

Blast kills four in Razmak
F.P. Report

RAZMAK: At least four died, 10 others injured as an explosion occurred in tehsil Razmak bazar, in North Waziristan. As per details, the district administration said that the blast occurred when explosives placed on a motorcycle exploded, killing four on the spot. Police officials said that the injured have been shifted to nearby hospitals.



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ISLAMABAD: General Li Qiamong, PLA Ground Forces Commander of China called on Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif.

Terrorists kill 23 bus passengers in Musa Khel

F.P. Report

MUSA KHEL: Territories stopped a passenger bus and killed 23 people in the firing incident that occurred in Radashim of Musa Khel area of Balochistan. The accused stopped the vehicles on the national highway and fired at the passengers in the same old pattern in which various labourers were gunned down in past incidents in the southwestern province.

A heavy contingent of Levies and police reached the spot. Balochistan Levies officials said that the dead bodies of the passengers are being shifted to the hospital. Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's strongly condemned the brutal incident of terrorism near Musa Khel. "The extreme brutality and cruelty were done near Musa Khel," they said. "Terrorists showed brutality by targeting innocent people," Mohsin Naqvi.

"Terrorists and their facilitators will not be able to escape the fateful end," he said. Naqvi said in the war against terrorism, every class, including the security forces, made sacrifices. The government is equally involved in the grief of the families of the deceased, he added.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti condemned the terrorist incident in Musa Khel. Balochistan chief executive expressed deep sorrow and regret over the killing of 23 people. He expressed condolences to the families of those who died in the cowardly action as terrorists targeted innocent people near Musa Khel.

"Terrorists and facilitators will not be able to escape from the terrible end," Sarfraz Bugti claimed. Earlier, two

Bolan railway blast leaves 2 dead, train service 'suspended'

F.P. Report

BOLAN: At least two dead and several others injured in a blast near a railway bridge in Bolan, Balochistan on Monday. As per details, Kachhi SSP Dost Muhammad Bugti stated that six dead bodies were found in the mountains near Bolan including two bodies from the debris of the destroyed railway bridge and four others near the highway.

According to railway sources, the blast occurred last night in the Dozan area of Bolan, destroying a railway bridge which resulted in the suspension of train service. The railway bridge collapse has halted train movement, and trains from Karachi and Rawalpindi to Quetta and other parts of the country have been stopped, sources added. Additionally, the Quetta section of the National Highway was also blocked by armed individuals last night, further disrupting transportation in the region. In another horrific incident, armed men killed at least 23 passengers in Balochistan's Musakhel district after offloading them from trucks and buses. According to SP Ayub Achakzai, armed men stopped the vehicles on the national highway in the Rarah Sham area of Musa Khel and killed at least 23 passengers hailing from different parts of Punjab. During the action, the armed men also set 10 vehicles on fire.

Punjabi laborers were killed by firing by unknown persons in the Tamp area of Turbat, Balochistan. Police said firing by unknown persons in Turbat. Both deceased belong to Punjab.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has condemned the killing of the two laborers. In his tweet on X, Sarfraz Bugti wrote that the so-called terrorists martyred two innocent Pakistanis. Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti wrote that innocent people were martyred based on identity and the incident is condemnable. Balochistan government stood with the survivors of the oppressed, innocent and innocent workers in this hour of grief.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday strongly condemned a terrorist attack targeting a pas-

senger bus in the Musakhel area of Balochistan.

They expressed their deep grief over the loss of precious lives in the attack and called for taking the perpetrators to task. Both the president and prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed souls and strength for the bereaved families to bear the loss.

"The killing of innocent people is tantamount to killing the entire mankind. The terrorists are enemies of the country, nation, and humanity," the president said and reiterated the nation's resolve to keep up fighting terrorism. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed the law enforcement agencies to carry out an immediate probe into the incident. He also instructed the authorities to cooperate with victim families and extend urgent medical care to the injured.

Chinese Commander calls on PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China General Li Qiaoming Monday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

He warmly welcomed General Li to Pakistan and underscored that Pakistan and China are All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners and trusted friends. The prime minister highlighted that the deep-rooted ties between the two nations enjoy broad public, political, and institutional support in Pakistan, making them indispensable for the progress and development of both countries.

He expressed satisfaction at the deepening military-to-military exchanges, noting that the defense and strategic ties between Pakistan and China are vital for peace and stability in the region. These relations form the foundation of their bilateral relationship. General Li, in his remarks, affirmed that China, as an iron brother, strategic partner, and reliable friend, places the highest priority on its relationship with Pakistan.

He expressed China's desire to elevate their bilateral friendship to new levels of cooperation and collaboration. Recognizing the role of Pakistan's armed forces in promoting regional peace and stability and combating terrorism, General Li reiterated the PLA's commitment to further expanding its cooperation with Pakistan to enhance the capacity building of the two armed forces. The two sides focused on various aspects of the Pakistan-China friendship, particularly the bilateral defense and strategic partnership.

Leghari for resolution of power issues

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaish Ahmad Leghari has said that government is trying its best to resolve issues relating to power sector and complaints of electricity consumers. Talking to media in Multan today, he said that government will be able to reduce power tariff within one year.

He said that steps are being taken to reduce electricity theft up to forty percent as compared to the last financial year. Sardar Awaish Leghari said that WAPDA is going to introduce prepaid meters for the consumers so that they could use electricity according to their affordability. He said the issues of tariff and capacity charges will be resolved keeping in view the relevant laws and taking all the stake holders into confidence. He said that distribution companies have been directed to solve the complaints of consumers at earliest and improve their customer care and complaint centers.

The Frontier Post

Moonis's CNIC blocked
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) spokesperson said PTI leader Moonis Elahi's identity card has been blocked on court orders. "Moonis Elahi's passport has also been placed on the control list," the FIA spokesperson said. In addition to Moonis Elahi, the identity cards of six other accused individuals have also been blocked, the spokesperson confirmed.

21 terrorists killed in Balochistan retaliatory operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: As many as 21 terrorists were killed as security forces launched retaliatory operations after attacks of militants in different areas of Balochistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Monday.

According to military's media wing, the terrorists attempted to conduct numerous heinous activities in Balochistan on Sunday-Monday night. "The cowardly attacks conducted on behalf of inimical and hostile forces were aimed at disrupting the peaceful environment and development of Balochistan by targeting mainly the innocent civilians, especially in Musa Khel, Kalat and Lasbela Districts. Resultantly, numerous innocent civilians embraced martyrdom," the statement read.

It further stated that in Musa Khel District, terrorists stopped a bus in the general area Rara Sham and maliciously targeted innocent citizens, working in Balochistan to earn their livelihood. The ISPR said, "Security forces and law enforcement agencies immediately responded and successfully thwarted the evil design of terrorists and sent twenty-one terrorists to hell in ensuing clearance operations, ensuring security and protection of local populace. However, during the conduct of operations, 14 brave sons of soil including 10 security forces soldiers and four personnel of law enforcement agencies, having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced martyrdom."

The Sanitisation operations were being conducted to eliminate any other terrorists. The military vowed that the instigators, perpetrators, facilitators, and abettors of these heinous and cowardly acts, targeting innocent civilians, will be brought to justice.

"Security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan, and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the statement concluded. At least 38 people, including police and Levies personnel, were martyred in different gun attack incidents in Balochistan's Kalat, Musakhel and Bolan districts. Eight people, including Balochistan Levies personnel, were martyred in different incidents in Kalat district on Sunday night, said police.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid tributes to the personnel of security forces who embraced martyrdom during operations against terrorists in various areas of Balochistan province.

In a message, the prime minister said the timely actions of the security forces foiled the nefarious designs of the terrorists. He said the entire nation stood with its brave security forces. He vowed to uproot all forms of terrorism adding that the cowardly activities of the terrorists could not shake our resolve. Offering his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, the prime minister prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the mar-

tyrs in Jannah.

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed profound sorrow and respect for the 14 young soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice while battling terrorists at various locations. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari extended heartfelt condolences to the families of these martyrs, affirming that the entire nation stands with them in their grief. He emphasized that the valour and sacrifices of these heroes will forever be etched in the nation's memory.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari lauded the security forces for their remarkable success in eliminating 21 terrorists, stating that no matter how many challenges arise, the courage and resilience of our brave soldiers will remain unwavering. He highlighted that the selfless sacrifices of our troops in the war against terrorism serve as a powerful beacon of hope, with these martyrs giving their today for a better tomorrow.

The PPP Chairman declared that the soldiers who lay down their lives for the nation's safety are a source of immense pride. He reiterated his and his party's steadfast determination to continue the fight against terrorism. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari assured that the monumental sacrifices of these heroes will always be honoured, and the struggle against terrorism will persist resolutely. In closing, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari paid tribute to the martyrs, describing their sacrifices as a golden chapter in the nation's history, destined to inspire and be remembered for generations to come.

Tarar pays tribute to security forces for sacrifices

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture, Attaullah Tarar, on Monday paid glowing tribute to the personnel of security forces and law enforcement agencies for their unmatched sacrifices in maintaining law and order in the country.

Speaking on a point of order in the National Assembly, he said, "We pay tribute to the security forces, law enforcement agencies, and those injured while maintaining law and order in the country." He recalled that in 2013, under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, terrorism was eliminated from the country, and peace was restored in Karachi city.

He alleged that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government brought back the Taliban, disrupting law and order in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He further alleged that no meeting of the National Action Plan was held during 2018 to 2022, blaming the PTI for the current bloodshed in the country. He held the previous PTI government responsible for the deterioration of law and order, accusing it of allowing the Taliban to settle in Pakistan.

Tarar stressed the need for national unity to address the law and order situation. He said that the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been requested to establish a counter-terrorism department on modern lines and to install a safety system in Peshawar. Responding to a point rose regarding the law and order situation in Kalabagh, he informed the National Assembly that the issue had been resolved peacefully. "I just spoke to the Inspector General of Police, Punjab; the issue was resolved peacefully, and the two groups have dispersed."

On another point, the minister said that an operation against dacoits in the Kacha areas had been launched. He commended the efforts of the Sindh and Punjab governments working to eliminate dacoits from the region and expressed hope that the operation would successfully eradicate them. The minister said that Karachi is a top priority for the incumbent government. He highlighted that during the Prime

Minister's recent visit to China, the Karachi Circular Railway and other projects for the city were discussed.

He also said that the Airport Authority has been established to improve airport operations and provide best possible facilities for passengers. Addressing energy concerns, he said that a National Task Force has been established to review Independent Power Producers (IPPs). The government has allocated Rs. 50 billion to provide relief to electricity consumers. The task force is expected to submit reports on IPPs, and solutions to related issues will be sought, he added.

Regarding internet connectivity issues, the minister said that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Chairman reported that the Web-Management System is currently being upgraded. He explained that the use of the Web-Management System and VPNs had caused slow internet speed but assured that improvements would be seen in the coming days.

He also recalled that the previous PTI government had issued directives for the installation of a National Firewall System. He said that the Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had been directed to provide relief to those affected by floods in Dera Ismail Khan. The NDMA has established a state-of-the-art digital visual center for weather forecasting.

The minister said that it is an honor for Pakistan that Benazir Bhutto was the first female elected prime minister of the country. On the subject of law and order, the minister said that the federal government has the full support of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister in maintaining law and order.

He said that during a meeting, the chief ministers of all four provinces were on one page to eliminating terrorism and improving law and order. He said that there are "no-go" areas in the country. However, he said there is need for intelligence-based and targeted operations against terrorists. With the coordination of federal and provincial governments, he expressed confidence that terrorism would be eradicated from the country.

Pakistan loan approval 'not on IMF board agenda'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released its Executive Board meeting schedule up to September 4, 2024, with financially-struggling Pakistan missing from the agenda, according to sources.

Despite this, the government remains optimistic that the country will secure approval for a \$7 billion bailout package from the IMF next month, sources privy to the matters told media. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb last week dismissed concerns about the

IMF declining the staff-level agreement, exuding confidence that "the lender will approve it next month".

Pakistan and the IMF reached an agreement on the 37-month loan programme in July. The IMF said the programme was subject to approval from its Executive Board and obtaining "timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners". Sources said the Ministry of Finance was upbeat on the IMF's final approval of the loan programme next month.

The government is actively working to roll over \$12 billion in loans

from China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, they added. Additionally, Pakistan has requested an extra \$1.2 billion loan from Saudi Arabia to bridge a \$2 billion financing gap. According to insiders, Pakistan already owes \$5 billion to Saudi Arabia in the form of cash deposits. It must be noted that Pakistan also holds \$4 billion in deposits from China and \$3 billion from the UAE. These amounts are separate from an additional \$4.5 billion in commercial loans, including those from China, sources quoted the ministry officials as saying.

Chinese Commander meets COAS

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Commander of the People's Liberation Army Ground Forces General Li Qiaoming expressed admiration for Pakistan's concerted efforts in combating terrorism and extremism during a meeting with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Monday, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement.

The Chinese commander also acknowledged the unwavering professionalism and dedication of the Pakistan army during the meeting. "The meeting afforded an opportunity for in-depth discussions on matters of mutual interest, regional security, military training, and measures to further augment bilateral defence cooperation," the military's media wing said.

Moreover, the army chief underscored the robust relations between the Pakistan Army and the People's Liberation Army, highlighting the ongoing bilateral military cooperation is a testament to the enduring brotherhood between the two nations, as per the ISPR. The ISPR said: "COAS General Syed Asim Munir expressed his gratitude to the dignity, reiterating that Pakistan deeply cherishes its fraternal ties with China."

Earlier, upon arrival at the GHQ, General Li paid respects at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada by laying a floral wreath, and was presented with a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Pakistan Army, in a ceremonial display of respect and hospitality, according to the statement.

3 officers of Adiala Jail transferred

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Three officers of Adiala Jail have been transferred on the allegations of "facilitating" PTI founder Imran Khan.

After the arrest of the PTI leader's alleged facilitators in the prison, transfer of officers is going on. The Prisons IG on Monday issued a notification transferring the three officers. According to the notification, Additional Superintendent Aftab Ahmed has been transferred to the Punjab Staff Training College.

Balochistan govt vows all-out action against terrorists: Bugti

F.P. Report

QUETTA: After at least 38 people including law enforces lost their lives to different terrorist attacks in Balochistan in a single day, Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Monday vowed stern action against the terrorists to avenge the killings "without launching any grand operation".

"At least 38 innocent people were martyred in the attack," said CM Bugti during a press conference in Quetta, adding that those involved in the killings are "terrorists" and not the Balochs. He was referring to the several terror incidents in Balochistan. In one of the attacks, at least 23 passengers were killed after being offloaded from passenger buses and trucks in the Rarasham area of Balochistan's Musakhel, police told media.

Providing details of the incident, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ayub Achakzai said

armed men blocked the inter-provincial highway and offloaded passengers from the vehicles. Separately, at least 10 people, including police and Balochistan Levies personnel, were martyred in a gun attack in Kalat, police told media.

Condemning the attacks, the chief minister pledged that the terrorists, their facilitators and sympathisers would be taken to task. He said that 21 terrorists have been killed by the security forces along with other law enforcement agencies in clearance operations across the province. He said that the state is standing with the victims, adding that all stakeholders including judiciary, media and civil society will also have to fight this war along with the state against terrorism.

"The state will establish its writ and take all necessary steps. We are ready for dialogue but with whom we should hold talks? Should

we hold talks with those who killed innocent labourers?" "Innocent people were martyred after being offloaded from buses. Revenge will be taken from the terrorists. These activities were not carried out by disgruntled Balochs but terrorists who always search for soft targets."

CM Bugti said that the provincial government will enhance the capacity of the forces and eliminate terrorism as a challenge. The government has a smart kinetic approach against terrorists who do not have a strong capacity in Balochistan, said the chief minister. He clarified that there is no need to launch a grand operation and the law and order situation would be brought under control via smart intelligence-based operations (IBOs). He also hinted at limiting 4G internet services in Balochistan following a surge in terrorist attacks and propaganda by anti-state elements against the state.



DC Peshawar for action on drainage issues

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar Sarmad Saleem Akram emphasised the urgent need to address road drainage problems during a meeting with administrative officers, relevant department officials, and municipal authorities.

The DC highlighted the importance of a comprehensive strategy to enhance the drainage system, aiming to alleviate public hardships during the rainy season. The meeting reviewed ongoing projects and discussed plans to improve the city's infrastructure.

He directed all departments to ensure cooperation and effective communication to resolve drainage issues promptly. He reiterated the government's commitment to public welfare, stating that improving the drainage system is a key part of these efforts.

The DC urged the public to keep the city clean and avoid throwing garbage and plastic bags into drains. He called for community support in enhancing the drainage system and emphasized the collective responsibility to develop Peshawar and address public concerns.

Rs37000 wage for daily wagers demanded

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sahibzada Naseem Khan, the president of the Small Industries Development Board Union, has called on the provincial government to implement the announcement made in the provincial budget of 2024, which sets the minimum monthly wage for daily wagers, project employees, and laborers at Rs. 37,000.

He urged the government to issue the notification without further delay. He criticized the bureaucracy and officials for securing salary increases for themselves while neglecting to implement the wage increase for daily wagers, project employees, and laborers.

Sahibzada Naseem Khan expressed these views while presiding over a union meeting, which was attended by Adnan Gul, Hazratullah, Muhammad Sami, Muhammad Ashraf, Haji Imtiaz, Muhammad Riaz, and Amjad Khan.

He criticized the provincial government, stating that the rulers are too preoccupied with political rallies and activities to consider the plight of the poor people in the province.

During the meeting, he warned that if the notification is not issued immediately, they would resort to protests.

He urged the government to take the matter seriously.



PESHAWAR: Muzammil Aslam, Advisor to the Chief Minister for Finance, addressing one-day stakeholder consultation workshop to kick-start the implementation of the new Fixed Asset Management Policy 2024.

Muzammil inaugurates KP Fixed Asset Management Policy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Finance Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa held a one-day stakeholder consultation workshop in Peshawar to kick-start the implementation of the new Fixed Asset Management Policy 2024 (Health Department and Elementary and Secondary Education Department). The policy was recently approved by the Provincial Government in order to ensure effective management and utilization of fixed assets to improve service delivery. This policy is a significant move towards ensuring transparency, efficiency, and

fiscal responsibility in managing public assets. Special Secretary Regulation Abdullah Kakakhil, Additional Secretary Finance Gul Bano, Financial Consultant Waqas Paracha and many officials of the Health, Elementary and Secondary Education and Planning and development department participated in this special workshop.

The workshop brought together key stakeholders from the Health Department, Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Planning & Development Department, and Finance Department. Mr.

Muzammil Aslam, Advisor to the Chief Minister for Finance, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led the workshop and emphasized the critical importance of this policy in ensuring the optimal use of investments in public assets. He highlighted that while substantial amounts are spent annually on repairs, maintenance, and the creation of new fixed assets, a systematic approach is essential to ensure these investments are optimally utilized.

Participants in the workshop engaged in in-depth discussions on the implementation challenges of the policy and provided valuable

insights on strategies to overcome these challenges. Mr. Muzammil Aslam reiterated the government's commitment to allocating the necessary resources and support to ensure the successful implementation of this policy, which will enhance financial prudence, optimize resource allocation, and improve service delivery across KP's health and education sectors.

At the conclusion of the workshop, Mr. Muzammil Aslam congratulated the participants and called upon all departments, and officials to embrace this change and work collaboratively towards its success.

PHC seeks response in transfer of uplift funds

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has issued notices to the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Deputy Commissioner North Waziristan and Secretary Irrigation seeking their response on a petition filed against the transfer of Special Integrated Fund allocated for Mir Ali and Sub-Division Wazir to other districts, on Monday.

The counsel Bashir Wazir advocate, told the court that a protective wall and water channels were approved to mitigate flood damages in Mir Ali and Sub-Division Waziristan, and the feasibility report for these development projects was also prepared and approved at the administrative level.

The lawyer informed the court that in 2023, a special integrated fund was approved for development projects, but after the change of government in 2023, work on the projects was stopped. Now, the current members of the assembly have transferred the development fund to other areas. He requested the court to stop the transfer of the development fund to other districts.

PHC after initial hearing, issued notices to the Chief Secretary, Deputy Commissioner of North Waziristan, and Secretary Irrigation seeking their response before the next hearing.

Dy Director Media KMU successfully defended PhD thesis

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar proudly announces that its Deputy Director of Media & Protocol, visiting faculty Pakistan Studies and noted Columnist Mr. Alamgir Afridi, has successfully defended his PhD thesis in Pakistan Studies from the University of Peshawar. His dissertation, titled "Leadership of Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan: A Comparative Study of Mian Tufail Muhammad and Qazi Hussain Ahmad 1972-2009," offers a significant contribution to the academic understanding of leadership within one of Pakistan's prominent political parties. Mr. Afridi's research employs a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative scientific methods to explore the leadership styles, strategies, and impacts of Mian Tufail Muhammad and Qazi Hussain Ahmad on Jamaat-i-Islami and the broader national political landscape.

Traffic pressure horns A negative social practice irritates Peshawarties

PESHAWAR (APP): Once known as a City of Flowers, Peshawar is currently confronted to a monster problem of traffic pressure horns, which started unnerving the people.

Exposed to massive traffic jams almost everyday especially during peak hours at morning and evening, Peshawarties are subjected to various health, mental and psychological health hazards due to unnecessary pressure horns of buses, buses, wagons, tsunami of rickshaws and others vehicular traffic that continued to people's headache.

Despite many complaints were made and rules framed; however, the implementation against pressure horns' laws has been declared unsatisfactory in KP.

"No doubt, pressure horns are a social course. On Sunday last, I visited Peshawar where a truck's loud pressure horns affected my hearing structure and faced pains" said Kamal Khan, a resident of Nowshera while talking to APP.

The irritating and doubled hearing pains forced me to visit a ENT specialist for treatment, said Kamal and questioned that who was responsible of his suffering without naming the PTI Government?

ENT specialist and former professor of Khyber Medical College Peshawar, Dr Fazal Sattar said that using an pressure horn for an extended period of time can lead to a hearing loss, as the loud noise can damage the delicate structures of the ear.

Additionally, he said that such horns can be jarring and may cause physical discomfort to its victims due to sudden loud noise.

Causing an extreme stress and anxiety in people exposed to it for extended periods of time especially traffic police, vendors shopkeepers and drivers, he said that in some cases, air horns can even be dangerous and cause accidents while driving or operating machinery.

Dr Sattar said many medical investigations conducted by experts at local and international level have proved that noise pollution can cause physiological stress reaction such as high blood pressure besides increasing heart rate, speech and sleep disturbance.

Besides hearing loss, he said that noise pollution could also caused cardiovascular problems associated with accelerated heartbeat, gastric intestinal, decrease in alertness and ability to memorize, long lasting effects such as insomnia, nervousness, bulimia, chronically high blood pressure, anxiety, depression and sexual dysfunction.

In recent years, the noise pressure levels in all major cities including Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and Rawalpindi have risen exponentially as unplanned and unmanaged urbanisation continued to swell the urban sprawl.

Except of some posh townships, it is difficult to differentiate between a residential and commercial locality, offices, shopping plazas and auto-repair workshops surround even schools, universities and hospitals which should always be protected from noise pollution.

Ear-splitting noise from unmuffled motorbikes, auto rickshaws and public transport is very harmful in more than one way which are causing ears impairment.

He said the excessive noise leads to psychological effects, and changes in social behaviour of its victims by interfering with daily routines.

In developed countries like Pakistan, he said municipal authorities needs to strictly enforce environmental laws and regulations to protect people especially school-children and patients in hospitals from all sources of noises. To address this growing menace, the authorities needs of adopting a comprehensive and consistent policy approach for management of noise pollution which combines the principles of precaution, prevention and heavy fines against polluters.

Environment and health authorities also underscored the need to collaborate with the civic administration to monitor noise levels, compile data on sources and effects of noise pollution and raise public awareness through the electronic and social media.

Environmental Protection Agencies (EPAs) in all provinces and local government-entities must take steps through the strict enforcement of regulations and laws to hold noise polluters accountable.

Dr Zilat Malik, former Chairman, Economics Department, University of Peshawar claimed that by 2050, about 68pc of the global population will be living in cities and that all cities of Pakistan with nearly two percent population growth rate would face environmental hazards due to rapid urbanisation and that noise pollution could contribute to a public health crisis.

Environmental Protection Agency KP official told APP said that over 120 million people are estimated to have disabling hearing globally due to noise pollution.

Exercising power under Pakistan Environmental Protection Ordinance 1983 he said that National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) has been established for monitoring motor vehicle exhaust and controlling of noise pollution.

As per NEQS, he said that motor vehicle noise has been allowed maximum 85 dB (A) sound emission for vehicles at a distance of 7.5 meters from the source without specifying the type of motor vehicle and measuring technique.

EPA KP has launched campaign against noise pollution and pressure horns by public and private vehicles in the province.

Moreover, rickshaws were booked for spreading noise pollution. The experts suggested establishment of green belts and plants that help serve the dual purpose of filtering dirty air and absorbing noise in big cities of Pakistan.

They also underscored the need of education of people through special campaign against noise pollution through social media to combat this social mess.

12 detox units & drugs rehabilitation centers setup

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has setup 12 detoxification and drugs rehabilitation centers (DTRC) in different districts of the province.

These centres were established at Mardan, Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Kohat, Karak, Swabi, Swat, Malakabad and DI Khan districts for treatment and psychological services to patients.

More such centres in others 12 districts would be setup in the province besides a model detoxification and rehabilitation centre at Lakki Marwat, official in social welfare department told APP.

He said the numbers of beds at DTRC would be increased from existing existing 120 to 500.

Besides awareness to counter smuggling of illicit drugs, four pronged strategy was adopted focusing on supply reduction, controlling illicit drugs trafficking, treatment and rehabilitation measures in addition to enhance cooperation with national institutions and enforcement agencies.

The regional offices of anti narcotics department in Peshawar, DI Khan, Abbottabad, Swat and Mardan were converted into excise police stations where trained investigation officers deployed to investigate narcotics cases after registration of cases. The drugs addiction was a social scourge and collective efforts of all stakeholders were required to win fight against it.

Good Governance Committee to act against corruption: Qazi Anwar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Qazi Anwar, a member of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Good Governance Committee has said that the party's founder, Imran Khan, had canceled the public gathering, but workers are being given the impression that it was postponed due to someone's pressure.

He expressed these

views during an informal conversation with the media at the Peshawar High Court yesterday. Qazi Anwar Advocate said that he met with Imran Khan, who said that when he asked why the public gathering was canceled, the jail administration said that political questions could not be asked.

He said that the Good Governance Committee

was formed by Imran Khan, who said that the committee's name would be changed and a secretariat would be established for it. The committee's name will be PTI Internal Accountability Committee. Qazi Anwar said that complaints can be filed with the committee against any minister or officer. The committee will have its own website where complaints can

be registered.

PTI's senior leader said that a petition has also been filed in the high court against the committee, which says that the committee should be stopped from investigating the wheat scandal.

We are not talking about the wheat scandal. He said that the committee will take action based on evidence, not allegations.

Chanzeb for enforcing PTI's public agenda

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism and Culture and senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Zahid Chanzeb has said that any lethargy in compliance to the vision of the founder of PTI Imran Khan and the enforcement of the public agenda given by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur would be intolerable. He said that the focus of all the projects of the provincial government is the welfare of the people as the direct benefit of all these projects would be given in the form of relief in one way or the other.

He expressed these views during a meeting with the delegations in his office at Civil Secretariat. The delegations

briefed Advisor for Tourism and Culture on the ongoing development projects in their areas. Zahid Chanzeb while discussing with the delegations said that the development projects are started to provide facilities in the lives of the people for which most of the expenses are paid by the tax money given by the people.

He urged the delegates to keep a watchful eye on

the ongoing projects and inform the concerned authorities in case of any brevity so that timely action could be taken.

Zahid Chanzeb said that the contractor or staff who do not work should be marked and the record should be shared with other departments so that the departments know about the blacklisted contractors and they cannot get the contract.

Pakistan's rare wild pheasants being pushed to the edge

PESHAWAR (Anadolu Agency): Pakistan is fast losing several rare wild pheasant species due to a string of threats including habitat degradation, hunting, climate change and human intervention, with wildlife experts warning that their extinction would be "disastrous" for ecosystems and biodiversity.

Due to increasing habitat loss driven by climate change, deforestation and poaching, the population of wild pheasants in Pakistan is under persistent threat, according to Mohebullah Naveed, a wildlife expert in the capital Islamabad.

"Pheasants cannot thrive without their habitat," Naveed, who is associated with a pheasant conservation project, told Anadolu.

Depletion of forest cover due to climate change and increasing housing and agriculture needs are primary reasons for the wild bird's dwindling numbers, he said.

While all native pheasant species are protected under local wildlife laws, hunting and poaching are an equally major threat to two main pheasant species in Pakistan, he said.

"Poaching and hunting are mostly done by locals living close to the (pheasant) habitats. They enjoy this as a sport, although hunting pheasants is illegal," said Naveed, who serves as a wildlife conservation officer with the Himalayan Wildlife Foundation, an Islamabad-based wildlife group.

Another motive behind the poaching and hunting of pheasants is their prized bush meat and



beautiful feathers that are used in traditional hats in parts of northern Pakistan, he said.

In addition, disturbances caused during the collection of medicinal plants in the summer are also a factor, he added.

Pakistan is home to six pheasant species: the western horned tragopan (Tragopan melanocephalus), Himalayan monal (Lophura impejanus), koklass pheasant (Pucrasia macrolopha), white-crested kalij (Lophura leucomelanos), Indian peafowl (Pavo cristatus) and cheer pheasant (Catreus wallichii). Sprawling forests in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region are home to wild pheasants.

Cheer pheasants and western horned tragopans are the rarest and most threatened species in Pakistan, while others still have viable populations, Muhammad Naem Awan, director of research and conservation at the World Pheasant Association's Pakistan chapter, told Anadolu.

These two species have been classified as "endangered" and "vulnerable" and are on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), according to Awan, who is also a member of the IUCN's Species Survival Commission.

"The population of these two species is on the decline and the situation demands urgent measures," he warned, asserting that they should be declared "priority species" by the government to

bolster efforts to revive their population.

Public awareness and engagement in conservation efforts are also essential for "long-term success," he said.

Supporting the argument, Naveed called for habitat preservation and restoration to be a top priority. "To protect and revive wild pheasant populations, conservation efforts should focus on habitat preservation and restoration, ensuring diverse and natural environments for feeding and breeding," he said.

"Implementing sustainable agricultural practices, creating protected areas and planting native vegetation will support their habitats."

Additionally, he said, strict control on poaching, managing

predator populations, and breeding pheasants in captivity for reintroduction into the wild could help boost their numbers.

There have been no detailed surveys recently in Pakistan to ascertain the current population status of wild pheasant species, according to Jamshed Iqbal Choudhry, an official at the World Wide Fund for Nature - Pakistan (WWF-Pakistan).

However, he said, four species still have "viable" populations, especially in protected areas such as Ayubia National Park in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Margalla Hills National Park in Islamabad.

"There is a need to conduct detailed surveys in known potential sites and to explore new areas for their conservation," he said.

Supporting the view, Naveed said some surveys have been carried out in a few selected areas for certain species, but in the context of the whole of Pakistan, "it's hard to estimate their current numbers."

The extinction of wild pheasants would be "disastrous" because they play a crucial role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems, he said.

"Pheasants help control insect populations, disperse seeds and provide food for predators. Their loss could lead to imbalances in food webs, reduced biodiversity and altered vegetation growth, negatively affecting both wildlife and the health of their habitats," he said. As part of a larger ecosystem, pheasants help sustain the ecological stability of the areas they inhabit, he added.



In brief

Commissioner chairs meeting F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah held a special meeting with the Deputy Director of Regional Information Office Kohat Irshad Muhammad Afridi for effective media coverage of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda" in his office. Coverage of Provincial and District Governments, especially the proper publicity of "Awami Agenda" on Print, Electronic and Social Media came under discussion in the meeting. Commissioner Kohat praised the performance of the Information Department and said that the role of the Information Department in image building of the government cannot be ignored. He said that "Awami Agenda" is a revolutionary program of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which will needs proper coverage on media. It will have a positive impact on the lives of common people and improvement of overall administrative affairs, he added. Commissioner Kohat while stressing the need for publicity of the "Awami Agenda", said that the divisional and district administration will be in close contact with the Information Department in this regard. Motasim Billah Shah expressed his satisfaction on the performance of the Information Department.

Cop kills wife, accused held

SAHIWAL (INP): A police constable gunned down his wife over domestic disputes here on Monday. Police arrested the culprit and his mother. According to details, the incident took place in village 15/WM of Sahiwal where a cop exchanged hot words with wife over domestic issues. After verbal clash, the accused shot dead his wife. The body was shifted to hospital for post-mortem. DSP Saddar, Taqqi Abbas said that the police constable and his mother have been arrested who were being investigated after registering a case against them.

LESCO staff loses both arms

CHANGA MANGA (INP): A Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) staff lost both arms after receiving an electric shock while repairing 11KV power wires in Changa Manga. As per details, Nasir who was working to repair 11kv wires received an electric shock after which he was rushed to the hospital. After examination, the doctors decided to cut both his arms to save his life after electric shock. LESCO staff said he was working at Sidha feeder on the orders of SDO Amjad. He alleged that he was asked that the electricity supply was suspended from the grid, but actually, it was on, that that left him injured.

Landlord kills servant

WAZIRABAD (INP): A heartless landlord in Alipur Chattha Wazirabad, fuming over his servant's sluggish attitude, first brutally tortured him and then took the boy to a tube well where he killed him by repeatedly dipping his head in water, father said on Monday. As per 18-year-old Tariq's father's account, his son worked for a landlord Shahzad Zafar Chattha. Chattha, he explained, first beat up his son over laziness and then took him to a tube well where he continuously dipped his head in water due to which his son died. Although a case has been registered against the landlord at Alipur Chattha Police Station on the complaint of the deceased youth's father, the police are yet to arrest him.



HYDERABAD: A view of accumulated rainwater after heavy rains in City.

JI to support traders shutter down strike

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Jamaat-e-Islami extended full support and cooperation to traders and business community over their complete shutter down strike scheduled to be held on August 28. The district Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Ghulam Rasool along with other part key leaders including Ibrahim Biland, Saeed Akhtar Advocate, Manzoor-ul-haq, Jehanzib and Fazalullah made the announcement in a press conference held here the other day.

On the occasion, the president of Markaz-e-Thanzeem-i-Thajraan Ihsan Bacha, president of chamber of commerce and industry Mardan Zahir Khan along with large number of traders accompanied the JI leaders. Speaking to journalists, the Jamaat-e-Islami district Ameer Ghulam Rasool blamed that two percent rich influential families were imposed over people of Pakistan who had been sucking blood of them through adaptation of cruel policies.

He claimed that Jamaat-e-Islami would fully sup-

port and participant the shutter down strike of traders scheduled to be held tomorrow on August 28. They would try their best to make it as successful and effective, adding that the strike would become as a mile-stone for their ongoing anti-government agitation. He said that the Thajar-dhoost scheme of government was in fact a Thajar- Dushman scheme which was planned with the purpose to loot the traders and business classes with both hands.

"We will never accept it as traders and business community are being deceived on the name of Thajardhoost Scheme," he said, adding that the system of FBR was based on injustice that was why they would also not accept SROs. He told the present rulers were arguing that they were compelled to impose these heavy taxes as the financial condition of country was weak and they wanted to boost it.

He lamented that the government was not serious about boosting economy of Pakistan as on one hand they were imposing huge

and heavy taxes on middle and poor classes but on other hand they were not ready to end or reduce their privileges and unnecessary expenditures.

The JI district Ameer alleged that the power purchase agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were made without proper considerations as well as without taking people of Pakistan into confidence. Ghulam Rasool accused that these agreements had now been turned into blood sucking agreements of poor countrymen. He lamented that the government was not ready to overview and revise those IPPs agreements, resultantly, huge and heavy taxes were being imposed on poor traders and businessmen.

He said that traders were like backbone in economy and the country would make progress and go forward if they were happy. He announced that Jamaat-e-Islami would set-up protest camp on bank road and various JI teams would be roaming on different roads and markets to deal the issues which were created on the spot.

Operation against encroachments F.P. Report

CHAKDARA: The district administration has started anti-encroachment operation under public agenda of the provincial government to ensure good governance which is appreciated by business community and the public, on Monday.

According to the directive of Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower to transfer rickshaw and Suzuki stop illegally established in Chakdara Bazaar to the TMA lorry base and to eliminate the encroachment in order to implement the good governance agenda of the provincial government.

A high-level meeting was held in this regard in which Assistant Commissioner Chakdara, Additional Assistant Commissioner, TMO Tariq Ayub, Tehsildar Imran Khan, Forest Range Officer Sajjad Ali, Sub Engineer Dawood Khan, President of Anjuman Tajran Adenzai Khawaja Faizul Ghafoor, Vice President Ali Badshah, General Secretary Akbar Khan Sultan Khel, Chakdara Press Club Chairman Shah Faisal Afghani, President Javed Ur Rehman, Traffic Incharge Wajid Khan, Liaquat Hussain of Transport Union, John Muhammad, Rais Khan of Adenzai Youth Jirga, Yasin Khan, Abdur Rehman and many others participated in the meeting.

On the public complaints, to solve traffic jams, rush and other problems in Chakdara Bazaar, removal of illegally established public transport stands, encroachments and rickshaw and Suzuki stops from the market, while the TMA base.

It was decided to activate, similarly, all the carriages from the market will also be shifted to the base. Yesterday, the implementation of the above decisions was started by the administration and for this purpose, the heavy forces of late levies, traffic police and late-night police were deployed.

A team was appointed and Additional Assistant Commissioner Syed Sardar Badshah supervised the entire process, the public has welcomed the decision of the administration made in public interest.

Kundi criticizes PTI for seeking NRO

F.P. Report

BUNER: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has criticized the leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for allegedly seeking an NRO (National Reconciliation Ordinance) and pleading for release from jail.

Governor Kundi praised the people of Buner for their sacrifices in maintaining peace, emphasizing that their contributions are well-recognized. He welcomed the public enthusiasm and the joining of other parties into the PPP, describing it as a positive development.

Governor Kundi referred to the events of May 9 as unforgettable and criticized the previous government's performance. He highlighted that the late Benazir Bhutto endured imprisonment and martyrdom for the country's sake, while former President Asif Ali Zardari spent eleven years in unjust detention without speaking against the country.

He criticized the leadership of PTI for allegedly seeking an NRO and pleading for release from prison. Kundi expressed confidence that the public support indicates that the upcoming government will be led by the PPP.

Governor Kundi reiterated that providing economic stability to women was a dream of Benazir Bhutto. He said that the Benazir Income Support Programme is a step toward

fulfilling that vision. Reflecting on 2008, Kundi recalled that when the PPP came into power, the province was engulfed in violence, but by 2012, they had managed to restore peace. However, he criticized the subsequent administration for failing to maintain stability.

He condemned the current state of unrest in the province, highlighting the prevalence of armed groups and the kidnapping of judges. Additionally, he criticized the rise in corruption and the inefficiency of justice institutions. Kundi announced the establishment of Benazir Income Support Programme offices at the union council level to improve public services and emphasized the ongoing Benazir Nashonuma Programme for maternal and child welfare. He assured the public that the doors of the Governor House are open to them.

The meeting also featured speeches by the provincial president of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, district president Yousaf Ali, and General Secretary Akbar Ali Bacha. During the gathering, Governor Kundi, along with Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha and other guests, was honored with traditional turban. Former federal minister Najamuddin Khan and other provincial leaders were also present.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi assured Utility Stores employees that he would play a role in addressing their legitimate issues. He gave this assur-

ance during a meeting with the office bearers of the Utility Stores Corporation Dera Ismail Khan Union, including Ghulam Abbas and Arif Baghi.

The meeting was also attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly member Ahmad Karim Kundi and former district Nazim Azizullah Alizai, who is also the divisional general secretary of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Governor Kundi emphasized that the PPP has always advocated for the prosperity of workers, farmers, and the underprivileged.

He said that struggling institutions are a burden on the national economy and expressed the party's desire to implement policies that would stabilize the economy while reducing difficulties for the employed and lower-income workers. The delegation members thanked Governor Kundi for his commitment to supporting their issues and ensuring cooperation in resolving them.

Similarly, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi also strongly condemned brutal killing and attack in Mosa Khel district of Balochistan and in Razmak of North Waziristan. He said that the killing of innocent people and security forces will not go in vain and the whole nation is unite against terrorism. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage to bereaved family members to bear this irripable lose with fortitude.

Several drug sellers sent behind the bars in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir police during a crackdown against drug peddlers in parts of the district arrested several accused and recovered different kinds of contrabands from their possession here on Monday. Following the directives of the district police officer Saleem Abbas Kulachi, the Timergara police arrested drug peddlers identified as Bilal and Attaulah and recovered 1859 grams of charas from their possession. Another drug seller identified as Saeed was arrested by the Timergara police.

The Talash police arrested several drug sellers including Roman Khan and Asghar Khan and recovered 2 kilograms of charas from their possession. The Lal Qila police arrested a drug

seller, Inayat and recovered 1090 grams of charas from his possession. The Chakdara police during routine checking arrested one Fazal Dayan and recovered a pistol from his possession.

The Balambat police also arrested a drug peddler Sardar Ali and recovered one kilogram of charas from him. The police also arrested a proclaimed offender Zaimullah, wanted by the Balambat police in a murder case. Meanwhile the Khall police while a gang of thieves including Dayam Khan and Sadiqullah, residents of Timer Camp and recovered 5 water pumps from their possession. The Samarbagh police also during the crackdown arrested a drug dealer Habib, a resident of Sadbar Kalay and recovered 1122 grams of charas from him.

Similarly, a drug seller Masood, a resident of Khall in front of local elders, promised to leave his drug selling. The Khall police in a raid arrested another drug seller Noorul Wahab and recovered 630 grams of charas from him. The Ouch police arrested one Attaulah and recovered 750 grams of charas, a Kalashnikov-type pistol, 2 chargers and 4 cartridges from his possession.

Talking to local journalists, the DPO Saleem Abbas Kulachi said that there was no room for drug sellers in the district and the crackdown would continue for an indefinite period. The DPO held a meeting with all DSPs and SHOs in his office and directed them to work collectively against the menace of drug. He said the facilitators of drug sellers would also face the brunt.

Govt College Wana golden jubilee celebrated

F.P. Report

WANA: In a show of solidarity and commitment to education, the United Political Peace Paoon and representatives from all political parties of Waziristan gathered at Government College Wana to commemorate its golden jubilee. The occasion was marked by celebrations and a renewed pledge to support and strengthen the institution.

During the visit, Amir Nawaz, the principal of Government College Wana, provided a comprehensive overview of the college's

progress, current challenges, and the issues faced by both students and staff. The principal highlighted the ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of education and improve the college's facilities.

Leaders from South Waziristan Lower expressed their joy at the college's 50-year milestone, praising the principal and teaching staff for their dedication. They noted with satisfaction that all subjects are now taught by qualified professors, ensuring that students receive a high standard of education. The leaders called on students,

parents, and stakeholders across South and Upper Waziristan to actively support and enroll in local colleges, emphasizing that revitalizing these educational institutions is crucial for the region's development, peace, and prosperity.

The political leaders assured the college administration of their continued support, pledging to work together to provide all necessary facilities and resources to educational institutions across the district, including girls' and boys' schools and colleges.

Life on earth could slip out of our grasp knowingly or unknowingly. If we are cutting the branch on which we stand, our fall is inevitable.

The seething cauldron of mixed political and environmental issues have brought a frozen winter of discontent. Everything is going upside down. Chaos is taking over. There is a prevailing sense of hopelessness, pessimism, and utter disorientation. The abyss is drawing us deeper into its darkness. The alarm bells are ringing louder and louder, warning us about the imminent extinction of humanity.

Franz Kafka spoke of the "axe to break the frozen heart." Do we have the axe to shatter the frozen hearts and restore normalcy? We should hope that we have it soon. If our hearts remain frozen, we may be doomed to a global graveyard blanketed by an everlasting winter.

The author is an MPhil Scholar in English Literature. He can be reached at Email: msarwar2069@gmail.com

Muhammad Sarwar

WHO can save humanity? The answer, I suppose, is no one. Because the foes of humanity are none other than human beings themselves. Therefore, the talk of saving humanity from human beings appears to be ironic and a daunting task to accomplish.

If the survival of humanity has so far hung by a narrow thread, that narrow thread now appears to be severing apart. Human beings are racing towards their mutual extinction faster than ever before in the entire history of human civilization.

The ongoing onslaught of climate change allied with the grim scientific reports augurs ill for the future of humankind. The planet earth is rapidly turning into an inhospitable region with each passing day. Graphic scenes of natural disasters have become a daily spectacle. I use the word spectacle because the

elites and governing classes watch the environmental destruction passively as spectators. They do not act as they presume that the problem has not reached their luxurious enclaves yet, and that they are well fortified. Therefore, they go with their usual business of accumulating power and wealth and neglect what is a distant threat for them.

On the other hand, the world's poor populations are bearing the brunt of the impending environmental apocalypse. They cannot afford to secure themselves from natural disasters; they drink polluted water, inhale toxic air, suffer contagious diseases and lose their homes and sources of income. They are living in unlivable conditions. It appears that we exist in an apartheid world bifurcated by the decadence of wealth at one pole and the ashes of extreme poverty at another. This gap is

widening with each passing day and more people are pushed into destitution. In other words, the glimmering life in some parts of the world comes from the utter degradation of biodiversity in other parts of the world.

Moreover, the modern capitalist world fosters the illusion that the resources of the planet are limitless. As a result, overconsumption is central to its progressive model. The earth is endlessly drilled miles deep down to extract its rich resources which are then concentrated in a few hands. However, this model is flawed and cruel as the resources of the planet are not infinite. For how long will the earth be drilled and bled in order to satiate the promethean quests of the rich spoils of modern life? Perhaps, not for much longer. If the rampant consumption persists, these resources will eventually run out. This will result in the breakdown

of the natural framework of life on the planet, and consequently, it will lead to the decimation of the human race.

Facing such a gloomy future does not awaken the human race. They refuse to acknowledge this danger and make it their top priority. Instead, they are engaged in power politics and waging perennial wars. These wars have made the world a more dreadful and volatile place. Because in the nuclear age, some megalomaniac could push the nuclear button and erase the signs of all life on earth. This is not a far-fetched scenario given the current trajectory of events.

Look at the Middle East, which has endured unending wars for decades, it is now embroiled in another atrocious conflict in Gaza. There is a persistent danger that the war might escalate into a broader regional

conflict. Israel, backed by its Western powers, is provoking several countries including Iran, Lebanon, and Yemen, potentially leading to a full blown war. South Asia and East Asia each have nuclear powers with strained relations. Moreover, the rise of China has once again revived power politics on the world stage. The relations between the two superpowers, the USA and China, have been consistently on the escalation ladder. To make matters worse, NATO and Russia are at loggerheads over the war in Ukraine. These countries host thousands of nuclear weapons, and any miscalculation or misadventure could cause unimaginable catastrophe.

We are living both in 'the best of times' and 'the worst of times'. Life is beautiful yet fragile. The bustling life of modernity inspires awe and wonder, but also evokes dread and uncertain-

Winter of our discontent



DHAKA: Bangladesh army personnel direct rescue operations for people stranded in flooded residential areas in Feni.

Famine hits Sudan as peace talks fall short yet again

KHARTOUM (BBC): Famine is ravaging Sudan. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) - which claims to be the government of Sudan - took a small step towards alleviating that famine earlier this week by allowing 15 UN aid lorries to cross the border from Chad to bring food to the starving. Aid agencies hope that it opens the door to a full-scale relief effort that can save millions of lives.

But they fear it is just a symbolic concession - too little and too late. Four weeks ago, the UN-accredited Integrated food security Phase Classification (IPC) system said that famine conditions existed in parts of Darfur, Sudan's westernmost region. This was no surprise. Sudan's humanitarian catastrophe has been the largest in the world for many months. More than half of Sudan's 45 million people need urgent relief aid. More than 12 million are displaced, including nearly two million refugees in neighbouring countries - Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan. Some food security specialists fear that as many as 2.5 million people could die from hunger by the end of this year. While the roots of Sudan's hunger lie in decades of economic mismanagement, the legacy of devastating wars, and drought made worse by climate crisis the trigger for today's famine is the use of starvation as a weapon. War erupted in April last year between the SAF, under Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo, known as "Hemedti".

The war soon devastated Sudanese communities. Like a swarm of human locusts, RSF militiamen rampaged through the capital, Khartoum, stripping it bare of anything that could be pillaged and resold. The force also vandalised vital infrastructure such as hospitals and schools. The same story was repeated wherever the RSF advanced. The breadbasket regions of Gezira and Sennar along the Blue Nile, a place of vast irrigated farms, have been ravaged. People there are going hungry for the first time in generations.

Starvation is worst in Darfur, especially in el-Fasher, the only city in the region still controlled by the army and its local allies. Surrounded by the RSF, the city depends on precarious supply routes that cross the battle

lines. It is in the Zamzam camp for displaced people near el-Fasher that the aid group Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) first reported famine levels of malnutrition. For its part, the army has fallen back on its tried-and-tested strategy of cutting off rebel-held areas. Its logic is that if it can choke off external supplies, the RSF's local supporters will become disoriented and some of its units may defect.

That tactic worked well when it was fighting the long war in southern Sudan from 1983 to 2005. Its generals regret that they allowed the UN to send aid, which, they believe, sustained the rebellion for long enough to enable the southerners to claim their independence. The SAF controls Port Sudan, the country's only port and its major route for imports. Even more importantly, the United Nations recognises the SAF as the sovereign government. Even though there are no SAF troops within 100 miles (160km) of the Chad border - which arms smugglers cross at will - the UN's lawyers insist that World Food Programme lorries must have official government permission to drive the few miles from the Chadian border town of Adré along sand tracks into Darfur. And the SAF has played the sovereignty card to maximum effect.

In June, Sudan's ambassador to the United Nations, Al-Harith Idriss al-Harith Mohamed, condemned talk of starvation as a conspiracy by the country's enemies to justify intervening. He threatened "Biblical Armageddon" if the UN declared famine. The IPC experts assessed the data, called his bluff, and declared famine. The Sudanese Armed Forces backed down and opened the Adré border crossing - but only for three months. And they allowed just 15 of the 131 UN aid trucks waiting at the border to cross, before insisting that negotiations begin on an inspection regime. Aid veterans expect that the generals will use every trick in their bureaucratic book to slow down the approvals process. And Darfur needs thousands of trucks of food every week, not a single convoy. Getting food to Chad from the nearest ports on the West African coast takes weeks.

To feed the starving, every road needs to be opened - from Port Sudan, from South Sudan and across the desert from Libya and Egypt.

Sudan's local relief committees also urgently need money. A full-scale aid effort needs the warring parties to agree a ceasefire and to end pillage and extortion. But there is no sign that they are willing to do this. Peace talks in Geneva concluded without substantive progress. Hosted by Switzerland, they were jointly convened by the US and Saudi Arabia. US Special Envoy Tom Perriello planned the meeting with high hopes. He wanted the two warring generals to meet face-to-face and sign a ceasefire. But SAF head Gen al-Burhan refused to go or even send a senior delegation.

He argued that the RSF should first evacuate its forces from civilian neighbourhoods - essentially demanding their withdrawal from the territories they had captured - as a precondition for talking. Mr Perriello scaled down his expectations and settled on proximity talks and phone calls - including from US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken - hoping to open roads for humanitarian access. He achieved just enough to say that all was not lost, and that the talks would resume at an unspecified future date. But diplomats know that no progress is likely until the two sides' main backers - for the RSF, the United Arab Emirates, and for SAF, Saudi Arabia and Egypt - come to an understanding. Until now, the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and the UAE over who should lead the region has stalemated peace efforts.

Although it denies it, evidence points to the UAE supporting the RSF with money and guns, while Saudi Arabia leans towards SAF. The UAE had not wanted to attend talks in the previous location of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, expecting that any breakthrough would be credited to their Saudi rivals. The Saudis, meanwhile, did not want to see the UAE deciding who would run Sudan's next government. Representatives from the two Arab states sat as observers in the Geneva talks. But until the top-level Arab decision-makers meet, that is just a diplomatic courtesy. In the meantime, the fighting continues and the hunger deepens. Sudanese are still hoping that, unlike previous civil wars that lasted years if not decades, this one can be brought to a swift and peaceful conclusion. But the signs are not hopeful.

Bird species was extinct in Europe. Now it's back

PATERZELL, Germany (AP): How do you teach a bird how, and where, to fly? The distinctive northern bald ibis, hunted essentially to extinction by the 17th century, was revived by breeding and rewilding efforts over the last two decades. But the birds - known for their distinctive black-and-iridescent green plumage, bald red head and long curved beak - don't instinctively know which direction to fly to migrate without the guidance of wild-born elders. So a team of scientists and conservationists stepped in as foster parents and flight instructors.

"We have to teach them the migration route," said biologist Johannes Fritz. The northern bald ibis once soared over North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and much of Europe, including southern Germany's Bavaria. The migratory birds were also considered a delicacy, and the bird, known as the Waldrapp in German, disappeared from Europe, though a few colonies elsewhere survived.

The efforts of Fritz and the Waldrappteam, a conservation and research group based in Austria, brought the Central European population from zero to almost 300 since the start of their project in 2002. The feat moved the species from a "critically endangered" classification to "endangered" and, Fritz says, is the first attempt to reintroduce a continentally extinct migratory bird species. But while northern bald ibises still display the natural urge to migrate, they don't know which direction to fly without the guidance of wild-born elders. The Waldrappteam's early reintroduction attempts were largely unsuccessful

because, without teaching the birds the migration route, most disappeared soon after release. Instead of returning to suitable wintering grounds such as Tuscany, Italy, they flew in different directions and ultimately died.

So the Waldrappteam stepped in as foster parents and flight instructors for the Central European population, which was made up of descendants from multiple zoo colonies and released into the wild in the hopes of creating a migratory group. This year marks the 17th journey with human-led migration guides, and the second time they've been forced to pilot a new route to Spain due to climate change. To prepare them for travel, the chicks are removed from their breeding colonies when they are just a few days old. They are taken to an aviary that's overseen by the foster parents in the hopes of "imprinting" - when the birds will bond with those humans to ultimately trust them along the migration route. Barbara Steininger, a Waldrapp team foster mother, said she acts like "their bird mom."

"We feed them, we clean them, we clean their nests. We take good care of them and see that they are healthy birds," she said. "But also we interact with them." Steininger and the other foster parents then sit on the back of a microlight aircraft, waving and shouting encouragement through a bullhorn as it flies through the air. It's a bizarre scene: The aircraft looks like a flying go-kart with a giant fan on the back and a yellow parachute keeping it aloft. Still, three dozen birds follow the contraption, piloted by Fritz, as it sails over alpine meadows and foothills. Fritz was inspired by "Father Goose" Bill

Lishman, a naturalist who taught Canadian geese to fly alongside his ultra-light plane beginning in 1988. He later guided endangered whooping cranes through safe routes and founded the nonprofit "Operation Migration." Lishman's work prompted the 1996 movie "Fly Away Home" but features a young girl as the geese's "mother."

Like Lishman, Fritz and his team's efforts have worked. The first bird independently migrated back to Bavaria in 2011 from Tuscany. More have flown the route that's upward of 550 kilometers (342 miles) each year, and the team hopes the Central European population will be more than 350 birds by 2028 and become self-sustaining. But the effects of climate change mean the Waldrapp are migrating later in the season now, which forces them to cross the Alps in colder, more dangerous weather - without the aid of warm currents of air, known as thermals, that rise upward and help the birds soar without expending extra energy. In response, the Waldrappteam piloted a new route in 2023, from Bavaria to Andalusia in southern Spain.

This year, the route is roughly 2,800 kilometers (1,740 miles) - some 300 kilometers (186 miles) longer than last year's path. Earlier this month from an airfield in Paterzell, in upper Bavaria, the team guided 36 birds along one stage through bright blue skies and a tailwind that increased their speed. The entire journey to Spain could take up to 50 days and end in early October. But Fritz says the effort is bigger than just the northern bald ibises: It's about paving the way for other threatened migratory species to fly.

Tourist dies after ice collapse in glacier

ICELAND (BBC): A foreign tourist has died in south Iceland after ice collapsed during a visit their group was making to a glacier, local media report. A second tourist was injured but they have been taken to hospital and their life is not in danger, while two others are still missing.

Rescuers have suspended the search for the missing in the Breidamerkurjökull glacier until morning because of difficult conditions. Ice collapsed as the group of 25 people were visiting an ice cave along with a guide. Emergency workers worked by hand to try to rescue those missing. First responders received a call just before 15:00 about the collapse.

"The conditions are very difficult on the ground," said local police chief Sveinn Kristján Rúnarsson. "It's in the glacier. It's hard to get equipment there... It's bad. Everything is being done by hand." Local news outlets reported that 200 people were working on the rescue operation at one point. Speaking on Icelandic TV, Chief Superintendent Rúnarsson said police had been unable to contact the two missing people. While the conditions were "difficult", the weather was "fair", he said. Confirming that all those involved were foreign tourists, he said there was nothing to suggest that the trip to the cave should not have taken place.

Wildfires in Brazil leave two dead

SAO PAULO (AP): Wildfires in Brazil's southern Sao Paulo state have killed at least two people, officials said Saturday. At least 36 cities have been put on high alert. Local and federal authorities were stepping up efforts to control the flames, Sao Paulo state Gov. Tarcísio de Freitas said.

The fires have raged in the region outside the city of Sao Paulo, one of Latin America's most populous cities with more than 11 million residents. At least 7,300 government workers and volunteers had been deployed across the state to "contain the advance and put out these fires," de Freitas told journalists. De Freitas warned that the flames, spurred on by a heat wave and a drought, may be fanned by strong winds.

While the city largely hasn't been affected by the fires, videos on social media show the skies of rural areas filled with smoke and burning trees along the highway. The government said that in the city of Urupes, two employees working at an industrial plant died while trying to fight back a fire, but provided few other details. The region has been plagued with the worst wildfires in decades, according to local news organization Folha de S.Paulo, which counted 4,973 fires in the region just this year.

Dozens evacuated

LONDON: More than 100 people have been evacuated from a building partly used as a block of flats in east London which has been engulfed in flames. London Fire Brigade (LFB) was called at 02:44 BST and parts of the scaffolding surrounding the building as well as from the ground floor up to the sixth floor and the roof are alight.

Forty fire engines and 225 firefighters have been sent to Freshwater Road which has been closed to traffic. The cause of the fire is not yet known, the Brigade has said. Station commander Alan Bendell is at the scene and said: "The fire is producing heavy smoke and we're advising local residents to keep windows and doors closed. "Two of the Brigade's 32-metre turntable ladders are being used at the scene as aerial water towers to assist with tackling the fire from height." Crews from Dagenham, Ilford, Romford, Barking and surrounding fire stations are at the scene. LFB is describing the property as a "mixed-used residential and commercial building". — Aljazeera

Moscow and Kyiv swap prisoners

KYIV (AP): Russia and Ukraine exchanged over 100 prisoners of war each as Kyiv marked its third Independence Day since Moscow's full-scale invasion. Ukraine said the 115 Ukrainian servicemen who were freed were conscripts, many of whom were taken prisoner in the first months of Russia's invasion. Among them are nearly 50 soldiers captured by Russian forces from the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol.

The Russian Defense Ministry said the 115 Russian soldiers had been captured in the Kursk region, where Ukrainian forces launched their surprise offensive into Russia two weeks ago. The ministry said the soldiers were currently in Belarus, but would be taken to Russia for medical treatment and rehabilitation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on X that the United Arab Emirates had again brokered the exchange, the 55th since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of its neighbor in February 2022. Photos attached to Zelenskyy's post show gaunt servicemen with shaven heads and wrapped in Ukrainian flags. "We remember each and every one. We are searching and doing our best to get everyone back," Zelenskyy said in the post. Officials from the two sides meet only when they swap their dead and POWs, after lengthy preparation and diplomacy.

Neither Ukraine nor Russia discloses how many POWs there are in total. According to the UN, most Ukrainian POWs suffer routine medical neglect, severe and systematic mistreatment and even torture while in detention. There have also been isolated reports of abuse of Russian soldiers, mostly during capture or transit to internment sites. Last January, Russia and Ukraine exchanged hundreds of prisoners of war in the biggest single release. Drone and artillery attacks continue. Five people were killed and five others wounded in Russian shelling of the center of the city of Kostiantynivka in Ukraine's partially occupied eastern Donetsk region, local officials said.

In the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, Russian shelling killed two people and wounded four, including a baby, officials said. Two people were killed in a Russian drone attack, and one further person in shelling, in the northeastern Sumy region. Ukraine's air force said it had intercepted and destroyed seven drones over the country's south. Russian long-range bombers also attacked the area of Zmiynyi (Snake) Island overnight with four cruise missiles, while the wider Kherson region was also struck by aerial bombs. In Russia, the Defense Ministry said that air defenses had shot down seven drones overnight. Five drones were downed over the southwestern Voronezh region bordering Ukraine, wounding two people, regional Gov. Aleksandr Gusev said.

Ukraine's Military Intelligence Directorate claimed to have blown up a

warehouse storing 5,000 tonnes of ammunition in the region's Ostrogozhsky district. News outlet Astra published videos appearing to show explosions at the ammunition depot after being hit by a drone. The videos could not be independently verified. Two people were wounded in a drone attack in the Belgorod region, also bordering Ukraine, regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said. Local authorities did not report any casualties in the Bryansk region, where the fifth drone was intercepted. In the Kursk region, regional Gov.

Alexei Smirnov said Saturday that three missiles were shot down overnight and another four on Saturday morning. Russian air defenses shot down two more drones on Saturday morning, Russia's Defense Ministry said - one over the Kursk region and one over the Bryansk region. Independence Day commemorations Ukraine marked its 33rd Independence Day Saturday as its war against Russia's aggression reaches a 30-month milestone. No festivities are planned and instead Ukrainians will mark the day with commemorations for civilians and soldiers killed in the war. Speaking at a ceremony marking the anniversary, Zelenskyy announced on Saturday that Ukraine has successfully used a new domestically produced drone for the first time against Russian forces.

"Today, we had the first and successful combat use of our new weapon - a completely new class of weapon, the Ukrainian missile drone 'Palyanitsa,'" Zelenskyy said. He did not give further details, but added that "the enemy was struck," and thanked the developers and manufacturers. Zelenskyy also said that Ukraine's offensive in the Kursk region was a "preventive strike" that made it possible to avoid encirclement of part of Ukraine's Sumy region. Poland's president joins the commemorations in Kyiv Polish President Andrzej Duda arrived in Kyiv by train early Saturday in a symbolic show of support from one of Ukraine's key allies. Videos posted by his office showed him being greeted by Ukrainian officials and later paying his respects in a ceremony at the Wall of Remembrance of the Fallen for Ukraine.

Duda's visit to Kyiv, his fifth since February 2022, sends a message that Warsaw's support for Ukraine remains strong as the war drags on for the third year. Poland, located to Ukraine's west, has donated arms and become a hub for Western weapons destined for Ukraine. It has also welcomed tens of thousands of Ukrainians who fled the war. It hosts the most Ukrainian refugees outside of the country after Germany. A trade dispute over Ukrainian grain that dragged down ties last year, and historical grievances between the two countries, sometime provoke bad feelings, particularly among Poles who remember a World War II-era massacre by Ukrainian nationalists.

Harris sets fundraising record with \$540m

WASHINGTON: Vice President Kamala Harris has raised \$540m in little more than a month since she began her race for United States president, with a surge of donations during the Democratic National Convention last week, her campaign said.

A memo released by Harris's campaign manager, Jen O'Malley Dillon, said the \$540m raised included \$82m that came in during convention week and was a sign of Democratic enthusiasm for her candidacy. "Just before Vice President Harris' acceptance speech, we officially crossed the \$500 million mark," O'Malley Dillon wrote in a memo released by the campaign.

"Immediately after her speech, we saw our best fundraising hour since launch day." "This is the most ever for any presidential campaign in this time

span," she added. 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 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. Harris became candidate for president on July 21 when President Joe Biden stepped aside under pressure from fellow Democrats concerned about his age after he stumbled during a June 27 debate against Republican rival Donald Trump.

The Harris candidacy has generated momentum that has put Trump on the defensive and left him struggling to maintain media attention.

Trump has also proven a formidable fundraiser, but at the moment appears to be outpaced by Harris's month-old campaign. Trump's campaign and its related affiliates announced earlier this month that they had raised \$138.7m in July - less than what Harris took in during her White House bid's opening week. Trump's campaign reported \$327m in cash on hand at the start of August. Harris and her vice presidential running mate, Tim Walz, take their campaign for the White House on a bus tour through Georgia this week, looking to build support in a state looming large in the November 5 election. — Aljazeera

Cows obstruct Abuja

ABUJA (AP): At an intersection seven miles from the presidential villa, frustrated drivers honk as a herd of cattle feeds on the grass beautifying the median strip and slowly marches across the road, their hooves clattering against the asphalt. For the teenage herder guiding them, Ismail Abubakar, it is just another day, and for most drivers stuck in the traffic, it's a familiar scene unfolding in Nigeria's capital Abuja.

Abubakar and his cattle's presence in the city center is not out of choice but of necessity. His family are originally from Katsina State in northern Nigeria, where a changing climate turned grazing lands into barren desert. He moved to Idu - a rural, bushy and less developed part of Abuja - many years ago. But it now hosts housing estates, a vast railway complex and various industries. "Our settlement at Idu was destroyed and the bush we used for grazing our cattle cut down to pave the way for new

houses," Abubakar said in a smattering of Pidgin English. It forced his family to settle on a hill in the city's periphery and roam the main streets for pasture.

Fulani herders like Abubakar are traditionally nomadic and dominate West Africa's cattle industry. They normally rely on wild countryside to graze their cattle with free pasture, but the pressures of modernization, the need for land for housing and crop farming and human-caused climate change are challenging their way of life. To keep cattle off of Abuja's major roads and gardens, some suggest that herders need to start acquiring private land and operating like other businesses. But to do that, they'd need money and government incentives. "It's disheartening," said Baba Ngelzarma, the president of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, a Fulani pastoralists' advocacy group. "Nigeria is presented as an unorganized people. The

herders take the cattle wherever they can find green grasses and water at least for the cows to survive, not minding whether it is the city or somebody's land."

He added that part of the problem is the government's failure to harness the potential of the livestock industry by offering incentives such as infrastructure like water sources and vet services at designated grazing reserves and providing subsidies. For its part, the government has said it will address the issue, previously promising fenced-off reserves for cattle herders. President Bola Tinubu announced in July a new livestock development ministry, which Ngelzarma said would help revitalize the abandoned grazing reserves. No minister has been appointed. Fewer places to go Nigeria is home to over 20 million cows, mostly owned by Fulani herders. It has the fourth largest cattle population in Africa, and its dairy market is valued at \$1.5 billion.

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Onus on US to rein in Israel's aggression

AFTER nearly 11 months of bloodshed in Gaza, it is heartening to see both Hamas and Israel engaged in the cease-fire negotiations in Cairo that began on Thursday.

Although the high-level talks mediated by Egypt, Qatar and the United States ended on Sunday without a final agreement, they were described as "constructive" as all parties were said to be working to "reach a final and implementable agreement", and the exchanges are continuing at the Egyptian capital at lower levels in the coming days in an effort to bridge the remaining gaps.

Although Iran is not a party to the talks, it has made a tremendous contribution to the unfolding of the Cairo talks for an early cease-fire in Gaza by exercising considerable restraint. It has refrained from taking revenge for the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, in Teheran on July 31, which was widely suspected of being carried out by Israel.

After Haniyeh's death, in anticipation of Iran's retaliation against its closest ally in the Middle East that it has unconditionally been supporting with arms, intelligence and funding throughout the Gaza conflict, the US recently deployed at least two aircraft carrier strike groups along with other forces to the region. While Israel, on its part, has been carrying out large-scale military and civil preparations, indicating it expects a significant retaliation by Iran.

That Iran has so far not taken any action does not mean it will let bygones be bygones. The only reason is that Teheran would like to see the humanitarian crisis in Gaza end at an early date. And many countries, including China, have tried their best to persuade Teheran to bear the bigger picture in mind, setting the table for the Cairo talks.

That being said, all stakeholders to the talks, particularly the US, must make sincere efforts to make the talks fruitful. Even if it is only a temporary cease-fire that is agreed, it will provide the Palestinians in Gaza with the first breathing space since the Oct 7 Hamas attacks on Israel that triggered the fighting, and a window for other countries to mediate the situation.

Over the past nearly 10 months, more than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip, which is 41 kilometers long and from six to 12 km wide, with many of them women and children, according to local Palestinian sources. The 2.3 million Palestinians that are still trapped in the enclave are in a de facto state of famine due to Israel's harsh control of the region. Many rights groups have accused Israel of intentionally weaponizing hunger.

Yet the most intensive exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah in months in the northern border region between Israel and Lebanon on Sunday showed how easy it would be for the ongoing talks to be derailed. The fighting was triggered by Israel's "preemptive" air strikes on Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon after it detected what it said was the militant group's preparation to attack northern Israel.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "deeply concerned" by the escalation and called on the two parties to immediately cease hostilities, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said in a statement.

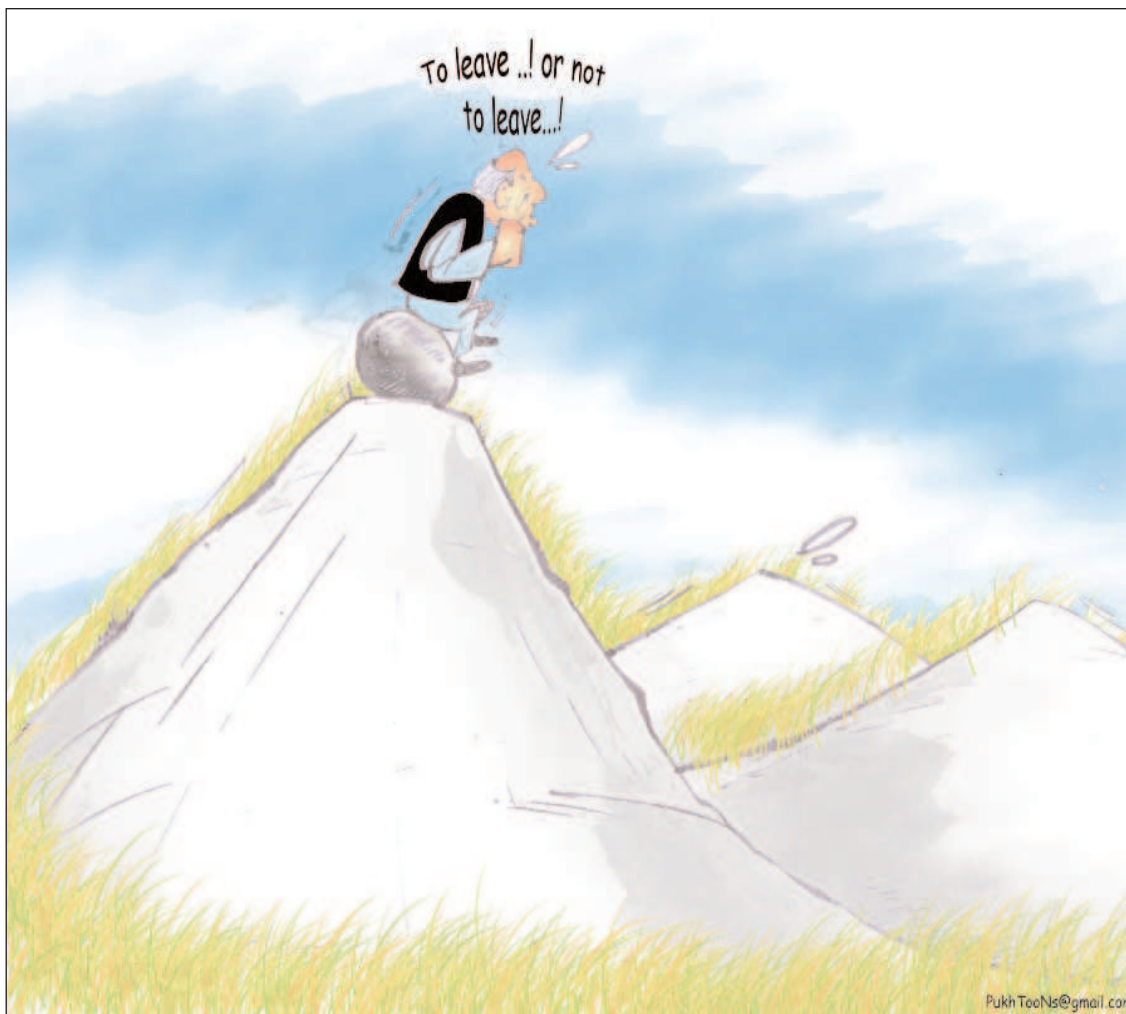
A spokesman for the US National Security Council, Sean Savett, said US President Joe Biden was "closely monitoring" the events in Israel and Lebanon and that he has been engaged with his national security team throughout the evening. "At his direction, senior US officials have been communicating continuously with their Israeli counterparts," Savett said.

"We will keep supporting Israel's right to defend itself, and we will keep working for regional stability."

With its Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Charles Brown visiting Israel, Egypt and Jordan this week, the Biden administration should take more concrete actions to control its ally's aggressiveness at this crucial juncture. The sooner Gaza is freed from the US' partisan politics, the earlier the on-and-off cease-fire talks will yield concrete results.

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Time for US to end its ambiguity on Israel-Palestine

Chris Doyle

AS the Democratic National Convention wound down last week, one was left wondering if the positions of either the Biden administration or a potential Kamala Harris White House on Israel-Palestine had become any clearer.

It remains a divisive issue within the party. The Palestinian issue was tightly controlled at the convention.

Not a single Palestinian-American was permitted to speak. This went down badly, not least with Arab American voters in key states such as Michigan. Even Harris' speech contained the usual carefully constructed ambiguities. She specified the atrocities against Israelis last October but could not name one atrocity, let alone the perpetrator, against the Palestinians.

Donald Trump, in contrast, is under close to zero pressure to be anything other than a die-hard supporter of the Israeli far-right coalition government and hostile to Iran.

On this issue, he is in a comfort zone.

But for President Joe Biden and Harris, Israel-Palestine is a migraine-level headache. Muddling through might be the most apt way to describe Democratic policies.

Constructive ambiguity is not a strategy. It is a mechanism to bypass awkward domestic pinch points such as the party's convention and the November elections. This sort of works on the domestic American scene, but it fails spec-

tacularly when it comes to the Middle East and on the ground. This may come back to hurt Harris in the weeks ahead.

This ambiguity has coursed through the hyperactive diplomacy of the last few weeks. Senior US figures and foreign ministers of allied states have all jumped on planes and dutifully done their tours of the region. The messaging is dreadfully familiar: we support Israel's right to defend itself, we urge all parties to pull back and de-escalate, and the people of Gaza have suffered too much. But it is never stated what is causing that suffering.

The US markets a ceasefire deal without a ceasefire. Instead of an end to hostilities by all sides, it simply proposes a hostage-prisoner exchange during a pause in Israeli bombardment.

None of this impresses the actors in the Middle East. If the US truly wants a ceasefire, it has all the tools required to coerce Israeli acquiescence, should the lead actors in Washington so choose.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for starters, knows the Biden administration is not going to cut the military umbilical cord to Israel, as evidenced by the \$20 billion of arms sales approved this month. He smells weakness in his sleep.

He tolerates the US' diplomatic roadshow but never engages with the substance. Biden presented a plan at the end of May claiming it was Israel's, something

Netanyahu has never owned up to.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, forever failing in the Middle East, embarrassed himself by declaring last week that Israel had accepted an American "bridging proposal." Netanyahu repeated the trick, his silence speaking volumes about his opposition. Note that we have only vague indications as to the contents of this bridging proposal, which appears more a bridge between the US and Israel than one between belligerents.

Anytime a deal approaches, Netanyahu tosses additional obstacles in the way or escalates the regional temperature with a provocative assassination in Beirut, Damascus or Teheran. The latest hurdle is the insistence that Israel retains military control of the Philadelphia Corridor, which itself is a violation of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. Be in no doubt, Netanyahu has plenty of other landmines and traps to deploy if needed.

Even better for the Israeli leader, every time he escalates matters in the region, triggering Iranian threats of retaliation, the US and its loyal states all circle the wagons around Israel and mute their concerns about Gaza.

Palestinians see straight through US policy. They cannot see Biden and Blinken as serious as long as they refuse to pressure Israel and continue to supply the bombs that decimate Palestinian schools and hospitals in Gaza. Warm

words and empathy are seen for what they are — hollow soundbites.

It is seen as sick when Harris says she will "always stand up for Israel's right to defend itself," as if flattening schools acting as shelters is in any way defensive.

What should be defining US policy is ending the Israeli decimation of Gaza, which many see as genocide. Playing for time and entertaining Netanyahu's latest posturing is no way forward.

It is time for the US to ditch the ambiguity, game-playing and complicity in Israeli atrocities. Crystal clarity must be the order of the day. The US has to read the riot act to its awkward ally.

Firstly, no more American planes or bombs should be used to obliterate starving Palestinians in Gaza. Secondly, seek a proper, viable ceasefire deal.

There must be an immediate and full cessation of hostilities, with a hostage-prisoner exchange as part of the package, as well as full humanitarian access.

Thirdly, the continued Israeli military presence within Gaza has to end, no ifs, no buts and no exceptions.

An international presence in Gaza has to be on the agenda.

Finally, the US should also make clear that full accountability for all parties in this conflict would have its backing. That decision alone would change the calculations of all parties, not least Israel. The lack of ambiguity would be the game-changer.

— Arab News

How difficult it is to end a war

Ghassan Charbel

ENDING a war is more difficult than deciding to wage one. The one backing down must offer a convincing story. He must offer explanations and justifications. He must compare the losses and gains and say which of the declared goals were achieved. He must say if he feels more secure after the fighting stops and if the end of the war is just a truce in preparation for other wars.

Ending wars was easier in the past because they were waged by armies that received orders from governments. Today, some wars are different, especially when an army is confronted with factions spread across a region.

Most dangerous of all is the belief of the warring parties that they are waging an existential conflict from which they cannot back down. How hard it is to end a war when one cannot turn to a neutral and honest mediator who can fairly tend to wounds and interests.

The most dangerous aspect of the roaming war the Middle East has been enduring since Oct. 7 is that it is taking place amid a very volatile international situation. The world is living without safety valves. The world has lost faith in the UN Security Council, which has proven ineffective in addressing the wars. Relations between major powers are at their worst in decades.

One simply has to look at how Russian soldiers are being killed by American, German or British shells. And how Western weapons have allowed Ukraine — in the third year of war with Russia — to make an incursion into Russia itself in scenes unprecedented since the Second World War.

Volodymyr Zelensky was elated at the development, describing the master of the Kremlin as a "sick old man from Red Square who constantly threatens everyone with the red button." He "will not dictate any of his red lines to us." The truth is that the Ukrainian army erased the red lines when it dared to breach Russian territories. Vladimir Putin himself had crossed the red lines in 2022 when he invaded Ukraine and returned Europe to a time when borders were undermined.

Zelensky's words reflect his fear. He fears that he may be forced to stop the war and see the Russian forces win a significant portion of Ukrainian territory. A frightened man can become frightening if he keeps pursuing revenge for wounds and gambling with what remains.

The same can be said of Putin. He was frightened of the NATO weapons that were approaching Russia's borders, so he decided to pounce on Ukraine to thwart its Atlantic dreams and launch an operation aimed at depleting the West. The danger grows when the frightened man boasts a frightening arsenal. Moscow's constant reminders of its nuclear weapons only accelerate the drive of regional countries to obtain a "nuclear insurance policy."

How dangerous a war is

when your enemy refuses to surrender despite its heavy losses and finds a side pumping aid into its veins. The inability to deal the knockout blow to decide a war will only prolong the conflict indefinitely.

The Middle East imploded amid this tumultuous international scene. Yahya Sinwar launched an operation that soon engulfed the region. It was difficult for Hezbollah to remain on the sidelines of the war on Gaza. A day after the war erupted, this party launched a "support front" for Gaza from Lebanon. In all likelihood, no one believed that the Gaza war and the support front would still be burning 10 months later, with no serious signs that they will be extinguished any time soon.

Throughout this time, the US has managed to prevent the eruption of a full-scale war in the region. The recent trading of blows along the Lebanese-Israeli border — hours before a new round of ceasefire negotiations in Cairo — underscored just how much the various fires in the region are tied together.

Iran has openly said it does not want a comprehensive war and that it will program its retaliation to Ismail Haniyeh's assassination in a way that will not drag it into conflict. Hezbollah has also said that it does not want a comprehensive war as it pursues its retaliation for the assassination of its military commander, Fouad Shukur. So, it chose purely military targets in its response on Sunday.

But the Haniyeh and Shukur assassinations took place in Teheran and Beirut, respectively. The choice of location was no coincidence. In all likelihood, Benjamin Netanyahu was aware that Iran and Hezbollah do not want a comprehensive confrontation, but he tried to lure them in and he dragged American warships along too. Iran and Hezbollah cannot not retaliate for Haniyeh and Shukur's assassinations. This has to do with Iran and Hezbollah's image and their deterrence power and the risk of losing it. On Oct. 7, Israel appeared lost and frightened. Ten months later, it is frightening. It has committed an open massacre in Gaza, killed hundreds of Hezbollah fighters, launched strikes on Syria and Yemen and hit positions in Iran and tested Iran's image and deterrence.

How difficult it is to end a war. Hamas will not obtain a truce that matches the extent of the losses it and the people of Gaza have incurred. Hezbollah is evidently coming under major pressure to agree to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701. Netanyahu has yet to achieve his declared goal of eliminating Hamas and the residents of Israel's north are still displaced. Iran itself will find it difficult to relinquish the Palestinian arm of its axis of resistance. Does the Biden administration have a solution that will bring the Middle East back from the edge of the abyss?

Of hereditary politics in the subcontinent

Engr. Mamoon Ahmad Khilji

HEREDITARY politics has long been a defining characteristic of the political landscape in the subcontinent, particularly in Pakistan, India, and Bengal. In these regions, political power has often been concentrated within a few elite families, making it difficult for outsiders to penetrate the political arena. However, recent developments in India and Bengal suggest that this trend may be waning, while in Pakistan, the legacy of hereditary politics continues to influence the political narrative.

In the subcontinent, hereditary politics has deep historical roots, stemming from the feudal system where political power and land ownership were passed down through generations. This system persisted even after the region transitioned to democratic governance, leading to the rise of powerful political dynasties.

In Pakistan, the Bhutto family, beginning with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, established a political dynasty

that continued with his daughter, Benazir Bhutto, and later her son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Similarly, the Sharif family, led by Nawaz Sharif, has maintained a significant presence in Pakistani politics, with Nawaz's brother, Shehbaz Sharif, and daughter, Maryam Nawaz, playing pivotal roles.

The rise of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) under Imran Khan marked a significant departure from the entrenched tradition of hereditary politics. PTI emerged as a third force in Pakistani politics, offering hope to those disillusioned by the dominance of political dynasties. Imran Khan's leadership was seen as a break from the past, as he did not belong to a political family and had no direct successors within his family.

Khan's criticism of the Sharifs and Zardaris for perpetuating hereditary politics resonated with many Pakistanis, especially the younger generation. PTI's manifesto emphasized meritocracy, and its success was built on the promise of ending nepo-

tism and providing opportunities for ordinary citizens to participate in the political process.

However, recent developments within PTI suggest that the party may be veering away from its commitment to meritocracy. With Imran Khan currently imprisoned, his sister, Aleema Khan, has begun to position herself as a replacement for him. Aleema Khan has also been vocal in her criticism of key PTI leaders, such as Sher Afzal Marwat and Azam Swati, and has even spoken against Imran Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi. These actions indicate a desire to assert her influence within the party and possibly assume a leadership role.

Aleema Khan's involvement in PTI's leadership raises concerns among supporters who have long opposed hereditary politics. If PTI is perceived as following the same dynastic path it once criticized, it could lose its appeal as a party of change. Furthermore, Aleema

Khan's criticisms of the current leadership could create internal divisions within PTI, weakening the party at a critical time.

While hereditary politics remains a significant issue in Pakistan, recent developments in India suggest that this trend may be in decline. For decades, the Nehru-Gandhi family dominated Indian politics, with figures like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, and Sonia Gandhi holding significant influence.

However, the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under Narendra Modi marked a turning point in Indian politics. Modi, who does not come from a political dynasty, has successfully challenged the dominance of the Gandhi family.

His ascent to power in 2014 signaled a shift in Indian politics, where merit and popular support began to outweigh family lineage.

The BJP's success in elections has further marginalized the Gandhi fami-

ly's influence, leading to what many see as the end of hereditary politics in India.

A similar trend is observed in Bengal, where the long-standing dominance of Sheikh Hasina Wajid's family has been challenged.

Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader of Bangladesh, led the country for several terms, solidifying her family's political influence. However, recent political shifts have led to the toppling of her government, marking a significant change in the political landscape of Bengal.

The fall of Sheikh Hasina's government represents a broader trend in the region, where the public is increasingly rejecting hereditary politics in favor of leaders who rise through merit and popular support.

This development suggests that the era of political dynasties may be coming to an end in Bengal as well.

Hereditary politics has long been a dominant

force in the subcontinent, with powerful families wielding significant influence in Pakistan, India, and Bengal. However, recent developments suggest that this trend may be waning.

In India, the rise of Narendra Modi and the decline of the Gandhi family's influence signal a move away from dynastic politics.

In Bengal, the fall of Sheikh Hasina Wajid's government marks the end of a political era dominated by her family. In Pakistan, however, the influence of hereditary politics persists, as evidenced by the recent involvement of Aleema Khan in PTI's leadership. For PTI to maintain its credibility as a party of change, it must resist the lure of dynastic politics and stay true to its principles of meritocracy. The future of Pakistani politics will depend on the party's ability to uphold these ideals in the face of increasing pressure.

The writer is an Engineer by profession and writes as freelancer.

The next US president should not take on both Russia and China

AS the presidential race in the United States is heating up, the two candidates – Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump – have clashed on a range of issues. Whether it is immigration, reproductive rights or social spending, the two have sought to rally their bases by attacking each other on what they see as the key concerns of voters.

However, there is one issue on which they seem to align: China. Although they have different visions on how to pursue US policy towards the superpower challenging Washington's position on the world stage, they seem to agree that it is a threat that needs to be contained.

How do they propose to do that? Harris appears to offer a continuation of President Joe Biden's policies. She would seek to enhance the US's longstanding security partnerships in Asia by transforming them into economic alliances while also waving a "big stick" against those who seek to violate US sanctions even in partner states.

Harris will also likely continue to push for "de-risking" from China, a policy of relocating manufacturing industry out of Chinese territory – which the Biden administration has promoted as something that can benefit third countries. In the case of some key partners like Vietnam, that has been the case; the country has seen substantial FDI growth as a number of Western companies have moved their operations there.

The Democrats are also keen on placing the CHIPS and Inflation Reduction Acts – which seek to promote domestic production of microchips and clean energy, respectively – not only at the heart of their domestic agenda, but also contextualising them as returning jobs and industries "stolen" by Beijing. Trump, on the other hand, has doubled down on the "America First" rhetoric of his previous campaigns and even gone further. His wider economic policy rests on a return to 19th century-style broad tariffs on almost all US imports, particularly crushing ones against Beijing.

It is through these policies that he has most significantly affected US geo-economic policy. Today, there is no faction of either the Democratic or Republican parties that calls for actively engaging with China.

The pro-free trade agenda that dominated both sides of the aisle in the 25 years between the Soviet Union's collapse and Trump's ascent to power is quietly ignored. When it is mentioned, it is to tar one's political opponents.

Trump and Harris's campaigns thus offer different tactical visions of the same strategy – protecting US economic interests by pushing and pulling away from China's. But both have failed to consider the fact that a far more aggressive Russia is also a threat to the US-dominated international economic order and taking on both Beijing and Moscow at the same time would be foolhardy.

The US has to recognise that China is far more eco-

Maximilian Hess

nomically important to countries caught in this global rivalry, including allies. This is as true for Georgia and Kazakhstan – two countries that have not embraced the Western sanctions regime against Russia but have signalled some compliance with it – as it is for Germany and the United Arab Emirates, for whom China is almost as important a trade partner as the US.

The "Middle Corridor" of Eurasian trade the West has sought to promote to deter Russia's influence in the region makes little sense without Beijing's buy-in. Furthermore, pushing too hard against China risks a backlash that would at best undermine or potentially even reverse some of the progress that has been made in restraining Russia's geo-economic agenda.

It is important here to point out Moscow's ever-growing dependency on its large neighbour. Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, China has become one of Russia's top trade partners as well as a provider of access to international markets that are otherwise restrained by Western sanctions, with Russian companies seeking to use the Chinese currency, the yuan, for trade with Latin America, Asia and Africa.

But despite ever-escalating sanctions under the Biden administration on Chinese trade, Beijing has yet to fully embrace Russian President Vladimir Putin's vision of the world order. China does support his rhetoric, particularly at summits

where criticism of the West and the US in particular is the standard flavour.

Beijing has been reluctant to directly challenge US sanctions on Russia or push hard for a new currency bloc to challenge the dominance of the US dollar. Chinese banks, for example, have significantly cut back on offering yuan trade for Russian counterparties following increased US secondary sanctions threats. Russian media, including slavishly pro-Putin outlets, have noted these challenges; Western media have done so far less frequently.

Even on crucial economic projects, such as the construction of a new major Russia-China gas pipeline dubbed Power of Siberia 2, Beijing is wary of overcommitting. Agreed in principle just weeks before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, no progress has been made on talks around its development. Mongolia, through which the pipeline is planned to pass, recently indicated it does not expect it to be completed in the next four years.

If the next US president decides to wage a two-front economic war with Russia and China, this would push Beijing closer to Moscow's position. Presently, Chinese President Xi Jinping sees his country as the rightful centre of the emerging international economic order, displacing the US. By contrast, Putin believes that the existing international economic order should be destroyed, even if only rubble is left once it is gone. Russia's commodities-dependent economy has no

chance of being a great economic power like the US. That is why, it hopes that by knocking everyone down a peg it can compete as one of many moderate economic powers.

This thinking lies at the core of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its willingness to politicise everything – from sovereign lending markets to gas trade in its aftermath. China is certainly a major economic competitor for the West and the US in a way that Russia cannot have any hopes of being in the foreseeable future, but its track record of invading neighbours is far less pronounced than Russia's.

Its economic warfare is also largely relegated to trying to improve its position through strategic loans, new institutional aims such as mobbing arbitration centres from the West to China, and state subsidies for critical industries. In short, it is a competition that the US can engage with and against over the long term, whereas Putin's threats, risk tolerance, and willingness to wage war are far more pronounced in the short term.

That is why, it makes more sense to pursue increased cooperation with China now, or at least try to ensure its support for Russia is as limited as possible. The battle over where automotive production and supply chains will run can wait. This logic should hold even for the most hawkish US voices on China – rebuffing Russia's threat today will leave the US and its allies in a far stronger place to outcompete China in the future.

The Muslim American vote matters and it can no longer be taken for granted

AS the United States presidential election approaches, the race to attract voters has intensified. Among the different constituencies the Democrats and Republicans are battling over, there is one that stands out: the Muslim community.

Although Muslims constitute roughly 1 percent of the American population, they are an important voting bloc because they are concentrated in swing states, which are often narrowly won in elections. In this election cycle, the Muslim community seems more united than ever over a single political issue: the war in Gaza. Any candidate hoping to win over large segments of Muslim voters would have to address community demands for an end to the bloodshed in Palestine.

This is according to a new study published by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) in partnership with Engage and Change Research. It is based on a survey conducted in late June and early July focused on how Muslims in three swing states – Georgia, Pennsylvania and Michigan – intend to vote in the 2024 presidential election.

What we found is that President Joe Biden's handling of the war in Gaza has turned Muslims, who in 2020 were some of his biggest supporters, into his sharpest detractors.

In 2020, about 65 percent of Muslim voters in these states showed up to cast their ballots for Biden. This support was vital to his electoral victory because he won key swing states by small margins. He won Georgia by just 12,000 votes, a state where more than 61,000 Muslims voted, and Pennsylvania by 81,000 votes, where 125,000 Muslims voted.

By contrast, in our survey, conducted before Biden dropped out of the presidential race, only 12 percent of respondents said they would vote for him, marking a dramatic drop in support not seen among any other group studied. While this impacts the presidential race, it has also manifested in a broader disillusionment with the establishment of the Democratic Party.

The war on Gaza has unified Muslim voters in a way that no other issue has in recent memory. According to the 2020 American Muslim Poll conducted by ISPU, healthcare (19 percent), the economy (14 percent) and social justice (13 percent) were the top voting issues for Muslim voters. Compare that with 2024: Across the partisan spectrum, the top priority of Muslim voters in Georgia, Pennsylvania and Michigan is the war in Gaza (61 percent), followed by keeping the US out of foreign wars (22 percent).

Reduction of military aid to Israel also garnered the support of the vast majority of Muslim voters in our study, who, regardless of partisan senti-

Dalia Mogahed and Saher Selod

ments, all overwhelmingly see this policy as a reason to vote for a candidate. While a war overseas may seem far from the daily concerns of American Muslim voters, many see the US role – providing unconditional aid and diplomatic cover to Israel – as complicity in the continued oppression of Palestinians.

The importance of the war in Gaza for Muslim voters was made clear months before we conducted our survey. The Muslim community played a leading role in the Uncommitted National Movement, which urged Democratic voters to vote "uncommitted" in presidential primaries in their states. The initiative managed to get more than 700,000 Democrats to do so, making clear their demand for a change in the Biden administration's tone and policy on Israel and Palestine.

This dramatic Muslim migration away from Biden is not a wholesale

Overwhelmingly, former Muslim supporters of Biden are moving to third parties or are still undecided. Our study found that nearly a third of Muslim voters will either vote a third-party candidate (27 percent) or write in a candidate (3 percent). About 17 percent of Muslims said they have yet to decide on a candidate compared with 6 percent of the general public. This means there is still room and time for candidates to win over this vital constituency. And it seems they are trying. Not only has Biden pulled out of the race, but Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris has signalled she is distancing herself from his unflinching support for Israel's war on Gaza. In July, the vice president did not attend Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress, said she will not be silent about the suffering in Gaza and made clear her support for a ceasefire.

leap to the other side of the aisle, however. Muslim support for Trump inched up from 18 percent in 2020 to 22 percent in 2024 in Georgia, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

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In August, she picked as her running mate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, who is widely regarded as more sympathetic to the Palestinian cause than short-listed

Governor Josh Shapiro. This year, Walz praised uncommitted voters in Minnesota, calling them "civically engaged" and saying, "This issue is a humanitarian crisis. They have every right to be heard."

And while Muslims were cautiously optimistic at best, the Harris campaign's refusal to allow a Palestinian American to speak at the Democratic National Convention last week has soured this hope.

Third-party candidates Jill Stein and Cornel West have both been vocal in their support for the people of Gaza. West chose Melina Abdullah, a Black Muslim woman as his running mate. Stein chose Muslim activist and academic Rudolph "Butch" Ware.

Even Republican candidate Donald Trump's campaign is reaching out to Arab American voters – a surprise given the anti-Muslim rhetoric he used when campaigning in 2016. People associated

with his campaign have been trying to woo Arab voters in swing states. Trump's youngest daughter, Tiffany, married the son of a Lebanese American businessman, Massad Boulous, who has been trying to persuade Arabs in Michigan to vote for the former president due to the current administration's failed policy in Gaza. The Muslim community's mobilisation on Palestine has come at a heavy cost for many. The Council on American Islamic Relations reported an unprecedented spike in incidents of bias: a 56 percent increase in reports of Islamophobia in 2023. Anti-Palestinian racism has also skyrocketed, a worrying trend reflected in the shooting of three Palestinian students in Vermont who were wearing the keffiyeh scarf. Thousands – many of them Muslim students – were arrested at campus protests, and many were threatened with expulsion or faced criminal charges for their pro-Palestinian activism at colleges and universities across the US.

And yet even with the consequences of taking a public stance on Palestine, Muslim voters appear to be undeterred this time around. Solidarity with the people of Gaza has emerged as the single most important issue for American Muslim voters, a group no candidate can afford to ignore.

Putin's visit to Baku deepens Iran's Caucasus concerns

ALTHOUGH Iran and Russia have cultivated closer ties in recent years, particularly since the onset of Russia's war on Ukraine, which has suggested the possibility of a deeper military alliance, Moscow's actions sometimes reveal underlying tensions between the two nations.

This was highlighted by Iran's reaction to President Vladimir Putin's visit to Baku last week and his meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, which reignited Tehran's fears about its strategic interests in the Caucasus. These concerns have been exacerbated by the shifts in regional power dynamics following the 2020 war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which disrupted decades of stability and weakened Iran's influence in the region.

Historically, this region has not aligned with Iran's interests; instead, it has been a battleground where the vital and essential interests of both Iran and Russia intersect, directly impacting their security and stability. Both nations once exerted sovereignty over this area, leading to a long history of conflicts and disputes.

This overlap in interests likely explains Russia's hesitation to deepen its partnership

with Iran, particularly in this region, as doing so could bolster Tehran's influence as a regional competitor. Moreover, Russia's key arrangements in the area are seen by Iran as a significant threat to its strategic interests.

Putin's visit to Azerbaijan unsettled Russia, as it signalled Russia's intent to revitalize its diplomacy and reinforce its interests in one of its traditional spheres of influence, rather than fully sever ties with the West. Central to this agenda is Putin's push for a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which would redefine the borders and potentially expand the territory of Azerbaijan, a historical rival of Iran. Tehran views these developments as a strategic realignment that favors Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkiye at the expense of its own influence.

Iran perceives that Putin's agenda in the Caucasus aligns with the interests of Turkiye and Azerbaijan, particularly as he backs the establishment of the Zangezur corridor, Russian pressure to realize this project could shift the balance of power in Azerbaijan's favor against Iran, severing the land link between Iran and Armenia and hindering the flow of Iranian

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

goods through Armenia. This corridor could also diminish the benefits Iran expects from the North-South Corridor and undermine its role in the proposed international trade routes between East and West.

Moreover, Turkiye, Iran's regional rival, would gain significant influence as the corridor connects it directly to Central Asia, creating a geopolitical and economic arc encircling Iran from the north.

The situation might escalate further, as Armenia, displeased with Putin's growing ties with Azerbaijan, has accused Russian peacekeeping forces of inaction during Azerbaijan's swift recapture of the Nagorno-Karabakh region in 2023. As a result, Armenia suspended its participation in the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization and began aligning more closely with the West, sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine and joining the International Criminal Court, which has issued an arrest warrant for Putin.

For Iran, this shift signals several concerning developments. First, the West could gain a new strategic foothold near Iran, potentially inviting NATO and the US into the region, heightening threats to its security.

Second, Russia's presence and influence in Iran's strategic sphere could grow, with Moscow offering unprecedented support to Azerbaijan. Lastly, the Caucasus may become a cold war zone, sparking new alliances and conflicts that could drain and weaken Iran.

These developments are particularly alarming for Iran as they fuel Turkish and Azerbaijani nationalist sentiments, posing significant threats to its territorial integrity and regional sovereignty. The rising prominence of the Azerbaijani issue along the Iran-Azerbaijan border has the potential to reignite separatist movements, a deeply sensitive matter for Tehran. Given Iran's diverse population and its complex geographical distribution across borders, these nationalist stirrings could spark secessionist movements not only in the Caucasus but in other regions as well, exacerbating internal rebellions against the Iranian state.

In light of these dynamics, the Caucasus region seems poised to enter a new phase of international and regional competition, with potential transformations that are unlikely to favor Iran.

The risk of renewed conflict looms large, particularly after Russia withdrew its peacekeep-

ing forces from the disputed region in April, leading to intermittent clashes.

However, this time, the conflict may extend beyond the two neighboring countries in the Caucasus, attracting multiple players with their own agendas.

This could introduce a range of risks for Iran, potentially forcing it to open a new front to defend its sovereignty, interests or waning influence in the region. Iran's adversaries are likely to exploit this conflict to exhaust and weaken the country, using it as leverage to impact its standing on other fronts.

In conclusion, Russia's actions and positions frequently raise concerns in Iran, highlighting that their cooperation is often based on temporary, necessity-driven interests. This underscores the limitations of Iran's eastward pivot, particularly toward Russia, as Moscow shows little hesitation in sidelining Iran when their interests diverge. In the Caucasus, Russia's maneuvers are likely to revive historical and geopolitical tensions between the two nations, imposing clear limits on their cooperation.

This is especially evident given the numerous instances where Iran has not received the support it anticipated from Russia.

Michael Jansen

final offensive in April.

Military experts argued that if the US had retained 8,000 troops, the Taliban could be contained.

With their pull out the Afghan army began to collapse due to a lack of a viable command-and-control structures and logistical arrangements for payment of salaries and deliveries of ammunition and food to army bases and posts.

During the 20 years of the US occupation, the US military did not train the Afghan army to assume these existential roles. Its soldiers either melted away or joined the Taliban which paid higher salaries than the corrupt US-sponsored regime.

The return to Taliban rule has been disastrous for Afghanistan, which has reverted to pariah status for its imposition of harsh regressive laws, brutal treatment of the population, and exclusion of women from secondary and university education, government, business, and public

an assistance while \$68 billion is paid to US manufacturers of arms, equipment and other items. "Jobs for the boys," as the saying goes. Before the Ukrainian army invaded and seized territory in Russia's Kursk region, Ukraine appeared to be on the brink of defeat, but this offensive seemed to justify the high investment, at least for the moment. Retention of Kursk could give Ukraine an advantage if Zelensky were to opt for peace talks and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to engage.

While armchair warrior Biden would likely press Zelensky to expand further into Russia, Harris would have to decide whether to rein in Kyiv, due to the threat of spill-over into Ukraine's European NATO-member neighbours. This could compel the US to enter the battle against Russia, a risk Washington wants to avoid.

DEMOCRATIC presidential candidate Kamala Harris should limit appearances alongside unpopular incumbent Joe Biden during her jolly, high stakes campaign to succeed him. Last Wednesday, he hovered beside her on the stage at a community college hall in Maryland not far from the White House.

He clearly did not want to be there, playing second fiddle to Harris instead of being the nominee.

Predictably, she lauded his successes on the domestic front – including the expansion of affordable health care – but ignored his disastrous interventions on the foreign front which loom large in his legacy. Although uncertain of victory in the November election, Harris will have to consider how to deal with Biden's legacy when she announces prospective foreign policies during the campaign.

Three years ago, Biden withdrew remaining US

forces from Afghanistan, implementing a policy adopted by his predecessor – and Harris' rival – Donald Trump. Biden delayed the deadline from May to August but neglected, as armed forces commander-in-chief, to arrange with his generals a dignified, orderly exit.

Instead, the pull-out was a rout with fearful Afghans thronging Kabul's airport to escape the inevitable, instant Taliban take-over. Biden's aim was political rather than strategic. He wanted to complete this operation before the 20th anniversary of Afghanistan-based al-Qaeda's 2001 shock attacks on New York and Washington.

Trump and the Taliban signed the withdrawal deal in February 2020, and he ran down the deployment from 13,000 to 8,600 by July 2020. By the time, Biden ordered the exit in 2021 there were 2,600 US troops still in Afghanistan, not enough to challenge the Taliban which began its

spaces.

Today 90 per cent of Afghans have fallen into poverty and 50 per cent rely on aid which this year has been only 15.9 per cent funded. The situation is unlikely to improve as global relations with the Taliban are deadlocked due to its policies, deepening the humanitarian crisis which Harris would have to address.

Despite warnings from Russia that NATO's expansion into Ukraine is a red line for Moscow, Biden, ex-British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg urged Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky to press for membership in the Western alliance.

At the end of February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Since then, the Biden administration has provided more than \$175 billion for Ukraine. Of his sum \$107 billion is in military, financial, development, and humanitari-

The cruellest legacy Biden would leave for Harris is the Gaza war whether or not there is a ceasefire before he leaves office at the end of January.

Biden has cleaved to Israel as tenaciously as he clung to the Democratic Party's presidential candidacy until he was no longer viable. Before Biden put forward his May 31st plan for a ceasefire, he instructed his UN mission to scupper three Security Council resolutions.

The first was in October less than two weeks after the Hamas attack on Israel, the second in December and the third in February. On all three the US cast the sole veto.

Finally, the US circulated a draft resolution calling for a temporary humanitarian ceasefire "as soon as practicable" which was never as far as Israel was concerned.

In late May, Biden put forward his plan and submitted a Council resolution calling for a ceasefire which Israel has sub-

verted by demanding changes rejected by Hamas and by assassinating Hamas' negotiator Ismail Haniyeh ahead of new ceasefire negotiations. Since Israel carried out this killing in Tehran the day after Israel slew Hizbollah military strategist Fuad Shukur in Beirut, both Iran and Hizbollah have vowed to retaliate against Israel if there is no ceasefire in Gaza.

With the aim of averting retaliation, Biden has dispatched senior envoys to aid Qatar and Egypt in their quest for a ceasefire. Instead of threatening to withhold arms supplies Israel uses to attack Gaza if it stalls over a ceasefire, Biden has sent ships and warplanes to protect Israel from Iran and Hizbollah.

This has encouraged Israel to continue its onslaught on Gaza and carry on with other Israeli provocative behaviour. This has enraged regional public opinion which Harris would have to placate. Biden has also pledged

the US to deliver \$20 billion in weapons and fighter jets to Israel during 2026, knowing full well he will not be in the White House and that he would be burdening Harris with honouring this commitment.

While she has said she would not withhold weapons from Israel, Biden knows Harris is particularly vulnerable to criticism because hundreds of thousands of Arab, Muslim and anti-war US voters demand an end to the war, humanitarian aid for the 2.3 thirsty, hungry, ailing, wounded and traumatised Gazans, and accountability for the 40,000 killed, 10,000 buried under the rubble and 90,000 wounded, thousands of them crippled.

For them Biden is "Genocide Joe" who deserves to be hailed before the International Criminal Court along with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant who are accused of war crimes.



SCCI asks KP govt to abolish 2% tax on exports

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq expressed concern over imposition of 2 percent tax on export in the name of Infrastructure Development Cess and stated the move has halted export consignments worth billions of dollars and rendered huge financial loss to exporters.

Speaking at a news conference along with traders' leaders, manufacturers and exporters here at the chamber house on Monday, Fuad Ishaq asked the provincial government to immediately withdraw the cess and stop shifting billions of export from KP to other provinces.

The SCCI vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, Anjumane Tajran Life-time president Haji Muhammad, Khalid Sultan Khawaja, members of the SCCI executive committee

Ghulam Hussain, Affaf Ali Khan, Naeem Qasmi, APCEA former chairman Haji Ashfaq Ahmad, the chamber former senior vice president Imran Khan Mohmand, Nadeem Rauf, Fazal e Wahid, Ishfaq Paracha, Fahad Amin, Ihsanullah,

traders, exporters and industrialists were present in a large number during the press conference.

The SCCI chief said the situation is already dire strait in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa owing to government's ill-conceived policies and anti-business initiatives. He added a step-motherly and discriminatory attitude with the hand of the provincial government will bring the rest of the business, trade and export to end.

He said the anti-trade and export step was unfavorable for the national economy, which should be revisited.

Responding to a question, Fuad Ishaq said the government has already collected various duties/taxes on export consignments.

He clarified infrastructure development cess on exports wasn't implemented in any other parts of the country, but the cess was imposed by KP government from 23 August 2024, which was completely unjust and vowed to raise forceful voice against it.

Fuad asked the incumbent Advisor to the Chief

Minister on Finance to immediately withdraw the tax on exports.

He also expressed no-confidence over the CM advisor on Finance and demanded appointment of a person who has good knowledge and experience about business and trade.

In response to various queries of the reporters, the SCCI chief said exports would be completely stopped from KP after enforcement of the Infrastructure Development Cess. On the other hand, he said the industrial process has already been badly affected following frequent increases in electricity and gas prices.

Fuad raised a question on the occasion that whether it is all happening to end business, industry and trade from KP under a well-prepared conspiracy or all were based on inexperience.

He praised sacrifices of the business community, people and security forces for peace and stability in KP.

He went on to say that renowned people, personalities and intellectuals were born in KP but unfortunately

no appointment of finance minister was made from this province.

Replying to a question, Fuad Ishaq said SCCI believes in resolving all issues through negotiation with the government.

He, however, made it clear that they will not allow a step-motherly attitude with the business community of K-P.

Furthermore, he clarified SCCI will not be rested till withdrawal of the Infrastructure Development Cess.

To another question, Fuad Ishaq announced full support for the shutdown strike call given by Central Tanzeem Tajaran on 28 August 2024 against the government's taxation.

On the occasion, traders' leader Haji Muhammad Afzal, Khalid Sultan, exporters and industrialists and others also spoke on the occasion.

They strongly condemned the overnight implementation of 2 percent tax on exports and asked the provincial government to facilitate business and trade instead of taking steps to completely halt them.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq addressing a press conference. Vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

60 illegal gas connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In the ongoing campaign against gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has intensified its efforts, resulting in the disconnection of 60 illegal gas connections across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad. The company has also imposed fines totaling Rs 0.8 million.

In Lahore, 15 connections were severed due to illegal gas usage, with fines amounting to Rs 0.32 million imposed on the offenders. The Bahawalpur regional team disconnected 10 connections where compressors were being used illegally.

In Faisalabad, 3 connections were cut off due to unauthorized gas usage, and fines totaling Rs 0.04 million were imposed. The Sheikhupura team disconnected 2 illegal connections and imposed fines of Rs 0.09 million. In Multan, 24 connections were severed for illegal gas usage, and 1 connection was cut off for compressor usage.

Meanwhile, in Sahiwal, fines amounting to Rs 0.21 million were levied against those involved in gas theft. The Mardan regional team disconnected 5 connections due to unauthorized gas usage and imposed fines totaling Rs 0.16 million.

PSX loses 230 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 230.37 points on Monday, showing a negative change of 0.29 percent, closing at 78,571.06 points against 78,801.43 points on the last working day.

A total of 512,337,206 shares were traded during the day as compared to 682,409,886 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 18.894 billion against Rs 18.168 billion on the last trading day. As many as 433 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 150 of them recorded gains and 242 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 41 companies remained unchanged.

The 3 top trading companies were Symmetry Group with 59,366,445 shares at Rs 7.69 per share, Kohinoor Spinning with 50,616,021 shares at Rs.10.52 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 24,441,228 shares at Rs 1.28 per share.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.189.64 per share price, closing at Rs 2,086.04, whereas the runner-up was Hallmark Company Limited with a Rs 51.70 rise in its per share price to Rs 568.70.

Nestle witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs87.85 per share closing at Rs 6,887.15 followed by Abbott Laboratories with Rs 76.28 decline to close at Rs 723.88.

Rupee gains 09 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Monday appreciated by 09 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.41 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.50. However, the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.60 and Rs 280.10 respectively. The price of Euro increased by Rs1.56 to close at Rs 311.24 against the last day's closing of Rs 309.68, according to SBP. The Japanese yen went up by 03 paise and closed at Rs1.93, whereas an increase of Rs 2 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs367.35 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 365.35.

Shell announces financial results

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Board of Directors of Shell Pakistan Limited (SPL) announced half year results for the company. The company posted a profit after tax of PKR 1.3 billion compared to the profit after tax of PKR 3.5 billion made in the same period last year.

In October 2023, Shell Petroleum Company Limited entered into a Share Purchase Agreement with Wafi Energy LLC (the Acquirer) for the sale of its entire shareholding in SPL, which is currently under progress. In April 2024, an Addendum to the above was posted on PSX to reflect a change in the capital ownership structure of the Acquirer, where Wafi

Energy Holding Limited replaced Wafi Energy LLC as 'Acquirer'.

On July 27, 2024, Public Announcement of Offer to further acquire up to 24,162,179 ordinary shares representing 11.29% was made by Arif Habib Limited on behalf of Wafi Energy Holding Limited. The completion of the transaction is subject to receipt of regulatory approvals, completion of legal requirements and satisfaction of other closing formalities.

During the period, SPL maintained its market share through relatively stable macroeconomics conditions. The inflation rate eased to 12.6% in June, down from a peak of 30% in December last year. The period also witnessed a relatively

stable exchange rate.

The Mobility business grew its network with 10 new stations and 60 non-fuel retail units. The Lubricants business signed an exclusive agreement with MG Motors, securing the use of Shell Helix motor oils for MG vehicles. Furthermore, Shell Tameer engaged around 200 students in workshops focused on entrepreneurship and the business model canvas at various educational institutes and incubation centers across Lahore, Karachi, Jamshoro and Faisalabad.

SPL remains committed to operational excellence, safety performance, strengthen its financial position, and play a responsible role in society.

Arshad Nadeem honored at Meezan House

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Arshad Nadeem, Pakistan's star athlete and Olympic gold medalist in men's javelin throw, was celebrated for his historic achievement at a special ceremony held at Meezan House, the headquarters of Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank.

Amidst a backdrop of enthusiastic applause from Meezan Bank employees, Arshad Nadeem received the cheque from the Bank's Founding President and CEO, Mr. Irfan Siddiqui. He was also honored with a commemorative plaque and medal from Syed Amir Ali, DCEO of Meezan Bank, celebrating his historic achievement.

Arshad Nadeem captured the gold medal at the 2024 Olympics with an exceptional throw of 92.97 meters, marking Pakistan's first Olympic gold in 40 years that defined his Olympics journey. The cash reward of Rs. 9,297,000 given by Meezan Bank represents Rs. 100,000 for every meter of his Gold-medal-winning throw.

The ceremony, attended by distinguished guests and media representatives, underscored the nation's pride in Arshad Nadeem's accomplishment. Irfan Siddiqui, Founding President and CEO of Meezan Bank, presented Arshad Nadeem with the cash reward, highlighting the bank's commitment to supporting Pakistani athletes who bring honor to the country.

Additionally, Syed Amir Ali, Deputy CEO of Meezan Bank, bestowed upon Arshad Nadeem a commemorative plaque and medal, symbolizing his remarkable journey and contribution to Pakistani sports history.

"It is a monumental achievement for Pakistan, and Arshad Nadeem has brought immense pride to our nation," stated Mr. Irfan Siddiqui during the event. "His dedication, perseverance, and exemplary sportsmanship serve as an inspiration to millions of



Pakistanis, proving that determination leads to extraordinary success.

"Syed Amir Ali, DCEO Meezan Bank Limited echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing Arshad Nadeem's role in uniting the nation through his sporting excellence. "Arshad Nadeem's achievement has not only bolstered Pakistan's international standing but also inspired our youth to pursue their dreams with unwavering dedication," he remarked.

"We applaud his resilience and commitment to excellence," Meezan Bank reaffirms its commitment to nurturing talent and promoting sportsmanship across Pakistan, aiming to inspire future generations to achieve greatness on both national and global stages.

UBL applauds Arshad's Olympics achievement



F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a special ceremony held on Monday, at the UBL Head Office in Karachi, the Bank welcomed and congratulated

Olympian Gold Medalist Arshad Nadeem on his amazing feat at the recently concluded Paris Olympics 2024. UBL awarded Arshad Nadeem PKR 5 million to recognize his record-breaking

performance. Picture shows Arshad Nadeem receiving his cheque from Zia Ijaz, Deputy CEO, and Ijaz Farooq, Deputy CEO, UBL.

FBR and University of Wah sign MoU to promote tax culture



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and University of Wah have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote tax culture in the

society. The MoU underscores the commitment of both institutions to collaborate in enhancing tax awareness, promoting academic research in the field of taxation, and nurturing a culture of tax compliance

among students and the general public.

The collaboration is focused on embedding the principles of tax education into academic curricula, thereby empowering students and staff with the knowledge, attitudes and

skills necessary to be responsible citizens. Mr. Muhammad Alam Zeb, Secretary (Tax Education) FBR, and Ms. Mahwish Ramzan Additional Registrar (HR), University of Wah, signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations.

Both parties expressed their enthusiasm for this collaboration and its potential to make a meaningful impact on the next generation of tax professionals while making citizens more informed and responsible regarding their tax obligations.

This initiative marks a significant step towards integrating tax education into the fabric of higher education, ultimately contributing to a more tax-compliant and informed society.

'Executive Doodles' launched by Ahmed Kapadia



F.P. Report

KARACHI: After 77 years of the existence of Pakistan's advertising and marketing industry, the first book of its kind, 'Executive Doodles', has been launched. Authored by Mr. Ahmed Kapadia, Chairman and CEO of Synergy Group, the book encapsulates 20 years of thought-provoking writings. The unveiling ceremony was graced by the Honorable Governor of Sindh, Mr. Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, who served as the chief guest, in the presence of eminent personalities from various industries.

The keynote speech was

delivered by former Senator (r) Mr. Javed Jabbar, followed by a monologue by the distinguished Mr. Anwar Maqsood. The event concluded with closing remarks and the unveiling of the 'Executive Doodles' book by the Honorable Governor of Sindh.

Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori emphasized the crucial role of marketing and advertising in promoting a positive image of Pakistan, stating that it is imperative to convey to the world that Pakistanis are a peaceful and progressive nation.

Governor Sindh Kamran

Khwa Tessori remarked, "Our creative abilities have the potential to leave a lasting impact globally. To effectively build our national image, the government and the private sector must work together, leveraging their talents to project a positive image of Pakistan."

He further praised Mr. Ahmed Kapadia for his remarkable contribution to the fields of advertising and marketing, noting that Kapadia's innovative thinking has set new benchmarks in the industry. He lauded Kapadia's book, noting that it would serve as a valuable resource for the youth, inspiring them through the author's experiences and

ideas. Governor Tessori also acknowledged Kapadia's philanthropic efforts, which have benefited underprivileged communities in Karachi.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Ahmed Kapadia remarked, "I have always believed in speaking the truth. With this first-of-its-kind book in Pakistan, I want to inspire the next generation of marketing and advertising professionals to challenge the status quo by sharing my perspective and a winning mindset. It is Synergyzer that set the ball rolling two decades ago, providing a platform that pushes boundaries and welcomes everyone. I hope this book carries that legacy forward, encouraging bold, fresh, and innovative thinking."

Ahmed Kapadia's experience and insights have made him a disruptor in the industry, reflecting and anticipating key trends in Pakistan's advertising and communications sectors. The launch of 'Executive Doodles' celebrates his contributions and underscores Synergy Group's commitment to innovation, creativity, and excellence in the industry.

The physical copy of the book can be preordered at www.synergyzer.com and will soon be available on global e-book platforms such as Apple, Amazon, and Google Books.



KARACHI: Faculty members of UoS at Orientation workshop on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction. Director Operations PDMA Imdad Hussain and Director Technical SEPA Waqar Phulpoto present on occasion.



Abbas Afridi's five-wicket haul helps Shaheens secure convincing victory

ISLAMABAD (APP): Right-arm fast bowler Mohammad Abbas Afridi's five-wicket haul and half-centuries by Haseebullah and Usman Khan guided Pakistan Shaheens to an eight-wicket win over Bangladesh 'A' in the first one-day at the Islamabad Club on Monday.

The win gives Shaheens' a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. The second match will be played at the same venue on Wednesday, August 28, with the first ball to be bowled at 9:30am.

After opting to field, Pakistan Shaheens bun-

dled out the visiting team for 183 runs in 36 overs. Abbas was the pick of the bowlers, with match figures of 9-0-38-5.

This was Abbas' second five-fer in 22 List-A matches. Left-arm pacer Jahandad Khan (2-51) and left-arm spinner Mehran Mumtaz (2-29) equally supported Abbas as only Saif Hassan (58, 47b, 10x4s, 1x6) managed to score a half-century for Bangladesh 'A'. Rishad Hossain coming to bat at number nine was the other notable run-getter, scoring 40 off 37 balls, hitting four fours and two sixes.

In turn, Shaheens'

achieved the target in 27.5 overs courtesy a 129-run partnership between Haseebullah and Usman for the second wicket. Left-handed opening batter Haseebullah returned undefeated on 73 off 81 balls, smashing seven fours and two sixes.

Right-handed batter Usman fell 13 runs short of his first List-A century. His innings included eight boundaries and five towering sixes, which came of 60 balls. Omair Bin Yousuf also returned unbeaten on 14 off 19, adding an unbroken 42-run partnership for the third wicket with

Haseebullah.

For Bangladesh 'A', Mahedi Hasan and Mosaddek Hossain snapped a wicket each. Mohammad Abbas Afridi (Pakistan Shaheens) was declared Player of the match.

Scores in brief: Bangladesh A 183 all out, 36 overs (Saif Hassan 58, Rishad Hossain 40; Mohammad Abbas Afridi 5-38, Mehran Mumtaz 2-29, Jahandad Khan 2-51).

Pakistan Shaheens 184-2, 27.5 overs (Usman Khan 87, Haseebullah 73 not out; Mosaddek Hossain 1-15, Mahedi Hasan 1-19).



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's squash legend Jansher Khan called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at PM Office.

Former England manager Eriksson dies aged 76

LONDON (BBC): Former England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson has died at the age of 76.

Eriksson, the first non-British manager of the England team, led the Three Lions to the quarter-finals at three major tournaments during his five-year spell in charge between 2001 and 2006.

In January, Eriksson said he had "at best" a year to live after being diagnosed with cancer.

His children, Lina and Johan, said on Monday: "Our father Sven-Goran Eriksson fell asleep peacefully in his home at Bjorkefors outside Sunne this morning. He has for a long time fought bravely with his illness, but now it came to an end.

"Dad told us at the beginning of this year about his serious illness and received an amazing response from friends and football fans around Europe.

"He was invited to several football teams in England, Italy, Portugal and Sweden. They shared their love for football and for dad.

"It was unforgettable for both him and us. He expressed his appreciation and joy and stated that such beautiful words are usually only uttered when someone has died.

"We hope that you will remember Svennis as the good and positive person he always was both in public and at home with us."

Eriksson managed 12 clubs, including Manchester City, Leicester, Roma and Lazio, winning 18 trophies. The Swede also had spells in charge of Mexico, Ivory Coast and the Philippines.

After retiring as a player at the age of 27, he began his managerial career with Degerfors in 1977 before joining fellow Swedish side Gothenburg, where he won the league title, two domestic cups and the 1982 Uefa Cup.

He then went on to enjoy two spells with Portuguese giants Benfica as well as managing Italian sides Roma, Fiorentina, Sampdoria and Lazio - where he won seven trophies including the Serie A title, two Italian Cups and the European Cup Winners' Cup.

Following his diagnosis, Eriksson spent the year visiting some of his former clubs, including Lazio and Sampdoria.

In March the Swede, a lifelong Liverpool fan, helped lead a Liverpool Legends team which beat an Ajax Legends side 4-2 at Anfield.

He shared a poignant message at the end of his new documentary 'Sven', which was released earlier this month.

In the closing scene of the Amazon film, Eriksson says: "I had a good life. I think we are all scared of the day when it is finished - when we die.

"But life is about death as well. You have to learn to accept it for what it is.

"Hopefully at the end, people will say: 'Yeah, he was a good man.' But everyone will not say that. I hope you will remember me as a positive guy trying to do everything he could do.

"Don't be sorry, smile. Thank you for everything - coaches, players, the crowds. It has been fantastic. Take care of yourself and your life and live it. Bye."

PM directs authorities to take steps for Jansher's medical treatment

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muuhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to Jansher Khan, a multiple-time world champion and British Open champion, during their meeting.

"The services you have rendered to popularize squash in the country and promote the sport are

highly commendable," said the Prime Minister.

"You have brought immense pride to Pakistan through your achievements in squash on the global stage," he added.

"The entire nation is proud of your accomplishments," the Prime Minister remarked.

The Prime Minister instructed the relevant authorities to take all nec-

essary measures for Jansher Khan's medical treatment.

He also emphasized that the government is taking significant steps to promote squash and other sports in the country.

"Providing young people with the best facilities in sports and recreation is among the government's top priorities," the Prime Minister stated.

PSA announces World Events Calendar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Professional Squash Association (PSA) has today announced its 2024-25 PSA Squash Tour calendar, with more than 50 World Events scheduled to take place across five continents from August 2024 to June 2025.

The season begins later this month in Cairo for the first Diamond-tier event of the new PSA Squash Tour era. With the main draw held between August 30 - September 6, the CIB Egyptian Open will also feature a qualifying draw between August 26-28, with four spots up for grabs in both the men's and women's draws, said a press release.

The opening Platinum-tier tournament of the season will see the Paris Squash event move to the spectacular Cirque d'Hiver Boughione between September 15-21, while the sport's first Copper-tier event will be held in London, Canada when the Nash Cup takes place between September 17-21.

The Qatar Q-Terminals Classic is scheduled for September 30 - October 5 before the PSA Squash Tour heads to the United States and Canada for multiple events, including the Silicon Valley Open presented by Oracle NetSuite and the U.S. Open in San Francisco and Philadelphia, respectively.

From there, the PSA Squash Tour moves to Asia for several tournaments, including in popular destinations such as Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Hong Kong, before the tour signs off for the winter break. 2025 kicks off with the Florida Open and Squash in the Land Open, before the J.P. Morgan Tournament of Champions showcases the world's best players in New York's famous Grand Central Terminal in the first Platinum tournament of the New Year.

North America hosts a further 10 events throughout February and March, before the tour heads to New Zealand and Australia. Several tournaments will take place in Europe in March and April, including the Optasia

Championships and Grasshopper Cup, before the tour returns to Egypt for the El Gouna International (in April) and the new Palm Hills Open (in May). The biggest tournament in squash - the PSA World Championships - will be staged between May 9-17.

The British Open - the second Diamond tournament of the season - will return to the spectacular Birmingham Rep Theatre at the start of June, before the season draws to a close at the PSA Squash Tour Finals at the end of the month. In addition to the various trophies on offer, points for the Road to Tour Finals standings will be available at all World Events throughout the season. The top eight players on the standings qualify for the season-ending PSA Squash Tour Finals, whilst all Diamond winners and the reigning PSA World Champions qualify automatically for the season-ending spectacle, which was won by Egyptian duo Ali Farag and Nouran Gohar last season.

Being at St Andrews, it can't really be any better. Ko was the youngest woman to win a major when she won the Evian Championship at the age of 18 in 2015. She followed that with victory in what is now the Chevron Championship in 2016 but, despite having 11 top-10 finishes in the majors since then, she had been unable to add to her tally. And her hopes of doing so on Sunday were in the balance during an intriguing finale with rain and wind battering the Old Course, as it has done all weekend. Ko started three shots behind Shin but birdied the fourth, 10th and 14th holes to put herself firmly in contention. However, Korda looked to have wrestled control with a run of three birdies in four holes around the turn, and she led by two on eight under on the 14th tee. But a couple of poor wedge shots around the green led to the American taking seven shots on the par-five hole. "It's golf," said Korda. "Unfortunately I messed up over the weekend twice coming down the stretch. That's what cost me the tournament but I played well."

Meanwhile, Ko, who was playing in a couple of groups ahead, made a terrific up and down for par from the back of 16 to remain at six under. That made it a four-way tie for the lead with Shin and Vu, who birdied the 14th. As the rain intensified Ko hit arguably the shot of the championship, knocking her second to the notoriously tough 17th to 15 feet and two-putting for par.

Her birdie on the last set the target at seven under and she watched from the practice putting green as first Korda, who hit her second shot into the Road Hole bunker, and then Shin, bogeyed the 17th to effectively end their hopes.

That left Vu. The American world number two holed a 10-footer for par on 17 to keep her in the game. But she was unable to match Ko's three up the last and then lost concentration to dribble her par putt wide as she finished with a scruffy bogey.

When asked where she would rank this victory alongside her Olympic title and two other majors, Ko replied: "That's like asking me who I like best, my mum or dad."

England's Charley Hull, who led after round one on five under, started Sunday five shots off the pace but her challenge was sunk by successive bogeys on the sixth and seventh, and a double bogey on the ninth.

PCB unveils five Champions Cup team mentors



ISLAMABAD (APP): Misbah-ul-Haq, Saqlain Mushtaq, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shoaib Malik and Waqar Younis were today confirmed as mentors of the five Champions Cup sides on three-year contracts following a transparent and robust recruitment process.

Names of their sides and squads will be confirmed in due course, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement.

The first assignment of the mentors in the PCB Domestic Cricket Season 2024-25 will be the Champions One-Day Cup, which will be held at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad from 12 to 29 September. Best of the best cricketers from the country will feature in the single-league competition that will also serve as the homecoming of men's seniors' competitive cricket in Faisalabad after nearly two years. The last domestic men's 50-over match played at the Iqbal Stadium was in March 2022 between Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The five Champions Cup side mentors have played 1,621 international matches between them, scoring a total of 32,780 runs and taking 1,503 wickets between them. Of the five, Sarfaraz Ahmed and Shoaib Malik are two-time ICC Event winners, Misbah is a one-time ICC Event winner and ACC Asia Cup 2012 winning captain, while Saqlain and

Waqar were members of the side that played in the 1999 World Cup final.

PCB Chair Mohsin Naqvi said: "I am pleased to welcome five exceptional champions as mentors for the Champions Cup teams. These individuals bring a wealth of cricketing experience, knowledge and expertise, which, combined with their passion for the game we all love, will help the Pakistan Cricket Board identify, develop and nurture the next generation of cricketers across all formats. This initiative will not only benefit the Pakistan men's cricket team but also help bridge the gap between domestic and international cricket.

"These five mentors will play a pivotal role in the development and progression of our emerging cricketers. They will guide strategic planning and team-building processes, while also providing support in leadership and personal development.

"The PCB is committed to strengthening Pakistan's cricket through a robust domestic structure that offers a clear and competitive pathway for all cricketers. The most talented and skilled players will advance through the ranks to represent Pakistan at the highest level."

About mentors:
Misbah-ul-Haq: -Pakistan's most successful Test captain, who led his side to victories in

26 out of 56 Tests, including inspiring Pakistan to No.1 in the ICC Test Team Rankings in August 2016

•In 2014, equaled the then world record of fastest Test century by hitting a 56-ball 100 against Australia in Abu Dhabi

•Featured in two 50-over World Cups, three T20 World Cups and three ICC Champions Trophy events

•Was a member of the side that played the final of the ICC T20 World Cup 2007 and won the tournament two years later at Lord's

•One of the Wisden Cricketers of the Year for 2017

Saqlain Mushtaq:-

•Is the fastest to 250 ODI wickets and took most ODI wickets in a calendar year

•Is second on the list of most consecutive five-wickets in an ODI innings

•Took two hat-tricks in ODIs, including one in a World Cup

•Is the inventor of 'Doosra'

•Played in three World Cups and two Champions Trophy events

Sarfaraz Ahmed:-

•Captained Pakistan to victories in the ICC U19 World Cup 2006 and ICC Champions Trophy 2017, was a member of the Pakistan side that won the ACC Asia Cup 2012

•Led Pakistan to No.1 in ICC T20I Team Rankings

•Holds the record for most dismissals in an ODI (all 6 catches)

•Only the second wick-

et-keeper to have captained his side in 50 or more ODIs; 17th on the ODI list of wicket-keepers with 2,000 runs and 100 dismissals

•Also played in two 50-over World Cups and one T20 World Cup

Shoaib Malik:-

•Played in 2007 and 2019 50-over World Cup; featured in six T20 World Cups, including captaining the side in the 2007 event; and, six Champions Trophy tournaments

•Is 33rd on the list of ODI players with 1,000 runs, 50 wickets and 50 catches

•Holds the record for one of the longest international careers, spanning over 19 years and 245 days

•Has appeared in 35 Tests, 287 ODIs and 124 T20Is in which he has scored 11,867 runs and taken 218 wickets

•He is considered as one of the most sought after and busiest cricketers in franchise cricket

Waqar Younis:-

•Played in three 50-over World Cups

•Holds the record for fastest to 400 ODI wickets

•Leads the list of captains with best ODI bowling figure

•Is one of the bowlers to dismiss all 11 batters in a Test match

•Coached Pakistan in the 2010 and 2016 T20 World Cups and 2015 World Cup, while last served Pakistan as bowling coach from 2019-2021

Bairstow and Moeen out as England pick five new faces

LONDON (BBC): England have picked five uncapped players for next month's white-ball series against Australia but have left out Jonny Bairstow and Moeen Ali.

In an apparent look to the future, Jacob Bethell, 20, and Dan Mousley, 23 - both Warwickshire batting all-rounders - have been given their first international call-ups for the three-match T20 series.

Essex batter Jordan Cox, Hampshire seamer John Turner and Leicestershire left-arm bowler Josh Hull, who was named in the Test squad to play Sri Lanka on Sunday, have also been picked in the 15-strong squad.

Hull, Bethell and Turner are also in the squad for the five one-day internationals that follow.

Former opener Marcus Trescothick will be England coach for the series, having been

appointed on an interim basis following the departure of Matthew Mott.

Australian Mott left in July - a month after England's defence of their T20 World Cup title ended in the semi-finals against India. That came after England's calamitous defence of their 50-over world title last year.

England T20 squad to play Australia: Jos Buttler (Lancashire, captain), Jofra Archer (Sussex), Jacob Bethell (Warwickshire), Brydon Carse (Durham), Jordan Cox (Essex), Sam Curran (Surrey), Josh Hull (Leicestershire), Will Jacks (Surrey), Liam Livingstone (Lancashire), Saqib Mahmood (Lancashire), Dan Mousley (Warwickshire), Adil Rashid (Yorkshire), Phil Salt (Lancashire), Reece Topley (Surrey), John Turner (Hampshire)

England ODI squad: Jos Buttler, Jofra Archer, Gus

Atkinson (Surrey), Jacob Bethell, Harry Brook (Yorkshire), Brydon Carse, Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire), Josh Hull, Will Jacks, Matthew Potts (Durham), Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Jamie Smith (Surrey), Reece Topley, John Turner

World Cup winners Bairstow, 34, and Moeen, 37, are the highest-profile casualties from those campaigns and could now have made their final England appearances.

Wicketkeeper-batter Bairstow was given a two-year England contract in October last year but was also dropped from the Test side earlier this summer while all-rounder Moeen retired from red-ball cricket for a second time after last summer's Ashes series.

Bairstow has played 287 times for England across all formats and, like Moeen, was part of the side who won the World Cup in

2019. Moeen, who 298 England caps and was Jos Buttler's vice-captain at the past three World Cups, also won the T20 World Cup in Australia in 2022, a tournament Bairstow missed because of a serious leg injury.

Bowler Chris Jordan, another member of England's T20 World Cup squad, has also been left out entirely while England say batter Joe Root, who has not played a T20 international since 2019, has been rested from the ODI squad. Mark Wood and Ben Stokes are injured.

Buttler will return as captain, having missed The Hundred because of a calf injury.

Pace bowler Saqib Mahmood has been picked in the T20 squad. He has not played for England since sustaining a second stress fracture of his back last year.



In brief

Cracks down launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has launched an operation in response to a complaint from the Excise Department in Islamabad, targeting the illegal sale and registration of tampered vehicles. According to the spokesman of ICT administration, the operation led to the arrest of two accused, identified as Shahbaz Tasawar and Rizwan Ullah, who were involved in preparing fraudulent documents for non-custom vehicles. These suspects attempted to register a luxury vehicle using a fake customs import document. The FIA's swift action has brought attention to the activities of an agent mafia operating within the Excise Department. On the occasion, Director General of Excise, Irfan Nawaz Memon announced that strict measures would be taken against those who were involved in this illegal business. He emphasized that all individuals associated with the illegal activities will face accountability. The DG has also urged citizens to boycott the agent mafia and help identify those involved in such activities. The crackdown marks a significant step towards curbing illegal practices within the department.

IESCO issues programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 06:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, Athal, Shahpur, Trit, T&T, Bhara Kahu I&II, NIH, Golf City, H-8/2 Feeder, Rawalpindi City Circle, Alamabad, Raja Sultan, Sardar Bagh, Eid Gah, Dhok Najo, Ali Market, Khayaban Sirsyed, Mohammadi Chowk, Kuri Road, Chakra, Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Dharmyal, UC Lakhana, Gulshan Saeed, Humayun-1, Dhok Hasu, Peer Wadhai, Quaidabad Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Shukrila, Mundi Bhalwal, Chapran, Puran, Karoli, Colonel Muhammad Akram, Chakwal Circle, Khanpur, Malhal Mughlan, Segalabad feeders and surrounding areas.

274,300 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 274,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 285,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1550.00 feet (maximum conservation level) and was 152.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 174,200 cusecs and 173,700 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1216.65 feet, which was 168.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 18,500 cusecs and 8,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 212,600, 185,100, 364,700 and 299,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 40,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 24,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

30 computers provided to girls college in Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has join hands with Pak Arab fertilizer company to provide 30 computers to the Islamabad Model College for Girls (IMCG) F/8-1 Computer Lab.

The initiative has been taken by the Education Ministry in order to take a significant stride towards modernizing education by initiating various projects in collaboration with private sector.

According to the Education Ministry, it is imperative for private public partnership to join hands

for enhancing the infrastructure and quality of education in government schools federal capital.

In this regard Federal Secretary Education Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, representative from Pak Arab fertilizer company Brigadier Abid Ali Askari and principal Prof Asiya rafique Malik signed a memorandum of understanding and the company sponsored 30 computers for IMCG F-8/1 college lab.

The Chief guest Mr Wani, in his speech shared his vision to equip youth with the latest skills and increase their employment

opportunities.

He shared that various projects in partnership with the private sector are being executed by the ministry for enhancing the infrastructure and quality of education.

He concluded that the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is committed to providing the best educational facilities to students in government schools.

It's the time that students and parents think beyond Doctors and engineering profession and must join all other fields and serve the country, he added.

NAVTTC-NUST join hands to equip youth with future-ready tech skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): In alignment with the Prime Minister's vision to harness the potential of the country's burgeoning youth for economic growth, the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) has signed a landmark joint venture agreement with the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST).

The agreement, which aims to provide specialized training in chip design and manufacturing, was formalized on Monday at NAVTTC headquarters in Islamabad.

The training program, structured to run in two cohorts over five months each, is designed to equip young Pakistanis with advanced technical skills that are increasingly in demand both locally and globally.

The signing ceremony was attended by the Minister for Federal Education, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, who emphasized the importance of technological training in unlocking the potential of Pakistan's youth.

"Technological training is our ticket to capitalizing on the youth bulge and an aging global population," he said. "Scientists predict that in the next two to three

decades, the world will undergo a profound technological transformation. It is our responsibility to ensure that our youth are equipped with the skills that will matter most in the future. I am pleased to witness this strategic partnership today."

Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Federal Secretary, also attended the ceremony and commended both NAVTTC and NUST for initiating this forward-thinking program. "We look forward to the successful implementation of this program and its potential expansion across Pakistan," he stated.

During his welcome address, Aamir Jan, Executive Director of NAVTTC, highlighted the organization's commitment to staying ahead of technological advancements. "At NAVTTC, we understand the critical importance of adapting to rapidly changing technologies and training our workforce in globally and locally demanded trades. This initiative marks a significant step forward in moving beyond conventional training programs towards more specialized technical training."

Rector NUST, Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari, spoke on the significance of this collaboration, saying,

"This program brings together the strengths of two very viable institutions in Pakistan, marking an important milestone in our transition towards meeting the global shift in demand for advanced technological skills. This partnership is a testament to Pakistan's bright future."

Aamir Jan further noted that the program not only offers high international employability but also promises a 200% return on the initial investment, underscoring its value and potential impact.

Following the signing ceremony, Aamir Jan delivered a comprehensive presentation to the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, showcasing NAVTTC's various programs and initiatives. The Minister expressed his appreciation for NAVTTC's efforts and leadership. "Modern education and training are essential for Pakistan to achieve its envisioned goals and establish itself as a leader in the global arena. National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC)'s dedication to this mission assures me that we are on the right path to making our mark in the modern world," he remarked.

Country braces for another torrential rains spell

ISLAMABAD (APP): After the intense hot and humid weather conditions, the country is bracing for another powerful spell of torrential rains, expected to last till August 29, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

The PMD has issued a weather warning predicting torrential rains that could trigger flash floods and landslides particularly in the vulnerable areas. Depression lying over west of Madhya Pradesh (India) and surroundings was further moving westwards.

Due to this depression, strong monsoon currents were penetrating in southern parts of the country and in upper parts from evening/night. A trough of westerly wave was also present over upper parts of the country.

Rain-windstorm/thundershower is expected in Sindh, northeast/south Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Pothohar region, Islamabad, Kashmir

and Gilgit-Baltistan. Very heavy falls with gusty winds/windstorm are also likely at scattered places during the period.

The PMD has warned that the torrential rains may generate pluvial flood/inundation in low lying areas of Sindh, Balochistan and southern Punjab.

Flash Flooding in local nullahs/streams and Hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan, Dadu, Kalat, Khuzdar, Jaffarabad, Sibbi, Naseerabad, Barkhan, Loralai, Awaran, Panjgur, Washuk, Mastung and Lasbela.

Heavy rains may trigger landslides in Murree, Galliat, Mansehra, Kohistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Urban flooding is expected in low lying areas of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Sialkot, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Multan, Sahiwal, Nowshera and Peshawar from today till August 30.

Past 24 Hour Weather.

Hot and humid weather prevailed over most parts of the country. However, isolated rain-wind/thundershower occurred in lower Sindh, northeastern Balochistan, upper Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, northeastern Punjab, Potohar Region and Kashmir.

The rainfall recorded during the period was in Sindh: Thar Parker (Nagar Parker 47mm, Islamkot 18, Mithi 17, Chachro 14, Delhi 12, Kaloi 10, Diplo 06), Badin 15, Chore 08, Sakrand, Hyderabad 06, Shaheed Benazirabad 03, Balochistan: Barkhan 03, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa: Dir (Lower) 19, Pattan 01, Punjab: Gujranwala 25, Sialkot (City) 15, Mangala 05, Murree 03, Khanewal 02, Kashmir: Kotli 06 and Rawalakot 01mm.

The highest maximum temperatures recorded were Dalbandin 43C, Bhakkar 41, Dera Ismail Khan, Noorpur Thal and Kot Addu 40C.



ISLAMABAD: FinnFund Representative Antti Partanen meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.

Foreign investment shows confidence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that foreign investments showed remarkable confidence in the country's economy and Pakistan was moving towards the right direction due to the tireless work of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Talking to the media here on Monday, he said that as many as 3,000 new companies had been registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission in July while foreign investment has been made in 86 companies which was a testament to the improvement in the economy.

He said that the provision of maximum relief to the masses was the priority of the government and that it was making all-out efforts to achieve it.

The Chairman PMYP expressed hope that the restoration of the economy will soon bring political and financial stability to the country.

Domestic consumers to get Rs14 per unit relief

ISLAMABAD (APP): The domestic consumers of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) who used 201 to 500 units in August will get Rs 14 per unit relief in their electricity bills as per the orders of the Punjab Government.

According to the press release issued by IESCO, for consumers under domestic tariff batches 1 to 5 who have already paid their electricity bills, the excess amount will be adjusted in the September bills.

For consumers in batches 1 to 5 who have not yet paid their August bills, revised bills with the 14 rupees per unit relief will be delivered to their homes. Bills for consumers in batches 6 to 15 are being printed according to the relief announced by the Punjab Government and will be delivered to their homes.

IESCO spokesperson further said that, for the convenience of consumers, due date for bill payments has also been extended, and the updated bills will soon be uploaded to IESCO's website.

For more information, consumers can contact their nearest customer service center, IESCO revenue offices, or SDO offices.

DC orders crackdown on dengue as cases climb to 23

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has called for strict enforcement of anti-dengue measures across the Federal Capital as five new dengue cases have emerged 1 pushing the total count for the year to 23.

In this regard, the Deputy Commissioner has chaired a review meeting to assess the ongoing anti-dengue campaign.

During the meeting, all assistant commissioners provided updates on the situation in their respective

areas.

The latest data revealed, that five new dengue cases in the past week raising concerns as the total number of cases in the city this year reached 23.

Breaking down the numbers, Kural reported the highest with eight cases, followed by three in Sohan, and two in Barakahu.

Other areas with reported cases include F-7 with two, and F-6, E-11, G-7, Sihala, Rawat, H-13, Alipur and Tarnol, each reporting one case.

The meeting also includ-

ed a review of last year's dengue statistics. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for the strict implementation of anti-dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

He urged the authorities to take action against any assistant commissioners who fail to enforce these measures.

The DC made a strong appeal for the urban dengue SOPs to be implemented without compromise, stressing that these actions are crucial in preventing further spread of the virus.

HEC, PPRA conduct online training for procurement professionals

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Division, HEC in collaboration with Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA), Pakistan conducted a one-day online training on "Procurement Regulatory Framework" for procurement professionals working in the higher education sector.

It was attended by over 130 officials of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from across the country through smart classrooms as well as HEC officials from different divisions. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman HEC was chief guest at the opening ceremony.

Speaking to the participants, he highlighted the roadmap of this initiative, outlining its objectives and potential impact on

Pakistan's higher education landscape within the procurement domain.

He emphasized the importance of such programmes to improve the procurement system within the higher education sector through understanding of rules and to avoid inaccuracies.

Senior officials from PPRA delivered extensive lectures on procurement rules and demonstrated the advanced e-procurement process. The workshop explored roles, key activities and methods used to drive value from the procurement process.

The interactive sessions focused upon the efficient and effective tendering strategy, including the completion of pre-qualification questionnaires, invitation to tender documentation and

evaluation methodologies under PPRA.

The training course provided the participants with an understanding of public sector procurement, providing an overview of key areas such as the legislative environment, rules, and documentation.

The forum also enabled the participants to discuss concepts and issues pertaining to procurement and audit through learning the key control issues in dealing with government resources and identifying the financial controls to prevent fraud, corruption and mis-procurement.

HEC is committed to promote excellence in governmental and institutional procurement through education and professional development of professionals.

AIOU introduces electronic system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in a recent development, has introduced an electronic system for managing daily official correspondence, showcasing its commitment to adhering to governmental policies and guidelines.

In this recent development, AIOU has further cemented its role as a leading national institution by adopting the digitalization of its educational, financial, and administrative processes.

Under the directive of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the Registrar Department has issued a new notification.

This directive mandates all university departments to utilize the e-Office system for all official correspondence and office files starting from August 28.

The notification also outlines that the Director of Information Technology is responsible for ensuring the smooth operationalization of this electronic system, including the creation of

user accounts and the provision of necessary training for all users.

The Vice Chancellor has emphasized that, after August 28, all departmental communications must be conducted through the e-Office system, and no documents should be sent in hard copy form.

This transition is expected to result in significant time savings, improved governance, and enhanced transparency, thereby addressing and eliminating any potential delays in administrative processes.

ISSI hosts farewell for Palestinian Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a farewell event in honor of Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Pakistan, Ahmad Rabaie on Monday.

The event was moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. The speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI; and Ambassador Ahmad Rabaie, a news release said. In her remarks, Amina

Khan emphasized the deep-rooted bonds between Pakistan and Palestine, built on brotherhood and solidarity. She noted Pakistan's consistent support for the Palestinian people in their struggle for a homeland and expressed gratitude for Ambassador Rabaie's efforts to strengthening the bilateral relationship.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood commended Ambassador Ahmad Rabaie for his valuable efforts to deepen the fraternal Pakistan-Palestine relations and to promote the just cause of the Palestinian

people, particularly in the wake of developments since October 7, 2023. Sharing deep anguish over the relentless military onslaught against the Palestinians in Gaza, he noted that the issue pertained to decades-long illegal occupation of Palestinian lands and consistent denial of their right to self-determination and separate statehood.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood underscored that Pakistan's support for the Palestinians emanated from three factors: a moral imperative to support their just struggle for an inde-

pendent state; Quaid's injunctions dating back even prior to the creation of Pakistan; and a historically consistent stance of solidarity with the Palestinians. He also drew parallels between the oppression and injustices faced by both Palestinians and Kashmiris.

He highlighted that the Government of Pakistan has consistently supported the Palestinian cause through political and diplomatic support, humanitarian aid, advocacy at the United Nations, human resource development and so on.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood also emphasized

that Pakistan remains steadfast in its position that the Palestinian people must have a viable sovereign and independent state, based on pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. He concluded by thanking Ambassador Rabaie for his services and wishing him well in his future endeavors.

Ambassador Ahmad Rabaie expressed deep gratitude for Pakistan's unwavering support for Palestine, especially after October 7. He highlighted the tragic toll of the conflict, with most victims being women and children,

and over 150,000 Palestinians killed and injured. He praised Pakistan's swift response, including the formation of a committee to send vital humanitarian aid.

Ambassador Rabaie also acknowledged Pakistan's unmatched diplomatic and political support at the UN. He was moved by the active support of Pakistan's youth, who have actively raised their voices against the ongoing genocide and expressed optimism for the future.

Ambassador Rabaie especially thanked ISSI for its consistent focus on the Gaza situation and its support and solidarity with the Palesti-

nians at this difficult time.

In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood reflected on Pakistan's enduring support for Palestine, which also existed pre partition as Quaid-e-Azam was a staunch supporter of the Palestinian people. This solidarity continues till date.

He also noted the challenging times for Palestine and expressed deep sympathy for the suffering Palestinian nation.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the Palestinian cause which continues to grow stronger.

Roza visits Kandahar

KABUL (Ariana News): Roza Otunbayeva, the head of the UN mission in Afghanistan, met with officials in Kandahar to discuss alternate crops for farmers who previously grew poppies. Kandahar's media and information office said Otunbayeva met with the deputy governor of Kandahar during her visit to the southern province. In the meeting she said the United Nations had provided humanitarian aid to 26 million Afghans last year and is trying to increase the level of aid this year.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Safar 21 1446 — Tuesday, August 27, 2024

EU provides 13m in aid

KABUL (Khaama Press): UNICEF reports that EU has contributed 13 million to combat malnutrition and support child education in Afghanistan. UNICEF warned that 23.7 million people in Afghanistan will need humanitarian assistance this year. The organization emphasized that over 78,000 people will benefit from this aid. UNICEF will use the funds to procure 62,000 cartons of RUTF and train 1,600 health workers to treat severe acute malnutrition in children under five.

Hanafi: IEA engages with world within Sharia framework



SAR-E-PUL (TOLONews): Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, the acting Minister of Vice and Virtue, criticized UNAMA and other organizations for their stance against the ratification of the Law on Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, during a meeting in Sar-e-Pul province.

In this meeting, attended by local officials, religious scholars, tribal elders, and Islamic Emirate enforcers, Hanafi dismissed the statements made by UNAMA and other organizations as insignificant. He stressed that the Islamic Emirate only engages with the world within the framework of Islamic laws.

According to Moham-

mad Khalid Hanafi, the hijab and the implementation of Islamic punishments are "red lines," and no one's orders in this regard will be accepted.

The acting Minister of Vice and Virtue said: "If the Islamic Emirate interacts with the world, it does so according to the framework of Sharia. It will not act against the framework of Sharia, God willing. Our goal is a system based on Islamic Sharia." Hanafi has asked the enforcers of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue to implement the newly ratified law by the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

Meanwhile, local officials and some religious scholars in this meeting

also highlighted the implementation of the newly ratified law of this ministry, good conduct with people, and non-interference by human rights organizations in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

Mohammad Zarif Muzafar, the governor of Sar-e-Pul, said at the meeting: "Fifty percent of your duty is what is assigned to you by the system or your relevant department; but the other fifty percent and the main part of your duty is how you treat people."

Abdul Manan Hashim, head of the Sar-e-Pul Ulema Council, said at the meeting: "The Afghan woman and the Afghan girl, whom we provide for and take care of their honor and dignity, are not represented by the United Nations and human rights organizations, nor are they our friends."

The acting Minister of Vice and Virtue stressed the implementation of the newly ratified law while the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in a statement called for clarification on some of the articles and proposed implementations of this law.

Qatar important position in IE's foreign policy: Kabir

KABUL (Ariana News): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the political deputy prime minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), said that Qatar has an important place in the foreign policy of the Islamic Emirate and that Kabul is interested in bilateral cooperation with Doha in the economic, political, educational, industry and investment fields.

In a meeting with the advisor of the Qatar Embassy in Kabul, Abdul Kabir also called Qatar a friendly country and added that the upcoming meeting in Doha regarding Afghanistan is welcomed, according to a statement released by the political deputy PM's office.

Meanwhile, Mirdef Alqashouti, the advisor of the Qatar Embassy in Kabul, said that he will work for the launch of direct flights between Kabul and Doha.

He also assured the IEA that Qatar will continue to provide humanitarian aid to Afghans and that it wants to expand its cooperation with the Islamic Emirate in various sectors.

Appreciating Qatar's position regarding the issue of Palestine, Abdul Kabir said the Islamic Emirate calls for an independent Palestinian state.

IEA announces mining deals

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has signed five mining agreements with Uzbekistan worth \$1.15 billion.

These were among 35 agreements and memorandums of understanding signed recently with Uzbekistan – MoUs worth \$2.5 billion.

The deals in the mining sector include the geological survey of the hydrocarbon reserves in the Afghan-Tajik oil basin, geological surveys of the copper and gold reserves in the Qandalan area of Zabol province, generation of 120 MW gas-based electricity, geophysical and geological survey of gas and oil reserves in the Toti Maidan area of Faryab province, and the geological survey of the iron reserves in the Hesh area of Bamiyan province.

Trade relations between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan have been deepening especially after Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov this month became the highest-ranking foreign leader to visit Afghanistan since the IEA returned to power in 2021.

Iran reports 33% increase in exports to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Iran announced on Monday that its exports to Afghanistan increased by 33% in the first three months of this year.

Ruhollah Latifi, spokesman for Iran's Chamber of Industry and Trade, stated that the total value of these exports was \$520 million.

According to the IRIB news agency, Latifi also projected that Iran's exports to Afghanistan might exceed \$2 billion by the end of 2024.

Despite not officially recognizing the Taliban government in Afghanistan, Iran is actively strengthening its trade relations with the country.

Iran has sought to bolster its economic ties with Afghanistan in recent years as part of its broader regional strategy. The growing trade relationship highlights the importance of economic cooperation in maintaining regional stability and addressing mutual needs.

As trade expands, both nations may face challenges and opportunities related to their political and economic dynamics.

Commission prioritizing regional relations

KABUL (TOLONews): Hamdullah Fitrat, Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, told TOLONews that in the meeting of the caretaker government's Political Commission, recent developments in Afghanistan and the world were discussed.

According to the Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, it was also mentioned in this meeting that the Islamic Emirate desires to have good relations with all countries, especially neighboring countries.

The meeting of the Islamic Emirate's Political Commission was led by Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Political Deputy of the Prime Minister, with the participation of Amir Khan Muttaqi, Anas Haqqani, Shahabuddin Delawar, Khairullah Khairkhwa, and the head of the Political Deputy's office.

Hamdullah Fitrat told TOLONews: "In this meeting, the situation and developments in Afghanistan and the region were assessed, and discussions were held regarding the expansion of the Islamic Emirate's relations with several countries



and the implementation of regional projects. It was emphasized in this meeting that the Islamic Emirate, as an independent country, seeks good relations with all neighboring countries based on the principles of mutual respect and good neighborliness."

Fitrat also stated that officials of the caretaker government stressed in this meeting that Afghanistan, as an independent country,

desires good relations with all neighboring countries based on mutual respect and good neighborliness.

"The Political Commission, led by Mawlawi Kabir, should take actions that encourage the neighbors to move past previous interactions and recognize the Islamic Emirate," said Salim Paigir, a political analyst.

"Interaction and creating the opportunity for interaction with any country, espe-

cially neighbors, is a good thing, and the meeting held in this regard, in my opinion, is a good meeting," said Sayed Akbar Agha, another political analyst.

The Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate added that the Political Commission meeting also discussed the coordination of aid to those affected by natural disasters and the provision of necessary services to them.

Farmers in Helmand shift from poppies to basil cultivation

HELMAND (TOLONews): Farmers in Helmand have turned to cultivating basil plants instead of poppies.

The Provincial Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock said that nearly 1,500 hectares of land have been planted with basil this year.

Mohammad Naseem, the head of the agricultural promotion at the Helmand Agriculture and Irrigation Department, said: "In 1403,

1,432 hectares of land were planted with basil, yielding 2,577.5 metric tons."

Abdul Malik, a 34-year-old farmer who has cultivated basil on 18 acres of land, mentioned that he used to plant poppies on his land in previous years. However, after the Islamic Emirate banned poppy cultivation, he turned to planting basil and hopes for a better yield.

Abdul Malik told

TOLONews, "I used to plant poppies, but now I've turned to cultivating these plants you see. I'm happy because if it's well-tended and watered, it can yield as much as opium."

However, farmers are asking officials to help market basil products.

Agha Gul, another farmer, said: "When we sell our crops and grains, they are bought from us at a low price and sold again at a

higher price." Zainullah, another farmer, said, "If markets are found for agricultural products and they become active, it will benefit both us and the traders."

According to information from the Helmand Agriculture and Irrigation Department, over a thousand acres of land in the province were planted with basil last year, yielding two thousand tons of the product.

Minister pledges faster payments to martyrs' families and disabled

MAZAR-E-SHARIF (TOLONews): Abdul Majid Akhund, the acting Minister of Martyrs and Disabled, during his visit to Mazar-e-Sharif to assess the situation of disabled individuals and families of martyrs, said that since the beginning of the current solar year, seven billion afghani have been paid to them in salaries.

The acting Minister of Martyrs and Disabled said: "The budget approved for us by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate is 12 billion afghani, and in the first six months of the year, we have paid 7 billion of it to the families of martyrs and disabled individuals, and the remaining funds will also be distributed to them."

The Head of Martyrs and Disabled in Balkh said that approximately 9,000 eligible individuals have been identified in the province, and nearly 7,000 of them have received their salaries since the beginning of the current solar year.

Jan Mohammad Hikmat, head of Martyrs and Disabled in Balkh, said, "This year, we have processed the documents of around 4,000 disabled individuals and 2,800 families



of martyrs whose documents were complete, and we have paid their salaries. We are working to resolve issues with others' documents and will pay their salaries from the available budget once the issues are resolved."

However, some disabled individuals are calling for the creation of employment and educational opportunities.

Abdul Rahim Safa, who is blind, said: "There

should be agreements with foreign organizations working in Afghanistan to help disabled individuals learn professional skills to improve their lives. Additionally, disabled individuals should be given a share in foreign educational scholarships."

Sayed Mohammad Yazdan Parast, an activist for the rights of disabled individuals, said: "The lack of special schools for the blind and deaf in most

provinces of the country is a serious challenge for disabled individuals, and we hope the acting government will pay serious attention to this matter."

Meanwhile, some disabled individuals in the country have identified the lack of access to education, healthcare services, and the deprivation of disability rights as significant challenges they face, and they are calling for these issues to be addressed.

Traffic incidents rise in Bamyán, says local officials

BAMYAN (TOLONews): Since the beginning of the current solar year, 68 traffic incidents in Bamyán have resulted in the deaths of 20 people and injuries to more than 30 others.

Bamyán local officials said that women and children are among the deceased and injured in these incidents.

In the most recent incident, on Saturday a high-speed vehicle of the Pasoo type with ten passengers overturned on the Bamyán - Band Amir Road after veering off the road. As a

result, four people, including women and children, lost their lives, and six others were injured.

Amrullah Amiri, the traffic incidents officer of Bamyán, said, "The speed of this vehicle was 140 km/h, and it was trying to overtake another vehicle when another car came from the opposite direction, causing the vehicle to veer off the dirt road and overturn."

Mohammad Khawani Rasa, the spokesperson for the Bamyán Police Command said, "Since the

beginning of this year, 68 traffic incidents have occurred in Bamyán, resulting in 20 deaths and 37 injuries."

Some drivers and residents of Bamyán attribute the increase in these incidents to the crowding of tourists, narrow roads, lack of traffic signs, and drivers' carelessness.

Sayed Hakim, a resident of Bamyán, said: "Tourists usually come to Bamyán at a specific time, and they are not familiar with the roads, driving at high speeds."

Sayed Taqi, a driver,

said: "Most drivers are young and unaware of traffic laws, which leads to traffic accidents."

Mohammad Hakim, a resident of Bamyán, said: "When the roads are not good and the streets are in poor condition, it definitely impacts the increase in traffic incidents."

Reportedly, to reduce traffic incidents, driving licenses have been issued to more than 400 people in the current solar year, and opportunities for learning traffic laws have been provided.

‘IEA recently made diplomatic progress’

KABUL (TOLONews): Hamdullah Fitrat, the Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, stated that the Islamic Emirate has made significant diplomatic progress in recent weeks.

Fitrat highlighted the recognition of the Islamic Emirate's ambassador by the United Arab Emirates, the appointment of the Islamic Emirate's chargé d'affaires to Kazakhstan, and the visit of the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan to Afghanistan as examples of this progress.

According to Fitrat, these events indicate that the foreign policy of the Islamic Emirate is expanding. Hamdullah Fitrat told TOLONews: "All of this shows that the foreign policy and diplomatic relations of the Islamic Emirate are expanding, and we hope to witness similar advancements in the near future."

Additionally, delegations from several regional countries, including Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, a delegation of religious scholars from Turkey, and most recently, the newly appointed chargé d'affaires of Qatar, have visited Afghanistan.

Over the past month, high-ranking officials of the Islamic Emirate have also traveled to Iran, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

"The visits of high-level delegations from various countries to Afghanistan and from Afghanistan to regional countries are naturally a positive step towards the stability of the country, establishing diplomatic relations, building trust in the international arena, and ultimately paving the way for the recognition of the Islamic Emirate," Sayed Muqaddam Amin, a political analyst, told TOLONews.

"The diplomatic visits of Afghan government officials, especially in the region, and the appointment of new ambassadors of the Islamic Emirate to the UAE and Kazakhstan indicate that the Afghan government is both strengthening and expanding its position in the international arena," said Fazl Rahman Orya, another political analyst.

Although no country has yet officially recognized the Islamic Emirate; however, after China, the United Arab Emirates became the second country to accept the credentials of the Islamic Emirate's ambassador.

Officials of the Islamic Emirate have repeatedly stated that the interim government currently has nearly forty active diplomatic missions abroad.

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Transport Ministry reports on achievements



KABUL (Ariana News): A total of 12,503 flights were conducted from the country's airports in 1402, the last solar year (April 2023 to March 2024), facilitating the travel of almost 1.9 million people, officials confirmed Monday.

Addressing a press conference, officials from the ministry of transport and aviation said the total number of people through Afghanistan's airports was 1,897,273. Of these, 774,700 people traveled domestically while 1,122,583 traveled abroad.

In addition, 40,016 flights flew over Afghan airspace, which was an increase against the previous year. Last week, Reuters reported that a number of international airlines are now routing planes over Afghanistan in light of the war in the Ukraine and the heightened tension in the Middle East.

Officials meanwhile added on Monday that in

the past year, 1402, at least 547,038 cargo vehicles transported goods from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Iran, and Pakistan, while 434,709 cargo vehicles entered Afghanistan from neighboring and regional countries.

In addition, 421,895 cargo vehicles and 3,722,283 passenger vehicles traveled between provinces during this time.

According to the officials the ministry successfully facilitated the safe transportation of 30,000 pilgrims to Saudi Arabia for Hajj and ensured their safe return to Afghanistan.

Other significant achievements by the ministry in the past year include the improvement of Khost Airport into an international airport, along with the provision of services to Ariana Afghan Airlines, Kam Air, and eight other international airlines.

In the aviation sector, the

ministry implemented 18 development projects, trained 112 individuals at the Civil Aviation Institute, recruited 150 students, and filled about 500 vacant posts.

To enhance operational efficiency, 66 capacity-building training programs were conducted over the past year, and professional staff were deployed to airports across the country to ensure the delivery of appropriate and standard services.

The ministry also facilitated the free repatriation of tens of thousands of returnees from Spin Boldak, Torkham, and Kabul to their home regions.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has transferred more than 3,500 jeribs of land in Kabul province to the Ministry of Transport and Aviation for the construction of standard transportation terminals.



QUETTA: Rescue workers shifting body of Bolan and Kalat incidents victim to civil hospital.

No agreement in Gaza ceasefire talks in Cairo: US

CAIRO/WASHINGTON (Reuters): There was no agreement on Sunday in the Gaza ceasefire talks that took place in Cairo, with neither Hamas nor Israel agreeing to several compromises presented by mediators, two Egyptian security sources said, casting doubt on the chances of success in the latest US-backed effort to end the 10-month old war.

A senior US official, however, described the talks as “constructive,” saying they were conducted in a spirit on all sides to reach “a final and implementable agreement.” “The process will continue over the coming days through working groups to further address remaining issues and details,” said the official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, adding that the teams would remain in Cairo.

Months of on-off talks have failed to produce an agreement to end Israel’s devastating military campaign in Gaza or free the remaining hostages seized by Hamas in the militant group’s Oct. 7 attack on Israel that triggered the war. Speaking at a news conference in Halifax, Canada, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said Washington was still “feverishly” working in Cairo to get a ceasefire and a hostage deal.

Key sticking points in ongoing talks mediated by the United States, Egypt and Qatar include an Israeli presence in the so-called Philadelphi Corridor, a narrow 14.5-km-long (9-mile-long) stretch of land along Gaza’s southern border with Egypt. Mediators put forward a number of alternatives to the presence of Israeli forces on the Philadelphi Corridor and the Netzarim Corridor which cuts across the middle of the Gaza Strip, but none were accepted by the parties, Egyptian sources said.

Israel also expressed reservations on several of the Palestinian detainees Hamas is demanding the release of, and Israel demanded their exit of Gaza if they are released, the

Patients flee Gaza hospital after latest evacuation order from Israel

DEIR EL-BALAH (AFP): War-weary Palestinians on Monday pushed wheelchair-bound and bed-ridden patients through the streets of central Gaza, evacuating a hospital in a frantic bid to stay ahead of feared Israeli bombardment. The Israeli military had told people the day before to “evacuate immediately” a part of Deir el-Balah city because it planned to “act with force against Hamas and terrorist groups” there. Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital sits in the middle of the area described in the warning, setting in motion a rapid exodus even though the Israeli military said medical facilities would not be affected by its operations.

Speaking to AFP on Sunday from her hospital bed outside the facility, Tamam Al-Raei said she did not know where to seek safety. “I have a war injury. I have broken bones and have had an amputation, and I have been receiving treatment for that,” she said. “But now they’re telling us to evacuate Al-Aqsa. Where do we go? Where do I get treatment?” All around her, families tried to flee, the wealthiest among them hiring donkey-drawn carts to transport their belongings. Others carried patients in their arms, including one teenager who had lost the use of his legs and was clutching a bag of intravenous fluid. The Israeli military said on Monday it was targeting “terror operatives” in Deir el-Balah and working to dismantle the “remaining terrorist infrastructure” of Hamas, whose October 7 attack on southern Israel triggered the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip.

“As part of these efforts, a temporary local evacuation of the population in eastern Deir el-Balah... was carried out, for their protection,” the military said in a statement. “It should be emphasized that the evacuation efforts did not include the evacuation of hospitals and medical facilities in the area.” Gaza’s hospitals have been raided by Israeli forces numerous times during their campaign to destroy Hamas. Israel has accused Hamas of using hospitals in Gaza as a cover for military operations, claims the militants have rejected. Memories of past violence in and around hospitals made it difficult to reassure patients and medical workers that Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital would be safe, said Gaza health ministry spokesman Khalil Al-Daqran. “The citizens, patients and some of the medical crews were struck with panic and fear as a result of the announcement that the areas surrounding the hospital are operational areas,” Daqran said.

sources added. There has been much back and forth between the teams from Israel, the United States and Egypt since Thursday to narrow the remaining gaps, the senior US official said, in preparation for Saturday, when Qatar and Egypt met with senior representatives of Hamas to walk through the proposal in detail.

On Sunday, senior officials from Israel joined the talks to address outstanding issues with the support

of mediators, the senior US official said but did not provide a definitive assessment on whether there was a breakthrough or not. Hamas said Israel has backtracked on a commitment to withdraw troops from the Corridor and put forward other new conditions, including the screening of displaced Palestinians as they return to the enclave’s more heavily populated north when the ceasefire begins.

PTI, JUI-F leaders to meet today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazlur Rehman Group (JUI-F) have decided that their sub-committees will meet on Tuesday at 2 PM at the residence of Asad Qaiser in Parliament Lodges.

PTI will be represented by Barrister Gohar and Shibli Faraz, while JUI-F will have Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri and Kamran Murtaza on their side. The decision for the sub-committees meeting was finalised after a consultation between JUI-F’s negotiation committee and party head Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

During this meeting with the JUI-F chief, which included Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Aslam Ghauri, and Kamran Murtaza, the discussions also covered Maulana Fazlur Rehman’s recent meeting with President Asif Zardari. It is worth mentioning that despite PTI’s efforts, the sub-committees of both parties could not meet on Sunday as initially planned.

Last Friday, PTI delegation was called on Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl’s (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman to discuss mutual cooperation in the parliament. PTI delegation comprised PTI chief Barrister Gohar Ali, Asad Qaiser, Shibli Faraz and Rauf Hasan while JUI-F Secretary General Maulana Ghafoor Hydari, Maulana Lutf-ur-Rehman, Aslam Ghoori and Maulana Amjad Khan attended the meeting.

During the meeting two sides stressed the need for joining hands in the parliament. After the meeting, PTI Information Secretary Rauf Hassan said that both sides have agreed to move on with mutual consultations during legislation in National Assembly and Senate. He said a sub-committee was being formed in Parliament which will give unanimous opinion on legislation. JUI-F spokesman Aslam Ghauri confirmed that both political parties have formed a committee for legislation in the parliament. Akhunzada Hussain Yousafzai said that Mahmood Khan Achakzai’s consultation was included for a meeting between PTI and JUI-F. He said Achakzai wants things to move forward in the country.

Floods in Nigeria kill 49

ABUJA (Reuters): At least 49 people have been killed and thousands displaced in Nigeria after heavy rains caused flooding in the northeast of the country, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has said.

Three states in the northeast, Jigawa, Adamawa and Taraba, have been hit hard by floods, with 41,344 people displaced, NEMA spokesperson Manzo Ezekiel said Monday. In 2022, Nigeria experienced its worst flood in more than a decade, which killed more than 600 people, displaced around 1.4 million and destroyed 440,000 hectares (1.1 million acres) of farmland.

“We are just entering into the peak of the season, particularly in the northern part of the country, and the situation is very dire,” Ezekiel told Reuters. The floods have also destroyed farmlands, affecting around 693 hectares (1,712 acres) of agricultural land.

Russia fires huge missile, drone salvo at Ukraine’s power grid

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia launched about 200 missiles and drones at Ukraine on Monday, killing five people and striking energy facilities nationwide, Kyiv said, while neighbouring Nato member Poland reported a drone had probably entered its airspace.

Power cuts and water supply outages were reported in many areas, including parts of Kyiv, as officials said the attack — 2.5 years into Russia’s full-scale invasion — targeted power or other critical infrastructure in at least 10 regions. Russia dramatically stepped up its strikes on the Ukrainian power grid in March in what Kyiv has said looked like a concerted effort to degrade the system ahead of next winter when people need electricity and heating most.

Monday’s missile and drone salvo was Russia’s most intense in weeks, coming as Ukraine is claiming new ground in a major cross-border incursion into Russia’s southern Kursk region while Russian forces steadily inch forward in Ukraine’s east, closing in on the transport hub of Pokrovsk. “It was one of the biggest combined strikes. More than a hundred missiles of various types and about a hundred Shahed drones. And like most previous Russian strikes, this one is just as sneaky, targeting critical civilian infrastructure,” President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Telegram.

Poland said an “object” had entered its airspace, that it may have landed on Polish territory and that searches were underway. “Most likely it was a drone and we assume so, because the trajectory of the flight and the speed indicate that it was definitely not a missile,” Jacek Goryszewski, spokesperson for the Polish army’s operational command, told Reuters.

According to Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, 15 Ukrainian regions sustained damage from the missile and drone barrage. Zelenskiy said the energy sector had suffered “a lot of damage”. Top Kyiv officials urged its Western allies and arms suppliers to allow long-range strikes into Russia. Zelenskiy also redoubled his call on allies such as Poland to join Ukraine in shooting down missiles and drones over Ukrainian airspace.

Ukraine had no powerful long-range weapons at the start of the invasion but has since developed many models of long-range attack drones and used them to hit targets deep inside Russia, ranging from oil refineries to military airfields. Over the weekend, Zelenskiy said Ukraine had

developed a new “drone missile” that had been used to attack Russia and was more powerful and faster than other hardware in Kyiv’s arsenal.

Russia’s defence ministry said on Monday its forces used high-precision weapons to strike important energy infrastructure in Ukraine which it said supported the military-industrial complex. It listed power substations, gas compressor stations and storage sites for aircraft weapons. The regions reporting strikes on power or critical infrastructure included Rivne and Volyn in the northwest, Khmelnytsk in the southwest, Zhytomyr in the north, Lviv in the west, Dnipropetrovsk, Kirovohrad and Vinnytsia in central Ukraine, Zaporizhzhia in the southeast and Odesa in the south.

Neighbouring Moldova, whose grid is linked to that of Ukraine, reported small disruptions to its power network. Ukraine’s foreign ministry said a hydropower plant in the Kyiv region had been targeted too. A video posted on social media and verified by Reuters showed a damaged dam and a fire after an apparent strike at a hydropower plant. A separate clip, also verified, showed a missile hitting a water reservoir.

The Kyiv region governor Ruslan Kravchenko said in televised comments there was no critical damage to the dam. In the northeastern Sumy region, from where Ukraine launched its incursion into Russia on August 6, authorities said a railway infrastructure facility had been struck, but did not say which one or give further details.

A 69-year-old man in the Dnipropetrovsk region and a man in the Zaporizhzhia region were among at least five people confirmed dead, local officials said. The others were in the regions of Kharkiv, Zhytomyr and Volyn. In Lutsk, an apartment block was damaged, the mayor said after reporting explosions. Blasts also shook central Kyiv and air defences could be heard engaging incoming targets on the outskirts of the capital.

The air force said Russia used 11 TU-95 strategic bombers during Monday’s attack, as well as other weaponry. Approximately 15 missiles and almost 20 drones targeting the capital of Kyiv were shot down, according to Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv’s military administration. Both Russia and Ukraine deny deliberately targeting civilians. Each says its attacks are aimed at destroying infrastructure critical to the other’s war effort.

‘Under which authority Aafia handed over to US’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A single bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) comprising Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaque here asked under which authority Aafia Siddiqui along with her children was handed over to American agencies.

The lawyer of Dr Fowzia Siddiqui, Advocate Imran Shafique told media after the hearing of the case Monday that today’s hearing was very important as the honourable judge asked about some basic questions. He said the American lawyer of Dr Aafia Siddiqui, Clive Smith had filed a declaration about the clemency motion in the US courts to seek the release of Aafia on humanitarian ground in which he mentioned all basic facts about the kidnapping of Aafia and her children and handing them to USA.

He said that as per the declaration Aafia Siddiqui and her children were handed to the US agencies by the Sindh government and ISI. He said that the court told the deputy attorney general and officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) that these questions are raised in the declaration and the court can’t keep its eyes closed on these issues. He asked why the court should not issue order to initiate an inquiry on the questions raised in the

declaration and seek a report on this matter from the DG ISI and ask him what were the evidences with them on the basis which it was decided to kidnap Dr Aafia Siddiqui along with her children and hand them over to the US agencies. He asked even if they had such solid evidences, had they any authority under any law to hand over Aafia and her children to the US agencies.

Imran Shafique said the IHC had given the government four weeks’ time to decide about a multilateral agreement with the US about repatriation of prisoners. He said the government officials told the court that the government has decided to ink a bilateral agreement with the US but talks in this regard with the US government are not yet initiated.

He said the court was told by Advocate Janjua that a hurdle in repatriation of Dr Aafia Siddiqui is that when a clemency motion is moved in this regard it is said that as Dr Aafia was handed over to the US by the Pakistani government so such process would be legal.

However, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mushtaq Ahmed told the media that Aafia and her children were illegally handed over to the American agencies by the government of Pakistan. Then they were illegally shifted to Afghanistan and

from where they were again illegally shifted to New York when a US court illegally sentenced Aafia to jail. He said the third kidnapped child of Aafia, Salman, is still missing. He should be recovered immediately. He said the key to the release of Aafia is present in Islamabad but our own government doesn’t want the release of Aafia. He said if the government of Pakistan formally lodges a petition to seek the release of Aafia on humanitarian grounds should could be released within a few days. He demanded from the government to take serious steps for an early release of Dr Aafia Siddiqui.

IHC adjourns Internet slowdown case till Sept 3: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) adjourned the case pertaining to internet slowdown and installation of a firewall until September 03. The government failed to provide a satisfactory reply about the reason behind slowdown of the internet speed, to the high court.

The bench adjourned the case and summoned a detailed report by the next hearing on September 03. The court also summoned the Member Technical in person. Chief Justice Aamir Farooq remarked that the ministers issuing contradictory statements, they are saying at a time it is firewall or denying it next time.

PK-19 MPAs including treasury MP sues govt for ADP 2024-25 plans

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: As many as 19 Members Provincial Assembly (MPAs) including treasury benches lawmakers approached Peshawar High Court (PHC) against Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa seeking declaration of Umbrella Schemes/ Block allocation in fiscal year 2024-25 as unlawful, null and void as well as Chief Minister directives after budget in this regard.

The petitioners including MPA PK28, 30, 32, 40, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 82, 95, 101, 103, 106, 111, 112, and 115 especially treasury benches member and Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) leader Arbab Muhammad Waseem Khan while Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary CM, Additional Chief Secretary Planning & Development, Secretary Communications & Works, Secretary Irrigation, Secretary Finance and Secretary Planning & Development made as respondents in the plea.

The petition pleaded that on acceptance of this writ PHC may be pleased declare the schemes included in the Annual Development Program (ADP) under Umbrella

schemes/Block allocation as enumerated and any other such schemes in the ADP 2024-25 are illegal, unlawful, null and void. As well as declare that all CM directives issued subsequent to the passage of the Budget for 2024-25 related to umbrella/block schemes are illegal and unlawful.

Moreover, set-aside the operation of all CM directives issued subsequent to the passage of the Budget for 2024-25 related to umbrella/block schemes. Direct the respondents to release the funds for developmental schemes as per the release policy and in a just and equitable manner. Direct the respondents to formulate, implement and distribute developmental schemes and release of funds to schemes as per law, rules, guidelines and dictates of the judgements of the superior courts. The petitioners and their constituents should not be discriminated against purely out of political considerations in this context, the petition stated.

The petitioners seeking interim relief to restrain the respondents from taking any steps to execute, distribute, point-out, finalize or earmark any scheme out of the schemes included in the ADP 2024-25 under Umbrella schemes/Block allocation as enumer-

ated till the final decision of the instant writ petition. Restraining the respondents from disbursing or releasing any funds to any scheme out of the schemes included in the ADP 2024-25 under Umbrella schemes/Block allocation as enumerated.

The writ argued for suspending the operation of all CM directives issued subsequent to the passage of the Budget for 2024-25 related to umbrella/block schemes till the final decision of this writ petition. Suspending the operation of any already released funds and execution of schemes for any scheme out of the schemes included in the ADP 2024-25 under Umbrella schemes/Block allocation as enumerated. Restraining the respondents from release of funds in an arbitrary manner against the release policy till the final decision in this writ petition.

The writ argued that the petitioners have been duly elected as members of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the general elections held on 8th February 2024. That the present petitioners belong to various political parties and constitute the opposition benches in the provincial assembly. That the petitioners thus representing the opposition parties

have collectively obtained approximately 30 million votes in the general election of 2024.

This calculates to around 36 percent of the total votes cast in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. That therefore, the petitioners represent almost half of the electorate that cast its vote in the February 2024 general elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is relevant to note here that the ruling government benches in the provincial assembly have obtained about 38 percent of the total votes cast in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. That amongst the petitioners’ numerous duties as enjoined on them vide the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the relevant statutes and rules, is a primary duty of safeguarding the interests and rights of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the writ stated.

The Annual Budget session of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly was held recently in June 2024. Unprecedentedly and demonstrating the extreme callousness of the respondent government, the Annual Budget Statement was placed in the provincial assembly before presentation of the Federal Budget in the National Assembly. This exhibits the extreme nonseriousness of the

respondents and of the treasury benches in the Provincial Assembly as they very well know that most of the revenue estimates of the province is obtained vide transfers from the Federal Government.

The ADP 2024-25 was also presented and passed by virtue of the sheer and brute majority of the ruling government in the province. This was done despite the fact that the same consists of entries of developmental schemes which very clearly violate the well settled law as laid down by various judgements of the Superior Courts including the Supreme Court of Pakistan and also of this Court and also the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Procedure and Conduct of Business Rules 1988, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government Rules of Business 1985 as well as the policy guidelines issued by the respondents in consequence of the judgment of this Honorable Court.

That the formulation of the ADP in such a manner is a clear and gross violation of the abovementioned law, rules and guidelines thus making this process utterly illegal. That despite the clear law, judgements of superior courts, guidelines against inclusion of and bar on including block/umbrella schemes in

the ADP, the respondents have included the following entries in the ADP.

The aforesaid schemes being block/umbrella allocations are distinguishable from schemes that are presented and approved with the required details and particularity and thus illegal. The respondents are releasing funds to ongoing schemes in a manner that violates the funds release policy formulated and issued by the respondent government. Favoritism and discrimination on the basis of political affiliations is being made the sole criteria of which developmental scheme or which area gets how much funds.

The respondent no.2 under the name of “CM Directives” is doling out public funds to his blue-eyed political favorites. This despite the fact that such practice of arbitrary one-man discretionary power has been declared consistently as illegal by the superior courts including PHC. That the present petitioners made all out efforts to debate in the provincial assembly and utilize any other public or private forum to pin point and convince the respondents and the government benches of the illegality of the aforementioned schemes, releases, directives and actions but to no avail.