Food Minister Bilal Yasin and others were also present.

The deputy PM said he had already served the country as the finance minister, and this time he had been assigned many responsibilities. He said there was no doubt that Pakistan had suffered a lot



economically during the past years, adding that "it was being predicted that the country would take 15 years to come out of the severe crises. But with the grace of Allah, it took only three-and-a-half years for Pakistan to come out of the crises."

In 2013, the country was experiencing up to 18 hours load-shedding, and dozens of terrorist incidents were taking place daily, affecting the economy badly. But, the PML-N

government solved all those problems in just three-and-a-half years with the grace of Allah, and the load-shedding issues were also resolved. It was admitted by major forums, and it was said that the way Pakistan was developing, it would soon join the G20. But after that, in the next four years, Pakistan was ranked at the 47th position economically and it was not a small loss, the problems of the country today are due to that duration.

Ishaq Dar said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, "we are making all-out efforts to restore economy and create ease for Pakistanis again". He said a 14 rupees per unit relief in electricity bills had been given by the provincial government to the people of Punjab, and the prime minister allocated Rs. 50 billion subsidy to electricity users of up to 200 units, with the approval of the cabinet.

Muqam: Anti-state elements exposed to Public

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, stated that the true face of the misleading anti-state group has been exposed to the public. Speaking at a press conference at the Abbottabad Press Club alongside the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N), he emphasized the deteriorating situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa compared to other provinces.

Muqam highlighted that foreign-funded conflicts are ongoing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with ministers demanding a share of the spoils. He criticized these elements for distributing money for protests and rallies while neglecting

the welfare of the province's citizens. He pointed out the irony of leaders who chant anti-American slogans one day and pro-American slogans the next, stressing the inconsistency in their narratives. Muqam also expressed concern over the growing insecurity and unemployment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, contrasting it with the relief efforts made by the chief ministers of Punjab and Balochistan.

Discussing developmental projects, Engineer Amir Muqam announced that the longstanding demand of the people of Hazara for the establishment of the Hazara Electric Supply Company and the Abbottabad Interchange will be fulfilled with their official inauguration by Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz

Sharif in September. He dismissed any speculation of a deal with the founding party of the PTI, asserting that Imran Khan must be held accountable for the events of May 9.

Muqam praised the performance of the PML-N in the Hazara region during the elections, acknowledging the party's strong competition. He criticized the PTI for its anti-Pakistan agenda and expressed confidence that they will not return to power. He noted the contradiction in PTI's stance on military courts, which were previously deemed acceptable during their tenure but are now being opposed.

Muqam also addressed the issue of corruption in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mentioning various scandals including those related to wheat, minerals, forests, and the BRT project, which have tarnished the provincial government's reputation. He accused the PTI government of engaging in political revenge and corruption, and failing to address the security and economic challenges of the province. Central leader Captain (R) Muhammad Safdar, who was also present, urged the Prime Minister to provide relief to the people of Hazara in their electricity bills.

NOTICE TO MCB BANK CUSTOMERS

All customers are informed that MCB Bank Ltd. **Topi Branch (0301)**, currently located at Main Bazar Topi, Tehsil Topi, District Swabi will be shifted to new location on **27-Sept-2024** at the following address:

MCB Bank Limited

Topi Branch (0301)

Khata No. 192/351, Qitai-3, Khasra Nos. 516, 519, 515, Mouza Topi Shumail, Main Bazar Topi, Tehsil Topi, District Swabi

Contact No. 0938-274178, 274179

Letters for the same have been dispatched to all the account holders.



HYDERABAD: A view of water level increasing in Indus River at Kotri Bridge due to recent rains in the country. — APP photo



PESHAWAR: Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad Khan chairing a meeting regarding the solarization of Madaris.

New indigenous chicken breed introduced in KP

Encouraging results shown in egg laying, meat weight

PESHAWAR (APP): Poultry Research Institute (PRI) of Livestock and Dairy Development Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has introduced a new and indigenous breed of chicken, Jabba 21, showing excellent results in egg laying and meat weight as well.

The new breed is named after place of PRI in Jabba, Manshera district and its chicks were obtained in year 2021, informed Dr. Mohsin Ali, Senior Research Office PRI KP.

Talking to APP on Sunday, Dr. Mohsin said Jabba 21 is a hybrid variety produced locally through cross of two imported breeds including male of Plymouth Rock and hen of Rhode Island Red (RIR), both American domestic chicken.

PRI is working over different layers since 2014 and all of chicken breeds we have in the institute were imported, Dr. Mohsin shared.

The objective of PRI is to do research for introduction of quality breeds to fulfil demand of people in form of eggs and meat.

In this connection, PRI started work over introduction of a local breed through cross of two imported breeds.

The first stock of Jabba was obtained in 21 and now research trials are still in progress which will continue till five to six generations to check continuity of eggs laying capacity of the hen besides its weight.

Sharing details of initial research findings, Dr. Mohsin said the breed has been laying around 230 to 240 eggs on annual basis while its body weight is around 2.5 kg.

The color of egg is light brown, reflecting a similarity with local egg, having good market demand and price because of liking by people.

Jabba 21 has shown better results in terms of eggs and weight from both Plymouth Rock and Rhode Island Red, which is encouraging, Mohsin commented.

The weight of RIR female is 2.2 while the body weight of Jabba 21 is around 2.5 or more than this. This size and weight is attained by Jabba 21 in around 10 to 11 months.

He said distribution of the new breed among local for farming purpose will start soon so people can benefit from its egg laying capacity and substantial meat weight.

Jabba 21 is suitable for rearing purpose in temperate region like Hazara division where it can give good results, Dr. Mohsin recommended.

Governor emphasizes importance of vocational education

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday stressed the role of vocational education in combating unemployment and skills development in the province.

The Governor made these comments during a discussion with Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Chairperson of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) here at Governor House.

During the meeting, NAVTTTC presented an update on its initiatives aimed at promoting vocational education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Governor expressed his satisfaction with the progress and highlighted the importance of involving as many young people as possible in these activities.

He said that economic difficulties are a major source of unrest among youth and emphasized that empowering youth and women are among his top priorities.

Governor Kundi pointed out that while there is a global demand for skilled labor, the lack of vocational training tailored to international standards often leaves Pakistani youth unable to secure jobs abroad.

He welcomed the Prime Minister's decision to increase the budget for vocational education, stressing the need for training programs that meet modern requirements and international needs.

The Governor commended NAVTTTC's efforts in launching courses in agriculture, IT, and other fields, and discussed various proposals for further enhancing vocational education. He assured the NAVTTTC Chairperson of full support from the Governor House to ensure a better future for the new generation.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi praised overseas Pakistanis and discussed social projects in a meeting at the Governor House with prominent social activist Imran Agra, a leader in the overseas Pakistani community based in the United States.

Social figure Malik Kifayat and Zahid Saleem from Islamabad were also present on this occasion.

During the meeting, Governor Kundi commended the overseas Pakistanis for their role as ambassadors of the country, acknowledging their significant contributions to enhancing Pakistan's global reputation through their hard work and dedication. He lauded the efforts of overseas Pakistanis in advancing social causes within Pakistan.

Calendar of annual sports competition announced

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An impressive ceremony for the Peshawar Boxing Awards took place here on Sunday, during which the annual sports calendar was unveiled. Captain (Retd) Usman Gul, Chairman of the KP Boxing Association, emphasized the importance of timely implementation of the annual calendar and merit-based player selection for the advancement of boxing in Pakistan, including KP.

He stated that all available resources would be utilized to ensure the timely conduct of boxing events and to encourage talented players. Usman Gul noted that players selected based on merit under transparent process would be sent to the national boxing championship. Usman Gul highlighted that proper supervision of the boxing sport would motivate players to compete at both national and international levels.

Major (Retd) Azhar Ali Khan, President of the KP Boxing Association, praised the efforts of the KP Boxing Association and the abilities of KP players in his address.

Subsequently, Khizar Ullah Jan, General Secretary of the KP Boxing Association, and Muhammad Ajmal Khan, General Secretary of the Peshawar Boxing Association, announced the annual sports calendar. Commendation cards were later distributed among judges, referees, and coaches.

Martial arts expert Rehmat Gul Afridi received warm applause from participants. The event was attended by all registered club coaches from Peshawar.

Blood Money and bribery: How the wealthy evade justice in Pakistan

Muhammed Mohsin Iqbal

THE perception that Pakistan's legal system disproportionately targets the weak while offering leniency to the powerful is, unfortunately, well-founded. Many believe the law serves as a weapon against the vulnerable, while the influential manipulate it to their advantage. This view, shaped by numerous instances where justice appears skewed, has eroded public trust in the judicial system and fostered a dangerous societal divide.

One glaring example of this disparity is the case of Raymond Davis, a CIA contractor who shot and killed two Pakistanis in Lahore on January 27, 2011. Despite the severity of his crime, Davis was released after the victims' families were reportedly coerced into accepting "blood money" under Pakistan's Qisas and Diyat law. His swift departure from the country, facilitated by foreign influence and political pressure, left many Pakistanis annoyed. The incident reinforced the belief that the powerful can escape justice while ordinary citizens bear the full weight of the law.

Diyat, or blood money, is an Islamic legal concept rooted in the Quran and Sunnah, serving as compensation paid to the family of a murder victim. The Quran, in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:178), outlines the principle of Qisas (retribution), but also allows for the option of forgiveness and the acceptance of Diyat. The amount of Diyat is typically equivalent to 100 camels or their monetary value, though this can vary depending on the circumstances and the socio-economic context. The Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) further elaborates on this, emphasizing justice, fairness, and the importance of preserving life. Diyat is not only a financial compensation but also a means of promoting reconciliation and forgiveness within the community. However, in cases like that of Raymond Davis, the application of Diyat is seen as being manipulated by those with influence, thus tarnishing its intended purpose of justice and mercy.

Raymond Davis wrote a book called "The Contractor" after his release, in which he provides a detailed account of his imprisonment in Pakistan and mocked the country's legal and judicial system. Davis recounted how he was swiftly released from prison after killing two Pakistani citizens in broad daylight, highlighting the ease with which he manipulated the system. His book not only exposed the vulnerabilities within the legal process but also underscored the ease with which the powerful can circumvent justice. His book serves as a stark reminder of the deep flaws within the system and the urgent need for reforms to ensure that justice is applied equally to all, regardless of status or nationality.

Similarly, the case of Shahrulh Jatoi, a wealthy young man who murdered university student Shahzeb Khan on December 25, 2012, further exemplifies the unequal application of the law. Despite being sentenced to death, Jatoi evaded his punishment through a series of legal maneuvers, including a questionable medical report declaring him a minor at the time of the crime and an eventual out-of-court settlement with the victim's family. The case highlighted how wealth and influence can allegedly manipulate the legal system, with Jatoi's release widely criticized as an example of how the rich can buy their way out of punishment.

A more recent example is the case of Natasha, a resident of Karachi and the wife of a wealthy businessman, who has come under intense scrutiny following a tragic hit-and-run incident. Reports suggest that Natasha was responsible for the deaths of four or five individuals, yet she is allegedly using her financial resources and connections to offer Diyat (blood money) to the victims' families in order to settle the matter out of court. Furthermore, there are rumours that she intends to leave the country soon after, potentially to evade legal repercussions. This case has sparked widespread outrage, with many questioning the fairness of a system that allows the wealthy to escape justice so easily. Natasha's case is another stark reminder of the deep-rooted inequities in the application of law in Pakistan.

Food Safety Authority disposes of substandard food items

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority has disposed of a large quantity of unsafe and substandard food items confiscated during various operations across the Peshawar Division. According to officials, the seized items included hazardous beverages, spices, China salt, tea leaves, snacks, ketchup, pickles, milk packs, and other consumables, which were discarded at a designated dumping site in Peshawar yesterday.

A spokesperson for the Food Authority provided details, stating that the confiscation of the food items occurred after recovering during different operations in the Peshawar Division. The spokesperson added that 202 bags of banned China salt, worth approximately Rs 3.64 million, were disposed of. In addition, 580 cartons of substandard and unsafe juice, energy drinks, and packaged milk, worth around Rs 400,000, were also discarded. Moreover, over 3,400 kilograms of substandard and hazardous spices and wheat bran, valued at more than Rs 2 million, were disposed of.

Further details revealed that during these operations, 10,000 liters of counterfeit beverages from various brands, with an estimated market value of Rs 1.2 million, were also seized and destroyed. Additionally, unsafe and substandard pickles weighing around 1,000 kilograms and worth Rs 350,000 were discarded. The spokesperson mentioned that the operations also led to the disposal of tea leaves, snacks, ketchup, tomato sauce, coffee, biscuits, chocolates, cooking oil, and vinegar, all of which were unsafe for consumption and valued at Rs 350,000.

Selection of CEO in final stage

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The selection process of newly Chief Executive Officer of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil and Gas Company Limited (KPOGCL), a subsidiary body of Energy and Power department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has entered in final stage as company's board of directors completed the interviews of candidates and the merit list of candidate has also been prepared.

In the light of which the names of top 3 candidates in the merit list will be sent to the provincial cabinet for final approval.

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also verified the educational data and certificates of the eligible candidates for appointment in accordance with the prevailing rules while bringing transparency in the appointment process.

Taboos, social limitations affect women empowerment

PESHAWAR (APP): Despite various reform initiatives and advocacy platforms, the socio-economic situation of women has not improved in the province. The process of empowerment has either been affected by social limitations or taboos that still persisted. These social limitations and taboos are deeply rooted in societal norms. Therefore, the situation demands mass awareness and mindset change to address the issue of women's empowerment. These factors give rise to gender inequality and limit the role of women in different fields of life, said Khurshed Bano, Chief Executive Officer of 'Da Hawwa Lur' a women's advocacy platform.

She said Pakistan is predominantly a patriarchal society where the majority of power is controlled by men in both public and private spheres and make decisions. This dominance has limited women's participation in decision-making processes that had largely affected their lives. The concept of family honor is often linked to the behavior, movement and reputation of women. This places immense pressure on women to conform to restrictive social norms, limiting their freedom to make personal choices and take decisions, she said. "Child and early marriages are still prevalent in many parts of the country, particularly in rural areas.

Early marriage often leads to the cessation of education for girls and restrict their opportunities for personal and professional growth," she said, adding these issues could be resolved by changing mindset of the people. These social limitations and taboos require a multifaceted approach including education, legal reforms, and an active involvement of both men and women. Women not only eliminate these socio-cultural barriers but it would also develop an environment where women can thrive and contribute fully for the wellbeing of the society, Khurshed Bano added. "Gender disparity in education is also witnessed in our society that created a significant gap in educational opportunities for girls," said Sadaf Syed, a lawyer while talking to APP.

In many areas, the attitudes affect and discourage education of girls as these prioritize domestic roles over academic or professional achievements, she added. "In the male dominant society, women often face barriers including discrimination in hiring practices, wage gaps, and limited opportunities for career advancement," said Saima Hanif. "Workplace harassment is a serious problem that deters many women from pursuing careers or remaining in the workforce. The lack of strong enforcement of laws and social stigma around reporting harassment further exacerbates the problem," she said.

She said Islamic law grants women the right to inherit property while in practice, many women are denied their inheritance due to pressure from male relatives. "Another reason that negatively affects women empowerment is that those that have the right to vote and stand for election, their representation in political offices remains low, limiting their influence on policy-making that also affect women's rights and empowerment. Cultural taboos and stigma often prevent women from speaking out or seeking help, leaving them trapped in abusive situations. Many women, especially in rural areas, are unaware of their legal rights and the resources available to them. This lack of awareness limits their ability to challenge the status quo and seek empowerment, said Saima Hanif.

Mashal Alam, KP CM Adviser for Social Welfare and Women Empowerment said that empowerment of women was cornerstone of the KP government policy. She said that women policy has been approved and notified to all concerned for implementation. She said that legislation for protection against harassment of women has been passed by the provincial assembly and the enforcement of women's property rights ensured. Mashal said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women has been formed to promote women rights in the province.

Being an adviser for women's empowerment and social welfare in the province, she would continue to raise voice for the rights of women and do all possible efforts for their development and economic well-being. She said that the government strongly believed in gender equality and granted stipends for girls' students of less developed districts increased under the Stars of the KP program to bring them at par with the developed areas of the country.

Free solar systems to be installed in Madaris

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to install free solar systems in more than 1000 religious madaris across the province, including the merged tribal districts, in order to promote religious education and attract students towards religious education.

In the light of the instructions from Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Auqaf and Religious Affairs Department KP will start a survey with the support of the Energy & Power Department KP across the province to transfer the religious madaris to solar energy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In this regard, on request of the Auqaf department, a special meeting was held under the chairmanship of Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad Khan regarding the solarization of religious madaris registered under the annual development program, in which Secretary Auqaf and Religious Affairs Adil Siddiq, Project Director Solarization Engineer Asfandiyar Khan Musa Zai and Senior Planning Officer Engineer Luqman Hakeem also participated.

During meeting Secretary Auqaf Adil Siddique said that after the survey in consultation with the Director General Religious Education (DGRE), Government of Pakistan, the project will be started soon with the support of Energy department to provide free solar systems to the registered religious madaris across the province, and each madrasa will be provided with a solar system as required he added.

On this occasion, Secretary Energy Nisar Ahmad Khan issued instructions to the concerned project director to prepare PC-1 of the project by conducting a survey in collaboration with the Auqaf & Religious Affairs department so that the practical work on the project can be started immediately. To ensure timely supply of funds and to prepare and provide lists for solarisation of registered madaris in proportion to each district, he emphasized.

KMU holds admission test for Allied Health Sciences Programs

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar on Sunday conducted its first centralized admission test (KMU-CAT) for admissions to various BS Allied Health Sciences programs in the province. The test, mandatory for admissions to all KMU-affiliated programs including Pharm-D, DPT, BS Nursing, BS Vision Sciences, BS Audiology, BS Mental Health, BS Prosthetics and Orthotics, BS Occupational Therapy, BS Speech and Language Pathology, BS Public Health, BS Microbiology, and BS Allied Health Sciences (Paramedical Sciences), was conducted at 14 centers in 12 cities, including Islamabad. A total of 21,665 candidates participated in the test. The results of the test will be announced within 72 hours and will be available on KMU's official website (<http://cat.kmu.edu.pk>). According to KMU's media cell, 8,705 candidates appeared at three centers in Peshawar, Islamia Collegiate School, University College for Boys, and Government Higher Secondary School No. 1, Peshawar City. Other centers included Abbottabad and Haripur 1,220 candidates, Medics College Chakdara Malakand 1,669 candidates, Iqra University Swat 3,680, Mardan 2,112, Kohat 1,028, Dera Ismail Khan 649, Swabi 813 Buner 328, Chitral 932 and Islamabad 137 candidates.



In brief

Livestock vaccinated

SANGHAR (APP): The Livestock Department of Sanghar is continuing its efforts to treat and vaccinate livestock affected by the breach of the Rohri Canal. Under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Sanghar, Imran-ul-Hassan Khwaja, the Livestock Department, led by Deputy Director Dr. Dost Akbar Mari, is running a camp at the Public School Tando Adam and in adjacent areas to provide treatment and vaccination to prevent diseases in animals. So far, 20,075 animals in the affected areas of three Union Councils Faqir Sher Muhammad Dero, Mitho Khoso and Kunb Darho—have been vaccinated against diseases including 11,098 small animals and 8,977 large animals. Additionally, 1,338 animals have been treated, including 798 small and 540 large animals. Dr. Dost Akbar Mari, Dr. Khushi Muhammad and Dr. Altaf Ahmed Shah informed the media that teams are present in the affected areas and can be contacted for any advice or treatment. Relevant officials, including Dr. Ghulam Murtaza Mari, Dr. Amir Lakho, Manthar Burdi, Shams Lighari, Mehar Khaskheli, Azam Brohi, and Ghulam Ali, were also present at the camp.

DC for resolution of issues

TANK (APP): Deputy Commissioner Tank Tanveer Ahmad on Sunday said that resolving the people's issues at their doorsteps was his top priority. Talking to media, he said that all the officers were public servants and they were answerable to the people. He said that an open court would be organized at Town Hall on August 28 in order to review the performance of the departments working under the district administration. The three-month performance of the district administration would be examined. The people's grievances regarding Finance Department, District Council, TMA, issuance of Domicile, Driving License, birth and death certificates will be heard. The deputy commissioner said that organizing such open courts was aimed at maintaining a strong liaison between the people and administration. The district officers were appointed here for public service and addressing people's woes was their duty, adding, no compromise would be made over resolving basic people's issues. Replying to a question, he said the practical steps were being taken to ensure the provision of clean drinking water to citizens. He warned that strict action would be taken against those officials who showed negligence in this regard.

Woman shot dead by husband

PATTOKI (INP): A woman was shot dead by her husband over domestic disputes here and culprit fled the scene, police said on Sunday. According to details, a couple exchanged hot words over domestic disputes in Chak No 5 of Rasoolpur Karaniwala Saddar police station jurisdiction in Pattoki. After verbal clash, accused Zulfiqar gunned down his wife Razia Bibi and escaped the scene after committing murder. The body was shifted to Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital Pattoki for postmortem and police after registering a case against the culprit started raids for his arrest.



LOWER DIR: Hundreds of candidates busy in solving Centralized Admission Test organized by Khyber Medical University for Medical College of Nursing Chakdra

Over 1700 candidates appeared for KMU entry test in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: More than 1700 male and female candidates from all parts of Lower Dir appeared in the entry test for the Khyber Medical University's Centralized Admission Test [KMU CAT] that held at the Medical College of Nursing Chakdra here on Sunday. The test was conducted for onward admission in all BS allied sciences programmes including DPT, Radiology, BS Nursing, Paramedics, public health, pharm D etc.

The KMU had deputed Prof Haidar Darain as supervisor, Haji Bahadar as center coordinator, Ibtisam Amin as assistant coordinator, one superintendent, eight deputy superintendents and 85 invigilators to conduct a transparent test in a peaceful and conducive environment.

The candidates were provided with all basic facilities like drinking water, washrooms, shelter, comfortable chairs and sound system.

The center supervisor Prof Haidar Darain, who is

also the KMU Dean, said the university had taken concrete steps to conduct a fair and transparent test for admission to different BS programmes. He said that over 21000 male and female candidates had applied online for the test for which accessible centers had been setup in all the districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The officials also thanked the founder of the Medix College of Nursing Chakdra, Haji Jalilullah for extending his all-out support and cooperation.

Talking to local journalists on the occasion Haji Jalil also thanked the KMU and its staff for smooth conduct of the KMU CAT test. He appreciated the KMU administration for its best arrangements.

PPP GATHERING: The PPP district president Ahmad Zeb Khan has said the party is being reorganized in the Lower Dir district on the instruction of provincial leadership. He was addressing the party workers at Gul Muqam in Chakdara as chief guest here on Sunday. Mr zeb

said the PPP was the most popular party in the country since 1970 and people trusted it for its valuable services to the masses. The gathering was also addressed by the PPP district general secretary Naeemullah Khan, information secretary Alam Zeb advocate, Zahir Shah Lala and others.

Mr Zeb said that following the instructions of the leadership, the party will be reorganized at the polling station level in each village council. He said that Pakistan People's Party was the party of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto who sacrifices their lives for the sake of the nation.

He said the PPP had its roots in the public and no power could harm it. He said the nation had voted to the PTI but it had disappointed the people in their three-time power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He stressed that the message of the party should be conveyed from house to house by participating in the organization of the party.

Asia quits PTI-P

Jamal Qamar

BANNU: Ms. Asia Jahangir Khan, an influential political figure from a prominent political family in the southern districts, has announced her decision to resign from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentarians. Following her resignation, both the central and provincial leadership of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) have reached out to her, seeking her support.

According to sources, Ms. Asia Jahangir, a former provincial minister with an active role in the politics of the southern districts, formally decided to leave the PTI Parliamentarians. She made her decision public on social media, sending her resignation to the party leadership. In response, the PPP and PML-N leadership have initiated contact with her, aiming to bring her into their respective parties.

Given her significant influence in Bannu and the southern districts, political parties are eager to secure her allegiance. Ms. Asia Jahangir's family is well-respected in the region due to their positive contributions and advocacy for the welfare of the people. She expressed disappointment with PTI Parliamentarians, citing a lack of respect for party opinion and the hijacking of the party by the General Secretary. She joined PTI Parliamentarians under the leadership of Pervez Khattak with the intention of serving the public. However, she has decided to leave due to the absence of a consultative process and the lack of importance given to the opinions of the core committee and workers.

Ms. Asia Jahangir emphasized that in a party where consultation is lacking, progress is hindered, and the party's existence is threatened. While she has been approached by leaders of other political parties, she stated that any decision to join a new party would be made after consulting her family and supporters.

Commissioner Kohat for action against CEO WSSC

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah on Sunday made a surprise visit to different areas of Kohat, Hangu and Orakzai districts under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda". Commissioner Kohat on this occasion, recommended action against the Chief Executive of WSSC Kohat to the higher authorities for the piles of garbage and poor cleanliness in the areas under the supervision of WSSC Kohat.

However, the piles of dirt were removed by TMA Kohat on the orders of Commissioner. Similarly, Motasim Billah, in his surprise visit to Orakzai Agency, deducted one day's salary from 22 employees of Agriculture Extension for not cultivating more than 50,000 cultivable plants in the nurseries of Agriculture Extension and poor sanitation, while Secretary Agriculture was contacted for departmental action against the Director Agriculture Extension Kohat for his poor performance.

Sufism begins its journey in South Punjab with a spark of divine love

MULTAN (APP): Sufism, or tasawwuf is known as the mystical heart of Islam and begins its journey with a spark of divine love to awaken the minds and souls of people towards Islam.

Some people are of the view that Sufism originated within Islam as a spiritual movement during the 8th-9th centuries CE while others believe that it began in the inner mystical reading of the Holy Qur'an.

"God awakens the lamp of divine light within the hearts of those who believe in Divine oneness. For the Sufi, this light is felt as love, tenderness, and guidance that is necessary to help us on the way. This light moves us back to the Divine, from pain of separation to the embrace of union" said Dr Ashraf Ali Qureshi, the divisional president of Jamiat Ulema Pakistan.

Islam as a religion was introduced via Southern Punjab only after the 8th century. The first Muslim state in Punjab was the Emirate of Multan, established in 855 CE after the disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate.

Multan is the oldest city dating back to 5000 BC recognized as the sister historic oldest living city Rome following both of their rich archaeological and cultural heritage with historical linkages.

Previously called the "City of Gold" now the "City of Saints", Multan among the rest of the regions across South Punjab become a thriving entity with all its spiritual and traditional essence.

Within a radius of twenty-five miles, there have been hundreds of mausoleums of saints who had propagated Islam in the sub-continent with a message of love and peace.

Historically, about 100,000 shrines have been constructed across the city and near-est towns in Southern Punjab with most of them either erased or destroyed with the passage of time due to expansion and development purposes, said an official of the local Auqaf department, Muhammad Arshad.

But in spite of that, around 3000 to 4000 shrines are intact yet with grandeur visited frequently by the devotees hailing from Southern Punjab and interior Sindh.

Among many, the most noteworthy Sufi saint of his time is Hazrat Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya Suhrawardi also remembered as "Baha-ul-Haq". He was born around 1170 AD in Kot Kehrur (now known as Karor Lal Esan), a town located near Multan. Following his marvelous contribution, Multan earned a metaphoric title as "Baghdad of the East".

The Sufi saint travelled from city to city in Southern Punjab and succeeded in winning the hearts of a large number of Hindus to convert them to Islam. His shrine is situated near the clock tower, the heart of the city.

According to certain chroniclers, Bahauddin Zakariya's mother was a sister of the mother of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar, one of the most revered and distinguished Muslim mystics of the medieval period.

The Khanqah (Shrine) of Shah Rukn-e-Alam, a masterpiece of architecture became the identity of Multan. It is situated on top of a small hillock, behind the old ruins of Multan Fort. The dome is more than 50 feet in diameter and height of over 100 feet. The entire complex is built with red bricks and decorated with wonderful woodwork.

Muhammad Arshad said that around 2000-3000 devotees among common visitors used to attend the three-day Urs of Hazrat Shah Rukn is scheduled to arrange from the 5th to 7th Juma-ul-Awwal every year. It's solemnized by the custodian, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the PTI's leader.

Bibi Pak Daman (1170-1262) known as Bibi Rasti was the mother of Shah Rukn Alam. She was also a disciple of Bahauddin Zakariya. She is stated to have brought the Suhrawardiyya order of Sufism to Multan. She died in 1295 and was buried near the temple of Mai Totla (one of Multan's three pre-Islamic deities) once stood. The tomb is roughly rectangular and is decorated externally with Multan's signature blue and white tiles. The traditional design of the tomb appears as the 'flat roof' just like the mausoleum of Hazrat Shah Yusuf Gardez.

Yusuf Shah was born in 450 AH in the district of Gardez in Afghanistan. The saint travelled to the city of Multan as his father Shah Ali Kasswer directed him. The area around the shrine is occupied by the family itself and goes by the name 'Muhallah Shah Gardez'. His descendants are known as Gardezis and are one of the few old noble families in the country. He died in 1136.

The Mausoleum of Shah Yusuf Gardez is present at Bohar Gate inside the walled city. The tomb was properly built in 1150 AD, about 14 years after his death. The mosque inside the South of the tomb was made by Sher Shah Suri (1639-1655).

There are some shrines of Sufi saints reported to have been constructed at deserted locations in the district. It included Hameed-ud-Din Hakim, Qutab-al-Qutaab, Syed Pir Sakhi Shah Hassan Parwana, Syed Hasan Khanjze, Hazrat Shah Dana Shaheed, Abu Hassan Hafiz Jamal-ud-din called Musa Pak Shaheed, Hazrat Shah Kamal Qadiri, Hafiz Muhammad Jamal Chisti Nazami, Pir Chup Wardi Waly, Mollana Hamid Ali Khan Naqshbandi. Hazrat Khawaja Awais Khagga, Pir Syed Wali Muhammad Shah (Chadar Wali Sarkar) and shrine of Hazrat Gul Shah.

"For the Sufi, love is the beginning and the end of the journey. The Sufi's mystical journey starts with a spark of divine love that leads to the remembrance of God."

This journey of love and longing burn away ego, sense of a separate self, a process called 'fana', or annihilation, which leads to 'baqa' (eternity), abiding in God" said Shakir Hussain Shakir, the author of the book: Hazrat Shah Yusuf Gardez and Hazrat Shah Shams Tabrizi.

DI Khan vulnerable to various climate-related natural hazards

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Dera Ismail Khan district is one of the districts of Pakistan that is most vulnerable to the effects of climate change which is evident from the recent flash floods and rising temperature.

The district is vulnerable to various climatic hazards like extreme high temperature, flash Flood, Riverine floods, urban flood, landslides, avalanches and heavy rainfall in the mountainous regions along Hindu Kush Range. The heavy rainfall in Baluchistan and Afghanistan generates heavy floods that travel through the mountains and enter plains of District DIKhan through different Zams.

The flood channels under different Zams have badly been deteriorated due to non-maintenance by the Rodh Kohi Department as they are silted up; embankments are breached and natural plants are grown on beds of the channels with the result they cannot take the pressure of unusual floods and the flood water overflows and makes its own way damaging infrastructure, destroying agriculture, killing livestock and human beings.

Under future climate change scenarios, DIKhan is expected to experience increased variability of river flows due to increased variability of precipitation and the melting of glaciers. Demand for irrigation water may increase due to higher evaporation rates. Yields of wheat and rice are expected to decline subject to water availability. Mortality due to extreme heat waves may increase. Urban drainage systems may be further stressed by high rainfall and flash floods.

While talking to APP, Ahmad Zeb Khan the climate expert associated with Serve organisation suggested that to achieve the goal of sustained economic development, we have to work on these objectives. First, To pursue sustained economic growth by appropriately addressing the challenges of climate change. Second, To focus on pro-poor gender-sensitive adaptation, while also promoting mitigation to the extent possible in a cost-effective manner. Third, To ensure water security, food security and energy security of the area in the face of the challenges posed by climate change. Fourth, To minimize the risks arising from the expected increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and tropical storms. and Fifth, To establish a proper mechanism of early warning system to minimize damages and loss of life, he added.

In 2022, the 233 villages of five Tehsils of District DIKhan were hit by hill torrents due to climate change, at almost mid night. The flood entered the houses and damaged them totally or partially. The main reason was choking of flood drains originating from Tank Zam, Gomal Zam, Sheikh Haider Zam, Chaudwan Zam and Daraban Zam, the discharge from each was over 100,000 cusecs. The 233 Revenue villages of Tehsil DIKhan, Paharpur, Paroa, Daraban and Kulachi are located on the edge of main flood drain and during the floods water entered their villages from two sides and totally damaged the villages. About 90% of the houses collapsed and damaged the streets water supply system and Primary/ secondary drains of the villages. The communities of these villages have requested for restoration and rehabilitation of these small infrastructure schemes and services, besides restoration of flood protection dikes around the villages to avoid future devastation.

Although the Government and Non-Government agencies have provided some support, yet a lot of recovery interventions are needed to restore the basic infrastructure in these flood affected villages. The Government is in the process of restoring main highways, schools, health facilities etc. but farm to market roads, small bridges, street pavements, and drainage system, irrigation channels, flood protection walls around villages are still to be rehabilitated and restored. Moreover, the livelihoods of the people in these villages have also been severely affected. People are selling their assets to reconstruct their houses. The climate change has impacted and strained the agriculture sector in the region and has disrupted the entire pattern of cultivation. The sowing and harvesting of different crops especially wheat has changed considerably in terms of months depending on rain patterns and weather, the climate expert said.

To replenish the damage caused and prevent future catastrophe the most important of all, is to rehabilitate flood channels of Tank Zam, Daraban Zam, Sheikh Haider Zam, and Chaudwan Zam, he added. The climate expert further said that by rehabilitation of flood channels not only will provide irrigation water in arid zone but will also work as drains for flood water. The flood channels are in a very bad shape due to neglect of the Government and the communities that has resulted in massive destruction.

Met office forecast downpour in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): The Regional Meteorological Center Quetta has forecast that a low-pressure system is likely to approach eastern and southern parts of Balochistan on Monday evening that may cause widespread rain/thunderstorm in Naseerabad, Sibi, Kalat, Lasbela and Loralai divisions till the end of the month.

Under the influence of this weather system, various parts of the province are expected to experience wind and thundershowers

from August 26 to 31.

Due to downpour system, heavy rainfall, wind and thundershower are expected in Naseerabad, Kalat, Lasbela and Loralai while there may be torrential rain at a few places in Harnai, Ziarat, Kachhi, Sibi, Jhal Magsi, Khuzdar.

The regional Met Centre issued alert that torrential rains may generate flash flooding in local nullahs, streams and hill torrents of Awaran, Lasbela, Hub, Khuzdar,

Kohlu, Dera Bugti, Loralai, Barkhan, MusaKhail, Harnai, Kachhi, Ziarat, Jhal Magsi, Naseerabad.

The Centre forecasted that flood may occur in low laying areas of Sibi, Sohbatpur, Jaffarabad, Usta Muhammad region.

The departments concerned are advised to remain vigilant and take all precautionary measures to mitigate the potential impacts of flooding and heavy rains in the province.

Hindus celebrate Thadri in northern Sindh

SUKKUR (APP): The Hindu minority community across northern Sindh celebrated the Thadri (meaning Thadhro, cold) festival here on Sunday.

The Thadri is a famous traditional festival, celebrated in the Siraman/Saawan month of the monsoon season.

On this day women decorate the doorways of their houses and do mud plaster to their kitchens.

No cooking activities were done on this day.

The sweet roties (mitho

lolo) made of pure ghee are offered to Shitla Mata to stay safe from various diseases.

Sweet roties are exchanged with relatives and friends and if needed women cook fresh food or tea in the temporary fireplace. It has also been learned that in Sindh "Thadri" reflected a tribute to Shitla Mata, who was believed to cure chicken poxes (Achbira).

Talking to APP, Sukkur's Mukhi Aishwer Lal said thousands of

years ago, when the land of Moen-Jo-Daro was dug, a statue of Shitla Devi was found and since then this day has been dedicated to the deity.

He said such festivals possess a rich history and traditional background but just think for a while in this digital and modern era if people are memorizing their cultural and religious activities it means they have respect and love for such events and are also willing to preserve them.



SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif addressing to media persons at his residence.



Seventh anniversary of flight from Myanmar: Rohingya demand end to violence

DHAKA (Reuters): Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees rallied in camps in Bangladesh on Sunday on the seventh anniversary of the military crackdown that forced them to flee, demanding an end to violence and safe return to Myanmar.

More than a million Rohingya live in squalid camps in southern Bangladesh with little prospect of returning home, where they are mostly denied citizenship and other rights.

Thousands more are believed to have fled Myanmar's Rakhine state in recent weeks, as fighting escalates between troops of the ruling junta and the Arakan Army, the powerful

ethnic militia that recruits from the Buddhist majority.

Refugees, from children to the elderly, waved placards and chanted slogans in the camps in Cox's Bazar, many wearing ribbons bearing the words 'Rohingya Genocide Remembrance'.

"Hope is home" and "We Rohingya are the citizens of Myanmar," the placards read.

"Enough is enough. Stop violence and attacks on the Rohingya community," refugee Hafizur Rahman said.

The latest attacks are the worst violence against the Rohingya since a 2017 Myanmar military-led campaign, which the United Nations described

as having genocidal intent, forced more than 73,000 to flee across the Bangladesh border.

Densely populated Bangladesh says repatriating the refugees to Myanmar is the only solution. Local communities have been increasingly hostile as funds for the Rohingya have dried up.

Bangladesh is in no position to accept more Rohingya refugees, de facto foreign minister Mohammad Touhid Hossain told Reuters this month, asking India and other countries to do more.

Hossain also called for more international pressure on the Arakan Army to stop attacking the Rohingya in

Rakhine state.

The UN children's agency UNICEF has raised alarm over the worsening situation in Rakhine, citing increasing reports of civilians, especially children, being caught in the crossfire.

It said that seven years after the exodus from Myanmar "about half a million Rohingya refugee children are growing up in the world's largest refugee camp".

"We want to return to our homeland with all the rights. The United Nations should take initiatives to ensure our livelihood and peaceful coexistence with other ethnic communities in Myanmar," Rohingya refugee Mohammed Taher said.



DHAKA: Rohingya refugees shout slogans as they gather to mark seventh anniversary of their fleeing from neighbouring Myanmar to escape a military crackdown in 2017, during heavy monsoon rains in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Ten dead in northern Ethiopia landslide

ADDIS ABABA (AFP/APP): Ten people have been killed in a landslide in northern Ethiopia's Amhara region, according to local state media, the latest natural disaster to strike the country. The Amhara Media Corporation reported Saturday that "10 people have died in the disaster", quoting local administrator Tesfaye Workneh who said four bodies had been pulled from the mud.

The report did not indicate what time the landslide occurred on Saturday in the North Gondar zone in Amhara region, or whether there was a search ongoing.

Eight other people were seriously hurt in the incident and were receiving treatment, the AMC said, citing the local official.

As many as 2,400 people had been "displaced by the disaster and are currently sheltered in local social institutions", it added.

Photographs shared on the AMC's official Facebook page showed people carrying what appeared to be at least one body from the epicentre of the huge mudslide. It is the latest of a series of landslides that have occurred in Ethiopia as a result of heavy seasonal rains.

A recent United Nations OCHA report, citing the Ethiopian Metrology Institute, warned "of high risks of further flooding and landslides in most parts of the country".

A massive landslide killed 229 people and displaced thousands more when it struck a remote community in Kencho Shacha Gozdi in southern Ethiopia in July. A week after the tragedy, six people were killed in the Gishere district in the neighbouring Sidama regional state, local officials said.

Earlier this month, at least 11 people perished in a landslide in southern Ethiopia in the Kawo Koissha district of the Wolaita administrative zone.

Bangladesh metro back on track

DHAKA (AFP/APP): Bangladesh's metro railway in the notoriously congested capital Dhaka resumed Sunday, more than a month after it was closed during the peak of student-led protests that eventually toppled the prime minister.

Much in the troubled South Asian nation remains in political turmoil since the revolution that ousted Sheikh Hasina and ended her 15-year-long iron-fisted rule, but on Sunday, the trains at least were back on track.

Dhaka is one of the world's most densely populated cities, and the railway is a critical transport link in the sprawling megacity of some 20 million people.

Banker Shaheen Sultana said she was delighted her commute to work was a "relaxed" affair after weeks of car-clogged gridlock on the roads.

"I am very happy that it is working again," 40-year-old Sultana said, as she exited a station near her workplace in the city's commercial heart. "It is a great relief." The elevated train network was closed in mid-July during the student-led protest.

In the deadly violence -- which would see hundreds of people killed until Hasina quit and fled the country by helicopter on August 5 -- the stations were vandalized by a mob.

Bangladesh floods: 300,000 people still in emergency shelters

DHAKA (Al Jazeera): River waters in low-lying Bangladesh are receding after days of deadly floods but 300,000 people are still in emergency shelters requiring aid, disaster officials said on Sunday.

The heavy floods, which killed at least 18 people in Bangladesh, have added to the challenges of a new government that took charge this month after mass student-led protests.

Rescue teams, including joint forces of the army, air force and navy, are helping people forced from their homes and bringing aid to those who have lost everything, Disaster Management Minister Faruk-e-Azam said.

"The flood situation is improving as the flood water started to recede," he said.

More than 307,000 people

are in shelters and more than 5.2 million have been affected by the floods, the ministry said.

"Now we are working to restore communication in the affected areas so that we can distribute relief food," Azam said. "We are also taking steps so that contagious diseases don't spread."

People in Bangladesh have been crowdfunding relief efforts.

The floods add to the woes of a nation still reeling from weeks of political turmoil that culminated in the toppling of Sheikh Hasina, who fled to India by helicopter.

She was replaced by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, who is heading an interim government that faces the monumental task of charting democratic reforms ahead

of expected new elections.

Highways and rail lines were damaged between the capital Dhaka and the main port city of Chittagong, making access to badly flooded districts difficult and disrupting business activity.

Monsoon rains cause widespread destruction yearly but climate change is shifting weather patterns and increasing the number of extreme weather events.

The South Asian nation of 170 million people is among the countries most vulnerable to disasters and climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index.

Hard-hit areas include the southeastern regions around Chittagong and Cox's Bazar, home to about a million Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar.

Pope calls for more help for mpox victims

VATICAN CITY (AFP/APP): Pope Francis on Sunday highlighted victims of the mpox virus in his weekly prayers and called on governments and the pharmaceutical industry to do more to get vaccines to the worst-hit countries.

"I pray for all the infected people, in particular the population of the Democratic Republic of Congo, so affected. I express my closeness to the local churches most touched by this disease," the pope said during his Angelus prayers in St Peter's Square.

The World Health Organization this month declared the surge of mpox cases from DR Congo to other African nations to be a global health emergency. It has also called for greater production and sharing of vaccines.

"I encourage governments and private industry to share the technology and available treatments so that nobody lacks adapted medical care," the pope said.

While mpox has been known for decades, a new more deadly and more transmissible strain -- known as Clade 1b -- has

driven the recent surge in cases.

Clade 1b causes death in about 3.6 per cent of cases, with children more at risk, according to the WHO.

The virus has swept across DR Congo, killing more than 570 people so far this year. Outbreaks have been reported in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda since July. The first case in Europe was reported in Sweden last week.

The virus can spread from animals to humans but also between humans through close physical contact.

Boeing's Starliner: a saga marked by setbacks

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): The decision to transfer the crew of Boeing's Starliner to a SpaceX mission after the spacecraft malfunctioned is just the latest twist in a long saga that has undermined the credibility of the US aerospace giant.

Here is a recap of the setbacks and delays on Starliner's journey to fly a crew to the International Space Station -- and how it was unable to bring them back again.

2014: Nasa awards contract
A decade ago NASA chose two companies, Boeing and SpaceX, to each develop a new spacecraft capable of transporting its astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS).

The US space agency asked both to be ready for 2017, as it sought to end its dependence on the Russian spacecraft it had used to ferry astronauts to the ISS since the end of the space shuttle program in 2011.

Boeing was awarded a \$4.2 billion contract, against SpaceX's \$2.6 billion. At the time, billionaire Elon Musk's young company was widely seen as the underdog against Boeing's aerospace might.

2019: Failed unmanned flight
During a first unmanned flight in December 2019, the capsule failed to set itself on the right trajectory and returned to Earth prematurely after two days, without reaching the ISS.

The problem was due to

a clock that was eleven hours late, preventing the capsule from firing its thrusters at the scheduled time.

NASA then realized that another software problem could have led to a catastrophic collision.

The manufacturer was given a long list of recommendations and modifications to make.

2021: False hope
In August 2021, when the rocket was already on the launch pad for another attempt at flight, unexpected moisture caused a chemical reaction that blocked the opening of some of the capsule's valves.

The capsule returned to the factory for inspection over a period of several months.

The delay was in stark contrast to the progress being made by SpaceX, which had been successfully transporting astronauts to the ISS since 2020.

2022: First (unmanned) success
In May 2022, Starliner finally completed its first unmanned test flight.

Despite a few glitches -- including a propulsion system problem detected in flight, but with no adverse consequences -- the capsule lifted off, reached the ISS where it remained docked for several days, and returned safely to Earth.

2023: New worries, new delays
Starliner's nascent momentum was arrested in 2023 when new problems

emerged, delaying preparations for its first manned flight.

One concerned the design of the parachutes that would slow the capsule as it re-entered the atmosphere. It was modified and new tests carried out.

The other was even more surprising: adhesive tape, used over several meters to wrap electrical cables inside the capsule, proved to be flammable and had to be removed.

2024: First manned flight goes awry
The big day finally arrived on June 5, 2024: the capsule lifted off with two astronauts for the first time, a final test mission to prove it was safe before beginning regular operations to the ISS.

But leaks of helium, the gas used to create pressure in the propulsion system, were discovered in flight.

Several thrusters then failed before the capsule docked with the ISS, although all but one were eventually reignited.

NASA feared the capsule would not be able to achieve the thrust necessary to return to Earth.

As a result, the space agency took a radical decision: to transfer the two astronauts to a SpaceX mission and return Starliner empty.

Analysis of the flight will determine the path forward -- and how long any new delays will last.

Boeing has already gone \$1.6 billion over budget on the program.

Authorities: Suspect in German stabbing rampage is Syrian man

FRANKFURT (Reuters): A suspect in German police custody following a stabbing rampage in the city of Solingen that killed three people and injured eight is a 26-year-old Syrian man, authorities said on Sunday as they looked into his possible links with Islamic State.

The incident, along with the militant group's claim of responsibility, sparked concern among some politicians who urged enhanced security, tighter curbs on weapons, stiffer punishment for violent crimes, and limits to immigration.

The attack occurred during a festival on Friday evening in the Fronhof, a market square, where live bands were playing to celebrate Solingen's 650-year

history. Mourners have made a makeshift memorial near the scene.

The suspect turned himself in late on Saturday and admitted to the crime, Duesseldorf police and prosecutors said in a joint statement early on Sunday.

"The involvement of this person is currently under intensive investigation," they said.

Friedrich Merz, a prominent politician who leads the opposition, centre-right CDU party, urged that the country stopped admitting further refugees from Syria and Afghanistan.

"It's enough!" he said in a letter on his website.

The suspect came from a home for refugees in Solingen that was searched on Saturday, North Rhine-

Westphalia's interior minister, Herbert Reul, said.

Der Spiegel magazine, citing unidentified security sources, said the suspected had moved to Germany late in 2022 and sought asylum.

German federal prosecutors have taken over the case and are investigating whether the suspect was a member of Islamic State, a spokesperson for the prosecutors said.

The group described the man who carried out the attack as a "soldier of the Islamic State" in a statement on its Telegram account on Saturday.

It did not provide evidence for this assertion and details of the suspect's possible membership of the group were not immediate-

ly known.

Hendrik Wuest, premier of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia where Solingen is located, on Saturday described the attack as an act of terror.

Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) has said there have been around a dozen Islamist-motivated attacks since 2000. One of the biggest was in 2016, when a Tunisian drove a truck into a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 12 and injuring dozens.

"The risk of jihadist-motivated acts of violence remains high. The Federal Republic of Germany remains a direct target of terrorist organizations," the BKA said in the report earlier this year.

Arrest of Telegram CEO Pavel Durov 'ridiculous', says lawyer

LONDON (BBC News): The lawyer of Telegram chief Pavel Durov, who has been arrested in France, has said the it is "absolutely ridiculous" and an attack on freedom of speech.

Durov was arrested by French police after his private jet had landed at Le Bourget Airport in Paris on Saturday, French media reported.

According to officials, the 39-year-old billionaire was detained in relation to an investigation about a lack of moderators on Telegram - which it has previously denied.

Mr Durov is accused of failing to take steps to curb criminal uses of Telegram. The app is accused of not cooperating with law enforcement over drug trafficking, child sexual content and fraud.

His lawyer, Dmitry Agranovsky, told Russian news outlet RIA Novosti that the accusations were similar to blaming a car

manufacturer for an accident, or for its cars being used for crimes.

Pavel Durov was born in Russia and lives in Dubai. He holds dual citizenship of the United Arab Emirates and France.

Telegram is particularly popular in Russia, Ukraine and former Soviet Union states.

The app was banned in Russia in 2018, after a previous refusal by him to hand over user data. The ban was reversed in 2021.

Telegram is ranked as one of the major social media platforms after Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok and Wechat.

Pavel Durov founded Telegram in 2013. He left Russia in 2014 after refusing to comply with government demands to shut down opposition communities on his VKontakte social media platform, which he sold.

On Sunday, the Russian Embassy in France wrote

on Facebook that it was seeking to "clarify the reasons for the detention and to provide for the protection of Mr Durov's rights and facilitate consular access".

"As of today, the French authorities are, at the present time, not cooperating on this issue," it added.

Russian Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova posted on Telegram asking whether Western human rights NGOs would be silent on Mr Durov's arrest, after they criticised Russia's decision to "create obstacles" to the work of Telegram in Russia in 2018.

Several Russian officials condemned the businessman's arrest, saying it showed the West has double standards when it comes to free speech and democracy.

X owner Elon Musk, who has faced extensive criticism over moderation and material hosted by his

own social media site, posted repeatedly about the situation.

He hashtagged one post #freepavel, and in another wrote: "[Point of view: It's 2030 in Europe and you're being executed for liking a meme."

Telegram allows groups of up to 200,000 members, which critics have argued makes it easier for misinformation to spread, and for users to share conspiracist, neo-Nazi, paedophilic, or terror-related content.

In the UK, the app was scrutinised for hosting far-right channels that were instrumental in organising the violent disorder in English cities earlier this month.

Telegram did remove some groups, but overall its system of moderating extremist and illegal content is significantly weaker than that of other social media companies and messenger apps, say cybersecurity experts.

Venezuela opposition candidate issued summons over vote dispute

CARACAS (AFP/APP): Venezuelan prosecutors have summoned opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia for questioning Monday as part of a criminal investigation following the country's disputed presidential election claimed by strongman Nicolas Maduro.

"Citizen Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia" is summoned "on August 26 at 10 am for an interview," prosecutors said Saturday, as part of an investigation into the opposition's publishing of electoral records which it claims show Maduro was clearly defeated.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab, a Maduro ally, had foreshadowed the summoning Friday, saying Gonzalez Urrutia would have to explain his "disobedience."

Saab said the opposition's website, where it has posted a detailed breakdown of election results, had "usurped" the powers of the Maduro-aligned CNE electoral council.

Opposition leader Maria Corina Machado was defi-

ant, calling in a post on X for Venezuelans to take to the streets again on Wednesday.

"One month after our glorious victory, in which Edmundo Gonzalez was elected President, Venezuelans again take to the streets," she said, calling for supporters to come "with family, with your children, with your grandchildren and with your voting record in hand."

The CNE declared Maduro the winner of the July 28 election with 52 percent of votes cast, but has refused to publish detailed results, claiming hackers had corrupted the data.

An observer mission from the US-based Carter Center said there was no evidence of a cyber attack.

The polling station-level results published by the opposition show that Gonzalez Urrutia, a 74-year-old retired diplomat, defeated Maduro with 67 percent of the vote.

Maduro has called for the arrest of Gonzalez Urrutia, who has not been seen in public since he led

a march on July 30 with Machado.

Machado, banned from running in the election, is also in hiding. She has demanded that Maduro enter into transition negotiations, which he has rejected outright.

On Saturday, she said in a televised Fox News interview that Maduro had unleashed a brutal "campaign of terror."

She pledged to "keep on fighting, peacefully protesting, increasing pressure domestically and internationally, until Maduro understands that his best option is to accept the terms of a negotiation that would bring us to a transition to democracy."

Venezuela's top court, widely regarded as loyal to Maduro, on Thursday certified his reelection to a third, six-year term, and reprimanded Gonzalez Urrutia for not appearing as ordered.

The opposition candidate refused to attend the hearings, saying doing so would risk his freedom.

Protests following the disputed vote left 27 peo-

ple dead, including two military members, and nearly 200 injured.

More than 2,400 people have also been arrested in the wake of the election, including some high-profile opposition members.

The United States, European Union, several Latin American countries and multilateral bodies have refused to recognize Maduro's victory claim without seeing the detailed results.

Mexico, Brazil and Colombia have been promoting negotiations to find a way out of the Venezuelan crisis.

The leaders of Brazil and Colombia on Saturday issued a joint statement reiterating a call for the CNE to release detailed vote results, while saying they "take note" of the Supreme Court ruling.

"Both presidents remain convinced that the credibility of the electoral process can only be restored through the transparent publication of disaggregated and verifiable data," the statement said.

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India plays opportunistic game in US

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi told his hosts in Kyiv on Friday, one month after his visit to Moscow, he was committed to playing a personal role in trying to mediate in the over-2-year-old conflict between Ukraine and Russia, urging both sides "to sit together and look for ways to come out of this crisis".

However, before and during his meeting with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on the same day, Indian Minister of Defense Rajnath Singh showed the Modi government is ready to take advantage of the United States for its own narrow ends at the cost of rising tensions in its neighborhood.

Speaking to a gathering of Indian-Americans in Washington on Thursday during his four-day visit to the United States, Singh spoke of India's commitment to strengthening its strategic partnership with the US, while warning New Delhi's neighbors about the emergence of a more assertive nation. "Previously, some of our neighbors thought they could trouble India at will, but India is no longer weak. We are now counted among the world's strongest nations." Although Singh and his hosts singled out no country, there is no doubt which country was high on their minds during their exchanges.

Austin said after the inking of some new agreements on strengthening bilateral military cooperation in supply chains, weapon innovations and regional operational coordination, "We share a vision of a free and open 'Indo-Pacific', and our defense cooperation continues to grow stronger and stronger". That defense cooperation also includes the US' geopolitical tool, the Quad which groups Australia, Japan and India with the US.

The Indian defense chief, who knows much better than anyone else how far the Indian military is from the modern level, will also be well aware the latest security agreements, like their predecessors, can only be described as broad but shallow.

But despite the US' apparent intent to take advantage of India's border disputes with China to support its China-containment strategy, and its desire to explore the feasibility of treating India as an alternative to China in both manufacturing and market, Washington is uneasy about New Delhi's close ties with Moscow and India-Russia trade that has swelled remarkably along with the ramping up of US-led sanctions on Russia.

The practical cooperation between India and Russia is of more strategic significance to the former than its practical cooperation with the US. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Russia provided 65 percent of India's weapons purchases, totaling over \$60 billion, in the past two decades. And Russian oil now accounts for over two-fifths of India's oil imports.

That means even if the US views India as an outsourcing alternative to China for US companies and a playable piece in its geopolitical game with China, the mutual trust between New Delhi and Moscow is clearly deeper than that between New Delhi and Washington. Washington will therefore be cautious about choosing which industries and technologies can work together with those of India, and which weapons can be sold to India.

US policymakers' scruples in working with India in both the economic and military fields do not come from the latter being a power but its opportune tightrope walking between Russia and the US. Washington will never allow itself to be treated as one side of the bread some can choose to butter or not at will. Claiming "India is no longer weak" and "India and the US are the two forces which can bring peace, prosperity and stability in the world" in Washington, the Indian defense minister was just telling the world the opposite.

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Kamala Harris has put a spring in the Democrats' step

Yossi Mekelberg

The passing of the Democratic Party torch from President Joe Biden to Vice President Kamala Harris at the Democratic National Convention last week was put together in a hurry but, in fairness, it should have been the party's "project" from day one of this political partnership, four years ago.

Biden has enjoyed a long and distinguished political career in the service of his country and party but, as in any other walk of life, and especially in the ruthless world of politics, there comes a point when giving way to those who represent the younger generation becomes necessary and inevitable.

This is especially true when the stakes are enormously high, and none are more so than the forthcoming US presidential election. To ensure his legacy and safeguard US democracy, Biden had only one option, considering the polls were consistently suggesting that his time was up.

The prevailing view in 2020 was that Biden's incoming administration was aiming from the outset to plug a hole in terms of the damage that had been caused to American democracy and the nation's international credibility, which threatened to become a flood had Donald Trump won a second term.

Biden was there to help the country emerge successfully from the COVID-19 pandemic and heal the wounds inflicted by the divisive and disruptive term of his predecessor.

Few thought he would be a two-term president — except the president himself, who most definitely did. However, when it became apparent that the game was up and his chances of winning the election in November were rapidly dwindling, all credit is due to him for acting with dignity and grace and stepping aside.

In his speech to the Democratic National Convention he was gracious in his endorsement of Harris, declaring: "Selecting Kamala was the very first decision I made when I became our nominee and it's the best decision I made in my whole career." He went on to say: "She's tough, she's experienced and she has enormous integrity."

They have had their differences in the past, and like many VPs before her Harris was not always comfortable in her job, but now, signaling a unity within his party, Biden has promised to be "the best volunteer" for her campaign against Republican rival Donald Trump.

Though it only happened two months ago, the televised debate between Biden and Trump in June now feels like ancient history, and the Democrats' fortunes immediately turned around when the president declared he would not seek reelection and instead backed Harris as his heir presumptive.

The renewed spring in the Democratic Party's step was instant, as was the change in voting intentions of so many who might otherwise have voted for

Trump or, more likely, stayed home on election day rather than voting for either Trump or Biden to lead America for another four years.

For these voters, both of those candidates represent the past, not the future. Certainly, until recently Harris was not a popular vice president but the effect on voters when she

relief and hope, channeling this new-found optimism into support for Harris' candidacy.

In strong contrast to her president, Harris is not only much younger and more energetic but also a woman of color, and should she be elected as US president in November she will likely shatter a multitude of glass ceilings.

The party's rank and file, who after the presidential debate believed their project was doomed and had lost all motivation to campaign for a lost cause, responded to this changing of the guard with great relief and hope, channeling this new-found optimism into support for Harris' candidacy. In strong contrast to her president, Harris is not only much younger and more energetic but also a woman of color, and should she be elected as US president in November she will likely shatter a multitude of glass ceilings. One advantage of the endorsement of Harris as the Democratic presidential candidate coming relatively late in the process was that she did not have to endure the grueling process of the primaries, during which, win or lose, reputations can be dented, if not destroyed, by the time they conclude. Instead, she received the almost universal endorsement of her party and quickly selected a running mate, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota, to complement what she offers the electorate but also to run alongside her as someone with no obvious ambition to succeed her. While the energy and buzz around the Harris-Walz ticket — and more importantly their party's instant surge in the polls, including in crucial swing states — seems to have justified the unusual decision to replace a presumptive nominee who had won the primaries by a mile, what is still missing from this partnership and their campaign is clear and detailed set of policies on the issues that most concern the American people. As much as foreign affairs issues such as the wars in Gaza or Ukraine attract much political and media attention, and rightly so, Americans vote primarily on the merits of what their politicians promise and offer on domestic issues. It is generally the approaches candidates take to the economy, the cost of living, crime and violence, poverty and homelessness, and the availability and the affordability of healthcare that matter to voters, as much as their views on abortion rights.

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As much as foreign affairs issues such as the wars in Gaza or Ukraine attract much political and media attention, and rightly so, Americans vote primarily on the merits of what their politicians promise and offer on domestic issues. It is generally the approaches candidates take to the economy, the cost of living, crime and violence, poverty and homelessness, and the availability and the affordability of healthcare that matter to voters, as much as their views on abortion rights.

While four years ago Biden had a task force writing for him a policy paper of more than 100 pages to back his bid for the White House, Harris is mainly cherry-picking from the current administration's policies. In her defense, she can always argue that as part of the current administration, the successes of its policies are equally hers, and that considering she did not plan to run for president, at least for another four years, she was not able to develop more detailed policies in advance but mainly set her vision in terms of her own principles and values.

But she might find this argument under increasing scrutiny the closer it gets to polling day. To be sure, Trump is himself vague about specific policies and has no intention of presenting any clarity. He has clearly been rattled by the quick turn of events and, true to his character, has resorted to personal attacks on Harris' looks, her laugh, and her ethnic background. He has also, absurdly, characterized her as a "communist," which suggests he has never bothered to read the Communist Manifesto or any related literature.

By now, the Harris-Walz camp is very familiar with Trump's crude and underhand tactics and is not fazed or threatened by them. Their road to the White House lies in the development of a social agenda that appeals to those who are being badly hurt by the high cost of living, who cannot afford housing, health or education, and who feel marginalized in American society. It lies in not scaring away those who are afraid of an agenda that is too progressive, and instead reaching out to them. And it lies, every step of the way, in rising above Trump's personal attacks and treating them as no more than background noise.

C. Asia emerges as a priority for Gulf states

Zaid M. Belbagi

In the past decade, the Middle East has been marked by an era of diversification. The Gulf states, in particular, have embarked on ambitious economic diversification programs, transforming their traditionally hydrocarbon-dependent economies by enhancing their non-oil sectors. Regional actors have invested in diverse sectors from renewables to sports to tourism. The spirit of diversification has also been evident in the region's foreign policy and international partnerships. As the Gulf states have increasingly sought to reduce their dependence on Western partners in recent years, Central Asia has emerged as a priority.

The Gulf and Central Asia have historically shared strong trade relations focused almost exclusively on oil and gas. The majority of the region's oil and gas reserves are concentrated in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also hold oil reserves, with further explorations underway. Kyrgyzstan has abundant

investments.

The growing relationship between the Gulf and Central Asia, however, comes with its own challenges. Central Asia is a crucial part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, a major international trade route. Toward this end, China has made significant investments in infrastructure and energy projects in the region. In parallel, Russia is keen to preserve its historical economic and military influence in the region. Russia and China are also joined by Turkiye, a long-standing partner of Central Asia given their strong cultural and economic ties.

There is, indeed, potential for Gulf investments in the region to coexist and collaborate with those of China, Russia, and Turkiye, particularly in the sphere of infrastructure and transportation. Gulf investments in transport and logistics infrastructure in countries such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan could facilitate easier access to European and Asian markets, providing all the competing states with alternative

Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been at the forefront of Gulf investments in Central Asia, although Oman and Qatar have also joined these efforts. While the Gulf sovereign wealth funds have actively invested in domestic non-oil sectors, diversifying international investments is also key to secure post-oil economies in the region. Gulf cooperation with Central Asia is not only at the bilateral state level, but also at the interregional Gulf Cooperation Council level. The second Foreign Ministerial Meeting of the Central Asia-GCC Strategic Dialogue was held in Tashkent in April.

coal reserves and, on the whole, the region is rich in mineral resources.

In recent years, this strategically vital region has received significant economic interest from the Gulf states. While both the Gulf and Central Asia are home to rich oil and gas reserves, the Gulf states have been more successful in establishing robust hydrocarbon industries. Consequently, their ability to use this expertise to develop the Central Asian hydrocarbon industry has encouraged strategic cooperation between the two regions. Beyond hydrocarbons, Gulf investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and manufacturing in Central Asia are also avenues for guaranteeing food security in the Gulf.

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This interest in economic cooperation and diversification has emerged equally from both regions. Gulf investments have allowed the five Central Asian nations to diversify their economic partnerships and reduce dependence on any single power. The Central Asian states, which were historically a part of the Soviet Union and are located in China's immediate neighborhood, have traditionally relied on Russia and China for much of their economic activities.

However, the Central Asian states are wary of the debt-trap diplomacy that has characterized China's Belt and Road Initiative investments. China's challenging economic conditions domestically have also made its appetite for international investment increasingly uncertain. At the same time, Russian influence in the region has waned since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, which has resulted in international sanctions and a reorientation of Russian resources toward the Ukrainian front. Seeking to avoid the cultural and economic expansionism of the two neighboring great powers and diversifying international partnerships, Central Asia has welcomed Gulf

routes for exports.

However, given each actor's outsized focus on the sphere of energy investments, this has emerged as a source of geopolitical tensions and competition. Hydrocarbons and renewable energy, two resources Central Asia is well endowed with, are particularly lucrative for international investors. The convergence of Central Asia's natural resources, strategic location, and growing markets with the geopolitical ambitions of investing countries has inevitably turned the region into an economic battleground.

This is further complicated by the fact that the competing states share positive economic and strategic relations with each other. Turkiye, which in the past has had tense relations with the Gulf, in recent years has witnessed a diplomatic thaw with the GCC states. Notably, Saudi-China relations have grown significantly, with an increase in Chinese investment in diverse sectors in Saudi Arabia, including AI, automated vehicles, solar power, and infrastructure. This indicates that the Gulf states will be wary of any partnership with Central Asia that may jeopardize their own cooperation with China. The growing bilateral and multilateral cooperation between these states is contrasted with their competing interest in regional influence in Central Asia.

The recent spurt in Gulf investments in Central Asia has thus transformed the region into a new economic battleground. Gulf states are not only competing with Turkiye, China, and Russia, but also with each other for regional influence. Its geostrategic location and economic potential has positioned Central Asia as a natural arena for competition. The Gulf states seek to leverage their individual economic strength to position themselves as influential diplomatic players in the region.

This comes as states across the global south are actively building international influence and new partnerships to move away from the shadow of the West. As such, over the next decade Central Asia will remain a strategic battleground for the Gulf states, witnessing both collaboration and competition. For their part, the Central Asian states are unlikely to favor any one international partner given their interest in diversifying investments to secure their economies. The competing powers may, therefore, seek to maximize cooperation in the region, notably in energy security, transport infrastructure, and counterterrorism.

Black freedom has never been on the ballot

Yannick Giovanni Marshall

I almost wish someone would ask us: how does it feel to be a pit stop? To be a refuelling station where sputtering-out political campaigns pull up to receive a laying on of hands; where a Black baritone reverend holds the president's shoulder and between benedictions issues forth some version of the declaration that "We know Joe"? And that president passes the torch to a Black candidate who can siphon Black popular culture and sponge down a government busy giving standing ovations to the Butcher of Gaza.

I almost wish someone would ask before the politicians slip off their oxfords: how does it feel to know that they are only here for the night? To know (what is by now an open secret) that although they promise that we are in this together they have only stopped by to use us. To make us promises and then dart off to fundraising dinners before we can whisper, "Hush now, don't explain."

Is it not time, now, to refuse to be ping-ponged between those who stand with genocidaires and those who dream of a day of retribution for our surviving them? Can we not saddle up and build a world away from those who dance to our music in the clubs but turn us away at the entrance? Who shoot us when we call for help and circulate minstrel memes of our killed as if they were digital lynching postcards?

Why resign ourselves to wait for the enlightenment

of evil? To be mules beaten from four years to four years, promised this time really "change is gonna come" as the Earth shrivels, Nazis are inspired, and presidential candidates openly challenge one another to golf.

This time will not be different. It is either victory for the lynch mob who marched on the Capitol building with nooses and Confederate battle flags, or those who ask us to look past the slurs they spit at us to "what we have in common". It is a battle between those who celebrate the

The US has proven itself to be a state where a leftist Black candidate who is not accountable, first and foremost, to white liberals is unelectable. The daring few who speak up against ethnic cleansing abroad are cane-hooked from the stage by Super PACs.

As for the rest, if they pay lip service to our liberation, it is openly confessed by their surrogates that this is a trick to gain our support and that they will eventually "pivot" to the centre. That is, after teasing freedom they will move closer to the people who ridicule

remain hostile to Black liberation. While racists bask in the likely return of a president who promises to be their "retribution", no Black candidate can win if they utter a word about reparations for slavery, or agree that Black Lives Matter, or make statements seen as sympathetic to the Defund the Police movement. Criticising the inflated budgets of institutions that hire and protect the men and women who shoot us in our nightgowns and leave us to die on our kitchen floors when we call them for help is toxic in a

Obama despite his imperialist wars. Kamala Harris despite her perp-walking parents of "truant" children. Cornel West despite his love will find a way. Tim Scott.

Should such a system that punishes any agenda for Black freedom be rewarded with Black energy? Should we still accept as wise the maxim that "progress is slow" when Nazism makes gains overnight? Should we accept to stand by the door, cap in hand, as they speed by in their motorcades? To be lectured, again, about pragmatism? To be told that we must place our hope in a society where one cannot win an election without appealing to racists?

Vote if you must, why not? But this time, when we close the voting booth's curtain, perhaps we should pivot as well. And turn our backs on a system that still sees our liberation as a liability. Reorient our political identity towards the rising Black anticolonial internationalism that does not, after promising to fight racism, shift to winning over racists. That seeks not to "make our voices against lynching heard" but to make those who would lynch hesitate.

We must push past the merry-go-round of leaders that say every four years "This is our time" then "We must wait more". We must pour that snake oil out onto the road. No more waiting on the messiah Democrat politician. None seeks to be our "retribution". Patience has only led us to the gate of lynch mob rule.

Foreign policy makes 2024 US race different from 1968

Andrew Hammond

of oil quadrupled in less than a year.

Turning to Ukraine, Kyiv this month launched a spectacular new offensive inside Russia, which at the time of writing has gained more than 1,000 sq. km of territory, estimates suggest. After months of Moscow making gains in Ukraine this has, at least temporarily, changed the narrative of the war.

In the Asia-Pacific, meanwhile, significant numbers of American voters are concerned about the potential for a crisis there, too, possibly over Taiwan. This could create a third major source of international conflict for the US and its Western allies, with their resources increasingly stretched.

US on foreign policy has emerged in recent years; if anything the gaps are widening. Even before Trump took office as president in 2017, many Republicans and Democrats differed significantly in their views on the power and standing of the US internationally; on the degree to which the country should be unilateralist in its approach; in their attitudes toward the fight against terrorism and the methods through which it was being fought; and on what the priorities of American foreign policy should be.

The divisions have only grown since Trump's presidency, with significantly divergent US grand strategies evident this year: Trump's "America First" agenda versus the more internationalist vision of

No clear consensus between the parties in the US on foreign policy has emerged in recent years; if anything the gaps are widening. Even before Trump took office as president in 2017, many

Republicans and Democrats differed significantly in their views on the power and standing of the US internationally; on the degree to which the country should be unilateralist in its approach; in their attitudes toward the fight against terrorism and the methods through which it was being fought; and on what the priorities of American foreign policy should be. The divisions have only grown since Trump's presidency, with significantly divergent US grand strategies evident this year: Trump's "America First" agenda versus the more internationalist vision of the Biden-Harris administration, which is much more reminiscent of the foreign policy approach of Republican and Democratic predecessors in the early post-war era. The increasing polarization of foreign policy reduces the scope for the long-standing tradition of Americans "rallying around the flag" in times of geopolitical tensions. This is illustrated by the attempt by some Republicans to blame the actions of the Biden-Harris administration for current geopolitical tensions.

Yet, even if foreign policy issues were to grow significantly during the remainder of this year, possibly as a result of heightened tensions in the Asia-Pacific, there is still one key difference between the situations now and during the first quarter-century of the Cold War: The earlier period was characterized by a relative consensus between Republicans and Democrats on policy, and widespread bipartisan cooperation, on foreign affairs.

Now, however, this policy domain is significantly more divisive. Certainly, the early Cold War consensus can be overstated. Nonetheless a significant degree of bipartisan agreement on foreign affairs, and wider political decorum, did exist at the time, at least until it fell apart in the late 1960s under the strain of the Vietnam debacle and the demise of the notion of monolithic Communism in light of the Sino-Soviet split.

No clear consensus between the parties in the

the Biden-Harris administration, which is much more reminiscent of the foreign policy approach of Republican and Democratic predecessors in the early post-war era.

The increasing polarization of foreign policy reduces the scope for the longstanding tradition of Americans "rallying around the flag" in times of geopolitical tensions. This is illustrated by the attempt by some Republicans to blame the actions of the Biden-Harris administration for current geopolitical tensions.

It is, therefore, increasingly plausible, especially if the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine continue for the rest of the year, that the salience of international issues could remain high on election day.

Moreover, the partisan opinion splits on foreign policy will only reinforce the high degree of political polarization in the US, potentially increasing, even further, the global interest in the race for the White House.

Under the radar, Ireland is helping illegal Israeli settlements do business

Ireland has been called the most pro-Palestinian country in Europe. So this might surprise you: at the same time – largely under the radar – it has been playing a pivotal role in connecting businesses in illegal Israeli settlements with consumers around the world.

Take the case of Etsy, the popular platform for more "ethical" artisanal and vintage shopping online. The company's business outside the Americas is handled by its Irish subsidiary. This business includes hosting dozens of shops that explicitly list illegal settlements as their locations (as documented in a recent investigative report I worked on).

Etsy has a big Dublin office not far from Ireland's parliament, which has been discussing a new bill to prohibit state investment in settlement businesses. It is the latest but not the only example of such contradictions. Airbnb has been challenged for years for listing properties in settlements, also through its Dublin-based subsidiary.

What is going on here? Two Irish trends seem to be colliding with each other. For decades, Ireland has worked to make itself a particularly "attractive" base for expanding multinational companies. Meanwhile, it has a long history of opposing occupation and it has been on the global stage for supporting Palestinian rights and statehood.

This is why people of conscience around the world should keep an eye on the Emerald Isle. It has an opportunity to help protect global consumers from complicity in Israeli war crimes. There also seem to be some clear ways in which the country could take action against settlement businesses, including

under anti-money laundering legislation.

Illegal Israeli settlements have been expanding amid Israel's war and "plausible genocide" in Gaza. They have also been in the news for increasing violence by some settlers against Palestinians who live nearby. The United Nations human rights office said that the establishment and expansion of these settlements amounts to a "war crime".

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in July 2024 also confirmed that

Claire Provost

to learn about how it set up what's considered the first modern Special Economic Zone (SEZ), inspiring the establishment of other corporate carve-outs around the world, including in China.

The United States government still praises Ireland's particularly "pro-business government policies and regulators". The British bank HSBC calls it "a gateway to the European Union" and "a hub for ... thousands of multinational

policies against the sale of things that are illegal or "subject to complex legal regulations". It closed Russian shops amid the invasion of Ukraine. When asked about the settlement shops on its platform, Etsy said: "We have shared this information internally with the appropriate teams for review."

Connections to war crimes demand more urgency and action than this. It is more evidence of why we cannot "leave it to companies" – even "ethical" ones – to ensure that

ment ought to take action to ensure that businesses operating in Ireland are not contributing to Israel's occupation of Palestine." Any company that enables businesses in illegal settlements, he said, "significantly risks violating not only international standards but also Irish law, including anti-money laundering legislation".

Earlier this year, human rights groups including GLAN launched a first-of-its-kind complaint arguing that the Criminal Assets Bureau should seize any revenue generated for Ireland from illegal settlements under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, Dutch prosecutors are currently investigating a criminal complaint against Booking.com, and its business with these illegal settlements. That complaint, launched by other civil society groups including SOMO (the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations), argues that Booking.com (based in the Netherlands) is in breach of Dutch anti-money laundering legislation because proceeds from its business with the illegal settlements are entering the Dutch financial system.

Irish officials should face similarly serious questions about whether and how proceeds of business with illegal Israeli settlements are entering the Irish financial system, against its anti-money laundering laws – and its position on Palestinian rights. Beyond Etsy and Airbnb, there are likely to be many other such Irish connections to the settlements.

It does not seem tenable for the country to continue enabling this business while maintaining its global pro-Palestinian rights reputation. It must choose.

Connections to war crimes demand more urgency and action than this. It is more evidence of why we cannot "leave it to companies" – even "ethical" ones – to ensure that human rights are upheld. We need strong and coherent state responses, too. Ireland's "Illegal Israeli Settlements Divestment Bill" – if passed – would prohibit Irish state investment in businesses that appear in the UN's database of companies that are involved in the settlements. However, there may be others (like Etsy) not yet included in that database.

these settlements go against international law. It was clear that all countries are obliged "not to render aid or assistance in maintaining" this unlawful situation.

Ireland, which additionally officially recognised Palestine as a state earlier this year, is not a country that you'd expect to be enabling illegal Israeli settlements. But it has worked since the 1950s to become a hub for thousands of multinational corporations – including those with connections to these settlements like Etsy and Airbnb.

Previously, while working on my book Silent Coup: How Corporations Overthrew Democracy (with co-author Matt Kennard), I went to Ireland

businesses". Meanwhile, Ireland is considered "one of the world's most successful tax havens". Recently, it has abstained in votes for a historic UN global tax convention to close loopholes that enable tax abuse.

Etsy – which profits when shops list, advertise and sell items via its platform – is one of the many multinational companies that have found a home in Ireland. I was surprised to find illegal Israeli settlements represented among the locations of its shops, given the "ethical consumerism" niche that the company seems to occupy online.

It has a mission to "keep commerce human", and

human rights are upheld. We need strong and coherent state responses, too.

Ireland's "Illegal Israeli Settlements Divestment Bill" – if passed – would prohibit Irish state investment in businesses that appear in the UN's database of companies that are involved in the settlements. However, there may be others (like Etsy) not yet included in that database. State investment is also not the only area of Irish responsibility here.

In response to the findings of Etsy's connections to the settlements, Dr Gearoid O Cuinn, an Irish human rights lawyer and director of GLAN (Global Legal Action Network) said: "The Irish govern-

Climate adaptation is as imperative as mitigation

Clemens Fuest and Maria Waldinger

Debates about climate policy tend to focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This makes sense, given that they are the primary cause of climate change. But global warming is expected to continue under even the most optimistic scenarios, implying that there is an urgent need for comprehensive strategies to minimize the economic costs, public safety risks, and health threats associated with the escalating climate crisis.

While some experts argue that full climate adaptation is impossible, owing to the significant risks posed by global warming, this view is misleading. Admittedly, adaptation alone cannot offset the worst effects of climate

change, and current efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions must be ramped up. But overlooking the need to develop, implement, and invest in strategies aimed at protecting businesses, households and communities from the inevitable consequences of a warming planet would be profoundly irresponsible.

Flood protection is a prime example. As inundations become more frequent and severe, the restoration of floodplains and other proactive measures have become increasingly important. Long-term adaptation should also play a central role in post-disaster reconstruction projects. Instead of repeatedly repairing

houses damaged by floods, for example, it might be more prudent to rebuild them in areas less prone to flooding.

Adaptation efforts are only as effective as the mechanisms to finance them. While many taxpayers understandably support the funding of reconstruction efforts, doing so can create incentives for construction in vulnerable areas.

Instead, these funds would be better spent on measures that protect communities against future flooding; not just building new houses in safer areas, but also investing in targeted research and innovation aimed at helping the sectors affected by climate change, particularly agriculture,

adapt to the threats.

Increasingly dangerous heatwaves also underscore the urgent need for adaptation measures. Although record-breaking temperatures pose significant health risks, particularly to the elderly, pregnant women, and people with preexisting conditions, some countries, such as Germany, are still reluctant to invest in air-conditioning systems and other cooling methods. Yet such systems do not require fossil fuels; they can be powered by solar energy, which is abundant during hot periods.

Extreme heat is especially risky for outdoor workers, highlighting the need to update occupational health

and safety laws. There must be a requirement on companies to put measures in place to protect their employees, such as provision of shaded areas and access to drinking water at all times.

Given that people on low incomes often work in high-risk conditions, climate adaptation offers far-reaching social benefits. The ability to implement such measures is, however, largely restricted to households, municipalities, regions, and countries with sufficient financial resources and technical expertise.

Without adequate adaptation strategies and financing mechanisms, impoverished individuals and com-

munities will disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change, further deepening economic and social disparities locally and globally.

In principle, households and businesses should approach adaptation like any other investment decision. Instead of pursuing every available option, they should focus on those that offer the greatest value, similar to how an entrepreneur would evaluate various expenditures.

Certainly, adaptation efforts face numerous obstacles, including uncertainty about the future trajectory of climate change and the high costs associated with modifying existing structures and processes. Moreover, the scarcity of

information about effective adaptation measures, and how they might be implemented within existing legal frameworks, could drive up costs.

All of this could depress investment in adaptation, especially since the benefits might only be realized in the medium-to-long term.

Nevertheless, governments and the private sector must ensure climate adaptation is a top priority. By anticipating the risks and taking proactive steps to adjust their operations, companies could reduce implementation costs.

Meanwhile, policymakers must invest heavily in building resilient infrastructure, supporting research and innovation, and disseminating vital

information to households, businesses, and local authorities to help them prepare for various climate-related challenges, including floods, heat waves and other extreme weather events.

Adaptation is not only a practical necessity, but it is also a moral imperative. While the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is necessary, adaptation is equally important to ensure that the world's most vulnerable populations do not bear the brunt of the most devastating effects of climate change.

By placing adaptation measures at the heart of climate policies, alongside mitigation efforts, we can create a future that is both resilient and equitable.



Pak, Azerbaijan discusses bilateral trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan have discussed the prospect of bilateral economic and trade relations to further look at bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation in different sectors of the economy.

The Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov met Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan at the residence of Deputy Chairman Senate on Sunday.

During the meeting, issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations and the overall situation of the region were discussed in detail.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Chairman Senate said that Pakistan values its fraternal relations with Azerbaijan and there is a need to increase cooperation between the two countries in the fields of economic and trade, investment, energy, defence, agriculture and natural resources.

The Deputy Chairman

Senate said that there is an urgent need to promote investment and trade between the two countries and it is necessary to remove the existing obstacles for the improvement of the economy. He said that Parliamentary and institutional cooperation can help promote relations at the public level.

Emphasizing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the meeting, the Deputy Chairman Senate said that Pakistan will further promote economic relations with Azerbaijan. Syedaal Khan said that trade and investment opportunities can be found through frequent exchanges of delegations in business sectors.

He said that Pakistan, especially Baluchistan province is rich in mineral wealth and will prove to be important in changing the destiny of this region. Pakistan will prove to be the economic and trade hub

of the region and Investors and businessmen from all over the world should take advantage of the investment opportunities in Pakistan, he added.

The Deputy Chairman Senate said that the relationship between Pakistan and Azerbaijan is based on religious and cultural values.

Emphasis was placed on the work of the delegations regarding the promotion of exchanges.

Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan said that the parliaments have a heavy responsibility for peace and development in the region.

He said that many lives and financial sacrifices have been made in Pakistan in the war against terrorism. Every possible measure will be taken for the peace and survival of this region, he said.

The Deputy Chairman briefed that the Indian government has set the worst

example of cruelty and violation of human rights in occupied Kashmir.

He said that the whole world should take strict measures against the ongoing cruelty and brutality in Palestine and for the freedom of the Palestinians Islamic countries need to adopt a common plan of action.

He said that Prime Minister, Muhammad Shebbaz Sharif and PML-N Leader Muhammad, Nawaz Sharif are working for the development and prosperity of Pakistan. The Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov, agreed with the views of the Deputy Chairman of the Senate and said that Azerbaijan is keen to further develop its relations with Pakistan.

They agreed to prepare an early action plan for the exchange of delegations in business sectors while stressing the need for institutional cooperation.

List of SIMs to be blocked announced

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has announced that all SIM cards issued in the names of deceased individuals will be blocked effective October 15, 2024.

The PTA has urged citizens who wish to transfer such SIMs to their own names to complete the necessary documentation at the relevant SIM provider's franchise or service center to avoid disruption.

This move is part of a three-phase plan by the PTA to block SIMs associated with fraudulent or outdated information.

The first phase, scheduled to begin on August 16, will involve blocking SIMs registered with fake or canceled CNICs. The 2nd phase will target SIMs registered with expired CNICs.

The PTA has obtained data from NADRA to facilitate this process.

Subscribers have already begun receiving messages on their SIMs informing them of the upcoming changes.



ISLAMABAD: People purchasing vegetables from vendor at Weekly Bazaar Peshawar Mor in Federal Capital.

Importers demand climate reporting compliance by 2026

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq has said that global importers linked purchases from Pakistani exporters with reporting climate compliance Oct 2023 and now every producer needs to make sure that it adopts the reporting practices by the year 2026.

Talking here on Sunday to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Ms. Hafsa Abdullah, he said this shift is part of a broader trend where multinational companies are prioritizing sustainable practices in their supply chains to meet environmental, social, and

governance (ESG) criteria. The move signals a growing demand for transparency in how goods are produced, especially concerning environmental impacts. The CEO said that Pakistani exporters now need to align with these evolving expectations. The aim is to ensure that suppliers are contributing to global efforts to mitigate climate change, rather than merely complying with local regulations. Non-compliance could result in reduced orders or, in some cases, the severing of business ties, he added.

He said those who invest in sustainable practices may unlock new market

opportunities, attract foreign investment, and increase their competitiveness on the global stage. By making climate reporting a requirement, global importers are not just focusing on their environmental responsibility but are also pushing entire supply chains towards greener practices. Pakistani producers that adopt these standards early could gain a competitive edge, while those that delay risk being left behind in an increasingly eco-conscious global market. Non-compliance could result in reduced orders or, in some cases, the severing of business ties, he concluded.

HVACR pledges to stand with PPP Alliance

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Heat Ventilation Air Condition Refrigeration Society Pakistan (HVACR-Lahore Chapter) has announced to support the newly-launched the PPP Alliance (PIAF Pioneer Progressive Alliance) in the LCCI polls being held in Sept 2024.

The delegation of Heat Ventilation Air Condition Refrigeration Society Pakistan arrived at PPPA to show the solidarity with the Alliance, holding a meeting with pattern-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar and Chairman Fahemur Rehman Saigol. The executive committee members Malik Khalid Gujjar, Ahsan Shahid, Rana Nadeem Abbas and other businessmen participated in the meeting. Coordination duties were performed by Executive Committee member Mian M. Nawaz.

While addressing the meeting Secretary General Safdar Ali Mughal, Ahmed Naem and others said that Heat Ventilation Air Condition Society will support PPPA in Lahore Chamber Election.

It is to be noted that the

biggest alliance of the three strong groups of LCCI has been established first time in the history of Lahore business community to contest Lahore Chamber's election.

In the meeting, other issues including the Lahore Chamber election campaign were discussed. Speaking on this occasion, Pattern-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar and Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol thanked the delegation and said that we have been working for the rights of traders. He said that HVACR has a very important role in the country's economy.

It will be easy to convey the problems of the related sector to the government from this platform.

Fahimur Rahman said that said that we always raised its voice for early solution of various issues being faced by the business community. He said Alliance would continue its efforts. Hafeez Centre trade body's newly-elected office-bearers paid rich tributes to the alliance leadership in general and Mian Anjum Nisar in particular.

Chairman Fahemur Rehman Saigol said that HVACR has always played an important role in the elections of the Lahore Chamber. In the biggest election of the business community of Lahore, we will be successful once again with the confidence of businessmen and industrialists. After two years, the chamber elections are taking place for which we all have to work very hard. Our leadership always active in solving the problems of the business community on all forums and will not spare any effort in the future.

This time also PPP Alliance will win all the seats with the support of all the markets of Lahore.

The participants of the meeting said that the role of business community is vital for the economic uplift and stability of the country. They appreciated the role being played by the Alliance in the country's economic development. They said at present, tough economic conditions called for taking difficult decisions but the government should improve the economy.

Traders warn of strike as FBR excessive tax notices spark panic among traders

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Warning the government of observing a shutter-down strike countrywide, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) and the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) have asked the FBR to stop harassing the traders and delay the implementation of the so-called tajir scheme, as the undue and excessive tax notices of the FBR have sparked panic among the business community.

The Businessmen Panel (BMP) chairman and patron-in-chief of PIAF Mian Anjum Nisar observed that the traders are being issued undue notices to submit monthly tax of Rs60,000, which is totally unaffordable and unjustifiable, as the tax department has been ignoring what it has agreed with the traders.

He urged the government to introduce special measures broadening the tax base by taking the business community on board, besides forming joint committees at district levels to address the challenges faced by local trade and investment.

He said that the BMP and PIAF will fully back the shutter-down call given by the traders' organization on August 28 (Wednesday) against unjust taxation and government anti-traders policies.

Mian Anjum Nisar strongly opposed the collection of double taxes on imports and demanded to immediately withdraw it. He presented these

demands, which were unanimously approved in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the PIAF through a resolution here in PIAF office on Sunday.

The FPCCI former president said that the notices have been issued to shopkeepers across various markets, irrespective of their registration status, causing widespread concern. We strongly oppose this unjust tax demand, which is inappropriate for both registered and unregistered individuals.

He appealed the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to acknowledge the challenges faced by shopkeepers, whose businesses are already struggling due to diminished purchasing power and inflation. He urged the FBR to halt its demands for such an unrealistic tax.

He said that tax officials are intentionally undermining the tajir scheme by issuing notices to everyone, regardless of their registration status. Despite promises that small shopkeepers would only face a tax of Rs1,000 to Rs1,200, notices have instead demanded an unmanageable Rs60,000, which many shopkeepers find impossible to pay. He emphasized that the Tajir Dost scheme, which currently suffers from significant flaws, needs a thorough review in consultation with all stakeholders. This is crucial to prevent further difficulties for shopkeepers already struggling amid rising inflation.

He further noted that the severe inflation and

high utility tariffs have already made it difficult for shopkeepers to sustain their livelihoods. In such circumstances, demanding an excessively high tax of Rs60,000 per month could force shopkeepers to shut their businesses permanently, exacerbating public and economic problems, he warned.

He also demanded the immediate withdrawal of two percent tax imposed on exports by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. He asked for the abolition of fixed tax Rs1,000 on commercial and domestic consumers in the electricity bills. The BMP chief also called for immediate withdrawal of the fixed tax imposed by FBR on shopkeepers ranging from Rs10,000 to Rs45,000.

He termed the Tajir Dost scheme as an anti-trader initiative and said that the budget proposals presented by the chamber should be implemented with true spirit. He, while presenting the suggestions to increase mutual trade, export and transit trade said that there is a need to deregulate the country's economy. He said that the BMP had initiated an organized struggle against the IPPs contracts in which they have gained success because these wrong agreements are damaging the national economy.

He said that for the development and stability of the country's economy, it is very important to provide facilities and incentives to the business community because the business community can play its full role in putting the economy in the right

direction.

He paid tribute to the sacrifices made by the people, business community and security forces of the country for peace.

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

He said that the government should fully pay attention to the provision of youth and women social and economic empowerment, and provision of health, education and basic facilities.

He said the business community of the country was aware of the significance of the tax for economic development and it always remained at the forefront for ensuring full tax compliance for documenting the national economy and social prosperity.

The FPCCI former president termed the track and trace system as imperative to check those involved in tax evasion and underlined the need for large-scale reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue, besides privatisation of loss-making government entities and promotion of exports to initiate a journey towards economic stability.

Demanding incentives to allure investors for strengthening the economy, he said the National Tax Number must be declared mandatory for opening of bank accounts and for the sale and pur-

Suspending Tel Aviv, Beirut flights

PARIS (AFP/APP): Air France is suspending flights to Tel Aviv and Beirut scheduled for Sunday and Monday after Israel launched air strikes into Lebanon, the airline said.

"Flights today and tomorrow are suspended," a spokesman for the French carrier said, adding that the suspension could be extended depending on the situation in the Middle East.

Air France, which usually runs a daily service to both cities, had already halted flights to Beirut between July 29 and August 15 but has kept flying to Tel Aviv.

Air France did not say whether its budget subsidiary Transavia, which also serves both destinations, would suspend its flights.

German airline Lufthansa on Friday extended its Beirut flight suspension to the end of September and said it would not fly to Tel Aviv and Tehran until September 2.

GCISC completes National GHG Inventory training workshop

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Global Climate-Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC), under the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) in collaboration with Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), has successfully concluded a pivotal five-day training workshop on Pakistan's National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory. Held from August 19 to 23, 2024, in Karachi, the workshop significantly bolstered national capacity for accurate GHG reporting in alignment with Pakistan's obligations under the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

This comprehensive training equipped experts and stakeholders from across Pakistan with essential skills and knowledge for precise reporting of GHG emissions and removals. As the country prepares to submit its inaugural Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) later this year-encompassing the National Inventory Document (NID) and common reporting tables-the workshop ensured that participants are proficient in adhering to international guidelines and standards.

Participants engaged in in-depth sessions on the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, emphasizing the principles of Transparency, Accuracy, Completeness, Consistency, and Comparability (TACCC). The workshop addressed key sectors including Energy, Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU), Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use

(AFOLU), and Waste, while also tackling Pakistan's unique challenges such as rapid urbanization and increasing energy demands.

M. Arif Goheer, Executive Director of GCISC, underscored the critical role of robust GHG inventories in formulating effective climate strategies for Pakistan. He stated, "Accurate and transparent GHG inventories are the cornerstone of our national efforts to combat climate change. They enable us to assess emissions accurately, monitor progress towards our Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and develop evidence-based adaptation plans essential for meeting the ambitious goals set under the Paris Agreement."

He added, "For a country like Pakistan, which is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, enhancing our capacity to develop and maintain precise GHG inventories is not just a regulatory requirement but a vital step towards ensuring environmental sustainability and resilience."

Ayhan Mustafa Bhutto, Special Secretary, Environment, Climate Change, and Coastal Development Department highlighted the Sindh government's proactive initiatives in addressing climate change and emphasized the urgency of enacting a dedicated climate change act for the province. He remarked, "Climate change is an undeniable reality that is drastically altering global weather patterns. The resulting rise in sea surface temperatures is leading to the thermal expansion of oceans and significant sea-level rise. Anticipated increases of approximately 60 cm pose serious threats to our coastal

infrastructure, especially along the Sindh coast. We must implement strategic planning and adaptive measures now to mitigate these impending impacts."

He also commended GCISC's role in enhancing national capacity, stating, "GCISC's efforts in building expertise and knowledge are invaluable to our collective fight against climate change. Such training programs empower our stakeholders to effectively respond to environmental challenges and safeguard our province's future."

Waris Ali Gabol, the Regional Director of the Sindh Environmental Protection Department, underscored the critical importance of collective responsibility in environmental protection. He stated, "Environmental challenges are not just the responsibility of the government or specific organizations; they require the active participation of every individual. Together, we can make a significant change." Mr. Gabol elaborated on the agency's role in promoting research, legislation, and public awareness to combat pollution and support sustainable development. He emphasized that the department is committed to setting safeguards against environmental accidents and fostering community involvement in pollution control initiatives. Highlighting the need for a separate greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for Sindh, Mr. Gabol noted, "Localized data is invaluable in addressing our regional climate issues effectively. It allows us to tailor our strategies and actions to the specific challenges we face." Furthermore, he called on all sectors of society to engage in environmental stewardship, stating, "Each of us has

a role to play in protecting our environment. From reducing plastic use to promoting tree planting, our collective efforts can lead to a healthier planet." Mr. Gabol also stressed the importance of collaboration between industry, academia, and government. He stated, "Partnerships and collaborations between universities, industries, and government agencies are essential in promoting research, legislation, and public awareness. These collaborations can lead to innovative solutions and effective delivery of development programs." Mr. Gabol concluded by urging the community to actively participate in environmental initiatives, reinforcing that "the health of our environment is a shared responsibility, and through collaboration, we can achieve sustainable development for future generations."

Muhammad Amjad, Senior Scientist at GCISC and Lead Author of Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of IPCC, who coordinated the training workshop between provincial entities and the Global Climate-Change Impact Studies Centre (GCISC), delivered key presentations on estimating greenhouse gas emissions resulting from fossil fuel use in the power and industrial sectors. He highlighted the critical need for collaboration between provincial and federal stakeholders to drive collective climate change actions and capitalize on emerging opportunities. During the discussion, he emphasized that developing organization-level GHG inventories and supporting businesses in setting net-zero targets would boost the competitiveness of local products in global markets. Mr. Amjad also stressed the importance of establishing and maintaining the

online Pakistan Transparency Platform, which would allow all stakeholders to monitor climate change adaptation, mitigation, and financial investment activities across the country. Additionally, he praised the Director General and the Director of the Regional Office Karachi of the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) for their crucial contributions to the successful organization of the workshop.

Dr. Asif Inam, Principal, Bahria School of Maritime and Applied Sciences discussed the critical need for preparedness in the face of rising sea levels. He noted, "The projected sea-level rise poses significant risks to Pakistan's coastal regions. Proactive planning and the implementation of resilient infrastructure are essential to protect our coastal communities and ecosystems from severe disruptions."

Dr. Ali Ismail, Director, NED University presented on the integration of advanced technologies in climate change monitoring. He elaborated, "Intelligent sensing utilizing advanced sensor technologies and GIS plays a pivotal role in collecting and monitoring data on greenhouse gas emissions and other climate-related variables. Incorporating AI, machine learning, and big data analytics enhances our ability to track scope 3 and 4 emissions as per the GHG protocol, leading to more comprehensive and effective GHG inventory methodologies."

Muhammad Safir Ahmed, Coordinator, TNC and BTR, MoCC&EC highlighted the strategic importance of the workshop in meeting international climate commitments. He stated, "This training pro-

gram represents a significant milestone as we move towards submitting our first Biennial Transparency Report under the Paris Agreement. Equipping our teams with the necessary expertise ensures compliance with the Enhanced Transparency Framework and reinforces Pakistan's dedication to global climate objectives."

Muhammad Ijaz, National Inventory Report Lead, GCISC emphasized the technical significance of precise GHG inventories, noting, "The accuracy and completeness of our GHG inventories form the foundation of our national climate policies and international obligations. This workshop has been instrumental in strengthening our capabilities to produce reliable and comprehensive reports that align with global standards."

The workshop successfully fostered a dedicated community of practice committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency and accuracy in climate reporting. This collective effort marks a substantial advancement in Pakistan's journey towards developing effective climate policies, reducing emissions, and contributing meaningfully to global climate resilience.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) remains steadfast in its commitment to addressing climate change challenges and promoting sustainable development across Pakistan. Through initiatives like this workshop, the Ministry continues to build capacity, enhance transparency in climate reporting, and ensure that Pakistan plays an active and responsible role in global climate action.



Mushfiqur and Mehidy star in Bangladesh's historic maiden Test win against Pakistan



R A W A L P I N D I (Cricinfo): A spirited Bangladesh bowling unit rode on the confidence Mushfiqur Rahim's 191 had instilled into their camp on the fourth day to skittle Pakistan for 146 on

the fifth, and hand them a fifth loss in a stretch of nine winless home Tests. While Pakistan have not won a Test at home since February 2021 against South Africa, this was Bangladesh's maiden Test

win against Pakistan - a ten-wicket win to boot - and a rare one away from home. Leading into this game, they had won just two Tests on foreign soil in the last seven years. If the fourth day was

about Bangladesh slowly strengthening their grip on the game, the last day was about romping to victory. Once the fast bowlers removed three of the top four Pakistan batters, the spinning duo of

Shakib Al Hasan and Mehidy Hasan Miraz shared the remaining seven wickets; the ball had started to turn more than it did on Saturday, with some uneven bounce as well.

Young fast bowler Nahid Rana cranked up the pace close to 150kmph to snare Babar Azam, Shakib stifled with his stump-to-stump lines from both sides of the wicket, and Mehidy struck with his zippy off-breaks to regularly create tense moments and wicket-taking opportunities.

After Pakistan - led largely by Mohammad Rizwan's 51 - set Bangladesh a mere 30 to win in the second session, Bangladesh hunted down the runs in 6.3 overs.

Even though the ball wasn't swinging as much as it did on the previous evening, Bangladesh's quicks set up their push for victory in the first session. With Saim Ayub already dismissed on the

fourth day, Shan Masood fell early when he edged Hasan Mahmud to the wicketkeeper. The on-field umpire didn't give it out, but Bangladesh reviewed and saw the decision overturned after a spike on UltraEdge.

The score of 28 for 2 could have been 28 for 3 when Babar Azam edged his second delivery, angling away from him to the keeper, but Litton Das couldn't hold on to the chance to his right and Babar survived a pair.

He grew in confidence with some runs and boundaries, but Nahid spotted his lack of footwork and plotted his fall. He peppered Babar with short balls regularly above 145kmph to push him on the back foot, and when he pitched one up

outside off, Babar's feet didn't move quickly and far enough, and his drive resulted in him chopping on for 22. That started the slide of wickets, halted briefly only by a counter-

attacking innings from Rizwan before the lunch break.

Saud Shakeel stepped out to negate Shakib's turn but missed and was stumped for a duck. A patient Abdullah Shafique then threw his wicket away with just over three overs left for lunch. He attempted a wild swing over mid-off only to hand a leading edge to Shadman Islam at backward point. Two balls later, Mehidy drew Agha Salman forward with a teasing offbreak and drew his edge, with Shadman taking a sharp catch to his left this time at slip.

Rizwan, in between, struck four boundaries on either side of the wicket to wipe out a chunk of the deficit that was 50 when he had walked out.

He attacked a slightly tired Nahid with a hat-trick of fours and followed it with a slog sweep for another boundary next over that made it 26 runs scored off the two

overs. But he was forced to curb his instincts with Salman's dismissal and farmed the strike after the lunch break once Shaheen Shah Afridi was trapped in front by a Mehidy delivery that barely bounced.

Pakistan were 111 for 7 at the time, still trailing by six. They took the lead, but Naseem Shah soon handed a catch to midwicket before Rizwan took the responsibility of building some sort of a lead with his tenth Test half-century. He was going hard at the ball through his innings and this resulted in his wicket when he chopped on against Mehidy, who also trapped Mohammad Ali to wrap up the hosts.

Zakir Hasan and Shadman then ensured Bangladesh got over the line unscathed. Zakir struck three fours in his 14 and hit the winning runs with a sweep down to the vacant fine-leg fence.

England call up Hull after Wood ruled out of SL series

LONDON (BBC): Mark Wood has been ruled out of England's final two Tests against Sri Lanka, with 20-year-old Josh Hull called up in his place.

Wood, 34, pulled up with a thigh injury on day three of the first Test and played no part on Saturday, when England secured a five-wicket victory at Emirates Old Trafford.

A scan has ruled him out of the rest of the Test summer, but he is expected to be available for the tour of Pakistan in October.

Ollie Stone was in the England squad for the first Test and is likely to take Wood's place in the XI for the second Test at Lord's, starting on Thursday.

Nottinghamshire's Stone, 30, is capable of high pace and has taken 10 wickets in his three Tests.

Leicestershire left-armers Hull earns his first call-up to a senior England squad despite playing only 10 first-class matches.

Standing at 6ft 7in, he took five wickets for

England Lions in their tour game against the Sri Lankans earlier this month.

"It was about half nine last night when I got the call from Brendon McCullum. It's a very special moment," Hull told BBC Radio Leicester.

"It's come around pretty quickly. I didn't think it would happen this fast, but I am really excited to be joining them.

"I was happy with how I performed [for England Lions] but I never thought it would lead to a call this early. They've got Ollie Stone there as the first replacement, so it will be a great opportunity to join up and be part of that environment."

Wood has been in electrifying form this summer, bowling at extreme pace in three Tests against West Indies and the series opener against Sri Lanka.

Since returning to the Test side during last summer's Ashes, he has established himself in England's first-choice XI.

Alongside Joe Root and Harry Brook, he was one of only three players handed a three-year central contract last year and is key to England's plans for the tour of Australia in 2025-26.

England's fast-bowling department has gone through significant upheaval in recent times.

Stuart Broad and James Anderson have both retired, while Ollie Robinson has been dropped. Josh Tongue, Jamie Overton and Dillon Pennington are all injured, and Brydon Carse has served a ban for historical offences related to gambling.

There has been a buzz about Josh Hull ever since he made his Leicestershire debut last summer.

With height, lively pace and the ability to swing the ball, he is every inch a fast bowler, as if the cricketing gods have built a paceman from scratch.

If England are building an attack to give them as many options as possible,

then a left-armer is something they are lacking. Hull's first-class average of 58 is no indicator of a bowler that has been tearing up the County Championship, yet England have once again picked on attributes and potential, rather than domestic record.

For that reason, Essex's Sam Cook can feel unfortunate. He was name-checked by managing director Rob Key when James Anderson retired. Cook's first-class numbers are staggering, but he is not a like-for-like replacement for Wood, who is likely to be fit for the Pakistan tour in October.

If Hull plays, he will become England's third-youngest seamer in Test cricket, behind Ben Hollis and Sam Curran. England will not make change for change's sake, but with two more Tests in two weeks and Chris Woakes struggling on Saturday, there is every chance.



PESHAWAR: Chairman KP Boxing Association Captain (Retd) Usman Gul in group photo with KP Boxing Association office holders, coaches, referees and players.

Cadets of Pakistan Naval Academy win Inter-Navies Sailing C'ship

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Cadets of Pakistan Naval Academy won the Commandant Cup Sailing Regatta held at Naval & Maritime Academy Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. Teams from Navies of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, China and India took part in the competition.

The competition was held on internationally recognized classes of boats including Laser Radial and Enterprise categories. Pakistan Naval Academy won the competition with Silver medal in Laser Radial and Gold medal in Enterprise category.

The victorious team of Pakistan Naval Academy comprised Officer Cadets Syed Sakhr Ali Shah, Saad Bin Khalid and Muhammad Abdullah Akram.

Sri Lankan Naval Chief



Vice Admiral Priyantha Perera was the Chief Guest of closing ceremony and gave away medals and trophy to the winning team.

The competition provid-

ed competitive environment for young cadets to polish the skills of sailing in general and competing on international arena in particular.

Inculcating quality curricular and co-curricular training to future leadership of Navy remains the hallmark of Pakistan Naval Academy.

McCartney Kessler secures first WTA title in Cleveland

CLEVELAND (Reuters): American McCartney Kessler stunned No. 1 seed Beatriz Haddad Maia of Brazil on Saturday, shaking off a brutal first set for a 1-6, 6-1, 7-5 victory in the final of Tennis in the Land in Cleveland.

It was Kessler's first career WTA Tour title. Kessler thrived as an underdog in the tournament, ousting No. 4 seed Xinyu Wang of China and

No. 5 seed Anastasia Potapova of Russia before completing the upset of Haddad Maia.

On Saturday, Kessler didn't get into a groove until the second set, where she took six games in a row after falling behind 1-0.

The 25-year-old then trailed 3-1 in the third set before rallying for the win over Haddad Maia, who entered the match ranked No. 23 in the world.

Kessler won 32 of 46 first-serve points and matched Haddad Maia in aces and double faults with three and four, respectively.

Sixth-seeded Linda Noskova of the Czech Republic won her first career WTA Tour title, defeating New Zealand's Lulu Sun 7-6 (6), 6-4 in the final in Monterrey, Mexico.

After trailing 6-5 in the first set, Sun forced a

tiebreaker, where she let a 6-4 lead slip away as the 19-year-old Noskova broke Sun twice, with the second break giving her the set.

At 2-2 in the second set, Noskova broke Sun's serve and held off a comeback attempt by the unseeded New Zealander, who was playing in her first WTA Tour final. Sun, 23, produced 13 aces to Noskova's four but committed five double faults.

Chelsea thrash Wolves thanks to Madueke's hat-trick

LONDON (BBC): Noni Madueke's hat-trick gave Chelsea their first Premier League victory of the season as they beat Wolves in a pulsating and chaotic encounter.

Chelsea took the lead after 98 seconds when Cole Palmer's inswinging corner was inadvertently flicked on by Matheus Cunha and an unmarked Nicolas Jackson nodded in at the back post.

Jackson stoked an already feisty Molineux crowd with his celebrations - and Wolves rallied on the field.

Rayan Ait-Nouri's dazzling run set up Cunha and the livewire Brazilian equalised with a crisp low finish from inside the box, before appearing to goad Chelsea's players.

Palmer then restored Chelsea's lead with a deft cushioned lob from 30 yards when he spotted Jose Sa off his line.

Wolves got themselves back level for a second time shortly before the break when Jorgen Strand Larsen poked home from the edge of the six-yard box after a free-kick was squared back across goal.

However, England Under-21 forward Madueke's treble in 14 second-half minutes settled the game as a contest.

The three goals were nearly identical as the winger scored with low angled shots from inside the area, assisted by Palmer on each occasion.

Joao Felix put the gloss on the result late on when he side-footed the ball high

into the net from near the penalty spot after being picked out by fellow substitute - and former Wolves winger - Pedro Neto.

This was a enthralling and frantic contest you simply could not take your eyes off, especially in the first half.

There were breathtaking passages of attacking play and bags of chances, with more needle than an acupuncture clinic.

The fact referee Darren England only brandished the first card of the game shortly after the half-hour mark was nothing short of remarkable.

The fires had already been stoked before the game by an Instagram post by Madueke on Saturday night which appeared to be less than complimentary

about the city of Wolverhampton.

A simmering Molineux inevitably jeered the 22-year-old's every touch, and it would have been easy for him to go missing.

Instead, Madueke got the bit between his teeth early on and did not shirk the challenge despite the cat-calls from those in the stands wearing old gold.

His finishing for his three goals was superb, albeit the first strike came via a deflection which flummoxed Sa.

Madueke has now scored more Premier League goals in Wolverhampton than he has at Stamford Bridge (two in 18 games).

Perhaps his view of the place might be different after this memorable afternoon.

‘No-one is in top gear’ - a wide-open US Open awaits

NEW YORK (BBC): The US Open can often throw up surprise winners - and this year's Grand Slam finale could be no exception.

With the Olympics taking place just three weeks ago, players are arriving in New York with fewer minutes on a hard court than before, and with more miles in their legs.

"I don't think anyone is

coming [to the US Open] in top gear," Christopher Clarey, former New York Times tennis writer, told BBC Radio 5 Live.

"For somebody who is maybe more of a second-tier favourite, this is their year and their opportunity."

Novak Djokovic is the defending champion, but it remains to be seen if the emotional impact of winning a long-awaited

Olympic gold on the Paris clay will affect his chances.

Djokovic made the Olympics his priority this year, but would love to keep his record of winning at least one Slam title every year for the past seven years going.

Victory in New York would secure his 25th major - the most of any singles player, male or female - and make Djokovic the

oldest man in the Open era to win a Slam.

"The man's draw is as wide open as it has been for as long as any of us can remember," British player Naomi Broady said on BBC 5 Live.

"This year, especially with the addition of the Olympics and the players being that bit more fatigued, it is going to be incredibly interesting."



In brief

Female drug smuggler held

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has arrested a suspect involved in supplying drugs to educational institutions in Islamabad. The suspect was caught red-handed during a raid near a prominent educational institution. The suspect was supplying drugs to a well-known educational institution in Islamabad. Acting on secret information, Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) officers arrested the suspect near the institution and recovered 4.8 kg of hashish and 1.2 kg of opium during the search. The suspect, who hails from Peshawar, has been charged under the Anti-Narcotics Act.

RWMC cancels holidays

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) on Sunday completed its cleanliness operation by removing all waste materials on the route of the Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS) processions. According to RWMC spokesman, a comprehensive cleanliness plan had been devised for Chehlum processions while the holidays of all the staff of RWMC had been cancelled on Monday besides deploying additional sanitary workers. He said Chief Executive Officer RWMC Rana Sajid Safdar monitored the entire operation carried out from Imambargah Colonel Magbool Hussain, including Raja Bazaar, Bara Market, Purana Qila, Jamia Masjid Road, Qadeemi Imambargah, Bani Chowk, Kartarpura, and adjacent areas. Under the special cleanliness program, all Imambargahs, procession routes, and their vicinity were being cleaned besides the waste containers were also being emptied. The construction material or debris was also being removed from the routes of the procession and its adjacent areas. He said that sanitary workers would remain present at the district administration relief camps to carry out the cleanliness work during and till the conclusion of processions. He urged the mourners and residents to cooperate with the RWMC staff and avoid throwing waste and other materials in drains and in open.

Anti-polio drive starts from 9th

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration is set to launch a comprehensive five-day anti-polio campaign starting on September 9. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Meemon on Sunday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for upcoming anti-polio drive. According to an ICT spokesman, the meeting was attended by District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Zeem Zia, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) East and others. The campaign will target vaccination of 421,455 children against polio across the region. The primary phase will run from September 9 to September 13, with additional rounds on September 14 and 15 to ensure that any remaining children are vaccinated. A key focus of the meeting was the security of the polio teams, who will conduct door-to-door visits to cover every area and household in the city. Citizens are urged to cooperate with the teams and ensure their children receive the necessary polio drops. This initiative is part of Islamabad's ongoing efforts to eradicate polio, aiming for full immunization coverage and a polio-free future.

84,000 electricity thieves apprehended

ISLAMABAD (INP): In the strict crackdown against electricity thieves, more than 84 thousand electricity thieves have been apprehended from across the country so far. About 108 billion and 93 crore rupees have been collected from thieves. During the current month, the relevant authorities collected more than 686 crores rupees from electricity thieves in Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan and Islamabad. 413 crore rupees were received from Peshawar, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Quetta. The relevant institutions are determined to continue their operations until the complete elimination of electricity thieves from across the country.

Power theft: Pakistan recovers Rs108 bln from defaulters in crackdown: The Power Division has recovered over Rs108.93 billion during a country-wide power theft crackdown, reported on Sunday. The crackdown launched by the Pakistan government and military leadership's measures to restore the country's economy is now showing positive results. According to the details, over 108 billion rupees have been recovered from individuals involved in power theft while over 84,000 electricity thieves were arrested.

During the month of August, the relevant institutions collected over one billion rupees from electricity thieves in Lahore,

Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan and Islamabad.

On September 6, the then caretaker federal government announced plans to launch a crackdown across the country on electricity theft in a bid to reduce the ballooning circular debt in the power sector.

The power minister said that there are 10 distribution companies in Pakistan that are facing a total loss of Rs589 billion annually. He said electricity theft and nonpayment of electricity bills are the major causes of this huge loss.

It is to be noted here that the inflated power bills triggered country-wide protests from Karachi to Khyber and protests in some parts of the country turned violent.

PNCA hosts Handmade Papermaking Workshop

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) hosted a Handmade Papermaking Workshop by Zahid-ur-Rehman at the National Art Gallery on Sunday.

The workshop was organized on special request for a large group of 100+ students from Art Society of the Foundation University School of Health Sciences (FUSH) Rawalpindi. It provided a hands-on introduction to the art of handmade paper, emphasizing sustainability and traditional craftsmanship.

The participants engaged in the creative process of making paper from recyclable materials such as waste paper, plants, flowers and leaves. Under the expert guidance of skilled instructors, the attendees learned to transform everyday items into beautiful, handcrafted sheets of paper.

The participants explored traditional papermaking techniques, focusing on the reuse of recyclable materials. Designed for beginners, the session offered a practical, 'do-it-yourself' approach to learning.

"This workshop was part of our 'Art for Therapy' series, which aims to merge artistic expression with mental health benefits," said Ms. Mariam Ahmed, Director Visual Arts Division PNCA.

"We are delighted to offer this enriching experience, promoting both creativity and wellbeing", she said.

By the end of the day, participants left with their own handcrafted paper creations, a testament to their creative efforts and the workshop's focus on sustainable art practices.

Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) is dedicated to promoting art and culture across the nation.

One of its top priorities is to encourage art practice through community outreach programs, such as "Art for Therapy."



ISLAMABAD: A volunteer searching mourners during Chehlum procession of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) commemorating martyrs of Karbala.

MoHR to review implementation of laws and policies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) is working with mandate to review human rights and protection of labour rights situation in the country including implementation of laws, policies and measures.

The Ministry was also formulating various programmes for teaching of human rights at educational institutions.

He said that the Ministry was also working to implement the "Rules and Regulations for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Senior Citizens Act, 2021".

The development of the Rules and Regulations for the ICT Senior Citizens Act is an important step in this process.

Number of senior people is exceeding. It is thus critical to create an enabling and healthy environment to ensure that every human being, irrespective of age, was able to fulfill their potential with dignity and equality.

The year 2024 marked the 34th anniversary of the International Day of Older Persons as well as the initi-

ation of the Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030), he added.

He added that despite the Social Welfare Department setting up several old homes across the country to provide shelter to old people abandoned by their families, no senior centres exist for offering integrative recreational facilities and socialization opportunities to millions of elderly citizens in the country.

He further added that the legislation to protect the rights of elderly people living a less empowered social life. The discussions focused on the draft rules and regulations for three key areas of Senior Citizens Card, Establishment of Old Age Homes and Privileges provided to senior citizens under the Act: (20% discount on the medical facilities and retirement benefits for the older people).

1.5 million street kids at risk of displacement, MoHR calls for urgent legal reform: MoHR called for urgent new laws to protect Pakistan's 1.5 million street children, who face severe abuse and

exploitation due to displacement, poverty, and violence, emphasizing that focused attention and education are essential to addressing the crisis.

The ministry stated that street children are among the world's most overlooked populations, neglected by governments, lawmakers, and society at large.

He also noted that the number is rapidly increasing due to displacement, migration, extreme poverty, and a rising count of runaway children fleeing homes, workplaces, and schools due to violence.

According to estimates, there are 1.5 million street children in Pakistan. Once on the streets, these children face heightened risks of abuse, including child labour, exploitation, trafficking, and arbitrary arrest, he added.

The time has come to give serious attention to the plight of street children, especially since the Ministry of Human Rights has committed to addressing school dropout issues. He emphasized that only education can make a difference.

RDA accelerates operation against encroachments

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG) RDA, Kinza Murtaza has accelerated its ongoing operation against encroachments across the city.

According to the RDA spokesman, the authority on the special directives of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, had formed a special enforcement squad to remove encroachments. He informed that the DG formed a special Enforcement Squad

to take strict action in accordance with the law against encroachments.

The squad, comprising six Inspectors and other staff members, would launch operations under the supervision of the Assistant Director Building Control, RDA, he said adding that the team has been directed to take strict action against encroachments in all areas without any discrimination.

The spokesman further informed that the DG also instructed the Additional Director General RDA to

monitor the squad's performance daily. He added that the squad would be held accountable for their effectiveness in dealing with encroachments, ensuring that prompt and decisive action is taken.

The spokesman informed that the DG said that encroachments were a blot on the city's beauty and vowed to clear the city of them. RDA would not tolerate encroachments that cause inconvenience to the citizens, the spokesman added.

BHC delegation visits NPC

ISLAMABAD (APP): A team from the British High Commission, accompanied by senior journalists, visited the National Press Club in Islamabad to empower the journalism community and enhance their careers.

The initiative aimed to guide journalists on Chevening applications and the South Asian Journalism Programme (SAJP), highlighting the benefits and opportunities these programs offer.

During the visit, Deputy Communications Officer Senah Lala briefed the journalists on the Chevening programme, encouraging them to seize this opportunity to advance their careers.

She emphasized how the programme spotlights mid-career journalists, providing them with a chance to excel in their field.

Shumila Noreen, a senior journalist and SAJP alumna, shared her personal experience, describing it as a "wonderful chance to advance your career." She explained the course structure and the challenges one faces while visiting the United Kingdom.

Another SAJP alumnus, senior journalist Shabbir Hussain, elaborated on how to become part of the programme and its benefits for one's career.

He detailed the process of the one-year Chevening fellowship programme and the requirements candidates must keep in mind while applying.

Both journalists assured their full support regarding the application process and guidance for the journalists.

They also agreed to continue visiting the National Press Club to provide guidance and mentorship to fellow journalists, ensuring the initiative's sustainability.

On the occasion, President of the National Press Club Azhar Jatoti thanked the team and emphasized the need for such initiatives to continue at the club for the betterment of journalists.

Similarly, Secretary of the NPC Nayyar Ali endorsed the president's views, requesting the British High Commission team to continue their support for journalists.

A. Hameed remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Urdu fiction writer and creator of the famous children's TV drama "Ainak Wala Jin", Abdul Hameed known as A Hameed, was remembered on his birth anniversary on Sunday.

Born in Amritsar on August 25, 1928, he passed his secondary education in Amritsar. After partition, he migrated to Pakistan and passed intermediate and joined Radio Pakistan as an Assistant Script Editor. After working some years for Radio Pakistan, he joined Voice of America. His first collection of short stories received popular acclaim and made him a recognized romantic short story writer.

A. Hameed has more than 200 novels on his credit. His books "Lahore Lahore Aye", "Ehram-e-Misir Se Farar" and "Mirza Ghalib Lahore Main" are amongst his most popular works.

His drama "Ainak Wala Jin" was popular with children in the 1990s. Moreover his fantasy series of 100 novels for children known as Ambar Naag Maria Series was a real cause of fame for him. A Hameed died on April 29, 2011, at the age of 83.

Vehicles' battery thieves target CDA facilitation centre

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) Facilitation Center in Sector G-7/2, Islamabad, found itself at the center of a growing crisis. For weeks, the facility has been plagued by a series of vehicle battery thefts, casting a shadow over its reputation and sparking anger among employees and visitors alike.

The most recent theft, which occurred on Wednesday, highlights the severe security deficiencies and inadequate parking facilities at the Center. Victims of the thefts, including both private and government employees as well as members of the

general public, are voicing their frustration and concern over the escalating situation.

Kamran, a CDA employee, recounted his distressing experience to APP. "I had my Mehran's battery stolen from right in front of my office," he said. "It's been days, and there's still no sign of recovery. The lack of security is palpable, and it's affecting all of us."

Similarly, Qasim, another employee, echoed Kamran's frustration. "It's not just a sudden loss; it's a constant worry. Every day, we're hearing about new thefts, and it's becoming unbearable."

The situation has grown

so dire that Idrees, the second shift security in-charge, confirmed the daily occurrences of thefts from vehicles parked at the facility. "We're all deeply concerned," Idrees admitted. "The thefts are relentless, and our office workers are increasingly anxious about their personal property."

The problem is compounded by the slow progress of a new parking lot under construction across the road. The project, intended to alleviate the parking crunch, has been stalled due to encroachment by local political figure Alamgir Khan, who has set up an office in a container on the plot.

Adding to the chaos, reports surfaced of a motorcycle belonging to staff members being stolen along with an alarming count of ten vehicle batteries being robbed in a single day. The mounting thefts have fueled demands from citizens and employees for immediate action from the CDA and ICT management.

In response, affected employees have formally notified higher authorities and lodged a complaint with the police, urging them to address the security lapses. Despite multiple requests for comment, Director State Management-I, Asad, has yet to provide official statement on the matter.

Financial literacy, change in mindset towards women SMEs, entrepreneurs crucial amid 22% labour force share: Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at a report launch on financial inclusion for women entrepreneurs underscored the critical need to enhance financial literacy and awareness towards projecting women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs as positive players of the market and end biases and un conducive environment hampering their growth in trade as women comprise 22 percent of the total labour force in Pakistan.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) organised the Launch of the Report titled "Advancing Financial Inclusion for Women Entrepreneurs in Pakistan" here on Sunday.

In his opening remarks, Joint Executive Director SDPI, Dr Vaqar Ahmed said the report is the third research conducted in collaboration with the FNF that sheds light on financial inclusion in the context of women entrepreneurs. However, there would be other women stakeholders apart from the female entrepreneurs who needed deeper research so that their

inclusion could be prioritized, he said and added, the SDPI's past research evidence shows that women's financial inclusion is directly co-related to the household level financial literacy. In this regard, this research becomes very important.

Dr Vaqar noted that the issues around credit, taxation, regulatory hurdles were all well known, whereas all these constraints needed to be looked into a political economy context to carve a way forward while not owning these limitations.

He added that the discourse should focus on outcomes offering a roadmap approach on the report's recommendations and prioritise the action matrix while moving forward and offer it to the government, private entities, business associations, chambers of commerce, the banking associations, and others.

He underlined that everything under financial inclusion could not be done by the government and regulatory bodies, whereas private sector would need to come forward and offer ideas which are more innovative than the conventional approaches.

Birgit Lamm, FNF Country Head in her keynote address said the report document would provide policy umbrella on the work done by FNF on promoting entrepreneurship among marginalised groups particularly women forming fifty percent of the country's total population.

She added that FNF has supported individuals on the microlevel of entrepreneurship to support their businesses, whereas the financial challenges like capital management during first five years of establishing businesses across the globe were the biggest risks faced by women.

"Lack of CNIC and certain registrations and formalities and societal biases makes it harder for female founders to get support for her startup as compared to the male founders. We need to not only focus policy but also education at different levels from schools to media to promote women as equally reliable business partners as men," Lamm said.

Faeyza Khan, Adjunct Faculty, SDPI and Head of Inclusive Finance, TANGENT in her presentation on Advancing Financial Inclusion for Women

Entrepreneurs in Pakistan explained the study methodology that included interactions with Central Bank, SECP, Regulatory bodies, Women chambers of commerce, SAARC chamber of commerce, HBL the pioneer of women banking products, and microfinance banks starting from high level to middle level banks.

"Globally there is a USD 28 trillion opportunity to tap through women inclusion into trade and economy. However, around 231 million women run formal businesses in middle and low income countries. Globally, women are 38 percent of the labour force which is 22% in Pakistan," she added.

Khan said there were 13.5 million women workers in the country out of which 7 million were agrarian workers categorised as family workers and remain unrecognised and unpaid.

Women in 2018-19, she said had earned just 18 percent of their men counterpart under unpaid care work and spent 10 times the hours as men in unpaid care work.

The study had found that it was difficult for female

SMEs and entrepreneurs to get a loan and if available it was expensive for them as women lack access to same kind of networks, information pools and mentorship in business and trade, she said.

"There are 5.3 mln SMEs in Pakistan and women owned are one percent as per World Bank data. India has 14% women SMEs and Bangladesh has 7.4 percent," she said.

Faeyza Khan said the study recommended to increase awareness on positive impacts of women entrepreneurship, leverage connectivity, and introduce robust result measurement frameworks for promoting women in trade.

Gulalai Khan, Revenue Mobilisation, Investment and Trade (ReMIT) Programme said ReMIT has been extensively working with the women entrepreneurs in various projects.

She added that this issue was international and not limited to Pakistan as in 2022 women exiting businesses were more than men and 24 percent of them were those who started it keenly but left due to lack of profitability, family and personal reasons.

The policy or regulatory environment was very important in supporting women to start and scale up their businesses which was unfavourable in Pakistan, she said, adding, "Women lack information on taxation policies and mechanisms as these are women running businesses but are unable to file their taxes and information manipulation is done by the systematic environment."

Murium Hadi Financial Inclusion Specialist, Asian Development Bank said the status quo would prevail as patriarchal mindset would stick to the system but it demanded plans and strategies to work within for betterment.

The women entrepreneurs, she said promotion needs to be looked into the options extended to a woman through various policies while starting her business or startup as entrepreneurship was a round the clock task that would require time, capital and commitment.

"The exit ratio of women entrepreneurs is higher, and reentry is low. The little educated women in the strata of entrepreneurs are preferred in the system," she said.

Hadi recommended that documentation, and track and trace system needs to be adopted, whereas the Indian model was brilliant that gave the system to pool ones savings and leverage it and multiply it which was completely missing in Pakistan. "Change in perception of institutions is important as 78 percent SMEs spend their most of the time in nonfinancial related tasks," she said.

Fareeha Armughan, Head SDPI Center of Evidence for Action and Research said women entrepreneurship has more focus on SMEs and startup ecosystem. Its high time to move needle on the business as usual on social protection and embed a system of household enterprises and entrepreneurship through a full circle of financial inclusion that starts from basic literacy and four pillars of saving, credit, digital transactions and insurance, she added.

Salman Shahzad, Project Director, National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) said the Institute had trained 3.5 million so far and 80 percent of them have opened their bank accounts including 57% females.

Minister calls for unity

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs, Sheikh al-Hadith Dr. Noor Mohammad Saqib, called on Islamic countries to work together for unity and to address Muslim issues. He made this appeal during a meeting with Professor Salim Ergun, Deputy Head of Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate and his delegation. He urged Islamic nations, especially Turkey, to deepen their relations with the Islamic Emirate.

Turkey announces aid

KABUL (Khaama Press): TIKa has announced that it has provided filming equipment and content production tools to the Ministry of Information and Culture in Herat province. Ararat Deniz, TIKa's coordinator in Herat, stated that these donations are aimed at "supporting journalism" in Afghanistan. During the equipment handover ceremony, Deniz described access to news in Afghanistan as "important" and emphasized that they will continue to support journalists in the country.

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

Ministry shares impressive one-year achievements

KABUL (BNA): In a press conference held at the Government Media Center, the Head of the Ministry's Office, Mawlawi Mirza Mohammad Shakib, outlined the impressive achievements of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development over the past year.

According to Mawlawi Shakib, the ministry has completed and handed over the construction of 100 micro water reservoirs and check dams across 13 provinces in Afghanistan, at a total cost of 426 million Afghanis. These projects have significantly improved access to water resources for rural communities.

The ministry has also

made major progress on the Qala-e-Naw water supply project in Badghis province, which is now 85% complete. Once finished, this project will provide clean drinking water to 65,000 residents of Qala-e-Naw city.

In addition, the Qadis Dam project in Badghis province is 40% complete, at a cost of \$12.5 million. Upon completion, the dam will irrigate 1,400 hectares of land in the Qadis district.

Other notable achievements include the construction of a 5-kilometer protective wall in Spin Boldak, Kandahar, which is 95% complete at a cost of 75 million Afghanis.

The ministry has also

overseen the construction of hundreds of kilometers of new roads across 51 districts in 23 provinces, with an additional 388 kilometers currently under construction.

One particularly significant project is the 50-kilometer road being built in the Wakhan district of Badakhshan province, which will connect Afghanistan to China by land upon completion.

The ministry has also completed feasibility studies for the Kaj Satar Dam project in Nimroz province and the design of the Gulistan Dam in Farah province, laying the groundwork for future infrastructure development.

Over 165,000 tons of opium stockpiled in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has reported the existence of opium stockpiles in Afghanistan, stating that no action has been taken to destroy these large caches of opium.

In a report, SIGAR notes that while satellite images show a significant reduction in opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, thousands of tons of opium have been stockpiled by traders and landowners.

According to the report, approximately 165,067 metric tons of opium are stored in Afghan traders' warehouses, and no specific measures have been taken to uncover and destroy these opium reserves.

SIGAR has indicated that the storage of opium and the lack of a specific plan to eliminate it have led to a doubling of opium prices and hoarding by opium traders.

The SIGAR report highlights that the "value of stored opium" has increased, reducing the number of small-scale farmers and significantly boosting the wealth and purchasing power of landowners with substantial opium reserves.

Meanwhile, the Taliban administration has been preventing opium poppy cultivation in various provinces, especially in the northeastern region, since April 2022, after the decree was issued banning opium poppy cultivation.

However, the Taliban officials have not yet commented on the issue of opium reserves in Afghanistan.

The ongoing situation underscores a significant challenge in Afghanistan's fight against the opium trade.

ARCS seeks assistance for flood-affected communities



KABUL (BNA): The Acting Head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has called for additional support for those affected by recent floods during a meeting with the Qatari Embassy's newly appointed Counselor.

According to a statement issued today by the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)'s press office, Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, met with Mardef Al-Qashouti, the new Counselor of the Qatari Embassy in

Afghanistan, along with his accompanying delegation at his office.

During the meeting, Shiekh Delawar welcomed the delegation and expressed gratitude for Qatar's past assistance, while urging them to pro-

vide more aid to help the needy and those affected by recent disasters.

In response, Mardef Al-Qashouti reassured the Acting Head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society of Qatar's continued support and full cooperation.

Minister vows to remove barriers to media information access

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Deputy Minister of Publications at the Ministry of Information and Culture has assured that the ministry is working to prevent obstacles for media access to information.

According to a report from Bakhtar News Agency, the coordination meeting with journalists and media representatives was led by Mawlawi Zia-ul-Haq Haqmal, Acting Deputy Minister of Publications at the ministry, and Head of Bakhtar News Agency.

During the meeting, Mawlawi Haqmal emphasized the responsibilities of journalists and media representatives, stating that the



Ministry of Information and Culture is committed to supporting them and is making efforts to ensure media access to information remains unobstructed.

He also noted that media outlets should respect individual privacy and reflect the achievements and progress while adhering to the

policies of Islamic Emirate.

Following this, media representatives shared their challenges and requested further cooperation from the Ministry of Information and Culture regarding information access. The Deputy Director assured them of comprehensive support.

600 'misconduct officers' expelled from police ranks

KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Mateen Qani, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, told TOLONews that over the past six months, more than 600 malicious and abusive individuals have been expelled from the ranks of the Islamic Emirate's police forces.

According to the spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, all of these individuals have been dismissed from their duties and referred to judicial authorities.

Qani told TOLONews, "In the past six months, over 600 people who had misused the name of the Ministry of Interior, particularly the police forces, have all been prosecuted and dismissed from their duties."

Abdul Mateen Qani added that the number of malicious and abusive individuals within the ranks of the Islamic Emirate's police has decreased compared to the past. He emphasized that those who misuse the name of the Islamic Emirate's forces will be arrested and face legal consequences.

sequences.

The spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior said, "We have practically demonstrated that anyone who commits violations or misuses the name of the Mujahideen will be prosecuted and dismissed from their duties. They will not be rehired."

Several military and political analysts also stress the importance of expelling abusive individuals from the ranks of the Islamic Emirate's forces, stating that such individuals tarnish the reputation of these forces.

Javid Momand, a political analyst, told TOLONews, "Those who misuse the name of Mujahideen or the Islamic Emirate should be swiftly apprehended and removed from the ranks."

This comes after the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate in the country, where the interim government has established a reform commission to identify malicious and abusive individuals.

Small businesses provide income for women under Islamic Emirate

KABUL (TOLONews): Since the return of the Islamic Emirate, women in Afghanistan have been establishing small businesses as a source of income.

Some of these women, working in tailoring and restaurant management, are seeking support from the Islamic Emirate.

Hasiba, one of these entrepreneurial women, has set up a tailoring workshop in a corner of the capital, where she prepares colorful traditional clothes for her customers, who are both inside and outside the country.

Hasiba has expressed her desire to expand her business to support other women.

She told TOLONews:

"Our request of the government is to create more job opportunities for women so that we can expand our work outside Afghanistan and that there are no restrictions on women's work."

Sadiqa, an apprentice, said: "My request of the government is that we be allowed to go out and work to provide for our families."

Meanwhile, Palwasha has also established a small restaurant offering traditional dishes, with an initial investment of ten thousand afghani to support her family. She mentioned that her investment has now increased to sixty thousand afghani.

Speaking to TOLONews

about her restaurant, Palwasha said: "We ask the government to provide us with a larger space and some financial assistance so that we can expand our restaurant. Now that girls are no longer attending school, we can continue our work and make progress."

Arzoo, a restaurant employee, said: "I am very happy that I found work here because by working here, I can help my family."

The Ministry of Economy of Afghanistan pledged that the Islamic Emirate is making efforts to support women entrepreneurs in the country.

Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy of Afghanistan,



told TOLONews: "The Islamic Emirate supports women in the fields of industry and commerce, and our efforts are focused on providing facilities for women, both in terms of marketing and strengthening handicrafts, where

women play a significant role."

Previously, the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry reported that over 2,500 women entrepreneurs have received business licenses in the past three years.

Six killed and four injured in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Last week, the United Arab Emirates and Kazakhstan accepted Afghan ambassadors. Kabul banned UN human rights expert Richard Bennett's entry into Afghanistan. Restrictions on women were reported to have had a negative impact.

Afghan officials, however, reaffirmed their commitment to respecting women's rights in line with the Shariah law.

Casualties
Six people were killed and four others wounded during various incidents across the country last week.

Last week, six people, including children, were killed and four others wounded as a result of landmine explosion in Dara-i-Noor district of Nangarhar.

In the previous week, two people had been killed and 11 others injured in separate incidents of violence across the country.

Before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of civilians, insurgents and security forces would be killed and injured every week.

Acceptance of Afghan ambassadors

The United Arab Emirates accepted the credentials of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's ambassa-

dor, says the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

Ambassador Maulvi Badruddin Haqqani, whose appointment was announced late Wednesday, had taken charge of the Afghanistan Embassy in the UAE on October 23 2023.

MoFA wrote on its X handle: "Today, IEA Ambassador Badruddin Haqqani presented his credentials to. Saif Abdullah Al Shamsi, the UAE deputy minister of protocol."

Kazakhstan's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Alibek Bakayev received Muhammad Ur Rehman Rahmani, head of Afghanistan's diplomatic mission in Astana on Thursday.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry in Astana said "At the meeting Deputy Minister Bakayev stated Kazakhstan accredited Muhammad Rahmani as charge d'affaires of Afghanistan, guided by the crucial goal for both countries of expanding trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation."

Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov had earlier said in a meeting with Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi his country might accept the IEA ambassador in the near future.

Uzbek PM's trip to Afghanistan

Last week, Abdulla Aripov visited Kabul at the head of a high-level government delegation and opened a three-day exhibition of Uzbek products in Kabul.

The visiting prime minister said his country was committed to developing cooperation with Afghanistan in economic, commercial and cultural fields.

The Presidential Palace wrote on X that deputy prime minister for political affairs Maulvi Abdul Kabir met Aripov.

At the meeting, the Uzbek leader said his country was the first to establish official relations with the Islamic Emirate and that bilateral ties were based on goodwill and cooperation.

During the exhibition, cooperation agreements worth 2.5 billion US dollars were inked between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan in various fields.

Ban on Bennett's entry
IEA banned UN Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett's entry into the country. Zabihullah Mujahid, chief spokesman for IEA, told DW the ban was imposed due to Bennett's "propaganda" against Afghanistan.

Mujahid accused the UN

rapporteur of exaggerating minor issues, spreading misleading information and providing inaccurate Afghanistan-related reports to other organisations.

In response to the travel ban imposed on him, Bennett urged IEA to reverse its decision.

Bennet said: "I have consistently sought to engage transparently with the de facto authorities, offering a critical assessment of the human rights situation in Afghanistan, as is my mandated responsibility, and making concrete, practical recommendations for improvement and offering technical assistance."

He urged IEA to retract its decision. The human rights campaigner went on to reiterate his willingness and availability to travel to Afghanistan.

"As an UN-appointed independent expert, I take my responsibilities very seriously. This includes always acting in an independent capacity, offering an impartial assessment of facts based on internationally recognised human rights standards and upholding the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity."

"Despite this announcement, the substance of

which was conveyed to me previously, I will continue to engage with the people of Afghanistan, both inside and outside the country, as well as other relevant stakeholders, noting that I have not travelled to Afghanistan for over a year."

Bennet pledged to continue to document human rights violations and abuses in Afghanistan and advocate for improvements.

Stéphane Dujarric, spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General, said: "He had been in Afghanistan I think in 2022 after the takeover of the de facto Taliban authorities, for us the mandate of special rapporteur, completely independent, for are the key part of human rights..."

Durrani remarks & IEA reactions

According to media reports, Pakistan's special envoy told a gathering of diplomats in Islamabad that Afghanistan could witness a return of Taliban's previous rule and something similar to 9/11 attacks.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) has repudiated recent remarks of Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan as far from true and an attempt to confuse public mind.

In a statement, MoFA

called Durrani's views about the economic and security situation in Afghanistan far from ground realities and spurned the remarks as an attempt at confusing the public mind.

The diplomat's warning of possible threats from Afghanistan could happen within Pakistan, the ministry added.

Afghanistan is a secure and stable country, using its own resources for self-sufficiency instead of relying on foreign debts and aid, according to MoFA.

Law of MoVV, Women right

Last week, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue codified a law – which consists of one clause, four chapters and 35 articles. It took effect after being ratified by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate and published in the official gazette.

Under the law, ordering compliance with the Islamic Shariah and Hanafi jurisprudence, a woman's entire body must be covered. Stéphane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN Secretary General, reacted to the enforcement of the recently ratified law by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue.

In a press conference, Dujarric, in response to this law concerning the imposi-

tion of further restrictions on women, stated that envisioning a better future and development for Afghanistan would be difficult.

Earlier, the United Nations Women's Support and Gender Equality Organization (UNWomen) said that the "Taliban" has issued 70 decrees and directives restricting the rights of women and girls during their three-year rule.

However, MoVV said the Islamic Emirate remained committed to providing women all Shariah-based rights and no one was allowed to take away their rights using traditions.

It added that "2638 cases of violence against women and 295 cases of selling women" were prevented last year. Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, acting minister for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice, said the implementation of Shariah and Islamic Hijab were red lines for IEA and there would be no compromise on these points.

Last week, 19 female students from Afghanistan's medical universities arrived in Scotland to complete their studies.

Independence Day of Afghanistan

The Independence Day was celebrated on Sunday.

Afghanistan gained freedom from the British India on August 18,1919.

Defence Minister Maulvi Mohammad Yaqub Mujahid said on the occasion: "We have a good message for all our neighbours, a message of brotherhood. They should never try to create problems for us on the borders, the Durand Line and in other areas."

He added: "If we build a ring road, posts or bases on borders or if we deploy more forces, this is not a danger for you. We do so to protect our country and honour, it is our duty and we will defend our homeland at any cost."

Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Maulvi Abdul Kabir called on regional countries to avoid provocative actions and statements that hamper peace, stability and undermine the spirit of regional cooperation.

Former president Hamid Karzai and ex-CEO Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, in separate messages on the 105th independence day, called national unity and understanding necessary.

They expressed the hope the celebration of this day among Afghans would pave the ground for unity, solidarity and social justice.

5 people die in Ukrantina shelling while Russian fire hits a hotel

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): Five people died in Ukrainian shelling in Russia's border region of Belgorod, officials said Sunday, while Russian forces struck a hotel in eastern Ukraine, leaving one journalist missing and two others injured.

Twelve other people were wounded in the Russian village of Rakitone, 38 kilometers (23 miles) from the Ukrainian border, including a 16-year-old girl reported to be in critical condition, said regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov. Another man also died in a separate drone attack on the border village of Solovevka, he wrote later on social media.

Russian forces struck a

hotel overnight in the city of Kramatorsk in the eastern Donetsk region, injuring two people and leaving one trapped under the rubble, regional Gov. Vadym Filashkin said.

They were reported to be journalists from Ukraine, the U.S. and the U.K.

Reuters news agency said Sunday that its journalist covering the war in Ukraine was missing and two other team members were hospitalized after Hotel Sapphire, where a six-person crew was staying, was hit "by an apparent missile strike" on Saturday.

"One of our colleagues is unaccounted for, while another two have been taken to hospital for treat-

ment," the agency said.

The rest of the team has been accounted for, the news agency said.

Local officials said that the hotel had been struck with an Iskander-M Russian ballistic missile, leaving the reporters with blast injuries, concussions, and cuts on the body.

Associated Press reporters at the scene described the former hotel as "rubble," with excavators still being used to clear debris hours after the attack.

In addition to the hotel, a nearby multistory building was also destroyed, Filashkin said, and rescuers were busy clearing the debris at the site.

Ukraine's eastern

Kharkiv region also came under Russian fire, resulting in multiple civilian injuries, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

In Kharkiv's Chuhuiv region, five people were injured, including a 4-year-old boy and a 14-year-old girl, after two houses were struck by Russian fire. In Kharkiv city, eight people were wounded when a two-story house was set on fire by a Russian attack.

In Balakliia, a Russian strike destroyed six houses and damaged others. A 55-year-old man was injured. In the Kupiansk area, a house was set on fire by a Russian attack, wounding four women.



RAWALPINDI: At least 25 passengers killed when a coaster coming from Hawaii Kahuta to Rawalpindi fell into a ditch near Azad Pattan.

Harris campaign says it raised \$540 million for election

WASHINGTON (AP): Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign says it has now raised \$540 million for its election battle against Republican nominee former President Donald Trump.

The campaign has had no problems getting supporters to open their wallets since President Joe Biden announced on July 21 he was ending his campaign and quickly endorsed Harris. The campaign said it saw a surge of donations during last week's Democratic National Convention in Chicago where Harris and her vice presidential running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, accepted their nominations.

"Just before Vice President Harris' acceptance speech Thursday

night, we officially crossed the \$500 million mark," campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon wrote in a memo released by the campaign on Sunday. "Immediately after her speech, we saw our best fundraising hour since launch day."

Trump has also proven to be a formidable fundraiser, but appears to be outpaced in her month-old campaign. Trump's campaign and its related affiliates announced earlier this month that they had raised \$138.7 million in July — less than what Harris took in during her White House bid's opening week. Trump's campaign reported \$327 million in cash on hand at the start of August.

The Harris fundraising totals

were raised by Harris for President, the Democratic National Committee, and joint fundraising committees.

O'Malley Dillon said that nearly a third of contributions during convention week came from first-time contributors. About one-fifth of those first-time contributors were young voters and two-thirds were women, groups that the campaign sees as critical constituencies that Harris needs to turn out to win in November.

The Harris campaign says it has also seen a surge in volunteer support for the vice president. During convention week, supporters signed up for nearly 200,000 volunteer shifts to help the campaign.

8th Silk Road International Exhibition Pakistan to participate as 'Guest of Honor'

BEIJING (APP): Commercial Counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing, Ghulam Qadir on Sunday said Pakistan, as the guest of honor, will participate in the 8th Silk Road International Exhibition scheduled to be held in Xi'an, Shaanxi, China, from September 20 to 24.

He highlighted the close exchanges between Pakistan and Shaanxi in

recent years across various fields. He noted that during a visit to Xi'an in early June this year, the prime minister expressed a strong willingness to deepen exchanges with Shaanxi in areas such as economy, trade, energy, agriculture, education, and sister city relationships, with economic cooperation serving as the focal point.

Qadir emphasized that Pakistan's participation as

the guest of honor at the Silk Expo will significantly contribute to promoting pragmatic cooperation between the two sides in various sectors, as reported by China Economic Net.

He also mentioned that a large delegation from Pakistan will attend the event, showcasing a wide array of Pakistani products to further strengthen ties and explore new opportunities for collaboration.

Monsoon rains expected from today: NDMA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) anticipated more rain and thundershower in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) from August 26th to 29th.

"Heavy rainfall may trigger landslides in hilly areas and flood may also occur in low laying areas of Gujranwala Division, Lahore Division, Sahiwal Division, Twin Cities, Attock, Murree, Galiyat, Chakwal, Tala Gang, Jhelum, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Layyah, Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Khanpur, Sargodha, Mianwali, Khushab, Bhakkar in Punjab, and Malakand Division, Peshawar Division, Mardan, Swabi, Hangu, Karak, Kohat, Orakzai, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Kurram, Waziristan Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may experience rainfall with heavy downpour," the NDMA's news release said on Sunday.

Heavy rainfall may trigger landslides in hilly areas and flood may also occur in low laying areas of Gujranwala Division, Lahore Division, Sahiwal Division, Twin Cities, Attock, Murree, Galiyat, Chakwal, Tala Gang, Jhelum, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Layyah, Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Khanpur, Sargodha, Mianwali, Khushab, Bhakkar in Punjab, and Malakand Division, Peshawar Division, Mardan, Swabi, Hangu, Karak, Kohat, Orakzai, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Kurram, Waziristan Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may experience rainfall with heavy downpour," the NDMA's news release said on Sunday.

Heavy rainfall may trigger landslides in hilly areas. Flows in local nullahs and river tributaries may increase during the forecast period.

The NDMA urged all relevant authorities and the public to take necessary precautions to mitigate the potential impacts of flooding in low lying areas and landslides in hilly areas.

It issued instructions to all relevant departments to alert Emergency Response Teams and mobilized resources to ensure a swift response to any arising situations.

The public is advised to remain vigilant and follow instructions from local authorities, the NDMA advised the public and said they should stay informed and download 'Pak NDMA Disaster Alert' mobile app for timely alerts and closely monitor weather reports.

Atta Tarar launches operation clean up on PTV, axes 25 shows

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar has launched a comprehensive overhaul of Pakistan Television (PTV), "shutting down 25 low-rating shows" and introducing a new policy aimed at promoting openness, professionalism and constructive criticism.

According to a news report published by a local daily on Sunday, the minister had vowed to root out "sifarishi culture, incompetence and fake news" on PTV. Tarar said this is just the beginning



of the "Operation Clean Up" initiative. The report said the minister had faced resistance from "vested interests and mafias but remains resolute in his mission to transform PTV".

The minister has announced the recruitment of professional anchors and producers, while warning that fake and incompetent staff would be sent packing.

The report said the minister had also engaged multiple experts to revamp PTV's programming, aiming to make it comparable to private channels.

KARACHI: Rangers personnel standing near burnt vehicles as two people were killed and nine others injured in deadly clashes between two groups in Golimar area. — INP photo

Tarar has addressed concerns about the rating of talk shows on PTV, stating that the policy has been changed to allow for openness and criticism of the government.

According to the report, the minister has also hinted at taking action against those behind a malicious social media campaign resisting the changes.

"With a focus on marketing and sales, Tarar aimed to make PTV's shows profitable and vibrant, starting with the successful coverage of the ICC T20 World Cup," the report noted.



KARACHI: Rangers personnel standing near burnt vehicles as two people were killed and nine others injured in deadly clashes between two groups in Golimar area. — INP photo

Operation Goldsmith: A plan to destabilize Pakistan

Palwasha

EVERSINCE the power of Imran Khan and PTI came to an end in April 2022 following a democratic vote of no confidence motion moved by the opposition parties in Pakistan's parliament, forces inimical to Pakistan, notably Zionists, India's RAW, and the West have been fully mobilized to destabilize Pakistan and its government.

This year alone, in the last 8 months, a flurry of 129 sympathetic articles have been written in the international press in favor of the now incarcerated founder of PTI, Imran Khan. The latest amongst these propaganda articles, have been the article published in the New York Times on August 1, 2024,

titled: "As Misery Multiplies, Pakistanis Rise Up Against the Ruling Elite."

When one peruses these articles, a clear attempt for discrediting Pakistan and its government, military in particular, can be noticed as has been the narrative of Imran Khan following his ouster from the post of Premiership. This common narrative being peddled by both Imran Khan, his party and the international media against the state of Pakistan is not mere coincidence but the manifestation of a unified anti-Pakistan agenda well coordinated, laid out and executed under 'Operation Goldsmith'.

Noting the impact of Operation Goldsmith on Pakistan, it is crucial to understand what this campaign is all about?

Operation Goldsmith is

a fake propaganda and a psychological warfare being orchestrated by the enemies of Pakistan considerably, RAW, Zionists and the US-led West to create unrest in Pakistan by turning the nation against its state, particularly the Pakistan Army, which is the cornerstone of Pakistan's solidarity and wellbeing.

Clearly, Imran Khan being a close associate of the Goldsmith clan, is an integral and vital player of the Goldsmith project.

Imran Khan's party has been engaged in a series of actions - prejudicial to the country's interests and integrity - spreading over almost a decade starting in August 2014 when they brought their first sit-in to topple the government of PML-N in Islamabad.

This party has attacked the parliament, the PM

House, the PTV, the Supreme Court, dissolved the National Assembly unconstitutionally, attacked police officers, police stations, army officers, destroyed military installations, set ablaze Radio Pakistan, tried its best to stir rebellion within the armed forces of a nuclear state, tried to stir up a mutiny against the army chief, launched the vilest, most sleazy, dirtiest and most venomous campaign campaign against the armed forces including the martyrs.

In the incumbent year, ever since its failure to make it the center post-Feb 2024 General Elections, PTI leadership, under the instructions of its founder, has conspired against Pakistan by approaching the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to

revoke Pakistan's GSP Plus status and cancel the release of the second tranche of its bailout package for Pakistan, respectively.

It also lobbied for the passing of an anti-Pakistan resolution in the US House of Representatives, seeking a probe into the military's interference into Pakistan's elections, which by contrast were held transparently under the watch of both national and international media.

Furthermore, PTI's opposition to the vision of Azm-e-Istehkam, strategy pertaining to both the Afghan Taliban as well as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and its sympathetic approach towards Sheikh Mujeeb ur Rehman, raises concerns about its allegiance to the state and suggests anti-state leanings.

Lately, the party's decision to hold a rally in Islamabad on August 22, now rescheduled for September 8, has also been an extension of Operation Goldsmith. According to sources, crores of rupees meant for the welfare and development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its residents were misappropriated from the provincial government's treasury. These funds were intended to be used to arm and transport party workers, Afghan illegal migrants and other criminal gangs and extremists to the venue of the power show with the aim to provoke violence, render casualties and then hold the government responsible for its self-orchestrated chaos through digital means, to further fuel more anti-state uprisings, unrest and instability in the country.

It bears mentioning that the Goldsmith network which is increasingly censoring the government of Pakistan for fulfilling its constitutional mandate by taking legal action against the fascist elements of PTI -for inducing despondency in Pakistan, sowing discord among institutions, particularly the armed forces, and spreading lies and propaganda at the behest of foreign collaborators - and for installing a firewall to regulate the Internet by clamping down on politically motivated digital terrorism, which by the way has long been employed in countries like China, Iran, Turkey, Russia, India, and US etc, has kept mum about the gross atrocities being committed against Muslims in Gaza and Kashmir.

This is because morality for these flag bearers of

humanity and consequent outrage are always selective and confined to razor sharp national interest. This duplicity has markedly been underscored by Pakistan's DG ISPR, Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, in his August 5 presser as well.

The enemies however should be informed that Pakistan is not Libya, Bangladesh, or Syria which can be destabilized so easily through foreign intervention aided by local facilitators. On the contrary, its institutions, particularly the Pakistan Army, with the unwavering support of its people, are well equipped and prepared to defend the country's sovereignty and integrity against internal and external forces, thwarting in turn sinister plans like Operation Goldsmith.