

Turkish CNS visits NHQ
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Navy Delegation headed by Chief of Staff Turkish Naval Forces Command Vice Admiral Ibrahim Ozdem KOÇER, visited Naval Headquarters for 6th Pakistan Navy Turkish Navy Expert Level Staff Talks. Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the visiting dignitary was received by Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami.



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Iran says Haniyeh killed from close range

TEHRAN (Reuters): Iran's Revolutionary Guards said Saturday that Israel killed Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh using a "short-range projectile" launched from outside of his accommodation in Tehran. "This terrorist operation was carried out by firing a short-range projectile with a warhead of about 7 kilograms — causing a strong explosion — from outside the accommodation area," the Guards said in a statement.

It added that Israel was "supported by the United States" in the attack. Haniyeh was killed early Wednesday in the Iranian capital where he was attending the swearing-in of the new president, Masoud Pezeshkian. Iran and Hamas have vowed to retaliate.

The Guards repeated their insistence that Haniyeh would be avenged and that Israel would receive "a severe punishment at the appropriate time, place and manner." Israel, which has declined to comment on Haniyeh's killing, had earlier struck a Hezbollah stronghold in south Beirut. That strike killed a senior commander of the Lebanese militant group it blamed for a deadly weekend rocket strike on the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights.

The killings are the latest of several major incidents that have inflamed regional tensions during the Gaza war, which has drawn in Iran-backed militant groups in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen. In Iran, the voices clamouring for revenge have intensified since Haniyeh's killing. On Saturday, the ultraconservative Kayhan daily said retaliatory operations were expected to be "more



US to send jets, warships

WASHINGTON (BBC): The US will deploy additional warships and fighter jets to the Middle East to help defend Israel from possible attacks by Iran and its proxies, the Pentagon said.

Tensions remain high in the region over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and a key commander of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Missile defence forces were placed on a state of increased readiness to deploy, the Pentagon said, adding that its commitment to defend Israel was "ironclad". A Pentagon statement said the new deployments would "improve US force protection... increase support for the defence of Israel, and ... ensure the US is prepared to respond to various contingencies". The deployments would include additional ballistic missile defense-capable cruisers and destroyers, it said. On Tel Aviv's seafloor, the mood appears relaxed with bronzed bodies lazing under beach umbrellas. But few are in any doubt that the Middle East stands perilously close to full-scale war. Israel is on high alert. Several international airlines have suspended flights to the country.

diverse, more dispersed and impossible to intercept." "This time, areas such as Tel Aviv and Haifa and the strategic centers and especially residences of some officials involved in the recent crimes are among the targets," the newspaper said in an opinion piece.

Iran said on Saturday it expects Lebanon's Tehran-backed Hezbollah group to hit deeper inside Israel and no longer be confined to military targets after Israel

killed the Hezbollah military commander.

Hezbollah has been exchanging near-daily fire with Israeli forces, saying it is targeting military positions over the border, since its Palestinian ally Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, sparking war in Gaza. But a strike claimed by Israel in an overcrowded residential area of South Beirut changed the calculus, Iran's mission to the United Nations said.

Bilawal pays tribute to martyred cops

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid glowing tribute to the brave police officers and Jawans who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty to protect the citizens of Pakistan.

According to a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, in his message on the eve of National Police Martyrs Day, stated that the unwavering dedication and selfless service of the police martyrs are a testament to their commitment to upholding the rule of law and protecting the citizens of Pakistan. He emphasized that policemen from all four provinces have fought valiantly against terrorism, rendering sacrifices that are unparalleled. "Their sacrifices are not in vain; they have safeguarded our communities and upheld the values of justice and integrity," he noted.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that as we remember our fallen heroes, we must also recognize the ongoing efforts and bravery of our police force, who continue to serve with honor and dedication. "The PPP stands in solidarity with the families of the police martyrs and extends its deepest condolences and gratitude for their immense sacrifice," he said, adding that the party pledges to continue advocating for the welfare and support of our law enforcement agencies, ensuring they are equipped and empowered to perform their duties effectively. "Today, let us honor the memory of our police martyrs and reaffirm our commitment to building a safer and more just society for all," he concluded.

Pak backs Iran's call for OIC meeting

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar had a telephonic conversation with Iranian interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri.

According to the Foreign Office spokesperson, the telephone conversation took place on Saturday between the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Iran. Ishaq Dar and Ali Bagheri discussed the background of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh's martyrdom in Tehran.

The spokesperson stated that the ministers also talked about the developments following Haniyeh's death. They agreed to continue supporting the legitimate rights of Palestinians, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, the spokesperson said.

"Ministers agreed to further strengthen and enhance bilateral relations," said the foreign office spokesperson. The spokesperson stated that the Iranian foreign minister requested Ishaq Dar to participate in the unusual meeting of the OIC called at the level of foreign ministers. Ishaq Dar accepting the request said Pakistan would actively participate in the meeting.

Sit-in to continue: JI

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Jamaat-e-Islami emir Hafiz Naemur Rehman said on Saturday that the JI sit-in would continue until its demands were met by the government.

Addressing sit-in participants, the JI emir said that sit-in had awakened the people, adding that people had pinned their hopes on the JI for representing them in the so far nine-day long protest.

Rehman termed the gathering as a historical milestone in the political history of Pakistan, announcing that Karachiites would also lodge their protest through a sit-in.

PTI's May 9 apology hinges on proof: KP CM

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI / MARDAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has stated that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party is prepared to issue an apology regarding the events of May 9, provided that the accusations against them are substantiated.

Speaking to the media in Rawalpindi following a visit to Imran Khan in Adiala Jail, Gandapur emphasized that an apology from PTI can only occur if the fault is demonstrated to be theirs.

"The fault should be proven before any apology is made," Gandapur asserted. He criticized the approach of using coercive measures for negotiations, stating that discussions should be conducted without such pressures.

Gandapur highlighted the ongoing concerns of PTI's founder, Imran Khan, about the current state of the country. He reiterated Khan's belief that their electoral mandate had been undermined. "We were wronged, and our women are still incarcerated," Gandapur added.

KP CM expressed dissatisfaction with the present government's refusal to comply with court orders, which he claimed demonstrates a lack of respect for the judiciary. He indicated that PTI's upcoming meeting in Swabi will address these issues and reaffirm their commitment to constitutional principles and true freedom.

"On May 9, a deliberate conspiracy against us was orchestrated," Gandapur alleged. He called for accountability from all parties involved, stating that anyone at fault should be prepared to accept responsibility. Gandapur also mentioned the plight of Yasmin Rashid, who remains in jail despite her health con-

cerns, and noted that those who left the party were not subject to similar scrutiny. Concluding his remarks, Gandapur urged the nation to critically assess the situation and determine where the true fault lies. He reaffirmed PTI's readiness to rally support for their cause, emphasizing their continued commitment to their principles and people.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur visited Rashakai Special Economic Zone, Mardan on Saturday where he was called on by a delegation of Chinese experts visiting Pakistan these days. Matters of mutual interest specially investment opportunities in the province and prospects to further enhance mutual collaboration in various fields including industries, Agriculture and Energy & Power came under discussion.

Besides Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Industries and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, high ups of Industries department and Federal Board of Investment were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister cordially welcomed the Chinese delegates to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and expressed the hope that their visit to Pakistan would be beneficial for both the countries with regard to enhancement of chinese investment in Pakistan. Talking to the delegates, Ali Amin Gandapur remarked that there was huge potential of foreign investment in Hydel Power, Industries, Agriculture and many other sectors of the province adding that the incumbent provincial government was investing in these potential sectors, and it would also welcome foreign

investment in these sectors.

Ali Amin Gandapur stated that creating maximum employment opportunities and increasing revenue of the province by effectively utilising the available resources and by boosting the potential sectors was one of the priority areas of his government, and steps were being taken to this end under a well conceived strategy, adding that the provincial government would not only encourage chinese investment in potential sectors of the province but would also facilitate the investor under its Ease of Doing Business policy.

The Chief Minister said that the provincial government is effectively tapping the hydel power potential of the province to provide its own generated power to the local industries on cheaper rates with the aim to boost the industrial sector, and added his government had established a Grid and Transmission Company of its own to provide cheap electricity to the local industries. He said that his government would appreciate and welcome foreign investment in grid and transmission sector.

Ali Amin Gandapur highlighted the importance of exchanging such expert delegation between the two countries in future as well so that maximum opportunities of mutual collaboration and involvement could be explored to the benefits of both the countries. He assured the delegation that the provincial government would take good care of the security needs of foreign investors working in the province and fool proof security of the foreign investors would be ensured. The Chief Minister also visited various industrial units newly set up in the Special Economic Zone where he was briefed by the high ups of Industries Department about the industrial units.

Pakistan to continue raising voice for Kashmir: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that considering its national duty, Pakistan has always raised its voice for Kashmiris right to self-determination at every international forum and continue to raise its voice till realisation of the Kashmiris goal of freedom.

He was addressing a webinar organized by Pakistan Embassy in Berlin, Germany on the occasion of Youm-e-Istehsal of Kashmir to express solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

"We promise our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that we will carry their voice in every forum until the international community takes action on this issue," the minister assured.

The people of Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have been making unprecedented sacrifices against the illegal rule of India, he remarked. Pakistan will continue to

support the people of Occupied Kashmir in their struggle for right to self-determination, he added.

"On August 5, 2019, India started unilateral actions in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the objective behind these operations was to disempower the Kashmiri people, deprive them of their right to self-determination and expel them from their own land, Attaullah Tarar said. "India has been trying to bring demographic changes in the occupied Kashmir population to damage the Kashmiris struggle for the right of self-determination", he stated.

He said Indian government was trying to convince the world that Jammu and Kashmir was an undisputed part of its territory which was not true. He recalled that it was New Delhi itself which took the issue of Jammu and Kashmir to the United Nations Security Council and its disputed status was recognized at the global level after UN adopted many resolutions on the long standing dispute.

The minister maintained

that India's brutal and illegal occupation of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir was not only a violation of international laws, but also a mockery of internationally recognized principles of human rights. The government of Pakistan had passed a unanimous resolution in the Parliament in support of the Kashmiri people, in which it had expressed its concern over the extremist intentions of the Hindutva government of India.

It was responsibility of the international community to put pressure on India to end gross violations of human rights and the unilateral and illegal occupation of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistani Ambassador to Berlin Saqlain Syeda, Lord Qurban Hussain, Honorary President of Prussian Society Berlin Volker Tschapke, prominent Kashmiri leaders Shamim Shawl, Mushaal Mullick, Altaf Hussain Wani and Ali Raza Syed also addressed the webinar. They shed light on the serious situation in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Rains leave 12 dead in Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has reported that torrential rains in Balochistan have resulted in the deaths of 12 people. According to the report, 12 people, including 5 children, have died due to various incidents related to the rains, such as lightning strikes, roof collapses, and wall collapses.

Additionally, 32 people have been injured, including 3 women and 10 children. The rains have also caused significant property damage, with 263 houses affected, 312 acres of crops and 19 kilometers of roads have been damaged.

The report also states that 106 animals have died due to lightning strikes and other incidents related to the rains. The PDMA and district administrations are working together to provide relief to the affected areas.

2080 cops martyred in KP

Shah Faisal

PESHAWAR: In a grim tally of the sacrifices made by law enforcement in KP, 2080 police officers and personnel have been martyred in the province's ongoing battle against terrorism. This information comes from a detailed document released by the Central Police Office.

The document highlights that the highest number of casualties occurred in Peshawar, where 367 officers and personnel lost their lives. Other significant losses include 239 in Bannu, 234 in Dera Ismail Khan, 121 in Mardan, and 104 in Swat.

The Elite Force, a specialized unit within the KP police, has also suffered significant losses, with 111 members martyred. Additionally, the document records that one police officer was martyred in the Kurram district. The remote districts of Torgar and Kohistan each saw the loss of two officers, while four officers were martyred in the Mohmand district.

To honor of these brave individuals, commemorative events will be held on August 4th across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including in Peshawar. These events will serve as a tribute to the officers and personnel who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty, ensuring the safety and security of the province.

ATC sends Raoof on remand

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in the federal capital sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Information Secretary Raoof Hasan on judicial remand for 14 days in a terrorism-related case on Saturday.

The PTI information secretary was arrested on July 31 in light of a statement of PTI International Media Coordinator Ahmed Janjua, who claimed that the former had given the latter money to incite terror.

PM chairs meeting to finalize Youm-e-Istehsal Day



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday chaired a meeting on preparation regarding the Youm-e-Istehsal Day to be observed as a special day against India's illegal action to end the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019 and to support Kashmiris right to freedom.

On this day, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, basic rights violations of Kashmiris and the broken promises of India would be highlighted. A main event to be attended by the

Pakistani and Kashmiri leadership was also approved.

The prime minister is expected to visit Muzaffarabad to express solidarity with the Kashmiris on August 5. He would strongly condemn the unilateral and illegal steps of India on August 5, 2019. The prime minister would also issue an important policy statement.

Pakistan, Kashmiris and the international community had rejected the Indian steps to end the special status of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019. On the Youm-e-

Istehsal Day, special walk would be held and events would be organized at the federal level, in the provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. Special transmission would be broadcast to shed light on the efforts of the leadership of the Kashmir freedom movement, sacrifices of Kashmiris and the facts about Indian oppression. Federal ministers, advisors and high level officials attended the meeting. The prime minister was briefed on the preparations regarding the Youm-e-Istehsal Day.

'Steps for recovery means its enforced disappearance'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Amid continuing scrutiny over the issue of missing persons and enforced disappearances, Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb has said that the prime minister and his cabinet are responsible for any person that goes "missing".

"The ultimate responsibility is on the shoulders of the personages at the helm of affairs in the government, which under our Constitution are the prime minister and the [federal] cabinet,"

Justice Aurangzeb said in an order issued on Friday in a case involving the disappearance of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Dr

Shahbaz Gill's brother Ghulam Shabbir.

The issue of missing persons and enforced disappearances has come under the spotlight on various occasions with various sections of society and human rights organisations expressing their concerns. The case at hand involves Shabbir, who as per the court order, went missing between the night of June 8 and 9 while he was on his way to Islamabad from Lahore.

A writ petition was filed in the Lahore High Court (LHC) seeking his recovery but was later withdrawn on information that he was in fact present in Islamabad instead. Later, another plea, seeking

Shabbir's recovery, was filed in the IHC last month. "Now if we give a strict order, action starts against judges. Earlier, the SHO was asked to pick up someone, now it is done according to the policy of the Government of Pakistan," Justice Aurangzeb had remarked while hearing the case on Friday.

In his order, the judge recalled that the assistant attorney-general along with representatives of the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and others, said that government officials have expressed their lack of knowledge of the detainee's whereabouts in their submission.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanging view with Chief of Staff Turkish Naval Forces Command Vice Admiral Ibrahim Ozdem KOÇER.

CM reviews Air Ambulance & Motorway Rescue 1122 Services

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met with Secretary of Emergency Services Dr. Rizwan Naseer to discuss the launching of an 'Air Ambulance' project and 'Motorway Rescue 1122 Services.'

Dr. Rizwan Naseer gave a briefing about the air ambulance project and also apprised her about the air ambulance pilot run. Various matters with regard to shifting the patients from Bahawalnagar and Mianwali to far-flung areas through the air ambulance service were discussed.

Dr. Rizwan Naseer gave a briefing about the landing arrangements of air ambulance in various cities. Matters relating to new airplanes about the air ambulance service also came under discussion in the meeting. It was agreed to use the CM helicopter so as to immediately shift a patient in case

of an emergency situation arising in the Central Punjab. The Secretary Emergency Services expressed his gratitude to the CM on granting permission to use the official helicopter in case of any untoward situation.

The chief minister expressed her satisfaction on launching the air ambulance project. She directed to undertake all possible steps for launching rescue services on the motorways at the earliest.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Punjab holds a unique distinction of becoming the first province for launching the air ambulance service. In case of a heart attack, head injury and spinal injury, the shifting of a patient to a big hospital within the golden hour is highly imperative. The shifting of a patient to a big hospital within the golden hour is a gigantic task."

The CM said the life of every

patient is highly precious and patients dwelling in the far-flung areas can be shifted to a big hospital for their treatment through the air ambulance service. The air ambulance service is being launched for the facilitation of the people of Punjab as precious lives can be saved in an emergency situation. Rescue 1122 ambulance service will be available at the motorways interchange. In case of an accident, the swift availability and reaching of a rescue ambulance service at the motorways will become possible.

She added Punjab will be the first province for launching the ambulance service at the motorways. The Punjab province not only has become a role model in Pakistan but in South Asia as well with regard to timely provision of rescue services. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman was also present on the occasion.

Kamran Tessori invites people to Governor House on Aug 14

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Muhammad Kamran Tessori on Saturday announced that on August 14, we all will have to celebrate Independence Day with national enthusiasm and citizens are invited to come to Governor House with their families to celebrate this auspicious day.

He said this while talking to media on the occasion of distributing ration among deserving families here at the Governor House.

The Governor said the

ration distribution process will be continued round the clock at Governor House and a target of distributing ration bags among 2 million deserving families will be achieved. He said so far ration bags were distributed among 690,000 deserving people.

Since the doors of the Governor House have been opened for the general public, 3 million people have visited the House, Tessori said, adding that laptops were also distributed

among 8,000 youths so far.

He said that 50,000 youth were being provided opportunity for having IT courses at the Governor House.

He said that on August 14, all citizens would come to the Governor House where the Independence Day cake cutting ceremony would be held while fireworks would be displayed as jubilation.

He said that till August 14, he would talk to media every other day to highlight his initiatives

and now it was up to the media to show this charity to the people so that the philanthropists could participate in this charity as many as possible.

He urged the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and the business community to come forward and play their role in solving the issues of electricity, gas and water.

He said that he does not have resources but he was serving people with the help of philanthropists.

Sindh govt set to distribute 0.2m solar kits among low-income families

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah, has said that 200,000 Solar Home Systems (SHS) would be provided to low-income households selected through the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) data in all districts of the province.

Speaking at the signing ceremony of framework agreements for solar systems, he said that by the end of October first batch of 50,000 SHS kits would reach Karachi for onward distribution. The ceremony was held at CM House and was attended by Minister Energy Syed Nasir Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Energy Muadiq Khan, representatives of three private companies and other concerned officers.

Murad Shah said that the Sindh Solar Energy Project (SSEP) was being executed for Rs27.4 billion with the \$100 million financial support of the World Bank. According to the CM Component - III of the SSEP the Provision of 200,000 Solar Home Systems (SHS) to low-income households in all districts of the province under BISP Data.

Murad Shah said that the Solar Home Systems would consist of an 80-100 W Solar PV Plate, a minimum 18 AH Lithium-ion battery, one DC fan, three LED bulbs and a mobile charging facility. The SHS set was shown to the CM, which he approved. The chief minister disclosed that the system's estimated cost was around Rs.55,000, including transport, taxes and duties and would be provided to eligible low-

income families at around 80 per cent subsidy.

Sharing the criteria, the CM said that the selection of low-income households has been made by using the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) register of low-income households as the criteria for household eligibility; the poverty scorecard ranging from 21 to 50 has been initially used.

The BISP data ranging from 0-20 are those households, having no capacity of paying at least Rs6000 for a solar home system kit, the CM said and added that these poorest households would be provided solar kits under the Annual Development Program (ADB scheme) of the Energy Department.

Murad Shah said that the program was started in 2020, but the amount of subsidy was 40 per cent and the poor people were unable to pay the 60 per cent costs. He added that under the old programme only 322 systems were sold. "Now, with the support of WB, the subsidy amount has been increased up to 80 per cent but the program was delayed due to the devastating floods in 2022 and Covid-19", he said.

The CM said that the project strategy was revised with an increase in subsidy and the Bulk procurement Model was adopted. He added that in the original project, 10 districts were selected, but under the revised program all 30 districts, including seven districts of Karachi have been included.

The CM said that the implementation strategy was being changed with the "Bulk procurement model" through

international bidding in the light of World Bank procurement guidelines. The beneficiaries will be charged a small amount of Rs6000, he said. Through the International Bidding process under WB regulations, Framework Agreements will be signed with the selected firms for the supply of 200,000 SHS Kits in different batches based on requirements throughout the project period: July 2025.

The Sindh Minister Energy Nasir Shah said that in the Bidding process, 18 local and international firms participated, and of them, three firms have been qualified for the signing of Framework agreements. The companies include M/S Bboxx Ltd, UK, M/S Shenzhen LEMI Technology Development Co. Ltd, China and M/S D.light Design Ltd, USA.

Nasir Shah told the CM that five NGOs working under the Sindh Peoples Housing Foundation Project (SPHF) have been contracted under the WB Direct Contracting Method, which would be responsible for collecting SHS from appointed warehouses, distribution, installation and replacement service.

The minister energy said that the Rs.6000 per SHS would be received from the beneficiary through a Bank Challan receipt of Sindh Bank limited by these distribution organizations before the delivery of the System. He added that a database management system has been developed through the web portal for the stakeholder coordination and transparency of the program execution.

Govt to present 'guard of honor' to Matric exam toppers

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has decided to honor matric exam topper students of all education boards of the province with special awards and big cash prizes.

Official sources told APP that on arrival in Lahore, the students will be presented with a guard of honor and brought to the venue of the ceremony with full protocol.

Furthermore, a dinner will also be served at Shahi Qila in honor of the students. In this connection preparations have been started to motivate the matric toppers

at the official level.

A high-level meeting was held here under the chairmanship of Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat, in which officers from DC Office, Home Department, IG Office, Protocol and other departments participated.

On this occasion, Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat said that special awards and big cash prizes will be given to the topper students of all education boards. Rana Sikandar Hayat said that in order to encourage the stu-

dents and their teachers, a teacher nominated by each student will also be honored with a special award.

Topper students, teachers and parents from all over Punjab will stay in Lahore for 2 days and the ceremony will be organized on August 7 at a local hotel. The sources further said that a prestigious ceremony is being organized at the government level after 7 years. It is pertinent to mention here that the ceremony is being held on the direction of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Govt intensifies anti-dengue operation

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has intensified anti-dengue operations as larvae were recovered from 1573 places in Lahore on Saturday. Health Department official sources told APP that during the last 24 hours, 1463 notices were issued in different areas of the city, while 110 cases were registered.

Apart from this, 43,185 notices were issued and 2,035 dengue cases have been registered so far this year. Dengue field teams were mobilised due to continuous rains across the city.

‘Higher education, advanced training essential for nurses’

LAHORE (APP): Principal of the Post Graduate Medical Institute, Professor Dr. Muhammad AL-Fareed Zafar, emphasized the critical role of higher education, advanced training, and refresher courses for nurses to ensure better patient care and treatment.

Addressing a seminar on "Optimizing Medication Management for Safe and Effective Patient Care" at Lahore General Hospital, Dr. Zafar stated that the healthcare system would be ineffective without nurses.

He praised nurses for their selfless spirit and dedication, likening them to warriors against diseases and symbols of hope for patients. He stressed the importance of careful medication management, adherence to SOPs, especially when administering injections, and maintaining positive interactions with patients to aid in their recovery.

The Principal highlighted the Punjab Government's provision of free medicines and the responsibility of doctors

and nurses to ensure their proper distribution and record-keeping. He also warned against the dangers of self-medication with painkillers and antibiotics, urging health professionals to educate the public on the risks.

The seminar was organized by DCNS Zumard Khursheed and her team, whose efforts were commended by Dr. Zafar. ED PINS Professor Asif Bashir also addressed the seminar, calling nurses a valuable national asset deserving of respect and recognition.

Anti-Corruption Dept intensifies actions against corrupt officers

KARACHI (PPI): On the directives of Sindh Minister for Anti-Corruption, Sardar Muhammad Bux Mahar, the Anti-Corruption Department has intensified its actions against corrupt officers.

In this regard, the Anti-Corruption Committee One, chaired by the Chief Secretary, made important decisions in its meeting. After the meeting, Chairman Anti-Corruption, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, approved inquiries against officers of 11 departments, including the registration of 5 FIRs against officers of 4 departments. Additionally, approval was given for 16 open inquiries and comments were sought from 8 departments.

The Anti-Corruption authorities further stated that 2 cases were filed against Revenue officers, 1 against the Mirpurkhas Education Board, 1 against the Irrigation Department, and 1 against the Education Department officers.

The Chairman Anti-Corruption stated that the Minister for Anti-Corruption, Sardar Muhammad Bux Mahar, has directed that no corrupt officer in Sindh will be spared, and immediate action will be taken on receipt of complaints against them. Inquiries have been approved against officers of the Revenue, Education Boards, Irrigation, School Education, Municipalities, Livestock, Works Services, Food, Cooperative, and Labor Departments.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
Ministry of Energy, Petroleum Division
Geological Survey of Pakistan
INVITATION TO BID

- Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP), an attached department of Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), Government of Pakistan, invites sealed bids from the firms/ general order supplier/ companies/ Consortium registered with Income Tax, Sales Tax Departments and who are on FBR's Active Taxpayer's List (ATL) for the **Rent of Vehicles on need basis** to the Geological Survey of Pakistan.
- Bidding documents can also be downloaded from GSP website www.gsp.gov.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk
- Processing fee of Rs. 1000/- (non-refundable), must be provide bank draft/ pay order of relevant bank.
- The bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, alongwith **Bid Security of PKR: 100,000 in the shape of Bank draft/ Pay order** drawn in favour of Project Director, Geological Survey of Pakistan may reach Office of the undersigned by **19th August, 2024 at 12:00 hours**. Technical bids will be opened on the **same day at 12:30 hours** in the presence of representatives of the bidders.
- As per PPRA Rules 33(1), 2004, Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP), Government of Pakistan, has the right to reject any or all bids/ proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid/ proposal.

INCHARGE PROCUREMENT,
Geological Survey of Pakistan,
Tel: 091-9217016
PID(P)203/24

**Shaukat Khanum**
Memorial Cancer Hospital
and Research Centre

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC Peshawar

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) is a specialist tertiary care cancer Centre built and funded by charitable donations with a mission to provide the best possible cancer care to all patients. SKMCH&RC has a team of UK and US-trained physicians who provide state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and support services to patients. SKMCH&RC is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

Medical Consultants:

- Consultant Anaesthetist
- Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Consultant Clinical & Radiation Oncologist
- Consultant Clinical Haematologist
- Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon
- Consultant Medical Oncologist
- Consultant Nuclear Medicine
- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
- Consultant Pathologist
- Consultant Physician Critical Care & Pulmonary Medicine
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Pulmonology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Infectious Diseases
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Nephrology
- Consultant Radiologist
- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon

- Consultant Urologist
- Locum Consultant Anaesthetist
- Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Locum Consultant Paediatrician/Hospitalist
- Locum Consultant Pathologist
- Locum Consultant Radiologist
- Locum Consultant Urologist
- Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist

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Martyrs’ Day:

Governor pays rich tributes to police force

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Saturday paid glowing tributes to the police force of Pakistan on the eve of Police Martyrs Day, which would be marked today (Sunday) with great respect and admiration.

Governor said that observance of the day was aimed to a knowledge the great sacrifices of the police force for defense of Pakistan, and praised the dedication, commitment and services of its officers and jawans who laid down lives for the protection of motherland.

In a message on the eve of Police Martyrs day to be observed on August 4, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor said, “we should also

remember the families of the police martyrs who lost their loved ones for our safe and prosperous future.”

Faisal Karim Kundi said the day remind us of the selfless duties and supreme sacrifices offered by the police martyrs who immortalized themselves for the defence of Pakistan.

“Police martyrs are our real heroes, and the entire nation held their sacrifices in high esteem.”

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor said that live and civilized nations allways remember their martyres in high esteem and present tributes to their supreme sacrifices.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that like other security forces, police officers and

jawans of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have also led from the front in fight against terrorism and sacrificed their lives in line of duty.

Despite limited resources, he said that KP police have fought all kinds of threats including terrorism with bravery and steadfastness and destroyed the nefarious designs of the inimical forces.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that our valiant police force had played key role in establishment of peace and law and order besides security to VIPs and laid great sacrifices in fight against terrorism and foiled many terror attacks with their bloods.

The Governor said that police was playing key role in protection of lives and

properties of citizens besides fighting against all dangers including terrorism with the spirit of shahadat.

He said it was the spirit of shahadat that our police started battle against terrorism without any fear as evident in recent incidents of terrorism and have frustrated the evil designs.

The Governor said that it was now our duty to keep our police martyres’ remember throughout the year and reassured their families that they are not alone and the entire nation are with them.

He said the best tributes to our police martyres to keep their sacrifices remember allways and work tirelessly for progress and prosperity of Pakistan.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fuad Ishaq presenting a shield to Managing Director of Meenas Online Nisrin Khalil.

PHC grants bail to alleged culprit
Humayun Khan

Muqam criticizes KP govt for corruption — demands investigation into scandals

PESHAWAR: A single bench of the Peshawar High Court, comprising Justice Sabzada Asadullah, has issued orders for the release of a nominated accused on bail in a case related to possession of narcotics and illegal weapons worth millions of rupees.

According to the prosecution, the accused, Irfan, was accused of carrying 6 kg of chars (narcotics) and illegal weapons in a car with registration number N-2337, which was stopped by police personnel at a checkpoint on July 4, 2024. The police registered a case against the accused.

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Ameer Muqam here on Saturday criticized provincial government for corruption and said that PTI leadership should solve problems of people rather than issuing misleading statements and threatening opponents.

Addressing a press conference in PML-N Secretariat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said that mudslinging, targeting and threatening would not benefit the people of KP who are confronted with daunting problems of unemployment, peace and deteriorating law and order situation.

ongoing corruption, mismanagement and plundering of public resources.

He said we desire that electricity crises should be resolved but the existing situation demands political insight coupled with mutual consensus. He said that torching of grid stations and forcibly acquiring control of supply stations would further aggravate the situation and negatively impact people living in KP.

The federal minister said southern districts are facing worst law and order situation but the provincial government has done nothing tangible to strengthen Counter Terrorism Department and law enforcement agencies. He also demanded inquiry into corruption scandals and said that the KP government should compare itself with Punjab government that had accomplished various public welfare schemes despite of numerous challenges.

versities. He said that land was not purchase by them and no one would be allowed to sell the land of educational institutions.

He also pointed out flaws in provincial healthcare system including Sehat Card and said that even beds were not available for patients in public sector hospitals. He urged the provincial government to review its policies and said that efforts that were aimed to resolve issues of the people would be supported.

He said that PTI had turned into an investment company and those who were on the helm of affairs were making money ignoring the interests and welfare of the people. He also questioned the spending of amount that was received by KP to combat terrorism under NFC award.

However, the counsel Malik Shabaz advocate argued that the allegations against the petitioner were baseless and that the accused was not the owner of the car nor was he driving it. He was merely sitting in the front seat of the car.

The lawyer further argued that there was no solid evidence against the petitioner and he was nominated in the FIR only because he was present in the car. After hearing the arguments, the court ordered the release of the accused on bail.

He said that the provincial government should seriously consider the scandals of wheat, medicines and forest that are question marks on the performance and credibility of KP government.

Ameer Muqam said that the KP province was facing a ‘power battle’ for personal benefits and those who were elected to serve people were involved in corruption and minting money, adding that provincial ministers had also admitted

planning to sell land of universities. He said that PTI had turned into an investment company and those who were on the helm of affairs were making money ignoring the interests and welfare of the people. He also questioned the spending of amount that was received by KP to combat terrorism under NFC award.

Ameer Muqam also praised Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif for his political acumen, hard work and incessant efforts to steer the county out of problems despite of unfavorable conditions. The provincial leaders of PML-N and other office bearers were also present during the press conference.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq invited German investors to invest in the potentials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially oil, gas, hydel power generation, minerals, marble, tourism, gems, agriculture, honey and other important sectors through giant ventures.

Fuad Ishaq was speaking during a meeting with Nisrin Khalil, Managing Director of Meenas Online, an German based organization here at the Chamber House on Saturday.

During the meeting, Vice President of the SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi, former IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Ali Shah, former Executive Director General Board of Investment Islamabad Rafat Parvez and Secretary SCCI Sohail Anjum and others were also present.

The SCCI chief said KP is rich in natural resources wherein vast opportunities existed to make invest-

ments in hydel, mine and mineral, honey, marble, furniture, olive and carpet and other potential sectors.

However, he said despite having so many natural resources, KP is lagging behind in the race of development with other provinces.

Fuad Ishaq said investments and industries from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are rapidly declining due to government policies.

He emphasized the government will have to take practical steps to use the natural resources in a better way and bring economic prosperity and development in the province.

To provide immediate solutions to the problems of the governments and the business class, and to provide incentives and facilities, he added.

On this occasion, Nisrin Khalil of Meenas Online informed the meeting about the aims and objectives of her organization and investments and other important points through a multimedia presentation.

A documentary was also played on the occasion highlighting the investment opportunities in KP, aims and objectives of the Chamber and future initiatives.

On this occasion, Faud Ishaq of SCCI asked the MD Nisrin Khalil to make the registration of their members easy and at a reasonable fee so that more and more people are registered. The SCCI president said that the chamber is currently working on different clusters which include honey, furniture, marble, carpet and pharmaceuticals among other sectors.

He said that most of KP’s trade and business import is dependent on Afghanistan and Central Asian countries.

Fuad Ishaq said that KP/Peshawar is a gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asian countries where there is a lot of business/trade and export potential.

On this occasion, MD Meenas Online Nisrin Khalil said that for the procurement of industrial

machinery they will arrange funding up to 10 million euros on easy terms that should be set up in KP.

Earlier, during the meeting, it was also agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding.

The two institutions have also agreed to take joint measures to promote investment, trade and export in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Constitution, laws only for rulers and elites interests
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman, Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faiq Shah said constitution and laws are only obedient to rulers and elite class in Pakistan.

In such circumstances, which door the poor people knock for speedy justice and facilities.

Shah in a statement here on Saturday said rulers have also confined themselves to palaces and castle-like buildings wherein access of poor people is impossible.

He said legislations made overnight for political survival and protection of personal vested interests but oppressed and poor people languishing in courts and police stations, aren’t paying attention to their plea and justice unde-



PESHAWAR: A boy viewing fish before buying from shop near Sunehri Masjid.

International Lawyers Association condemns attack on judges convey

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The International Lawyers Association Pakistan has strongly condemned the attack on the judges’ convoy in Tank and expressed regret over the martyrdom of two police officers in the attack. They have demanded that the government provide foolproof security to the judges.

In this regard, the association’s inter-provincial coordinator, Nasser Ghilzai Advocate, said in his statement that the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is deteriorating day by day. Providing security to judges is the responsibility of the state. The attack on the judges’ convoy in Tank is extremely regrettable. Daily attacks are being carried out on judges

and lawyers, which aims to disrupt the justice system, but lawyers will foil this conspiracy of the enemies of the country.

The Association said that attacks on judges and lawyers will not be tolerated. He demanded that the government provide foolproof security to judges across the province and bring the perpetrators of this attack to justice.

Nasser Ghilzai expressed regret over the martyrdom of two police officers in the attack and said that the police officers sacrificed their lives to protect the judges. He expressed heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the martyred police officers and prayed for the elevation of the martyrs’ ranks and patience for the bereaved families.

Quaid-e-Azam: A great leader who redrew world map on August 14, 1947 widely praised

PESHAWAR (APP): Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, revered as a leader of unparalleled excellence of the 20th century, altered the course of world history through his steadfast democratic struggle, has been widely praised by the regional and international leaders.

On August 14, 1947, his long political struggle culminated in the creation of Pakistan, and his legacy continues to resonate, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), where he galvanized the people in their quest for a new nation.

The Quaid’s leadership was characterized by an unwavering commitment to unity, faith, and discipline that was a beacon of light for Pakistanis.

His great ability to unite Muslims across the subcontinent, including those in KP (then known as NWFP), was widely acknowledged and admired.

As Stanley Wolpert, a distinguished US historian, wrote in his acclaimed book Jinnah of Pakistan (1984), “Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the

world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three.”

Mrs. Vijay Lakshmi Pundit, a prominent figure and sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, further highlighted Jinnah’s pivotal role, stating, “If the Muslim League had 100 Gandhis and 200 Azads and Congress had only one Jinnah, then India would not have been divided.” Such statements underscored the great Quaid’s unparalleled impact on the subcontinent’s political landscape.

In the aftermath of the Pakistan Resolution adopted on March 23, 1940, Muhammad Ali Jinnah embarked on a series of visits across British India, including KP, to reorganize the All India Muslim League (AIML).

His visits to the historic Islamia College Peshawar (ICP) in 1936, 1945, and 1948, were particularly notable. During his 1945 visit, the students and MSF presented him with Rs8,000 as a contribution to the Pakistan Movement, reflecting their dedication and strong commitment.

The reception the great Quaid received in KP was

nothing short of extraordinary. Streets and buildings were adorned with national and Muslim League flags, and a sea of supporters from across KP and erstwhile FATA turned out to greet him.

Professor Dr. Hilali of the University of Peshawar recalls, “The spirit and enthusiasm of the people were historic. The city was beautifully decorated, and there was a palpable sense of celebration.”

On April 12, 1948, the Father of the Nation returned to ICP as Pakistan’s first Governor-General. In a moving address, he lauded the students for their great role in the nation’s creation and urged them to work diligently and sincerely for the country’s progress.

“Your government is like your own garden. Your garden flourishes by the way you look after it,” he told them, emphasizing the importance of dedication and constructive effort.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s vision extended beyond his lifetime. His will, written on May 30, 1939, bequeathed funds to ICP, among other institutions, showcasing his enduring

support for education. This legacy led to the establishment of the University of Peshawar in 1949, in line with his vision.

The Quaid-e-Azam also showed profound respect for the tribal areas, visiting Peshawar and addressing a Grand Tribal Jirga on April 17, 1948. He praised the tribesmen’s loyalty and sacrifices, emphasizing the need for education and socio-economic development as crucial for progress.

Despite his declining health, he remained committed to his vision until his death on September 11, 1948. His legacy endures, particularly in KP, where his efforts are remembered with great reverence.

Dr. Hilali notes, “The Quaid’s emphasis on education, character building, and constructive criticism continues to inspire. It is our responsibility to uphold his principles and advance his vision for a prosperous Pakistan.”

As the nation reflects on Jinnah’s enduring influence on its 77th birthday of Pakistan, the values he championed—unity, faith, and discipline—remain a guiding light for the future.

Decoding Pakistan’s budgeting system: A comprehensive overview

Khial Zaman Orakzai

In Pakistan, the budget is a comprehensive financial statement presented annually by the government, outlining its anticipated revenues and planned expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget process is crucial as it reflects the government’s priorities and economic strategy, influencing every sector from defense to education. The preparation and presentation of the budget are pivotal in ensuring financial stability and sustainable economic growth.

The budgeting system in Pakistan involves several stages and is influenced by various factors, including political, economic, and social dynamics. The

process begins with the Ministry of Finance, which coordinates with other ministries and departments to estimate the revenue and forecast expenditures. This preliminary phase involves detailed scrutiny of previous budgets, economic trends, and current fiscal policies to create a framework for the new budget. Revenue estimates include projections from taxes, non-tax revenues, and foreign aid, while expenditure forecasts encompass current and development expenditures.

Once the initial draft is prepared, it undergoes a rigorous review process. The budget is discussed in cabinet meetings, where ministers provide their input, suggesting modifica-

tions to align the budget with the government’s policy objectives. After cabinet approval, the budget is presented to the National Assembly, typically by the Finance Minister, in a detailed budget speech. This speech not only presents the financial allocations but also highlights the government’s economic performance and future plans.

The National Assembly then engages in a thorough debate on the budget proposals. Members of Parliament scrutinize the allocations, debating their adequacy and effectiveness. This phase is crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability in public finances. Amendments may be proposed, and after

extensive deliberation, the budget is put to a vote. Once approved by the National Assembly, it becomes the official financial plan for the fiscal year.

A good budgeting system, as practiced in many countries, including Pakistan, exhibits several key characteristics. One of the foremost is transparency, which ensures that budget processes and documents are open to public scrutiny. This transparency fosters trust and accountability, allowing citizens to understand how their taxes are being utilized. The involvement of various stakeholders, including government officials, legislators, and the public, enhances the democratic legitimacy of the budget.

Another characteristic of an effective budgeting system is comprehensiveness. This means that the budget should cover all governmental activities, providing a complete picture of fiscal operations. By including all revenues and expenditures, the budget avoids hidden liabilities and ensures that all financial resources are accounted for. This comprehensive approach aids in better financial planning and resource allocation.

Fiscal discipline is also a vital aspect of a good budgeting system. This involves adhering to budgetary constraints to prevent deficits from ballooning uncontrollably. In Pakistan, fiscal discipline is maintained through legal frameworks

and policy guidelines that restrict excessive borrowing and ensure that expenditures do not exceed revenues. Such discipline is essential for maintaining macroeconomic stability and preventing inflationary pressures.

Predictability is another important feature, where a stable and predictable budget environment allows for better planning and execution of government policies. In Pakistan, efforts are made to ensure that budget projections are realistic and based on reliable economic forecasts. This predictability helps in minimizing fiscal shocks and provides a stable environment for economic activities.

The budgeting system should also be flexible to

accommodate unexpected changes in economic conditions or emergencies. Flexibility ensures that the government can respond effectively to unforeseen events, such as natural disasters or economic downturns, without compromising fiscal stability. In Pakistan, contingency reserves and supplementary budgets are mechanisms used to address such exigencies.

Finally, a good budgeting system is performance-oriented, focusing on the outcomes and impacts of expenditures rather than just the inputs. In Pakistan, there is an increasing emphasis on performance budgeting, which links budget allocations to specific performance targets

and outcomes. This approach ensures that public funds are used efficiently and effectively, delivering tangible benefits to the population.

In conclusion, Pakistan’s budget and budgeting system are fundamental components of its economic framework, designed to ensure prudent financial management and sustainable growth. Characteristics such as transparency, comprehensiveness, fiscal discipline, predictability, flexibility, and performance orientation are essential for an effective budgeting system. These principles help in achieving the twin goals of economic stability and public welfare, guiding the nation towards prosperity.



In brief

Road yet to be restored F.P. Report

KAGHAN VALLEY: The road connecting Kaghan Valley could not be restored even on the fifth day on Saturday after the bridge collapsed on Manoor rain drain, trapping many tourists. According to report, the flow of the River Kunhar has stopped due to the debris of the Manoor rain drain which is posing a serious threat to the Mahandri market Mansehra. Moreover, lake water entered the basement of nine hotels of Mansehra while 14 hotels and more than 50 shops were affected by the rainwater. District administration said that all resources were being utilized to remove the landslides but building bridge can take weeks and it was working for alternate arrangements to rescue the stranded tourists.

Three killed in mishaps

FAISALABAD (INP): Three people were killed and two others injured in various mishaps in different localities of Faisalabad on Saturday, police said. According to details, an over speeding mini-truck knocked down a motorcycle at Samundri road Housing Colony Faisalabad. As a result of accident, 38-year-old Shazia Bibi w/o Zulfiqar was killed on the spot while 42-year-old Muhammad Khalid s/o Muhammad Ramzan was injured. In Bhutta Colony near TV Booster Millat road, Waqas Masih s/o Anwar Masih was electrocuted to death while switching on the water pump. The deceased hailed from Chak No 121 GB Gokhowal. Body of a 45-year-old unidentified man was recovered from a canal near Mandi Quarter stop at Samundri road. A drug addict shot injured his brother Fazl Meeran 42, in Saddar police station jurisdiction. The bodies and injured were shifted to different hospitals of respective areas.

Adulterated milk wasted

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Punjab Food authority disposed of about 1000 liter adulterated milk after holding picket here, official spokesman said. The food safety team checked many milk-stuffed vehicles at Head Muhammad Wala point where most of them found carrying adulterated milk when checked through the lacto machine, it was said. About Rs. 10,000 fine was imposed on the owners proved as guilty of the crime. DG PFA, Asim Javed said in this regard that the traces of water and chemicals besides shortage of essential fats were discovered in the milk. The entire stuff 'being taken away in the name of milk' was disposed of nearside of the road, he said. Nobody would be allowed to play with lives of consumers, he said. He said milk was essential product to survive the living being but some nefarious elements are out and least cared about health of the people. He appealed the masses to cooperate with Punjab Food Authority to dispel activities of the mafia involved in mixing and adulteration in common food items.

Two robbers injured, held

OKARA (INP): Two robbers were injured and arrested with snatched bike, arms after exchange of fire with police while their three accomplices managed to escape here on Saturday. According to details, five robbers were fleeing after snatching motorcycle and cash from a citizen when police engaged them at Girja road of Okara.



MARDAN: KP Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur being briefed during his visit to Rashakai Economic Zone.

Female Additional SHO posted in Landi Kotal

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Keeping in view problems of tribal women, first ever female police officer posted in police station, Landi Kotal on Saturday, police sources said. In an order, issued by the District Police office, the female junior officer, Mehak Pervaiz Maseeh was appointed an Additional Station House Officer (SHO) of Land Kotal police station.

Mehak Pervaiz is from the minority (Christian)



community of Landi Kotal and presently residing in Christian colony, inside the forces cantonment.

The District Police Officer said that the purpose of the deployment was to encourage women folk in the tribal belt and to make possible access to justice.

Provision of favorable working conditions to the women officers was the first priority so that they could perform their duties without any pressure and delicately, the official added. It is to be stated here that a women's disk, set up in the police station, Bara last year had resolved thousands of problems of tribal women applicants.

Monsoon tree plantation drive inaugurated

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has along with the Chairman District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Kohat Shafi Jan MPA formally inaugurated the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign by planting saplings in Government Technical College Kohat.

During the current Plantation Campaign, maximum saplings will be planted across the district. Government departments

and institutions as well as students of schools, colleges and universities have actively been engaged in this campaign.

The Law Minister and Chairman DDAC Kohat planted saplings on this occasion and prayed for the success of the ongoing Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign.

Aftab Alam Afridi said that it is the national responsibility of all of us to make the Tree Plantation Campaign successful. He appealed the entire nation to plant more trees and ensure their safety. He added, if every person even plant a

single sapling and ensure its safety, millions of trees can be planted in a year.

Aftab Alam said that planting maximum trees and increasing forests has always been remained the priority of PTI leader Imran Khan and the launch of the Billion Tree Tsunami Program for the first time in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its success is a ample proof of it. He said that the entire international community has acknowledged the success of the Tsunami Billion Tree Program. He reiterated his pledge to spare no moment to implement this vision of Imran Khan.

Under-construction flyover inspected

F.P. Report

SARGODHA: Commissioner Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti, along with Deputy Commissioner (ret'd) Aurangzeb Haider Khan, inspected the under-construction 47 Pull flyover.

They reviewed the quality and pace of work, among other matters. Highways, FESCO, Cantonment Board, PTCL, SNGPL, and Municipal Corporation officials were called to the site for a detailed briefing on the progress of their respective responsibilities. SNGPL officials informed them that all line shifting work had been completed. FESCO officials stated that all poles at the flyover site

had been removed and relocated, and wire installation work would commence from Monday and it was expected to be completed within 20 days.

Cantonment Board officials reported that the sewer line from the diving point to Qainchi Morr had been shifted and only the connection work remains, which would be completed in the next two weeks. XEN Highways Farman Maken stated that an additional Rs. 27.5 million had been released for the flyover, and work was progressing as per schedule.

It was revealed that a private bakery had constructed a building on the 47-bridge site, contrary to the approved map, which was hindering the construction of the adjacent road.

The Commissioner ordered the bakery owner to rectify the construction within seven days according to the approved map, warning of legal action in case of non-compliance.

Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti directed all departments to take necessary measures to maintain traffic flow on both sides of the under-construction flyover. He also met with shopkeepers and instructed them to remove any encroachments on the storm drain, warning of municipal action in case of non-compliance.

He emphasized the need to expedite measures for the drainage of rainwater on both sides of the University Road.

Pensioners Union lauds performance of DAO Tank

F.P. Report

TANK: District Accounts Officer Tank Arifullah Khan is a very honest and competent officer, with his appointment, all the problems pertaining to the accounts office including pension have been solved.

Office bearers of Pensioners Union, Habib Khan, Ismatullah and others expressed these views in a statement issued here on Saturday. They said that due to his appointment, the overall system of the account office is moving in the right direction.

Government employees, including pensioners, are happy that the accounts office system is improved, while legitimate tasks of government offices are now being resolved in minutes instead of days. They said that the chapter of corruption was closed with the appointment of him.

They further said that few people are using illegal tactics in the accounts office, against which we pensioners and all government employees will be a leaden wall. It has been done and all the work is being done on the basis of merit. No one can even think of illegal recruitment or payment. They demanded that an encouragement certificate should be awarded to encourage such honest and competent officers.

Transfer of Judicial Complex sought

F.P. Report

WANA: A joint press conference was held by political leaders and lawyers in response to the recent attack on three judges in Bagwal, near Tank district, which resulted in the martyrdom of two police officers. The leaders demanded the transfer of the Judicial Complex from Tank to Wana, citing security concerns and the need for accessible justice.

The conference was attended by leaders from various political parties, including Ayaz Wazir, Asadullah Bhair, Ashfaq Wazir, Ware Khan, and Abdul Rehman, as well as lawyers Abdul Rehman Ganga, Noor Ali, and others. The leaders criticized the current arrangement, where judges travel 120 kilometers daily, putting their lives at risk and causing financial burdens on the people.

Starting of asphalt work on road in Dir demanded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The chemists' community and local residents have demanded the district administration to issue directives to the contractor to start asphalt work on the hospital to Mian Banda road in front of the district headquarters hospital Timergara. Talking to local journalists they complained the contractor started rebuilding of the road three months ago and dug the old one.

They said that work on the project had been stopped due to unknown reasons due to which they faced difficulty. They said that dust arising from the road had made the lives of chemists and motorists miserable. The chemists said that rains added to their miseries as water stood on the under construction road.

Issue resolved: A jirga of elders resolved a dispute between a worker of the tehsil municipal administration and workers of the Pakistan Tahreek Insaf during a function held at the

Timergara rest house with additional deputy commissioner Bashir Khan in the chair. The PTI worker Ameer Muhammad had beaten up the TMA staffer Niaz Muhammad during an anti-encroachment operation some days ago.

The TMA employees had been protesting against the disgrace of their colleague on which the Timergara police registered a case against the PTI worker. A jirga of local elders started efforts to resolve the issue out of court. The tehsil municipal officer Qadir Naseer, tehsil officer revenue Hanifur Rehman, accountant Bacha Muhammad, PTI activists Ziaul Haq, Asif Sadaat, Bashir advocate, Wazir Zada and others attended the function.

Speaking on the occasion the ADC Bashir Khan said that beating up government employees in line of their duties was a serious crime and it shattered the writ of the government. He said the administration hoped that such incidents would not occur in future.

The TMA worker Niaz Muhammad forgave the PTI worker Ameer Muhammad and the issue was resolved.

OIC urged to call meeting: The Gujjar Qaumi Movement (GQM) founder Haji Zarin Khan Gujjar demanded the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to call a conference of the heads of states in favour of Palestinians and Kashmiris. Talking to a group of local journalists at Chakdara he said that innocent Palestinians and Kashmiris were being killed while the world power had kept criminal silence on the matter.

He condemned the killing of Ismail Haneya in Iran and said the UN should take its notice. Haji Zarin said the Muslim countries were equally responsible for their failure to stop Israeli and Indian forces from violating human rights in Palestine and Kashmir. He said the GQM stood behind the Pakistan army and its workers would be ready to sacrifice for the nation.

Sustainable population growth Availability of inclusive data demanded



F.P. Report

QUETTA: The 'Media Coalition Meeting' organized by the Population Council with the support of UNFPA in the federal capital called upon the media to play a pivotal role in urging both central and provincial governments to ensure the availability of inclusive, disaggregated data. This data is essential for crafting informed policies and implementing them effectively, ultimately achieving sustainable population growth and fostering a resilient and equitable future for all citizens. By advocating for the regular collection and dissemination of such data, the media can contribute significantly to the nation's efforts to achieve sustainable development goals and improve the overall well-being of the masses.

Dr. Ali Mir, Senior Director Programs Population Council, in his welcome remarks emphasized the pivotal role of the media in advocating for the regular availability of disaggregated data based on age, sex, disability, geography, and economic status. "With targeted interventions based on robust data, we can ensure that everyone is counted and accounted for, as each individual plays a vital role in national development."

He stressed the importance of data utilization for effective policymaking, highlighting the need for a nuanced approach to address diverse population needs. Dr. Mir also introduced this year's World Population Day theme, "Embracing the Power of Inclusive Data Towards a Resilient and Equitable Future for All," underscoring the significance of comprehensive and accessible data in formulating effective population policies.

Deputy Manager Communication Population Council, Ikram ul Ahad presented the latest Census 2023 data, emphasizing the need for Pakistan to follow the example of neighboring Muslim countries that have successfully lowered their fertility rates. He said, "The SDG targets for education, health, nutrition, a sustainable environment, and gender equality cannot be achieved without the implementation of data-driven strate-

gies." He urged journalists to highlight data gaps to ensure the timely availability of national-level data for informed policymaking aimed at achieving sustainable population growth. He also emphasized the importance of enrolling out-of-school children, especially girls, increasing female labor force participation, and empowering women, which will remain a challenge with current high fertility rates.

Communication Officer, Population Council Ummi Kalsoom, shared data on Pakistan's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "Population growth and SDGs are intrinsically linked, with 12 out of 17 SDGs directly related to population growth. A decline in fertility and sustainable population growth could significantly help Pakistan achieve all the SDGs," she explained. Kalsoom stressed the need for consistent media coverage to highlight data gaps and urged Media Coalition members to ensure periodic data availability. Dr. Jameel Ahmed, Program Specialist at UNFPA, called for a comprehensive strategy prioritizing family planning to achieve the SDGs.

"People-centric development cannot be realized without the timely provision of disaggregated public data, which is crucial for developing nuanced and well-informed policies," emphasizing the media's pivotal role in advocating for voluntary family planning. The participants committed to leveraging the media as a powerful tool to advocate for increased data accessibility, which is essential for governments to develop and implement comprehensive family planning policies. Such policies and their effective implementation are crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other national development goals. It is worth mentioning that the Media Coalition on Population, comprising journalists from major media outlets across Pakistan, periodically highlights the cross-sectoral impact of rapid population growth to raise awareness and hold governments accountable for the well-being of the people.

On educating children

LET me share with you a terrifying experience that is both funny and serious in nature. As a kid, I was very shy and taciturn. At school, I neither asked any questions nor answered any. The funny part is that when I stood up for the first time and said something, a gigantic hand met my face with a thundering slap. The serious part is that the violence was a totally unjustified criminal act that deflated my confidence and put me in a miserable situation.

It was in the third grade when one of our teachers mispronounced the word 'uncle' as 'unsel.' I stood up and corrected him. Instead of thanking me, his face turned livid with anger, and he swooped upon me like a vulture ready to take an innocent life. For a short time, the barrage of slaps left my ears deaf, and I struggled to hear anything except a buzzing sound. A few

moments later, as I was recovering, I faintly heard the word 'balloon' reaching my ears as 'balan.' Amid the cascade of tears dripping down my cheeks, I stood up again, corrected him, and met a similar fate once more. It was an unwelcoming welcome, not once, but twice in a day.

Anyways, time has passed. It is said that 'time heals all wounds.' However, wounds and traumas inflicted in childhood can ossify into organic diseases later on in adulthood. I do not blame the teacher entirely for his cruelty. Perhaps, he also suffered a similar fate from his teachers, parents, and others, which morphed him into an abnormal adult. I use the word 'abnormal' as an adjective for him because he treated me abnormally as a student.

It is a common observation that our society is extremely intolerant. And intolerance is

like a fever: it is not only a disease but also the symptom of a disease. Most often we convince others not through dialogue but violence and force. From settling our individual issues to conducting our politics, violence pervades every aspect of our lives. The level of intolerance reflects the intensity of a sick society. The higher the intolerance in a society, the sicker it is. It is difficult to point out the singular cause of intolerance in our society. It would be like the chicken-and-egg debate, with no one knowing which of them came first. However, I believe that society does not exist in a vacuum; rather, social and political configurations of power create our society. In other words, social relations make and break any society.

If we look deep down, there are some agents that have a major share in making or break-

ing our society. Currently, I am attending a training workshop in Islamabad designed for the prospective teachers under the auspices of the FDE in collaboration with the American Board. The training program chiefly addresses an important question: how can we better educate our kids? The discussion revolves around two important agents that make or break our society: teachers and parents. If one of them fails, normal kids may be turned into abnormal adults, thereby creating fuel for an intolerant society.

It is true that an atmosphere of pessimism is plaguing our country. Everyone wants to go abroad because it is believed that nothing can be fixed here. It is also true that life here is becoming increasingly difficult, and people are worried about the security of their families and their future. Therefore, a healthy

degree of pessimism is justified, and individual choices should be respected. However, it is also true that there are no quick fixes. There is no antibiotic available to swiftly heal every malaise. We have to live with the reality we are creating for ourselves. Our past has led us here; our present will lead us to our future.

I remember a nice conversation with a chemistry professor in the Oval Ground at GCUL. The erudite professor told me that 'the garments of our profession has to be earned and re-earned in order to be valid.' He explained that a doctor earns her profession for the first time by wearing the symbolic dress. However, the dress must be re-earned to show the validity of her profession. If a patient is satisfied, then the doctor has truly validated the symbol and re-earned her profession. Similarly, the symbolic gown of a teacher

will only be validated and re-earned if she succeeds in teaching and bringing out the best in students. I learned this lifelong lesson from a teacher while laughing and enjoying the sun in the winter season.

I believe that optimum learning can be achieved effectively in an atmosphere free of fear. In an environment where kids feel fragile, learning becomes a distant dream. Neither a teacher nor a parent should create an environment where kids are vulnerable to drowning in fear. Fortunately, violent episodes in schools have considerably decreased as compared to when I was in school. However, a lot of work still needs to be done. More training programs like the one offered by FDE and American Board should be encouraged and supported in order to create a better future for our country.

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Ukraine adds another Turkish corvette to its navy for war with Russia



KYIV (AP): Ukraine has taken delivery of a second Turkish-built navy corvette, officials said, although they did not say specifically how the warships might be used in the war against Russia.

Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, attended the launching ceremony of the Ada-class corvette during a visit to Turkey, the Ukrainian presidency announced on its website. The corvette Ukraine already had is currently undergoing sea trials. Turkish Ada-class ships are typically able to strike planes, other ships and submarines.

Ukraine, which has coastlines on the Black Sea and the smaller Sea of Azov, had a small navy at the time of Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion. But it has developed deadly uncrewed sea drones that have severely limited Moscow's Black Sea naval capability. The Ukrainian presidency said the corvettes would help protect the country's interests in the Black and Azov seas "but also, in particular, in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean."

"So now the second corvette has been launched," Ukrainian Navy spokesman Dmytro Pletenchuk told The Associated Press. "The next step is to equip it with the appropriate weapons systems and train the second crew." He said a new crew of 100 men would be trained to work on the ship. International law forbids the passage of warships through Turkey's busy Bosphorus Strait, which links the Mediterranean and Black seas, during times of war. However, the presidency's statement didn't say where exactly the Turkish shipyard was located, meaning it could be on the northern side of the strait, with a direct route to Ukraine. Ukraine ordered the two Turkish corvettes under an agreement signed in 2020, the presidency said. Ukrainian authorities last month adopted a Maritime Security Strategy that aims to rebuild its naval capability. It is also getting help with that from Western partners. The maritime capability coalition, headed by the United Kingdom and Norway, was established last December.

Several killed in Mogadishu beach attack

MOGADISHU: Several people have been killed and more wounded in an attack on a popular beach in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, according to officials. Al-Shabab, an al-Qaeda-linked armed group, claimed responsibility for attack on Lido beach via an affiliated radio station. Security forces rushed to the scene, the Somali National News Agency reported, saying that at least five attackers were shot dead while a sixth blew himself up on the spot. The explosion went off while residents were on the beach. "We counted and confirmed eight dead people and 28 others injured. But other people also took casualties and so the figure is sure to rise," Dr

Abdikadir Abdurahman, director of Aamin Ambulance service, told Reuters news agency. Police officer Mohamed Omar told AFP news agency that he had seen "seven dead bodies along the beach" after the attack, adding security forces ended the attack and killed five members of al-Shabab after a sixth detonated an explosive device. A witness told The Associated Press news agency in a phone call that he saw an attacker wearing an explosive vest moments before the man "blew himself up next to the beach-view hotel". Mohamud Moalim also said some of his friends who were with him at the hotel were killed and others were wounded.

Rwanda shuts 4,000 churches

KAMPALA (BBC): More than 4,000 churches have been closed down over the last month in Rwanda for failing to comply with health and safety regulations, including not being properly soundproofed. It has affected mostly small Pentecostal churches and a few mosques - some of them operating out of caves or on the banks of rivers.

"This is not being done to prevent people from praying but to ensure the safety and tranquillity of worshippers," Minister of Local Government Jean Claude Musabyimana told state media. It is the first major crackdown since a law came in five years ago to regulate the proliferation of places of worship. It requires them to operate in an organised way and in safe environment as well as outlawing their use of loud public address systems.

The legislation also compels all preachers to have theological training before opening a church. When the law was adopted in 2018 about 700 churches were initially closed. At the time, Rwandan President Paul Kagame said the country did not need many houses of worship, maintaining that such a high number was only fit for more developed economies with the means to sustain them.

Mr Kagame, who has just won a fourth term in office with 99% of the vote, rules over a tightly controlled society where his critics say there is little freedom of speech. The ongoing operation targeting churches is being carried out by local urban authorities in partnership with the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB). The authorities say they are taking a tough line as churches have had five years to fully comply with the regulations.

"The government has taken a stance against proliferation in the houses of worship. We still see cases of dilapidated [structures] and unhygienic conditions," RGB chief Usta Kayitesi told the New Times news website. Some of the churches that had been shut down operated in tents, exposing worshippers to risks, Mr Musabyimana said.

The vast majority of Rwandans are Christians but many also follow traditional practices. Pentecostal churches, often run by charismatic preachers claiming to be able to perform miracles, have grown rapidly in many parts of Africa in recent years.

Pro-Palestine student protesters say lawsuits, crackdowns won't deter them

TORONTO: When University of Waterloo student Nicholas Sarweh received an email from the school informing him he was being sued for 1.5 million Canadian dollars (\$1.09m), he was certain it was a mistake. "I thought it said \$1,500 and that they had made a typo. But after a while, I just absorbed that it was \$1.5 million," Sarweh, who is in his early 20s, told Al Jazeera.

Sarweh had been among the students on campus leading a months-long protest against Israel's war on Gaza, erecting tents, fences and protest signs on a grassy part of campus called Grad House green. But by the end of June, much of the public attention surrounding the protest had died down. Many students had returned home for the summer.

That's when the email arrived, Sarweh said, accusing him and six other students of property damage, trespass and intimidation. He considers it an act of bullying and intimidation on the part of university administrators. "I thought to myself, 'What a disgusting abuse of power.' We're not here partying. We're not here for some abstract reason. We're here because there's the most documented genocide in history happening right before our very eyes."

As the war nears the end of its 10th month, student activists like Sarweh say their experiences at the university encampments have left them feeling alienated from the institutions they turned to for an education. But some experts believe the protests — and the international movement they inspired — will endure as testaments to the power of student activism, both on and off campus. "I would imagine that, given the numbers of encampments that we've seen all over the world, at least a good number of students are going to look at that to see the kind of collective power that they

do have," said Anna Drake, a political science professor at the University of Waterloo who observed the protests firsthand.

Sarah Ahmed was among the leaders at the University of Waterloo protest in Ontario, Canada. First established on May 13, the encampment was designed to pressure the university to cut all financial and academic connections with Israel and companies tied to its war effort. But when she saw her name printed on the lawsuit, Ahmed said she was overcome by a "feeling of shame" towards the university.

The lawsuit is believed to be the first of its kind: Never before had a Canadian university launched a seven-figure complaint against its own students for protesting a war. Ahmed, who is in her early 20s, said she had already felt "continuously disappointed" in the university's actions since the war in Gaza began. The school, in her opinion, was slow to react to the protesters' demands.

But the lawsuit, she said, was the "final nail in the coffin". She feels the relationship between the university and its students has been "permanently transformed", especially after the realisation that "the university was willing to hold this unprecedented move, suing us in damages over grass". "It's coming at a time when there is a housing crisis in Waterloo. Students cannot pay their rent, they cannot pay their tuition. Many students cannot even pay for their own groceries," she said. "It's all very, very cruel."

The encampment at the University of Waterloo was part of a surge in pro-Palestine demonstrations that erupted in mid-April. Universities across the United States and Canada — as well as around the globe — saw tents pop up on their campuses to protest the war in Gaza, which has elicited fears

of genocide. Already, the Israeli military offensive has killed more than 39,400 people. At least 91,000 more have been wounded, as the Palestinian territory grapples with persistent bombings and shortages of food and medicine.

Ahmed believes colleges like the University of Waterloo have a duty to ensure none of their investments are linked to that war effort — and to sever ties with Israeli institutions that support the occupation of Palestinian territories. "It seems the university just wants to deny that they are complicit in the genocide, no matter how much we try to explain our stories to them," Ahmed said.

Across the country, student protesters like Ahmed have said they faced pressure to bring their protests to a close. At the University of Waterloo, demonstrators denounced the million-dollar lawsuit as an intimidation tactic. Nevertheless, on July 7, the students ended their encampment after the university agreed to withdraw the lawsuit. The University of Waterloo in an email told Al Jazeera the goal of the lawsuit was to "end the encampment".

"Its primary objective was not about damages or punishing those on Grad House green," the email said, adding the university had recently published details about its investments on its website. Other campus protests claimed victories before folding up their camps. At Ontario Tech University, students negotiated a settlement that included a commitment that the university would disclose its investments and fund scholarships for Palestinians displaced by the war. While some encampments ended amicably, others were forced to shut down after universities took aggressive action — including threats of expulsion, trespass notices and calling police to arrest protesters. — Aljazeera

Colombia, Guatemala learn from each other in rainforest preservation

COLOMBIA (AFP): In the lush jungle of northern Guatemala -- in the largest protected area in Central America -- 30 leaders from Colombia's Amazon basin region are swapping strategies with local ethnic Maya farmers on how to live off this dense forest without destroying it.

Under the soaring, leafy mahogany and cedar trees in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, the visiting group discusses ways to ensure the rain forest remains healthy, while studying the reserve-type model Guatemala has been developing since 1994. Guatemala's vast sustainability project aims to achieve a balance in which communities reforest, cut down trees for timber in a controlled way, grow grains and vegetables, collect ornamental plants, and even develop low-impact tourism.

"That ensures that our communities are getting the economic resources that are also invested here for conservation," Sergio Balan,

regional director of the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), told AFP in the village of Melchor de Mencos, near the border with Belize. The Maya Biosphere Reserve sprawls over 2.1 million hectares (5.2 million acres) and borders Mexico and Belize.

Every year, its flora and fauna are threatened by fires, deforestation for agricultural and livestock purposes, and even drug traffickers. Hundreds of archaeological sites are located in this territory, such as the ancient Mayan city of Tikal, one of the main tourist sites in Guatemala and the site hosting the visitors from the Forest Development and Biodiversity Centers of the Colombian Amazon.

In the reserve and near Tikal, there is also the pre-Hispanic park of Uaxactun, where both groups participated in a Mayan ceremony with a fire stoked with candles and tree resin. The Colombian leaders, whose visit lasted a week, highlighted the

achievements in reducing deforestation in the Colombian Amazon between 2021 and 2023, by 61 per cent, according to data from Colombia's environment ministry.

There are currently 16 active concessions that help conserve nearly 619,000 hectares of forest, CONAP says. Controlled logging permits, meanwhile, let private companies work for 25- or 30-year periods. Concessions and reserves "not only provide employment, but also training for different jobs," says Erwin Maas, a Guatemalan tourist guide who is also familiar with forestry.

CONAP estimates that the concessions, a kind of activity grant, create about 150,000 direct and indirect jobs in the reserve. Along one part of the path, visitors find a row of cut logs that are stacked to be taken to the sawmill. The wood comes from trees selected for felling in a controlled process that will allow the forest to regenerate.

'Still alive' - graduate Asmaa's texts to BBC from the ruins of Gaza

LONDON (BBC): For six years the BBC's Paul Adams has been in contact with a young graduate in Gaza. Her text messages give a unique insight into the terrors and small triumphs she has experienced during the current conflict, and her fears for the future. My phone lights up. It is Asmaa. "Still alive," she writes.

It is 19 March 2024 and after several weeks of silence, Asmaa Tayeh has reappeared on WhatsApp. "Sorry. Bad internet connection and dangerous days." And then silence. For another two months. It has been like this since 7 October. Long disappearances, punctuated by flurries of text messages, as the 28-year-old emerges, briefly, amid the nightmare of Gaza's longest war. It is always late at night. Somewhere, Asmaa has found a signal. Far away in London, my phone pings as the messages tumble in.

I met Asmaa in 2018. I was in Gaza, reporting on daily protests at the border fence with Israel, where thousands of mostly young Palestinians angrily commemorated their ancestors' displacement during Israel's War of Independence, 70 years earlier. Asmaa was not part of the protests. I found her at her family's home a few miles away in Jabalia, quietly writing stories, some of which I had read online, about daily life in a place she both loved and hated.

Her laptop was a cherished portal to the world outside. She had only ever known the Gaza Strip and its stifling sense of isolation. From her spartan room, she watched vloggers and Youtubers casually exploring places she could only dream of. As a recent graduate in a place with few job prospects and frequent outbreaks of extreme violence, the exotic images flashing onto her computer screen were intoxicating but painful. "They show me how handcuffed I am," she wrote that year.

A refugee camp of tents and tin shacks in the 1950s, Jabalia had long since morphed into a small city, more than 100,000 people crammed together in a place of tall buildings, teeming alleyways and open sewers. Despite her narrow confines, the young Asmaa was hopeful. In September 2022, she launched her own business, Star Café, an online coffee delivery service. Her social media feeds suggested an optimistic young entrepreneur, finally achieving long-cherished goals and planning for the future. A year later, on 6 October 2023, in an Instagram post artfully depicting her branded products alongside a vase of roses and a manicured hand, she thanked God for "the blessing of self-employment". But what she didn't know was that a meteor was hurtling in her direction, about to obliterate everything. The following day, Hamas gunmen stormed across the border fence, killing about 1,200 Israelis and foreigners in nearby communities and at the

Nova music festival.

Israel's response was like nothing Gazans had ever seen before. Its military would go on to kill tens of thousands of people, displace more than 80% of the population, and render large parts of the Gaza Strip uninhabitable. Three days later, on 10 October, Asmaa got in touch. "Hey Paul. It's nice to hear from you. We are unharmed," she messaged. "But to be honest, I don't feel safe at all. We could be bombed at any minute."

Despite hearing airstrikes hitting nearby targets, Asmaa was hopeful the war would soon be over. But this was not a repeat of earlier Gaza wars. Within days, Israeli planes dropped leaflets, telling everyone in the northern Gaza Strip - more than one million people - to move south. Jabalia started to empty, but Asmaa's family - 13 people spanning three generations - stayed put, fearing going south would prove a one-way journey. For the descendants of refugees who were forced or fled from their homes in 1948, never to return, the thought of history repeating itself stirred deep fears.

Only her grandparents, elderly and frail, travelled, eventually finding shelter in Rafah. With electricity cut, food in freezers spoiling, and communications increasingly difficult, the family used a small generator every couple of days to charge mobiles and monitor the news. Asmaa's messages were becoming increasingly sporadic. "It's dangerous all over the Gaza Strip," she told me on 15 October.

At the end of October, Jabalia experienced its worst airstrikes so far. Israel said it had targeted underground Hamas structures and killed large numbers of fighters. The scenes were apocalyptic, with civilians and rescue workers searching for survivors through vast craters and wrecked buildings. Asmaa vanished. My WhatsApp messages were no longer being read. I assumed the worst.

But six weeks later, she suddenly reappeared. "I'm still alive, by God's miracles," she wrote on 12 December. It did, indeed, feel miraculous. In a torrent of messages that followed, Asmaa described the previous chaotic weeks. The family's reluctant decision to leave Jabalia, efforts to head south thwarted by the intensity of the fighting, terrifying journeys through a city at war. "I saw so much that I cannot find words to describe," she said.

"The streets are scary and the smell of death is everywhere. People are getting skinny and sick. I feel like I'm living inside a horror movie." When forced to walk, the family would spread out along the road, hoping this would improve their chances of survival. "We kept distance between us, so if any air strike comes, not all of us will die." During a week-long ceasefire in late November, the family had briefly returned to the house in Jabalia.

The top floor was gone. Asmaa's own room, which had doubled up as her Star Café office and studio, was pockmarked by shrapnel. When the ceasefire collapsed on 1 December, they fled once more, finding refuge in a printing shop in Gaza City where one of Asmaa's brothers had worked before the war. It was filthy, reeked of paint, and had no kitchen, mattresses, or water. "We basically lived with rats," she says.

When it was safe enough to go outside, they would walk, sometimes for hours, searching for clean water - especially vital to make up the formula for Asmaa's two-month-old nephew. But after less than three weeks in the shop, Asmaa got a phone call from the Israeli army. She was used to the army's recorded messages and leaflets dropped from the sky, with instructions to leave areas about to be attacked. But this time she found herself talking to a real person.

The man said Israel was about to start an operation nearby. For her safety, and that of her family, she needed to leave. "I wanted to curse him, but I couldn't." She says she was curious, after two-and-a-half months of war, to find herself speaking to an Israeli. She imagined what it must feel like to spend your whole day making the same phone call over and over. "I felt like there is on the other side an employee who's sick of his work." For all the horrifying immediacy of the war consuming the north, this was as close as Asmaa ever came to meeting an Israeli soldier. Part of her wishes that she'd had more contact.

"I'm really curious about the way they're fighting, how they look at us, how they understand the struggle," she told me later. "I feel like I need to dive inside their minds." At the end of December, as the bulk of the fighting moved south, the family made its weary way back to the house in Jabalia. "We started the new year in the best way ever - all together in our partially-destroyed home." Asmaa's father, a retired carpenter, spent the following weeks repairing the damage, fixing windows, doors and cupboards.

But food was in desperately short supply. International aid agencies warned that famine was looming. Asmaa noticed that people in Jabalia were starting to look gaunt. Asmaa's family had stocked up on canned goods. But flour, meat, fruit and vegetables had all disappeared from the markets. Aid agencies were struggling to bring humanitarian relief to the north. The family eked out their dwindling rations, ate twice a day, and drank tea without sugar - something practically unheard of among Palestinians.

On the roof of the house, where her brother's room had once stood, her father started growing vegetables. Asmaa had lost 9kg (almost 20lb) and felt her appetite ebbing away. But slowly, the humanitarian situation

started to improve. Air drops and new aid routes into the north kept famine at bay. Flour was back. The family had chicken and tomatoes for the first time in months. There was more water, too. Enough for the occasional shower.

"We started to feel a little bit settled down." But then the war came back. On 12 May, the Israeli army returned to Jabalia, saying intelligence indicated Hamas was once more operating out of the area. Asmaa was bewildered. "Only days ago, they were talking about a very possible ceasefire," she wrote, "and suddenly I woke to 'Let's pack, we have to leave asap.'" The family went west, to an area known as al-Nasr, near the coast, where her grandparents had lived before the war.

Al-Nasr was a wasteland, much of it reduced to rubble months earlier. But her grandparents' house was intact. Long-since looted following their departure for the south, but somehow undamaged. The family moved in and settled down, wondering how long this third displacement would last. One day, driven by curiosity, Asmaa walked to the nearby beach, where she marvelled at the sight of Gazans frolicking in the waves, despite the ominous presence of Israeli gunboats patrolling offshore.

"We've started to feel careless," she told me. "We don't care for our lives any more. That's how tired we are." On 19 May came the news that Asmaa had long dreaded. Her grandfather had died the day before, aged 91. After being forced to move repeatedly, he and his wife had recently settled in a tent in al-Mawasi, a desperately overcrowded place of dismal conditions, where many Palestinians had fled after the Israeli army began an operation in Rafah at the start of the month. Sheltering in his abandoned house, Asmaa felt bereft. She hadn't seen her grandfather since just before the war, when she had persuaded him to pose for a selfie. "I was so happy that I managed to take that memory."

Israeli forces finally left Jabalia on 1 June. Four days later, the family trudged back through streets so ravaged they were barely recognisable, to find their home still standing but increasingly battle-scarred. The whole process - of cleaning, repairing and planting - had to start again, made harder this time by the fact that a missile had destroyed the workshop where her father kept all his tools. For months, Asmaa and I had only ever communicated by text. Finally, in early July, we spoke on the phone. Two long conversations in which Asmaa took me through her Gazan odyssey and described how it had changed her.

Each time, her voice faded in and out and the line crackled, creating the impression of enormous distance. Each time, Israeli drones,



ubiquitous since this war began, could be heard buzzing in the background. Asmaa said survival was a mixed blessing. Everyone in the house was alive. But the war wasn't over and the threat of death was constant. "I feel anxious all the time, thinking that there will be one day in which I will lose something," she said. "I mean, our turn will come."

Gaza, where Asmaa had nurtured her dreams, had been devastated. But it wasn't the physical changes that were absorbing her the most. Society, she said, had been utterly transformed. The constant shocks of death, displacement and trauma leaving whole neighbourhoods teetering on the brink of disintegration. Tight-knit communities had been blown apart, she said, with family members and neighbours scattered up and down the length of the Gaza Strip, and beyond. Sometimes, in the struggle for survival, Gazans had turned on themselves. A total breakdown in law and order leaving gangs and rival families to battle it out for control of precious resources. "It's becoming really normal to see people even killing each other," Asmaa said.

But if war had brought out the worst in people, it had also brought out the best. In Jabalia, Asmaa said, people were sharing food and water, exchanging the latest news and information on where to charge mobile phones. With basic foodstuffs once again in short supply, women were swapping improvised recipes. "Everyone is really taking care of each other." Asmaa said it would take decades for Gazans to recover the meagre, confined, life they knew before 7 October. Defiant talk of reconstruction and renewal, she said, felt delusional. As for herself, Asmaa's only dream now was to escape. "I don't have any hope in this place," she told me. "I'm not the same person any more. I don't think I'll recover."

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Turkish, Armenian ties normalization

A notable milestone was achieved on Tuesday, when the special representatives from Turkiye and Armenia, who have been tasked with the normalization of relations between the two nations, met at the Margara-Alican border crossing, which has been closed since 1993. The representatives reportedly began their meeting on the Armenian side of the border before proceeding to the Turkish side.

The potential for a breakthrough had been hinted at the previous week, when Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan inspected the fully prepared Margara checkpoint on the Armenian side, as residents on both sides of the border watched such developments with cautious interest. While the meeting at the border was symbolically significant, those familiar with Turkish-Armenian normalization efforts understand that symbolism plays a crucial role in their diplomatic engagements.

In February 2023, following devastating earthquakes in Turkiye, the sole land border crossing between the two countries was reopened for the first time in more than 30 years to facilitate the passage of humanitarian aid. This reopening was symbolically important as the two nations do not have formal relations, although a rapprochement process is ongoing. The same border crossing had also been used in 1988 following a major earthquake in Armenia, when the Turkish Red Crescent Society sent aid to the affected areas.

Tuesday's meeting marked the first encounter of the special representatives since the one held in Vienna in July 2022, which was their fifth meeting. At that time, the two sides agreed to allow third-country citizens to cross the border, although this agreement was never put into practice.

The idea of opening the border crossing as a step toward normalization is not new and this is not the first time Turkiye and Armenia have come close to normalizing their bilateral relations. In 2008, then-Turkish President Abdullah Gul visited Yerevan to watch a football match between the two national teams, an effort termed "football diplomacy." This visit followed a historic reconciliation process initiated in 2009, when the two sides signed protocols in Zurich aimed at normalizing diplomatic relations and reopening the border.

However, this initiative, which was part of Turkiye's "zero problems with neighbors" policy, was unsuccessful due to unresolved territorial disputes over Nagorno-Karabakh. The protocols were never ratified, though the effort was seen as a significant moment in Turkish-Armenian relations.

The current regional and domestic context is markedly different from 2009. In the post-2009 era, Turkiye has been preoccupied with issues related to the Arab uprisings, particularly in Syria, shifting its foreign policy focus away from Armenia. Meanwhile, for Yerevan, relations with Turkiye have consistently been a top priority. An Armenian journalist once noted: "Armenia occupies the ninth or 10th place in Turkiye's foreign policy agenda, overshadowed by Syria, Iraq, the EU and the US. In Armenia, however, issues related to Turkiye are at the forefront of foreign policy and media coverage." This highlights the disparity in how the two countries prioritize their interests and perceived threats.

However, currently, both nations face urgent issues that necessitate cooperation, including the climate crisis, migration challenges and economic difficulties. Regional events are also playing a role in shaping attitudes toward the stalemate in bilateral diplomatic relations.

With Russia focusing on Ukraine and Iran dealing with its own problems, Turkiye's outreach to Armenia and the Armenian government's pragmatism and willingness to seize this opportunity to advance bilateral relations is important. However, Armenian officials face domestic opposition from nationalists and hard-liners, as well as from the global diaspora. There are existing anti-Turkish and anti-Armenian sentiments in both countries that complicate the normalization efforts.

In the Turkish-Armenian context, it is important to distinguish between normalization and reconciliation, which are two different processes. While normalization requires the opening of borders and establishment of diplomatic relations between states, reconciliation is a thorough process that requires the establishment of positive relations between two societies. This is tougher than just inking deals at the diplomatic table because there are ongoing historical and ideological sensitivities among the respective publics.

That is why Turkiye's normalization phase with Armenia differs significantly from its efforts with Egypt, Israel or the Gulf states. Various material and nonmaterial issues are in play, as well as the involvement of third parties such as Azerbaijan and the US, which have played both constructive and destructive roles at times in the Turkish-Armenian normalization efforts. Previous normalization attempts have gone through several contradictory phrases, ultimately bearing no fruit.

In the current context, the long-awaited reopening of the border between these two neighboring countries would not only help in bridging the psychological divide between their societies but also provide substantial economic benefits to both sides. Armenia is grappling with severe economic challenges, with many families relying on remittances from relatives abroad.

Armenia, which has a population of about 3 million, shares borders with Azerbaijan, Turkiye, Georgia and Iran. The first two of these neighbors have closed their borders, Iran is under sanctions and Georgia is not in a position to support the Armenian economy. Given the economic and moral toll from the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, reopening the border with Turkiye could be crucial for Armenia. The economic advantages of this development can be expected to materialize swiftly, leading to significant improvements. Moreover, for Armenia, the opening of the border would pave the way for opening a path to the West, while for Turkiye it would widen its influence in the Caucasus region. While significant challenges and domestic opposition remain, the potential reopening of the Turkiye-Armenia border offers a promising opportunity for both nations to address economic needs and bridge historical divides. This is why, maybe, this time, both states have been prioritizing realpolitik over idealpolitik.

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Gaza and death of Western journalism

Mohamad Elmasry

ON Wednesday, the Israeli army killed two more Palestinian journalists in Gaza. Ismail al-Ghoul and Rami al-Rifi were working when they were struck by Israeli forces in Gaza city. Al-Ghoul, whose Al Jazeera reports were popular among Arab audiences, was wearing a press vest at the time he was killed.

The latest killings bring Israel's world-record journalist kill total to at least 113 during the current genocide in Gaza, according to the more conservative estimate. No other world conflict has killed as many journalists in recent memory.

Israel has a long history of violently targeting journalists, so their Gaza kill total is not necessarily surprising. In fact, a 2023 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) report documented a "decades-long pattern" of Israel targeting and killing Palestinian journalists. For example, a Human Rights Watch investigation found that Israel targeted "journalists and media facilities" on four separate occasions in 2012. During the attacks, two journalists were killed, and many others were injured.

In 2019, a United Nations commission found that Israel "intentionally shot" a pair of Palestinian journalists in 2018, killing both. More recently, in 2022, Israel shot and killed Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in the West Bank. Israel attempted to deny responsibility, as it almost always does after it carries out an atrocity, but video evidence was overwhelming, and Israel was forced to admit guilt.

There have been no consequences for the soldier who fired at Abu Akleh, who had been wearing a press vest and a press helmet, or for the Israelis involved in the other incidents targeting journalists. CPJ has suggested that Israeli security forces enjoy "almost blanket immunity" in incidents of attacks on journalists. Given this broader context, Israel's targeting of journalists during the current genocide is genuinely not surprising, or out of the ordinary.

However, what is truly surprising, and even shocking, is the relative silence

of Western journalists. While there has certainly been some reportage and sympathy in North America and Europe, particularly from watchdog organisations like the CPJ, there is little sense of journalistic solidarity, and certainly nothing approaching widespread outrage and uproar about the threat Israel's actions pose to press freedoms. Can we imagine for a moment what the Western journalistic reaction might be if Russian forces killed more than 100 journalists in Ukraine in under a year? Even when Western news outlets have reported on Palestinian journalists killed since the start of the current war, coverage has tended to give Israel the benefit of the doubt, often framing the killings as unintentional casualties of modern warfare.

Also, Western journalism's overwhelming reliance on pro-Israel sources has ensured the avoidance of colourful adjectives and condemnations. Moreover, overreliance on pro-Israel sources has sometimes made it difficult to determine which party to the conflict was responsible for specific killings. One might assume here that Western news outlets have simply been maintaining their devotion to stated Western reporting principles of detachment and neutrality.

But, in other situations, Western journalists have shown that they are indeed capable of making quite a fuss, and also of demonstrating solidarity. The 2015 killing of 12 Charlie Hebdo journalists provides a useful case in point. Following that attack, a genuine media spectacle ensued, with seemingly the entire institution of Western journalism united to focus on the event.

Thousands of reports were generated within weeks, a solidarity hashtag ("Je suis Charlie," or "I am Charlie") went viral, and statements and sentiments of solidarity poured in from Western journalists, news outlets and organisations dedicated to principles of free speech. For example, America's Society of Professional Journalists called the attack on Charlie Hebdo "barbaric" and an "attempt to stifle press freedom".

and democracy, while "political technologists" from the Wagner Group use disinformation to drive a wedge between ordinary people and the West.

A case in point is Libya, the former stronghold of Muammar Gaddafi. Using the ongoing civil tensions and flare ups between the UN-backed government of Abdelhamid Dbeibeh in the West and the warlord General Haftar in the East, Putin has fully supported Haftar's bid to create a new dynasty that will take Libya back into dictatorship.

This new friendship has not only enabled him to flow his mercenary forces into the country and beyond, destabilising much of sub-Saharan Africa in the process, but it has also allowed discussions to begin on a new Russian nuclear submarine base to be constructed in the Libyan port of Tobruk. To my mind, this evokes a

freedom House issued a similarly harsh commendation, calling the attack "horrific," and noting that it constituted a "direct threat to the right of freedom of expression". PEN America and the British National Secular Society presented awards to Charlie Hebdo and the Guardian Media Group donated a massive sum to the publication. The relative silence and calm of Western journalists over the killing of at least 100 Palestinian journalists in Gaza is especially shocking when one considers the larger context of Israel's war on journalism, which threatens all journalists.

In October, around the time the current war began, Israel told Western news agencies that it would not guarantee the safety of journalists entering Gaza. Ever since, Israel has maintained a ban on international journalists, even working to prevent them from entering Gaza during a brief November 2023 pause in fighting. More importantly, perhaps, Israel has used its sway in the West to direct and control Western news narratives about the war.

Western news outlets have often obediently complied with Israeli manipulation tactics. For example, as global outrage was mounting against Israel in December 2023, Israel put out false reports of mass, systematic rape against Israeli women by Palestinian fighters on October 7. Western news outlets, including the New York Times, were suckered in. They downplayed the growing outrage against Israel and began prominently highlighting the "systematic rape" story. Later, in January 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued provisional measures against Israel.

Israel responded almost immediately by issuing absurd terrorism accusations against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). Western news outlets downplayed the provisional measures story, which was highly critical of Israel, and spotlighted the allegations against UNRWA, which painted Palestinians in a negative light. These and other examples of Israeli manipulation of Western

news narratives are part of a broader pattern of influence that predates the current war.

One empirical study found that Israel routinely times attacks, especially those likely to kill Palestinian civilians, in ways that ensure they will be ignored or downplayed by US news media. During the current genocide, Western news organisations have also tended to ignore the broad pattern of censorship of pro-Palestine content on social media, a fact which should concern anyone interested in freedom of expression. It's easy to point to a handful of Western news reports and investigations which have been critical of some Israeli actions during the current genocide.

But these reports have been lost in a sea of acquiescence to Israeli narratives and overall pro-Israel, anti-Palestinian framing. Several studies, including analyses by the Centre for Media Monitoring and the Intercept, demonstrated overwhelming evidence of pro-Israel, anti-Palestinian framing in Western news reportage of the current war. Many journalists in the United States and Europe position themselves as truth-tellers, critical of power, and watchdogs.

While they acknowledge mistakes in reporting, journalists often see themselves and their news organisations as appropriately striving for fairness, accuracy, comprehensiveness, balance, neutrality and detachment. But this is the great myth of Western journalism. A large body of scholarly literature suggests that Western news outlets do not come close to living up to their stated principles.

But Israel's war on Gaza has further exposed news outlets as fraudulent. With few exceptions, news outlets in North America and Europe have abandoned their stated principles and failed to support Palestinian colleagues being targeted and killed en masse. Amid such spectacular failure and the extensive research indicating that Western news outlets fall well short of their ideals, we must ask whether it is useful to continue to maintain the myth of the Western journalistic ideal. Is Western journalism, as envisioned, dead?

Aljazeera

Regional ripples from a contested election result

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

THE fiercely contested result of last month's Venezuelan presidential election, with victory claimed by both incumbent Nicolas Maduro and challenger Edmundo González, has sent ripples across the region and raised critical questions about the future of governance and international relations in Latin America.

The opposition, led by the barred initial candidate María Corina Machado, faced significant hurdles, leading to González, a 74-year-old retired diplomat, stepping in as a surrogate. Despite the challenges, the opposition managed to tap into a strong desire for change among Venezuelans weary of economic turmoil, corruption, and repression. However, the implications of this election stretch far beyond Venezuela's borders.

First, the exclusion of Machado from the ballot underscored the government's strategy to stifle significant opposition. González, though a relatively low-profile figure, represented a collective yearning for change and economic reform. The opposition, fully aware of public sentiment, ran on a platform to form a national unity government and negotiate a peaceful transition.

The opposition's agenda, inspired by Machado's principles of free enterprise, privatization, and individual rights, aimed to dismantle the state-controlled economic model that has contributed to Venezuela's economic stagnation.

But González's lack of a detailed manifesto also highlighted the broader challenge for the opposition: articulating a clear and cohesive plan that resonated with a population exhausted by years of hardship.

Brazil, under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, was poised to play a crucial mediating role. Lula's dispatch of top foreign policy adviser Celso Amorim to Caracas signals Brazil's willingness to engage deeply in resolving the Venezuelan crisis. However, Lula's intention to recognize the official election results showing a Maduro victory, contingent on the presentation of electoral records, is a risky approach that seeks to balance diplomatic engagement with a commitment to regional stability.

The US, having closed its embassy in Caracas in 2019, faces a more complex challenge. The Biden administration's condemnation of the election results as unreflective of the Venezuelan people's will underscores a broader geopolitical contest. It indicates a firm position against Maduro's authoritarianism, while also reflecting concerns about the implications for regional stability and the ongoing refugee crisis.

Peru's expulsion of Venezuelan diplomats in response to Maduro's contested victory highlights deep regional discontent. Peru hosts over 1.5 million Venezuelan exiles, and its actions underscore the broader humanitarian crisis triggered by

Venezuela's political and economic turmoil. Conversely, Maduro's allies, such as Cuba, Bolivia, Honduras, and Russia, have endorsed his claim to victory. This support reveals the entrenched ideological divides within the region and the broader international community. Russia's call for González and Machado to concede defeat illustrates the geopolitical dimensions of the Venezuelan crisis, aligning it with broader global contests between democratic and authoritarian models.

The economic implications of the Venezuelan election are significant. Investors are keen to see the normalization of relations with Venezuela, which could unlock the restructuring of approximately \$160 billion in debt and boost oil production. Such developments could provide much-needed relief to Venezuela's beleaguered economy. However, these prospects are contingent on a legitimate and transparent electoral process, which remains in question.

The humanitarian implications are equally pressing. The flow of Venezuelan refugees, driven by economic collapse and political repression, poses a significant challenge for neighboring countries and the international community. The Biden administration's urgency in addressing this issue reflects broader concerns about regional stability and the humanitarian toll of the crisis. The future of Venezuela and its position hinges on navigating a complex political landscape marked by deep-seated authoritarianism and international scrutiny.

For the opposition, the immediate challenge lies in maintaining unity and articulating a clear vision for the future. González's interim leadership must evolve into a robust political movement capable of mobilizing domestic and international support.

Regional powers, particularly Brazil, will continue to play a pivotal role. Lula's approach, balancing diplomatic engagement with demands for transparency, could set a precedent for regional responses to authoritarianism. However, this requires a delicate balance, avoiding legitimization of flawed processes while pushing for democratic reforms.

Internationally, the US and its allies must sustain pressure on the Maduro regime while supporting humanitarian efforts and fostering dialogue. The Organization of American States will be a crucial forum for consolidating a regional stance and exploring avenues for a peaceful resolution. The Venezuelan election is a critical moment not only for the country but for the entire region. The opposition's resilience, regional diplomatic efforts, and international pressure collectively shape the path forward. As Venezuelans grapple with their future, the region is at a crossroads, with the potential to redefine its commitment to democracy, human rights, and collective prosperity.

The Telegraph

Russia's war games extend far beyond Ukraine

Nicholas Soames

DESPITE faltering on the frontline in Ukraine, Vladimir Putin cannot be underestimated. Whilst Russia's war effort has pushed it into deals with dictators for munitions, such as Kim Jong Un in North Korea, Putin remains a calculated tactician. After 24 years in power, he continues to extend Russia's reach in new covert ways, mining global events to secure advantages for Russia at every turn.

Bogged down in Ukraine, Putin has turned to Africa as a new front in which to challenge Western values and interests, dangling the carrot of corruption to support authoritarian factions within struggling democracies.

Across the Sahel and in places like the Central African Republic, he has fast forged friendships with those who are disdainful of human rights

and democracy, while "political technologists" from the Wagner Group use disinformation to drive a wedge between ordinary people and the West.

A case in point is Libya, the former stronghold of Muammar Gaddafi. Using the ongoing civil tensions and flare ups between the UN-backed government of Abdelhamid Dbeibeh in the West and the warlord General Haftar in the East, Putin has fully supported Haftar's bid to create a new dynasty that will take Libya back into dictatorship.

This new friendship has not only enabled him to flow his mercenary forces into the country and beyond, destabilising much of sub-Saharan Africa in the process, but it has also allowed discussions to begin on a new Russian nuclear submarine base to be constructed in the Libyan port of Tobruk. To my mind, this evokes a

Cuban Missile Crisis scenario, only this time with Europe in the crosshairs and the Mediterranean Sea a possible new battleground for Western Europe.

Our leaders must wake up to these political games by Putin. Whilst Ukraine is important and needs our full support, we cannot think that Putin has only a single military campaign in mind. One place to start is to look at the sources of power for Putin's new allies and ensure that they cannot flourish and further embolden the Kremlin's dangerous ambitions.

For General Haftar, the same money that flowed into the bank account of Muammar Gaddafi is now funneling into his personal militias. In theory, Libya's staggering oil wealth should have eased the path towards economic prosperity and a function-

ing state after the revolution in 2011, but instead it has been used to thwart the democratic ambitions of the Libyan people at every turn.

Led by Ferhat Bendgara, the National Oil Corporation (NOC) is central to this missed opportunity. The soaring corruption and mismanagement within the NOC are well-documented and endemic. Serious issues have been flagged in recent months, including billions of dollars' worth of finances missing from the NOC's accounts, questions over fulfilling energy agreements with Europe and the commissioning of new oil field projects in backroom deals. This corruption has been facilitated by a clear sense of impunity combined with General Haftar's commitment to appropriating national resources as his own and to

foiling the democratic process.

Meanwhile, Libyans struggle to put food on the table, to light their homes and, perversely, to fuel their generators, given that they sit atop a sea of oil. Libya's infrastructure, which sorely needs investment, is ignored by officials who line their pockets while General Haftar and Putin rub their hands. The deadly consequences of this systematic theft were demonstrated all too starkly by the collapse of the Derna Dam last year and the loss of 5000 innocent lives.

Unless this oil corruption is confronted head-on, Libya will continue down a path of destruction. Western governments are understandably distracted from developments in nations like Libya by Ukraine and by immediate domestic priorities. The danger of this, however, is clear to see. Despots and

dictators will find their way to power across strategic continents such as Africa, looking to murderous tyrants like Putin to underwrite their oppressive rule in exchange for access to natural resources, techniques for sanctions-busting and opportunities to harass the West.

The new British government must not let this happen. We must recognise that Putin's geopolitical games extend much further than Ukraine. In Libya, for example, the fight against oil corruption has to be prioritised before all hope for democracy fades. Otherwise, General Haftar will position himself as the right-hand of Putin in Africa, using Libya as a platform for Russia to gain control over key parts of the Mediterranean and to shift a prolonged conflict over Ukraine to new battlegrounds in the global South.

A comprehensive peace based on two-state solution is still achievable

Jeffrey Sachs & Sybil Fares

THE landmark ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on July 19 calls for the immediate end of Israel’s illegal occupation and apartheid rule. This ruling reinforces a clear pathway to peace – based on a sovereign State of Palestine in the context of the two-state solution.

According to the ICJ, Israel must withdraw from all of the occupied Palestinian territory, cease all settlement activities, evacuate all settlers and pay damages. Ending the illegal occupation is not conditional upon a bilateral peace process between Israel and Palestine. In his declaration, ICJ President Nawaf Salam stated: “[Israeli] withdrawal cannot be conditional on the success of negotiations whose outcome will depend on Israel’s approval. In particular, Israel cannot invoke the need for a prior agreement on its security claims for such a condition may lead to perpetuating its unlawful occupation.”

The ICJ ruling is a vindication of the rights of the Palestinian people, who have endured decades of oppression. It is also a rejection of the position of the United States, which insists on Israel’s agreement on a political settlement as a condition for ending the occupation. The sovereignty of Palestine, based on the two-state solution and the borders of June 4, 1967, cannot be held hostage to Israel’s apartheid policies. The two-state solution is a matter of international law, not of Israel’s domestic politics, much less its extremism. Diplomatic negotiations, under the auspices of the United Nations, can and should focus on the implementation of Israel’s withdrawal from occupied territory and mutual security arrangements of the two states living side by side.

The US has been a decades-long proponent of a cynical “peace process” between Israel and Palestine that is designed to fail. The obvious truth is that the occupying power, Israel, and the people under occupation, Palestine, will never be on a fair footing in negotiations. Palestinians have been

forced to negotiate under extreme duress while Israel has continued its blatant violations of international law.

Yet the inequality of bargaining power has been far worse than the gross inequality of power between the occupier and the occupied. The US has held the cards for decades and has consistently been a dishonest broker. The US political elite is

more accurately because of – the call by the ICC prosecutor for Netanyahu’s arrest for war crimes, Congress received Netanyahu’s lies with repeated ovations.

The obeisance of Congress to the Israel lobby was especially vile given that the UN, the ICJ and the International Criminal Court have all recently concluded that the Israeli military is systematically

The obvious truth is that the occupying power, Israel, and the people under occupation, Palestine, will never be on a fair footing in negotiations. Palestinians have been forced to negotiate under extreme duress while Israel has continued its blatant violations of international law. Yet the inequality of bargaining power has been far worse than the gross inequality of power between the occupier and the occupied. The US has held the cards for decades and has consistently been a dishonest broker. The US political elite is pro-Zionist to the hilt as it is notoriously financed by the Israel lobby (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, and others) and deeply entwined with Israel’s military and security apparatus, especially CIA-Mossad links.

pro-Zionist to the hilt as it is notoriously financed by the Israel lobby (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, or AIPAC, and others) and deeply entwined with Israel’s military and security apparatus, especially CIA-Mossad links.

The US blames Palestine for every failure in negotiations, even when Israel’s intransigence and opposition to the two-state solution are the obvious, indeed blatant, obstacles to peace. Most recently, the Israeli Knesset voted to reject the two-state solution. The latest display of the US politics was the reception given to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by the US Congress. Despite – or

targeting civilians, starving them, inflicting collective punishment and deliberately destroying the infrastructure of Gaza. A devastating regional war is just around the corner unless the international community acts quickly and decisively to secure the two-state solution. In Lebanon, cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel have intensified. The conflict also grows with attacks between Israel and Yemen’s Houthis. The US could end the war now if it chose. Without American financial and military support, Israel does not have the means to fight a war on multiple fronts.

After rejecting multiple cease-

fire proposals, even US-backed ones, it is clear that the Israeli government is not interested in ending the war. Israel’s extremist government wants a wider conflict that lures the US into an open war with Iran. The latest outrage is Israel’s assassination of Hamas’s political chief, Ismail Haniyeh, in Tehran. This is a dangerous escalation, on foreign soil, that deliberately and flagrantly undermines negotiation efforts and a peaceful diplomatic resolution to the conflict. While Congress cheered Netanyahu’s lies, the more important story of US politics was occurring outside Congress on the streets of Washington (and the campuses across the nation). The American people, especially America’s young people, are tired of the US government’s complicity in Israel’s genocide. By March, a majority of Americans had turned against Israel’s actions in Gaza. They want the war to stop, not to expand.

The world’s governments are rallying on the side of justice as in the UN General Assembly’s overwhelming support for Palestine to become the 194th UN member state. Palestinian political factions have also joined together, supported by Chinese diplomacy, to form a national unity government. The world community has broadly welcomed the ICJ’s decision to end Israel’s illegal occupation. A comprehensive peace based on the two-state solution is achievable and within reach. According to the recent decision of the ICJ and the votes of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council (but for the US veto), the path to peace is clear: Palestine should immediately be welcomed as a UN member state with the borders of June 4, 1967, and with its capital in East Jerusalem.

Peace, in short, is much closer than it may seem, built on the unity of the people of Palestine; the strong and repeated backing of the Arab and Islamic states for the two-state solution; the goodwill of almost all of the world community, including the American people; and the support of international law and the United Nations.

What it will take to calm America

Julian Zelizer

ON Sunday evening, President Joe Biden spoke from the Oval Office, calling on Americans to temper their passions. In the aftermath of the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump, Biden reiterated his message that there is no room for violence in our politics and that everyone needs to take a breath and calm down. The nation needs to “lower the temperature,” he said. “No matter how strong our convictions,” Biden added, we must “never descend into violence.”

Will the message work? Coming at a pivotal moment in his own reelection campaign against Trump, Biden’s address is something of a stress test for what presidents can accomplish when political tensions spin out of control. Biden’s appeal is not coming in a vacuum; many political leaders across the spectrum have denounced the attack on Trump and called for calm. House Speaker Mike Johnson said on CNN Sunday,

“The rhetoric has consequences. When you have a heated environment and you have political division in this country, like we have in the age of social media, everything is amplified, and everyone can go on and turn the dial. So we need to work on bringing that down so that we can have thoughtful debate and we can have policy discussions.”

By virtue of his office, Biden is singularly positioned to attempt to soothe America. But sadly, even if Biden was not in such a fragile political position, the odds would be stacked against the president, as history suggests.

Americans lived through a horrendous moment on November 22, 1963 when a gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald, shot and killed President John F. Kennedy. The event, which was of greater magnitude given the fatal outcome, traumatized the nation. A president who embodied the promise of a new generation had been slain. All sorts of theories swirled about what happened in Dallas, most of which were connected to the divisive issues of the era — civil rights, anti-communism, right-wing extremism and more.

As soon as Lyndon Johnson took over the presidency, he too appealed to the nation to restore its better angels. Let us continue, he said, urging Americans to move forward with Kennedy’s agenda as the best memorial to the fallen leader. He said: “Our American unity does not depend upon unanimity. We have differences; but now, as in the past, we can derive from those differences strength, not weakness; wisdom, not despair. Both as a people and a government we can unite upon a

program, a program which is wise, and just, enlightened and constructive.”

But Johnson soon learned that presidential appeals to moderation often fall flat. The huge fault lines created by divisive issues that predated Kennedy’s assassination only widened. The civil rights movement intensified its effort to achieve racial justice through legislation while the White backlash grew worse and more violent.

The pressure from

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America’s youth to abandon traditional social and cultural values involving matters such as sexuality and style only grew stronger, as was on display at the Woodstock concert in 1969. At the same time, the growing culture wars between college students and the people whom President Richard Nixon would call the “silent majority” intensified.

And Johnson made things worse himself, as he accelerated a war in Vietnam that turned into one of the most divisive issues the nation ever faced. Americans fought bitterly over the military conflict, driving many further and further apart by the time Johnson stunned the political world when he announced that he would not run for reelection on March 31, 1968.

Throughout the 1960s, political violence flared. President Kennedy’s tragic death did not become a basis for reconciliation. Instead, Americans endured more assassinations that created shock and dismay. Malcolm X was slain in February 1965. In 1968, the horrors intensified with the killing of Rev. Martin

Luther King, Jr. in April and the killing in June of Senator Robert F. Kennedy after he won the California Democratic primary.

The bloody police crackdown on protesters in the streets of Chicago during the Democratic Convention in 1968 symbolized how deep the anger had become in the body politic. In his 1968 campaign, Nixon stoked the divisions with his appeal to “law and order” and blasts against the protesters who had taken to the streets.

Of course, the decades that followed the 1960s

have been characterized by intense division, polarization and political warfare. Americans moved further and further apart after 1963, not closer together. The history of the 1960s should remind us today that after Saturday’s shocking attempt on the life of Donald Trump, Biden has an uphill battle to calm the nation. The issues that divide the parties remain deep, the political processes will continue to foster discord, and many political leaders are likely to return to the toxic rhetoric that has been normalized in recent years.

Fighting against political violence will require much more than a speech. It will depend on a new generation of leaders willing to establish guardrails on what is permissible, it will require policies to address guns and psychological problems, it will require institutional reforms to create more room in the political system for pulling back from the extremes. Unless the country is willing to take bold steps, presidential speeches won’t do much to bring us back from the precipice we stand on in 2024.

CNN

Keep off the ice: why the world doesn’t need another shipping lane

Luke Coffey

TWO Chinese cargo ships began their journey last month from Shanghai and Rizhao to the Baltic Sea, but not by the traditional route through the Suez Canal. Instead, with the assistance of a Chinese icebreaker, they are taking the Northern Sea Route through the Arctic Ocean.

The Northern Sea Route stretches from the Barents Sea to the Bering Strait, connecting European and Asian markets, and its appeal is evident. The more traditional route connecting Europe to Asia through the Suez Canal is becoming increasingly perilous because of Houthi attacks in the Red Sea since the outbreak of Israel’s war in Gaza in October 2023. Despite the deployment of US and British naval assets against them, the Houthis remain undeterred; they carried out three attacks against commercial shipping only last week. Piracy off the Horn of Africa also poses a threat to commercial shipping. In contrast, the Northern Sea Route faces no such threats.

For China, the route also enhances its search for a larger role in the Arctic. Beyond using Arctic shipping lanes to connect with global markets, Beijing is also exploring new sources of food and energy in the region. China already sources a sizeable portion of its fish imports from Arctic countries, and oil and gas coopera-

tion with Russia is increasing.

For Russia, the Northern Sea Route holds economic, geopolitical, and prestige value. Russia is investing heavily in infrastructure along the route, and ships using it require support from Moscow in the form of icebreakers, resupply services, and search and rescue capabilities. As more ships begin operating in the region, it generates revenue for Russia. Geopolitically, an open Northern Sea Route would allow the Russian Navy to move its Pacific and Northern fleets around the world more quickly. Additionally, the Arctic has symbolic importance for Russia, dating back to Peter the Great, and it welcomes any increased global significance of the Russian Arctic.

Nevertheless, there is a long way to go before the Northern Sea Route becomes a viable option for international shipping, for several reasons. First, while Arctic sea ice has decreased, especially in the summer months, since satellite measurements began in 1979 it has not diminished at the rate and extent many had predicted. This brings additional costs. Ships often require the assistance of icebreakers, for which fees charged by Russia are significant. Additionally, the hazardous environment in the Arctic region leads to increased insurance costs.

Vessels using the route also need reinforced hulls and other modifications to ensure a safe journey, which adds considerable costs to ship construction.

Second, it is often overlooked just how vast Asia is. While the Northern Sea Route makes a trip between Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Yokohama in Japan 30 percent shorter than using the Suez Canal, a journey between Rotterdam and Shanghai in China is only 8 percent shorter. Considering all the risks and costs associated with using the Northern Sea Route, it remains uncertain whether this difference in distance is worth it. Currently, the numbers suggest it is not.

Last year, 36 million tonnes of cargo were shipped along the Northern Sea Route, of which only 2.1 million tonnes — less than 6 percent — completed the full journey between Asia and Europe. This is just 0.15 percent of the volume of goods that transited through the Suez Canal. The full Northern Sea Route between Europe and Asia was completed by only 75 ships, the number that pass through the Suez Canal about every 36 hours. It is clear that Western economic sanctions against Russia are deterring some shipping companies from using the Northern Sea Route. In 2022, the year Russia invaded Ukraine, no foreign ships

used the route for cargo transport, and there were no full transits between Europe and Asia.

In 2020, Russian President Vladimir Putin set a goal for the Northern Sea Route to handle 80 million tonnes of cargo a year by the end of 2024. It is not on track to meet this goal, and even if it did this would still be only 6 percent of the cargo volume that transited the Suez Canal in 2023. In reality, the best way to improve the stability and security of global shipping is to enhance the conditions of existing transit routes. Instead of hoping that Arctic ice will eventually melt and new shipping lanes will open, the international community should work together to secure the shipping lanes that already exist. It is astonishing that a non-state terrorist organization such as the Houthis can disrupt global shipping in the Red Sea, and the same can be said about piracy off the Horn of Africa or in the Malacca Strait.

The Northern Sea Route may help Russia with its economic problems, but it is unlikely to have a major impact on the global economy. Because of the interconnected nature of world trade, a disruption in one chokepoint can significantly affect places thousands of kilometers away. Greater international cooperation is needed to ensure global shipping lanes remain safe, secure, and open for use.

Europe’s far-right surge has a lesson for Labour

Catherine De Vries

THE Labour party may have won a landslide election victory in the UK last month, but now comes the difficult and onerous business of governing, not helped by the discovery of a £22bn black hole in the public finances. Significant voter discontent centred on the sorry state of hollowed-out public services, especially the NHS. With ever-longer waiting lists for hospital appointments, voters on both the left and right are hugely concerned about the health service. Nigel Farage, leader of the rightwing Reform UK, is ready to exploit any public discontent over the state of broken public services and has loudly spoken of his desire to win over Labour voters.

Keir Starmer is the first centrist leader to win a UK election since Tony Blair, who won on a sweeping mandate to modernise Britain. This time, things are different. While Labour won two-thirds of parliamentary seats, it received just over a third of votes, and much of Labour’s success came from widespread discontent with 14 years of Tory rule. Starmer has promised British voters that change starts now, but when it comes to the NHS, Labour faces a daunting task. Restoring confidence in the health system will be a long, difficult and costly road in a country faced with a mixture of sluggish growth, labour shortages and weak public finances.

In a recent study we at Bocconi University and the London School

of Economics examined the political consequences of declining NHS performance. By analysing government data on closures of local healthcare facilities and linking it to data on public preferences and voting intention, we found that closures increased people’s dissatisfaction with the health service and resulted in increased support for Reform (and its predecessors, the Brexit party and Ukup). Moreover, the link between the shutting down of local healthcare facilities and Reform support is highest in areas that have experienced increased immigration and registrations of migrants at local GP practices. These results could spell serious trouble for Labour if NHS services continue to face cancelled appointments, cuts and closures.

We have seen the results of slashed public services in other parts of Europe. In Italy, hard-right parties have enjoyed electoral success for longer than anywhere else in Europe. A study from 2023 showed that in Italy hard-right gains in government have occurred in step with public service cuts and closures. In 2010, an administrative reform forced municipalities to shut and merge local public services, to the detriment of residents. Some “native-born” citizens then saw themselves as pitted against immigrants in a zero-sum competition for access to essential public services. This research found that broken promises and

underfunded public services deepen discontent, and if people feel that the state can no longer adequately provide for their needs they experience profound discontent. This has proved fertile ground for the hard-right to exploit by pledging to restrict immigration and immigrants’ access to local public services. As a result, this boosts support for rightwing parties.

But it’s not just in Italy and the UK that crumbling public services are keenly felt. Across a great swath of rural France a sense of neglect prevails and has fuelled a turn to the right leading to an upsurge in votes for Marine Le Pen’s hard-right National Rally. Similarly, in the Netherlands the rhetoric of Geert Wilders, leader of the election-winning Freedom party, includes opposition to cuts to public services alongside anti-immigration sentiment.

The UK’s Reform party, like many populist hard-right parties in Europe, frame access to public service as a zero-sum game between “native” and “migrant” populations, and attribute blame for deteriorating public service delivery to the latter. So fixing the most urgent problems in the NHS will be key to stemming the tide of the populist right in Britain. The problem for Labour is that there isn’t a quick or easy solution to the challenges faced by the health service. One of its first actions has been to agree a pay

deal with junior doctors’ leaders to end a 20-month dispute that had resulted in the postponement of 1.5m appointments and to increase wages for other NHS staff, yet at the same time it decided to withdraw funding for the replacement of crumbling hospitals to shore up public finances.

This won’t install a huge amount of confidence among voters that the NHS is safe in Labour’s hands. And as long as mainstream parties are unable to show that they can safeguard public services, populist parties will continue to attract the support of disgruntled and ignored citizens.

Yet, providing good-quality health services and keeping up with public investment is going to be a tall order when economic growth has stalled and public finances are strained. Whether Starmer’s government can satisfy public expectations will be one of the key questions during his tenure as prime minister and could be decisive for his ability to win a second term.

If the British people start to feel as if their new government cares about them, and is able to restore good public services that meet their growing needs, then the far right may be kept at bay. At a time when trust in politics is low, Labour must deliver results or face the wrath of an electorate that desires – even demands – change and may turn to the populist right in the hope of achieving it.

The Guardian

Harris has work to do if she wants to be US president

Dalia Al-Aqidi

WHENEVER I contemplate writing about US Vice President Kamala Harris, I feel an overwhelming urge to say that, despite my fundamental disagreements with the policies of the Democratic Party, I was genuinely delighted when a woman was selected in 2020 to hold the second-highest office in the country. It was a significant milestone and a moment of progress I wholeheartedly supported. However, my initial optimism has receded.

In American politics, choosing a leader is a big deal. We need someone with experience, achievements and strong leadership skills.

Although her expected candidacy for November’s presidential election is historic and a symbol of progress, Harris still has to prove she has the ability to lead the nation. The vice president has had an impressive career, with roles as district attorney of San Francisco, attorney general of California and senator for California. However, her time in these positions has not always been successful. As district attorney, she made some decisions that upset people at both ends of the political spectrum.

As vice president, Harris was entrusted with several high-stakes responsibilities, including addressing the root causes of migration

from Central America and tackling the voting rights crisis. Her role in addressing migration was prominently highlighted when President Joe Biden appointed her the unofficial “border czar” in March 2021. Although not officially endorsed by the administration, this title became a focal point of both media and political discourse.

The chaotic situation at the border has persisted, with issues such as crowded shelters, strained resources and a lack of adequate long-term solutions. Many observers argue that the former California senator’s efforts have not produced the clear and decisive action needed to stabilize the situation. The administration’s approach has lacked strategic coherence and failed to effectively address the underlying causes of migration, such as economic instability and violence in the source countries.

Similarly, Harris’s work on voting rights has faced challenges. The crucial voting rights bills she supported have struggled to gain traction in Congress. This legislative stalemate reflects a broader difficulty in translating advocacy into concrete policy changes. The liberal media’s portrayal of Harris’s role as border czar has also evolved lately. Initially, the term was widely used to highlight her

high-profile responsibilities and the administration’s focus on migration issues. However, with her ascent to the top of the Democratic ticket as the presumptive presidential nominee following President Biden’s exit, the use of the title has vanished. This shift underscores a broader trend whereby media narratives are adapted based on political shifts and evolving priorities.

This leads us to foreign policy, in which Harris’s experience is limited. While she has been involved in some international issues as vice president, her foreign policy credentials are not as robust as those of her predecessors. With today’s complex global challenges, a candidate with strong foreign policy experience could gain the upper hand.

National leadership requires a clear and compelling vision for the future. Harris’s vision for America includes admirable goals such as social justice, but it so far lacks specifics and strategic planning will be needed to achieve these changes. Leadership requires more than ambition and symbolic victories: it demands a track record of effective governance, and the ability to unite and inspire and a clear, actionable vision for the future. Harris has work to do if she is going to beat Donald Trump in the Nov. 5 election.

Arab News



Overseas Pakistanis invest \$1.9 billion

ISLAMABAD (INP): During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, overseas Pakistanis deposited and invested a total of \$1.90 billion through the Roshan Digital Account (RDA). This brings the cumulative gross inflows through the RDA to \$8.25 billion since its introduction in September 2020.

The central bank's latest update shows that the net RDA inflows, excluding withdrawals and domestic utilization, improved by \$311 million to reach \$1.43 billion in FY2023-24. This contributed to stabilizing Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, which increased to \$9.10 billion as of June 2024, up from around \$4 billion in June

2023.

In June 2024 alone, non-resident Pakistanis injected a gross \$200 million into the RDA, further bolstering the total gross inflows over the past 45 months.

The higher returns on Naya Pakistan Certificates (NPCs) and the overall economic stability in the country have been key factors driving the increased investment through the RDA.

The central bank data reveals that out of the total \$8.25 billion in gross RDA inflows, Pakistani expatriates utilized \$5.21 billion domestically and withdrew \$1.61 billion from their RDA accounts.

As a result, the net deposits and investments

through the RDA stood at \$1.43 billion as of the end of June 2024.

Of this \$1.43 billion in net inflows:

- \$348 million was invested in Naya Pakistan Certificates (NPCs)
- \$592 million was invested in Shariah-compliant NPCs
- \$38 million was invested in shares on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX)
- \$422 million was maintained as net deposits
- \$31 million was in other liabilities

Financial experts noted that non-resident Pakistanis have been increasing their investments in various assets through the RDA, reflecting growing confidence in Pakistan's eco-

omic stability and the rupee-dollar parity. The investments in NPCs have surged following recent increases in the return rates offered.

Expatriates can freely invest or withdraw deposits and investments in NPCs denominated in Pakistani rupee, US dollar, UK pound, and euro through their online RDA accounts, with the returns significantly higher than those offered by debt instruments in developed countries.

These RDA inflows are in addition to the monthly workers' remittances, which increased by 11% to \$30.25 billion in FY2023-24, significantly aiding in financing the trade deficit over the year.

Tokyo stocks likely to remain volatile in coming days

TOKYO (Bloomberg): Tokyo stocks are expected to remain turbulent over the coming days, with the benchmark Nikkei 225 average forecast to move between 34,000 and 38,000.

In the latter half of this week, stocks suffered sell-offs on the dollar's steep drop against the yen following policy meetings of the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of Japan and on dismal US economic data.

On Friday, the Nikkei average plummeted 5.81% with the second largest point loss of 2,216.63 to end at 35,909.70.

Next week, US economic indicators, such as the Institute for Supply Management nonmanufacturing purchasing managers' index for July, the minutes of the BOJ's Policy Board meeting in June and major opinions at the latest such meeting, in which the Japanese central bank raised its policy interest rate to around 0.25%, are scheduled to be released.

Investors may respond to

weak US data by dumping stocks, brokers said. But if the minutes and opinions suggest that the BOJ is not totally hawkish, "the wind on the market may change direction," an official at a major securities firm said.

Also pointing out that the Nikkei has now fallen over 6,300 points from its all-time closing high marked on July 11, the official noted that players are ready to buy the dip.

Some other market sources said earnings reports by Japanese firms are likely to attract investor attention next week, when about half of firms that closed their books on March 31 are set to release their midyear financial statements.

If the yen has already appreciated above expectations, it may be hard for export-oriented firms to make rosy earnings projections. However, the sources said, companies that can demonstrate strong business performance will be hunted.

Meanwhile, a domestic brokerage firm official forecast that the still highly volatile dollar-yen rates will continue to sway stocks wildly.

On Friday, the Topix index sank about 6%, completing a two-day drop of more than 9%.

The fall, which was the largest since the tsunami that triggered the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, wiped away almost \$600 billion in market value, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The scope of the plunge has been remarkable, given that shares traded largely stable into the BOJ meeting, and that market participants knew that a rate hike was possible.

Investors pointed to the yen's surge through the 150 milestone versus the dollar, macro funds shorting Japanese stocks in favor of US equities, and volatility upending trend-following commodity trading advisers, who unwound some of their positions.

"I didn't expect stocks to fall this much — it's a disaster," said Kiyoshi Ishigane, chief fund manager at Mitsubishi UFJ Asset Management in Tokyo. "This might be temporary, but Japanese stocks are in their worst situation."

The moves underscore the vulnerability of Japanese assets to wild price swings as the central bank raises borrowing costs in an economy that's adjusting to inflation after decades of stagnation.

The yen is rising on the new outlook for interest rates, which in turn threaten to erode the earnings of exporters who drove the nation's equities higher for much of this year.

"Everyone is spooked about where dollar-yen may be headed," said Chisa Kobayashi, Japan equity strategist at UBS SuMi TRUST Wealth Management Co. "There is a great deal of concern that it might lead to a deterioration in earnings."



ISLAMABAD: A vendor showcases fresh coconuts, enticing customers at Abpara Market.

Gold rates dip by Rs500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs500 and was sold at Rs256,800 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs257,300 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs429 to Rs220,165 from Rs220,593 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs201,817 from Rs202,210, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs2,900 and 2,486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$15 to \$2,443 from \$ 2,458, the Association reported.

Sui Northern Gas takes major action against gas theft

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In a significant operation against gas theft, a commercial consumer on Band Road, Lahore, has been caught stealing gas worth millions of rupees through a direct bypass.

During excavation in front of the commercial consumer's main line, gas theft was detected through a direct bypass.

The commercial consumer had connected a direct bypass from the serv-

ice line using a clamp, and was using the stolen gas for large-scale wire manufacturing in two furnaces.

To steal a larger quantity of gas, the consumer was also using a large compressor. This substantial gas theft was causing a monthly loss of millions of rupees to the national exchequer.

The Special Task Force swiftly acted, disconnecting the commercial meter. Evidence of the direct bypass and compressor was

recovered from the site. The consumer involved in gas theft has been fined Rs. 32.5 million.

Legal proceedings against those involved in the gas theft have also been initiated.

SNGPL is committed to ensuring the safe and reliable delivery of natural gas across its network.

The company remains vigilant against any fraudulent activities that threaten company's operations and the national interest.

Stocks fall over United States recession fears

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stocks closed the week on a downcast note Friday after poor US jobs data stoked recession fears while Japan's Nikkei tumbled on a resurgent yen.

The US economy added 114,000 jobs last month, a drop from the prior month and fewer than expected, while the jobless rate rose to 4.3 percent, the highest level since October 2021.

The report added to recession fears following lackluster manufacturing data on Thursday, pushing major US indices into the red for the entire day after a down session in Europe.

"Historically it's very difficult to achieve a soft landing," said Steve Sosnick of Interactive Brokers. "It's easy for a soft landing to sneak up on

you and become a hard landing. And that's what the market is very much afraid of right now."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished at 39,737.26, down 1.5 percent for the day and 2.1 percent for the week. "And just like that, the market is worried about the US economy suffering a hard landing," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

"A sober market didn't need any more cold water poured on it, but that is exactly what it got with the July employment report, which was filled with ample headline disappointment," he said.

But Art Hogan of B. Riley Wealth said the market is likely overreacting to a few weak data points, noting that most of the cor-

porate earnings released in the last few weeks have been solid.

Earlier, European stock markets closed sharply in the red: Amsterdam retreated by more than three percent, Frankfurt 2.3 percent, Paris 1.6 percent and London 1.3 percent.

In Asia, where markets closed before the latest US jobs data, Tokyo led losses. The Nikkei 225 tanked 5.8 percent -- its biggest drop since the start of the coronavirus pandemic four years ago -- owing to a stronger yen, which hits Japan's key export sector.

Hong Kong and Sydney were off more than two percent, Seoul gave up more than three percent and Taipei shed more than four percent, with losses also in Shanghai, Mumbai and

Singapore.

Wednesday's decision by the Bank of Japan to hike interest rates for the second time in 17 years -- and talk of another to come -- strengthened the yen to its best level since March.

The dollar also weakened against the pound and the euro as traders bet the weaker US jobs data would translate into Federal Reserve interest rate cuts.

"The situation now shifts from 'if' the Fed will cut to 'by how much' will they cut," said Bret Kenwell, US investment analyst at trading platform eToro.

"The labor market is the lifeblood to the US economy and the Fed needs to ensure that they don't risk weakening it too much solely in an effort to bring down inflation," he said.

Founder Space partners with Exitbase — to boost Pakistan's startup ecosystem



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Founder Space, a vibrant community for startup founders co-founded by Kapeel Kumar, Javeria Faraz, Angel Imdad, Mahnoor Rizwan, and Laraib Fatima, is happy to announce a strategic partnership with Exitbase, Pakistan's leading marketplace for buying and selling businesses. This collaboration aims to create a robust ecosystem that empowers entrepreneurs and accelerates business growth.

The partnership between The Founder Space and Exitbase will provide exclusive benefits to members of The Founder Space community, including expanded networking opportunities, expert insights from Exitbase, invitations to the Exitbase Podcast, and access to growth opportunities through Exitbase's platform.

"We are excited to join forces with Exitbase to create a powerful synergy that will benefit the entire startup ecosystem," said Kapeel

Kumar, Co-Founder of The Founder Space. "By combining our resources and expertise, we can provide unparalleled support to entrepreneurs and help them achieve their goals."

Muhammad Nabeel, Founder of Exitbase, added, "We believe that this partnership will create a positive impact on the startup landscape in Pakistan. By working together, we can help more businesses succeed and contribute to the country's economic growth."

Rolls-Royce to give each worker £700 in shares

BERLIN (BBC News): Rolls-Royce is to give every employee shares worth about £700 in the company following a revival.

The engineering giant announced in an internal memo that it would gift 150 shares to its 42,000 workers worldwide.

The news comes after the Derby-based company, which makes jet engines, announced profits of £1.1bn in the first half of this year, almost double what it made over the same period in 2023.

It's the first time Rolls-Royce has gifted shares to employees, which will be handed out in September.

The move is expected to cost the company about £30m. UK workers will not be able to sell the shares for three years, after which they will be taxable, unless they are held for five years.

"Our strong first half results and the progress we are making on our transformation have been made possible thanks to the hard work and action of our people", the company said in a message to staff.

Berkshire's cash hits \$277 billion as Buffett slashes Apple stake

NEW YORK (Reuters): Warren Buffett appears to have soured on stocks, letting cash at Berkshire Hathaway (BRKa.N), opens new tab soar to nearly \$277 billion and selling a large chunk of its stake in Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab, even as the conglomerate posted a record quarterly operating profit.

Berkshire sold about 390 million Apple shares in the second quarter, on top of 115 million shares from January to March, as Apple's stock price rose 23%. It still owned about

400 million shares worth \$84.2 billion as of June 30.

The cash stake grew to \$276.9 billion from \$189 billion three months earlier largely because Berkshire sold a net \$75.5 billion of stocks. It was the seventh straight quarter Berkshire sold more stocks than it bought.

Second-quarter profit from Berkshire's dozens of businesses rose 15% to \$11.6 billion, or about \$8,073 per Class A share, from \$10.04 billion a year earlier. Nearly half of that profit came from under-

writing and investments in Berkshire's insurance businesses.

Net income fell 15% to \$30.34 billion from \$35.91 billion a year earlier, as rising stock prices in both periods boosted the value of Berkshire's investment portfolio, including Apple.

Buffett has long urged shareholders to ignore Berkshire's quarterly investment gains and losses, which often lead to outsized net profits or net losses.

Berkshire often lets cash build up when it can't find whole businesses or indi-

vidual stocks to buy at fair prices.

Its cash may also signal concerns about the broader US economy - many investors view Berkshire as a proxy for it.

Government data on Friday that showed slowing job growth and the highest unemployment rate since Oct. 2021 prompted some analysts to project multiple Federal Reserve rate cuts starting in September.

But Berkshire's returns from short-term Treasuries should decline once rate cuts begin.

PIAF wants review of contracts with IPPs to reduce energy cost

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF Anjum Nisar Group) has stressed the need for reviewing power purchase agreements, recommending forensic audit of the Independent Power Producers with a view to restore the viability of country's energy sector.

In a meeting, which was attended by the representatives of all major sectors of trade and industry in the provincial capital, posed their full confidence in the leadership of Mian Anjum Nisar and his group of PIAF, as the Front has been splitting into two groups.

PIAF patron-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar along with its chairman Fahemur Rehman Saigol said that instead of excessive bor-

rowing, including the recent IMF \$7 billion financing, the Ease of Doing Business is vital to put the country's economy back on track.

The PIAF, which has been allying with the Founders to rule the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) for last over quarter century, has a setback, dividing into parts, paving the way for a full-fledged and open election of the business community in the Lahore Chamber being held in Sept this year.

Patron-in-Chief of PIAF Anjum Nisar Group and chairman Fahimur Rahman Saigol, former Chairman PIAF Muhammad Ali Mian and Abu Zar Shad, LCCI Senior Vice President Zafar Mehmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Vice Chairman PIAF Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry

and other PIAF leaders made it clear that our commercial political group PIAF is our property. In this regard, we have submitted proprietary evidence including newspaper clippings, photos, minutes of meetings in the IPO court and the court has already given a stay order in our favor.

Our opposition group is neither appearing nor filing a response even after repeated summons by the court. If our opposition group wants to fight, they should appear in the court.

Mian Anjum Nisar also presented the copy of the stay order obtained from the court to the media.

PIAF Chairman Fahimur Rahman Saigol said that the opposition groups are cheating on the claim related to the ownership of PIAF, and have sent them legal notices and now the matter

is in the court.

Anjum also flayed the Founders for parting ways, saying the group has broken the unity of the business community, pledging it would continue the winning record of the last several years in the upcoming LCCI elections 2024.

He said that he himself along with LCCI former president Muhammad Ali Mian and late Sheikh Arshad had signed the PIAF-Founders alliance agreement, as the copy of the alliance agreement is the evidence. "This office used to be the PIAF-Founders Alliance. What happened to the founder overnight is beyond comprehension. All this happened at a time when the business community needed unity."

He said that more industrial groups and trade bodies have announced their

support for the PIAF in the upcoming LCCI elections, expressing full confidence of the leadership of Mian Anjum Nisar, rejecting all other so-called groups altogether.

In a large gathering, attended by a large number of business representatives from across the city and the members of the PIAF posed their confidence for the Anjum Nisar group, assuring him of full support in the upcoming election of the LCCI.

Mian Najam Nisar and Fahimur Rehman Saigol said that the service of traders from the platform of PIAF has been going on for the past 52 years and the presence of a large number of traders and industrialists in every event is the proof in this regard. It shows that PIAF is not just a show but a name of service to the



business community.

PIAF Fahimur Rahman Saigol said that PIAF has an excellent record of 22 years of service to the business community because PIAF brings qualified and working people to Lahore to advocate for the business community.

Criticizing the government energy policy he said

the PIAF has been raising its voice for the last four years that the industrial wheel of the country cannot run on this policy of electricity. Earlier it was said that there is no electricity, now they say that there is abundant electricity. People are reducing the use of electricity all over the world.

PIAF Chairman Fahemur Rehman Saigol said that the PIAF is not doing drawing room politics, we are people living in the business community and markets. PIAF is not the name of a few elders, but the name of businessmen and industrialists consisting of 180 executive committee members.



In brief

Legacy WFC wins match in Football C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Legacy WFC earned victory while match between Jafa WFC and Highlanders ended in a draw of the National Women's Football Club Championship 2024, played at Jinnah Stadium of the Pakistan Sports Complex here Saturday. In the first match of the day, Legacy WFC dominated the field with a stunning 11-0 victory over Diya WFC. Kainat and Eman were the standout players, each scoring three goals, showcasing their remarkable talent and contributing significantly to their team's triumph while Malika, Roshnan, Alina, Nazalia and Karishma each netted a goal, demonstrating the team's cohesive performance. The second match saw a tightly contested battle between Jafa WFC and Highlanders, ending in a 1-1 draw. Nazima scored for Jafa WFC, while Khatoon equalized for Highlanders WFC.

National strength lifter team meet governor

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistani Strength lifter Muhammad Usman and his team that brought laurels for the country have met with Punjab governor Sardar Saleem Haider. Usman, the captain of Pakistan's Strength Lifting Team, secured a gold medal in the 85kg senior class in the 11th World Strength Lifting and Incline Bench Press Championship held in Kazakhstan. He also clinched a silver medal in the Incline Bench Press category, edging out his Indian opponent. He was accompanied by Maryam Aqeel Shah (silver medal), and Muhammad Naveed (bronze medal). The team members and their coach Aqeel Javed Butt received appreciation certificates from Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider.

West Indies name Test squad for SA series

JAMAICA (Agencies): West Indies have announced their squad for the upcoming ICC World Test Championship against South Africa, which begins on 7 August. Pacer Kumar Roach made a return to the squad, having last played a Test against Australia earlier in the year. He had been withdrawn from the tour of England after sustaining a knee injury while playing in the County Championship. However, the pacer Alzarri Joseph, the vice-captain of the Test side, was rested to manage his workload. Off-spinner Kevin Sinclair also missed out as he continues his recovery from an injury. "We have decided to rest our vice-captain Alzarri Joseph for this series," head coach Andre Coley said. "Alzarri has had a considerable workload recently, and this break will allow him to recuperate and return to peak performance." The squad is very similar to the one that played in England in the recent Test series with Keacy Carty and the uncapped Bryan Charles the only players without a Test cap. Wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva was promoted as vice-captain in Joseph's absence. West Indies Test Squad: Kraig Brathwaite (c), Joshua Da Silva (vc), Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, Bryan Charles, Justin Greaves, Jason Holder, Kavem Hodge, Tevin Imlach, Shamar Joseph, Mikyle Louis, Gudakesh Motie, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales, Jomel Warrican.

Zheng Qinwen makes history with Olympic singles gold

PARIS (AFP): Zheng Qinwen became the first Chinese player to win Olympic tennis singles gold when she defeated Croatia's Donna Vekic on Saturday, hailing her victory as a "proud" moment for herself and her country.

The 21-year-old came through 6-2, 6-3, winning only China's second ever tennis gold after Li Ting and Sun Tiantian's women's doubles triumph at Athens in 2004. Zheng's victory came on the same Court Philippe Chatrier at Roland Garros where in 2011 celebrated compatriot Li Na became China's first Grand Slam champion in a landmark moment for the sport.

"Nothing can describe my emotion, every round was super difficult and I did everything I could to get a medal for my country," said Zheng, who has improved on the Olympic record of Li, whose best performance was a fourth place in Beijing in 2008. "I feel my country will be proud of me, I'm proud of myself. My family are at home, I'm sure they are screaming at the TV. I just fight every match. I have a special energy playing for my country. I never give up."

World number seven and Australian Open runner-up Zheng took advantage of settling into a groove faster than her opponent and broke for a 2-0 lead. Vekic and Zheng went head-to-head



with some brutal hitting but the Chinese star's 12 winners to the Croat's three proved crucial and her accuracy shone again with a set-clinching break in the eighth game.

Zheng had saved a match point in her gruelling third-round win over Emma Navarro and then ended four-time French Open champion Iga Swiatek's 25-match winning run at Roland Garros to reach the gold medal match. Match-hardened by those tests, Zheng held to love in the opening game of the second and broke again for a 2-0 lead as the errors piled up for 28-year-old Vekic.

However, the Croat, who knocked out world number two Coco Gauff in the third round, and saved a match point in her quarter-final win over Marta Kostyuk, hit back with her first service break of the contest. Zheng thwarted any hint of a

revival by converting a fourth break point for a 5-3 lead before sealing victory in the next game.

"I'm disappointed," said Vekic. "But once everything settles I will be proud of myself." Swiatek claimed the bronze medal on Friday by seeing off Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

Djokovic praise It was a rollercoaster tournament for Zheng, who needed back-to-back three-hour matches to defeat Navarro and then former world number one Angelique Kerber. In both matches she had to claw back deficits while against Navarro she even found her reputation under attack when the American described her as "cut-throat" with "no respect".

However, her run to the final created one fan in the shape of Novak Djokovic. "She's a terrific person. I really like her a lot," said the Serbian star on the eve of the gold medal match.

"(Getting to the final) is a huge deal for China, for her, but also for our sport. China is such a huge country, a huge market, and they've been waiting for a big champion and a big name since Li Na." Australia's Matthew Ebden and John Peers won the men's doubles gold with a thrilling victory over Austin Krajicek and Rajeef Ram of the United States.

Olympics 2024: Egyptian volleyball team reacts to France's hijab ban

PARIS (Agencies): The Egyptian women's beach volleyball team criticised the host of the Olympics 2024 for banning hijab after competing in one of the fixtures in the tournament.

Egyptian representatives, Marwa Abdelhady and Doaa Elghobashy, were at the Paris Olympics wearing hijabs, long black sleeved shirts, and black ankle-length leggings in a women's beach volleyball match against Spain, CNN reported.

However, if they had been playing for France, they would not have been allowed to observe hijabs.

France has banned its athletes from wearing any "ostensible religious symbols" while competing.

Speaking to CNN's Swedish affiliate, Expressen, Abdelhady criticised France for banning the hijab

for French athletes.

Moreover, Elghobashy expressed disappointment at not giving the French athletes freedom to wear whatever they wanted.

"I want to play in my hijab, she wants to play in a bikini," Expressen reported Elghobashy as saying. "Everything is OK, if you want to be naked or wear a hijab. Just respect all different cultures and religions," she said.

"I don't tell you to wear a hijab and you don't tell me to wear a bikini. No one can tell me how to dress. It's a free country, everyone should be allowed to do what they want," she added.

Earlier in January 2022, the French senate cast their vote in favour of banning the wearing of hijab and other "ostensible religious

symbols" in sports competitions.

Previously, in September, it was confirmed that this ban would also apply to French athletes competing in the Paris Olympics, when French Sports Minister Amélie Oudéa-Castéra said that the country would favour "a strict regime of secularism, applied rigorously in the field of sport."

In this respect, Elghobashy initiated playing beach volleyball in modest attire. The 26-year-old made her debut back in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro after the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) gave her last-minute permission to wear the head covering while playing. Additionally, speaking in an interview with CNN Sport last year, the athlete said that "the hijab is part of me".

New Bayern boss Kompany enjoys 2-1 win over Spurs in Seoul

SEOUL (AFP): Goals from Gabriel Vidovic and Leon Goretzka gave new Bayern Munich manager Vincent Kompany a 2-1 win over Tottenham on his first real test since taking the reins at the Bundesliga giants.

There was no reunion for Tottenham's Son Heung-min with his former captain Harry Kane, who is still resting after leading England to the final of Euro 2024 last month and did not make the trip.

The German side's Eric Dier did get a chance to catch up with his former Spurs teammates, and was seen chatting to Son, Richarlison, James Maddison and others as the teams warmed up before kickoff. Munich were into their stride quickest with former Arsenal attacking midfielder Serge Gnabry firing over the bar inside two minutes.

Moments later they were ahead when Vidovic slotted through Guglielmo Vicario's legs after more good work from Gnabry. Kompany's side played some mesmerisingly slick passing football



at times and Goretzka doubled the lead after half-time in an entertaining match which saw a hatful of chances at both ends.

Pedro Porro's thunderbolt from 30 yards put Tottenham back in the hunt after 66 minutes and Brennan Johnson, Dejan Kulusevski and teenager Lucas Bergvall all went close as Spurs poured forward looking for the equaliser.

Tired Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou said his players had struggled for energy after a long trip to Japan and South Korea in scorching summer heat. "Fair to say the players were showing the effects of us working hard here for 10

days," said Postecoglou. "I think we'll get an enormous benefit from the camp we've done here though, but tonight we perhaps just paid the price for it."

The match was a 67,000 sell-out at Seoul's World Cup Stadium, with many fans wearing replicas of Son's Tottenham shirt and Bayern's Korean defender Kim Min-jae's jersey.

"Son Heung-min and Kim Min-jae are now playing for foreign teams as South Koreans," Kim Jae-wong, a 24-year-old football fan, told AFP prior to the match. "The fact that these players can play in their own country, in South Korea today, makes me feel good as a fellow Korean."

An Sung-hyun, a 22-year-old fan, said: "I'm looking forward to seeing a combination between Son Heung-min and Kim Min-jae, something where they collide." Fan Cha Sang-hyuk said: "Since I am wearing Son Heung-min's uniform, I hope Son Heung-min scores first." National hero Son scored twice in Tottenham's 4-3 win over a K-League All-Stars side in a midweek match, but cut a disappointed figure on Saturday after being kept off the scoresheet.

"I'm really grateful for the support from many fans," said Bayern's Kim. "It was a tough match." (Son) Heung-min is a great player, and we agreed not to run into each other before the game. Thankfully, we didn't encounter each other too much." The teams will face each other again at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium in north London on August 10. Tottenham travel to Leicester City on August 19 to kick off their Premier League season, while Bayern will open their Bundesliga campaign against Wolfsburg on August 25.

Norway Cup 2024: Pakistan's U15 team suffers defeat in final

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Better Future, Pakistan's U15 team, lost the final to Norway's KFUM-Kam Oslo Bla in a penalty shootout in the Norway Cup 2024 U15 category.

After the end of 60 minutes of normal time, Shahbaz Ali and Salman scored for the Pakistani youth team as the match ended 2-2.

Then the match went to a penalty shootout where Pakistan failed to convert one of their chances during the end and KFUM-

Kam Oslo Bla then scored the winning penalty and won the title.

Better Future Pakistan scored 35 goals and conceded just four goals in nine matches as they performed impressively in the tournament.

Earlier on Friday, the Pakistan Street Child Football Team, playing under the name of Muslim Hands FC, lost the semi-final to Forde IL after a penalty shootout in the Norway Cup U17 category.

Pakistan conceded an early goal in the game but

they came back and scored later in the second half as the match ended 1-1 after the end of 60 minutes of normal time.

The match then went to a penalty shootout where Pakistan failed to convert one of their chances from the spot.

Forde IL converted the winning penalty and made their way to the final.

Muslim Hands FC performed greatly throughout the tournament as they scored 26 goals in the tournament and conceded just five.

Experienced New Zealand cricketer expresses his desire to play PSL

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Experienced New Zealand pacer and Test captain Tim Southee expressed his desire to feature in the Pakistan Super League (PSL).



In an interview with a local news outlet, the right-arm pacer spoke highly of the PSL and asserted that he follows the league closely.

"The Pakistan Super League is an amazing tournament that I follow, and I would be thrilled to be a part of it in the future," he said.

Southee also recalled his time in Pakistan when he visited the country two years ago. He praised the hospitality and the food of Karachi in particular.

"Two years ago, I toured Pakistan with the New Zealand team, and I have many pleasant memories of that time," he said.

"During the Test series, I thoroughly enjoyed the food and hospitality in Karachi," he added.

Tim Southee further commented on the pitches in Pakistan and termed them challenging for the pacers.

"The bowling conditions for fast bowlers in Pakistan are quite challenging," he stated.

The right-arm pacer is currently representing Birmingham Phoenix in the ongoing The Hundred 2024. He expressed his excitement to be a part of the league before terming the format tough for the bowlers like T20s.

"I am happy to represent Birmingham Phoenix in The Hundred tournament. Like T20, the Hundred format is also not very bowler-friendly," he concluded.

Notably, Tim Southee was roped in by Phoenix as Naseem Shah's replacement as the latter was denied a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

According to the details, the cricketing body made the decision in a bid to prevent Naseem from potential injuries and to ensure his workload management as he is Pakistan's first-choice pacer in all three formats.

Pakistani contingent excels in Malaysian Open Taekwondo

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistani athletes won many medals in the ongoing Malaysian Open Taekwondo Championship being played at Kuala Lumpur on Saturday.

Pakistani athletes won many medals in the ongoing Malaysian Open Taekwondo Championship in Kuala Lumpur. In the two-day competitions, Pakistani athletes presented a brilliant performance on the opening day and won two gold, three silver and six brown medals.

Umeema won gold in Fight, Silver in Pair poomsae and bronze medal in Individual poomsae. Hania won gold medal in Individual poomsae, silver medal in Fight and Bronze in Pair poomsae.

Mohammad Mustafa Afridi and Imran Ahmad in individual categories won bronze medal, Muhammad Ahmad in individual poomsae got silver medal, Waqar Afridi won bronze and Hashim won bronze medals in pairs.

Marin reaches Olympic badminton semi-finals



PARIS (AFP): Spain's Carolina Marin moved into the Olympic badminton semi-finals on Saturday and said it had been a long journey back since missing the Tokyo Games with a serious knee injury.

Marin, the 2016 women's singles champion, beat Japan's Aya Ohori 21-13, 21-14 at La Chapelle Arena to set up a final-four showdown with China's He Bingjiao. Marin was hot favourite for the title at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago until she suffered a cruciate ligament knee tear just months before the tournament.

That kept her out for a year and came just two years after she ruptured the ligament in her other knee -- an injury that sidelined her for eight months of 2019. Marin said it "means a lot" to be back in medal contention on the Olympic stage.

"Three years ago, I couldn't think that I would reach a semi-final here in Paris," she said. "The journey has been a long way but I am here and I feel really proud of myself."

South Korea's world number one An Se-young also progressed with a 15-21, 21-17, 21-8 win over Japan's two-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi. An's semi-final opponent will be Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung, who beat Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon 25-23, 21-9.

Marin beat eighth seed Ohori in 52 minutes and looked in control of their match from the off. "I'm proud of myself because the day before yesterday I had a difficult match," said the 31-year-old.

"Today from the beginning I wanted to keep the focus on the things that I want to improve." China's He advanced to the semi-finals after beating defending Olympic champion Chen Yufei. The sixth seed shocked her countrywoman with a 21-16, 21-17 win and said she felt "calm" throughout the match.

"I beat an Olympic champion today and I'm facing another one tomorrow." He said of her semi-final against Marin. "I hope tomorrow will be a good match for both of us."

Sangakkara breaks silence on England coaching role

COLOMBO (Agencies): Former Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara opened up on the reports regarding him being the potential contender to become England's white-ball head coach.

Earlier this week, it was reported that Sangakkara, alongside legendary all-rounder Andrew Flintoff was in contention to become England's white-ball coach.

The former wicketkeeper batter, however, revealed that he was not approached by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) before terming it an "exciting prospect".

"Well, I know [my name]

has been mentioned for some reason, but there has not been any approach as such," Sangakkara, a member of Sky Sports' commentary team for The Hundred, told Britain's PA news agency. "I think the England white-ball job is an exciting prospect for anyone, but there are so many good candidates out there. I think Matthew Mott has done a really good job," he added.

For the unversed, Kumar Sangakkara has worked with England's white-ball captain Jos Buttler at Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League (IPL). He further backed Buttler to continue

leading England in the limited-over formats.

"It is great that Jos Buttler is staying in that leadership role as the side progresses because it is a nice time from what the side is -- and was -- and how it wants to progress in the future," he said.

"I think the decision making in the England camp has been spot on. I really love the leadership that Rob Key has provided...I think he has been a really smart, practical man, very commonsensical in terms of how he makes decisions and very forward-thinking in how he has set the vision for England cricket," he added.



Britain's rowers celebrate their gold medal in the men's eight.



In brief

Two children killed due to electrocution

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two young children lost their lives due to electrocution while playing in rainwater in the F-11 sector of Islamabad, a private news channel and police reported on Saturday. According to the details, the accident occurred when an electric wire fell into the water where the children, identified as eight-year-old Ghulam and five-year-old Waqas, were bathing. Police shifted the bodies to a nearby hospital for further procedures.

Two apprehended for selling petrol illegally

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two persons for selling petrol openly and seized filling instruments from their possession, the police spokesman said here on Saturday. According to the police spokesman, Saddar Wah Police during a raid apprehended Faisal and Muhammad Naseer on the charges of selling petrol illegally. Police have registered separate cases against both of them and started an investigation. Meanwhile, City Police Officer (CPO), Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani has directed to launch a crackdown against the illegal business of refilling gas cylinders and said that no one would be allowed to sell petrol openly in the market. Meanwhile, Rawalpindi police have arrested seven illegal arms holders and recovered arms, and ammunition from their possession. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani commended police efforts and said that strict action will be taken against those carrying illegal weapons without any discrimination.

Son arrested for torturing mother

RAWALPINDI (APP): The police apprehended the son for torturing his mother within the jurisdiction of the Bani Police Station on Saturday. According to the police spokesman, the victim woman filed an application detailing the torture and threats to her life by her son, Wasif Yaqoob. The police registered a case under the Parental Protection Ordinance and took Rizwan into custody. SP Rawal has assured that all necessary legal procedures will be followed to ensure justice for the victim. He emphasized that violence against elderly parents is both unimaginable and deplorable. He reiterated the commitment of law enforcement to root out domestic violence, affirming that such acts against children and women will not be tolerated. He pledged that strict action would be taken to address and combat such heinous crimes.

Warden apprehended for brutal torture on citizen

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a traffic warden and other suspects involved in a shocking case of violence against a citizen in the Race Course area here Saturday. According to the police spokesman, the suspects have been identified as Traffic Warden Shoaib, along with Shafiq, Lal Khan, and Zeeshan Ali. Following the incident, the police have initiated departmental action against the traffic warden for his misconduct. City Police Officer Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, has taken serious notice of the incident and sought a report from SP Pothohar. He has also ordered legal action against those responsible. The police chief emphasized that violence and mistreatment of citizens are unacceptable.

Mohsin Naqvi meets Commander of Iraq's Rapid Response Unit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi met with a high-level Iraqi delegation led by Commander of Iraq's Rapid Response Unit Lieutenant General Dr. Tahmeir Ismail here on Saturday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, including not taking passports from Pakistani pilgrims in Iraq and providing more facilities to them were discussed in detail.

Moreover, training of Iraqi police in Pakistan, cooperation in the Safe City project, enhancement of mutual cooperation to prevent illegal immigration and human smuggling were

also discussed.

The Iraqi delegation invited Minister of Interior Mohsin Naqvi to visit Iraq.

The Interior Minister emphasized that the proposal of not taking passports from pilgrims traveling to Iraq requires immediate action added that hopefully, the Iraqi Government will soon make a final decision in this regard.

The Commander of the Iraqi Rapid Response Unit said that they will discuss the issue of not taking passports from Pakistani pilgrims with the DG Passport, and hoped that the issue will be resolved.

He added that the broth-

ers and sisters coming from Pakistan are our respectable guests. He highlighted that Pakistan has decided to provide visa-free facility to Iraqi citizens, which will be implemented soon.

He added that all possible cooperation for the training of Iraqi police and in the Safe City project will be provided. The Iraqi delegation included Brigadier General Commander of Protection Regiment Aqeel Kazim, Brigadier General Abdul Hussain, Muhammad Suhail, and others. Federal Secretary Interior Khurram Ali Agha and MD NRTC Brigadier Muhammad Asim were also present on the occasion.

Senators commend PPAF's poverty alleviation strategies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Syedaal Khan Nasar has said that Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund's (PPAF) comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation is truly commendable.

He expressed these remarks during a visit to the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) on Tuesday.

Accompanying him were Senators Abdul Shakoar Khan and Sardar Ali Haj Muhammad Umer Khan Gorgaji, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, who together underscored the importance of strategic initiatives targeting poverty in Pakistan.

During the visit, PPAF CEO Nadir Gul Barech briefed the senators on the organization's mandate, scope of work, and innovative strategies designed to tackle poverty. "PPAF's efforts not only address

immediate financial needs but also empower individuals with the skills and resources necessary for long-term self-sufficiency," Deputy Chairman Nasar remarked. He praised the organization's integration of gender equity and climate resilience into its programs, describing it as a testament to a forward-thinking strategy that aligns with national development goals. "This sets a benchmark for effective poverty alleviation," he added.

Nasar emphasized the significance of PPAF's initiatives in uplifting marginalized communities, noting, "The fact that a significant portion of their interest-free loans benefit women is particularly noteworthy, as it contributes to gender equity and economic empowerment." He acknowledged PPAF's commitment to sustainable development through initiatives like the GRASP program and the Restoration of Social

Services and Climate Resilience project.

"The detailed approach taken by PPAF, from providing livelihood assets to enhancing climate resilience, demonstrates a holistic understanding of poverty alleviation," Nasar stated, calling for continued support and expansion of these projects to effectively combat poverty and build resilient communities.

Senator Sardar Ali Haj Muhammad Umer Khan Gorgaji commended PPAF's initiatives, expressing his support for the emphasis on empowering women and promoting gender equity. "These efforts not only uplift communities but also contribute significantly to the socio-economic fabric of our nation," he remarked, reinforcing the Senate Standing Committee's commitment to supporting integrated efforts aimed at building resilient communities.

Ladies on push carts bring Independence Day cheer

ISLAMABAD (APP): As Pakistan's Independence Day approaches, the city's streets are coming alive with vibrant displays of festive merchandise where women vendors with their push carts laden with an array of national flags, bunting, badges, wristbands, and balloons are adding a splash of color to the city's landscape.

Their push carts are a treasure trove of Independence Day and birthday-related items, featuring an assortment of goods in shades of green, white, and red, said a report aired by a private news channel.

Despite facing numerous challenges, including harsh weather conditions and stiff competition, these female vendors remain undaunted, said a motorist in F6, adding that they have developed innovative strategies to attract customers, such as offering discounts for bulk

purchases or creating eye-catching displays.

"I am impressed by their resilience and creativity," said Maria, a resident of F6, adding, they are always coming up with new ways to showcase their products and attract customers."

"I have seen them braving the scorching heat and heavy rainfall, but they never give up," said Ahmed, a motorist who frequently passes through F6. "Their determination is truly inspiring."

I have been buying flags and bunting for years," said Mrs. Khan, a housewife from G6. "They offer great value for money, and their products are always of high quality."

"I love how they decorate their carts with colorful balloons and streamers," said Ali, a student from F8. "It adds to the festive atmosphere and makes me want to buy more."

"These women vendors are the true spirit of entrepreneurship," said Mr. Hussain, a businessman from Blue Area. "They are a testament to the fact that with hard work and innovation, anyone can succeed."

"I love buying Independence Day merchandise from these vendors, it's a great way to show my patriotism," said Ayesha, a resident of F10.

"Their push carts are a one-stop shop for all Independence Day-related items, from flags to badges to balloons," said Usman, a motorist. "I'm impressed by the variety of items they offer, from traditional flags and bunting to modern wristbands and key chains," said Ali, a student from F6.

These vendors are doing a great service by providing affordable and accessible Independence Day merchandise to the masses," said Hussain, a social worker.

PM's aide Romina Khurshid to table draft HIV prevention, protection legislation at NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's (PM) Coordinator for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Saturday vowed to table the draft legislation on prevention and protection of HIV AIDS in the National Assembly to get the law enacted for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the UN AIDS jointly organised a consultative dialogue for drafting HIV legislation in ICT here which has been participated by a diverse number of participants hailing from civil society, officials from the Ministry of Health, National Services Regulations and Coordination, National Highways and Motorway Police, health experts, academia and media.

Speaking as chief guest on the occasion, the PM's Coordinator for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam extended her gratitude to UNAIDS and SDPI for the endeavour and

shared her arduous experiences while enacting HIV legislation for the transgender community which is considered as taboo in the society.

She while volunteering to table the legislation at the lower house of the Parliament demanded the forum to develop synergies and collaborations with the provincial governments to come up with a holistic piece of legislation that could be made a model at the national level to be replicated by the provinces.

Romina Khurshid mentioned that it is necessary to adopt a proactive and out-of-the-box approach to devising solutions to cope with the HIV AIDS disease spread. She also demanded strict proposals for manufacturers of surgical and inoculation equipment including needles, syringes, gloves and others that could cause disease spread for poorly handling the infected materials.

She added that it was crucial to address HIV AIDS disease spread as it could be used as a weapon of biological warfare

and a threat to the nation's security if left unattended.

In his special remarks, Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said the Institute is welcoming and beneficial in catalyzing the efforts for sustainable development. He hoped that the lead role of the PM's aide on Climate Change in taking forward the legislation at the forum of the National Assembly would help drive the process further. National Coordinator, UN AIDS, Dr Syed Kaleem Imam delivered a detailed presentation on the draft legislation prepared by the UN AIDS team under his leadership.

He said the objective is to draw legislation for ICT which is aligned with global best practices and SDG3.3 (End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases).

The legislation, he said will help in the prevention, treatment and protection of the disease and

the infected masses. "37.7 million people are living with HIV globally, whereas in Pakistan from 2010-19, there has been an 84% increase in HIV cases" he added. He said the UN AIDS through the legislative endeavour intends to eliminate stigma and discrimination towards the disease and infected and ensure access to treatment and dignity and respect of HIV infected.

The draft titled "ICT HIV and AIDS Act 2024", he said comprised 38 sections prepared through a consultative process with a meticulous focus on the local, national and international laws enacted on the subject.

The legislation, he said once enacted would come into force at once and would also entail the formation of a Commission headed by a chairperson nominated by the prime minister to ensure implementation of the legislation.

National Coordinator, Strengthening Common Management Unit (CMU) for TB, HIV/AIDS and Malaria, Dr Razia Kaniz Fatima

said the HIV Aids has been always a priority for the government which is no more a taboo as many milestones have been achieved in addressing disease spread and prevention.

She added that Pakistan is in the phase of transition in the realm of HIV AIDS disease management programme which has always been under the stewardship of the government. Dr Fatima suggested that the HIV testing should be integrated with other disease tests to gauge the disease prevalence ratio in the population and local level resources are required at the local level as the HIV infected are the most neglected and need support at the grassroots level.

UN AIDS Country Director, Yuki Takimoto, on the occasion, said the draft legislation marked a crucial step towards the growing HIV epidemic in Pakistan. UN AIDS in support of the government and other relevant quarters is improving responses to reduce discrimination hindering HIV

ly advocates for the completion of the coalition

government's full five-year constitutional term.

The PPP always emphasized the importance of politicians resolving their differences amicably to strengthen democracy, he added.

Former DG Health ICT, Dr Hassan Arooj proposed the forum to consider making the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) a part of the implementation body of the legislation, whereas the individuals discriminating against the HIV infected should also be addressed in the legislation as it is not only a medical but rather a social and cultural issue in Pakistan.

Executive Director COMSATS, Ambassador Nafees Zakaria said the diplomatic missions should be guided through this legislation to ensure check on illegal immigrants carrying HIV positive entry from abroad into the country.

Former Justice Lahore High Court and Member Supreme Court Bar Council, Hassan Raza Pasha suggested the forum to clarify the qualification for the chairperson of the Commission to ensure that relevant experts will head the critical law implementing body.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi presenting souvenir to Commander of Iraq's Rapid Response Unit Lieutenant General Dr Tahmeir Ismail. —APP Photo

Mishal urges Muslim World to be united for Kashmir's freedom

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mishal Hussein Malik, a champion of Kashmir's struggle for liberation and wife of Senior Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik Saturday passionately appealed to the Muslim world to break its silence on the ongoing injustice and human rights abuses in Kashmir and be united for Kashmiris freedom.

Talking to a private news channel, Mishal Malik urged Muslim leaders and local citizens to stand in solidarity with the people of Kashmir, who have been suffering under Indian occupation for decades.

The Muslim world's silence on Kashmir is disheartening, ' Malik said, adding, it is time for us to speak up and demand justice for the Kashmiri people,' she stressed. Her appeal has also highlighted the critical

role of women in the Kashmiri resistance, who have long been at the forefront of the struggle against Indian occupation.

"This steadfast solidarity is rooted in our shared values of justice, equality, and human rights, she said, adding, we recognize that the Kashmiri people have been denied of their fundamental right to self-determination for too long, and that their struggle is a beacon of hope for oppressed communities worldwide".

By standing shoulder to shoulder with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters, we affirm our commitment to amplifying their voices, advocating for their rights, and supporting their courageous resistance against occupation, she highlighted. Through our collective action, we aim to break the

silence that has shrouded the Kashmir conflict for decades. We will not be bystanders to the human rights abuses, the arbitrary detentions, and the brutal suppression of dissent, she said.

Instead, we will mobilize our resources, our networks, and our voices to demand that the international community takes concrete steps to address the Kashmir crisis, she further added. We will stand in solidarity with the Kashmiri people until they are able to exercise their right to self-determination, free from coercion, intimidation, and violence, she mentioned.

Together, we will work towards a future where the Kashmiri people can live with dignity, where their rights are respected, and where their self-determination is a reality, not a distant dream, she concluded.

Minister directs for implementation of reduced travel fares

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Transport Minister Punjab, Bilal Akbar Khan on Saturday said that the government is ensuring the provision of quality travel facilities to the passengers. He directed the transport authority to ensure the recent fuel price cut was beneficial for the public in terms of reduced travel fares.

Talking to the media after visiting Pir Wadhai General Bus Stand, the minister expressed satisfaction with the atmosphere at the bus stand. "Standard facilities are being provided to the passengers at General Bus Stand by the administration and there are separate air-conditioned waiting rooms for gents and ladies", he said.

The minister said that under the leadership and vision of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the government was engaged in efforts to provide quality travelling to passengers.

He directed the bus stand management committee to ensure canteens and tuck shops on the premises of the bus

stands should sell quality food items. The minister further directed the implementation of Smog-Free Punjab SOPs to keep the atmosphere clean by discouraging smoke-releasing vehicles. Responding to media queries, he informed that Ching Chi Rickshaws would be brought under the transportation system.

"Employment of thousands of people is related to Ching Chi, so we cannot stop it, but the government will bring it under the law", he said.

He further informed that Ching Chi rickshaw stands will be built on the premises of the bus stands to reduce the rush. The minister also assured that transporters' problems will also be solved.

Earlier, the provincial transport minister reviewed travel facilities being provided for the passengers. The waiting room on the premises, anti-smog arrangements, implementation of new fares, problems of transporters and other issues were reviewed in

detail during the visit. Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema, AC City Hakim Khan, Secretary Rawalpindi Transport Authority (RTA), Rashid Ali and other officers were also present.

The Secretary RTA gave a briefing to the provincial minister regarding the renovation work at the bus stand. A delegation of transporters also met the provincial minister and informed him about their problems. The provincial minister directed the concerned authorities to resolve the problems of the transporters immediately.

The provincial minister during the visit also inaugurated the anti-smog awareness walk. Later, the provincial minister visited Kainat Bus Terminal where he inquired about the reduction in fares from the passengers. He visited the tuck shop on the premises of the bus terminal and directed the concerned management to ensure the sale of quality items.

Prioritizing country over politics only way forward: Saleem Haider

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said on Saturday that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) believed that Pakistan can move forward on the path to development by prioritizing the country's progress over political

disputes.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that PPP chose to limit itself on constitutional positions and gave free hand to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to implement its manifesto and cater to the public accord-

ing to their will.

He added that the PPP has always placed the interests of the state above political gains, believing that economic stability could only be achieved through political stability.

He said the PPP strong-

ly advocates for the completion of the coalition government's full five-year constitutional term.

The PPP always emphasized the importance of politicians resolving their differences amicably to strengthen democracy, he added.

Conflict peacefully resolved

KABUL (BNA): In Kunar's Shigal district, a 27-year-long feud between two families has finally been resolved. Mawlawi Aziz-ul Rahman Yasir, head of the Kunar Appeals Court, informed Bakhtar News Agency that the longstanding conflict between the families of Mohammad Dawood and Mohammad Hashim has been peacefully settled. He mentioned that both families had suffered casualties over the years, but local authorities have now brought an end to the dispute.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 28 1446 — Sunday, August 04, 2024

Afghan Judoka suspended

KABUL (Ariana News): Mohammad Samim Faizad, a judoka from Afghanistan at the Paris Olympics, was provisionally suspended after failing a doping test for a banned steroid. The International Testing Agency said: "The ITA reports that a sample collected from judoka Mohammad Samim Faizad from Afghanistan has returned an adverse analytical finding for the non-specified substance stanozolol metabolites."

Efforts accelerate to kickstart CASA-1000 power project

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Taliban administration has intensified efforts to begin the implementation of the CASA-1000 project in Afghanistan.

Engineer Farhad Mahmoudi, head of the Energy and Water Ministry's programs, announced on Saturday, August 3rd, that they are nearing an agreement with the World Bank to commence the project's practical work.

The CASA-1000 project involves the transmission of electricity from Central Asia through Afghanistan to Pakistan. The high-voltage transmission line will traverse seven provinces and 35 districts in Afghanistan before reach-

ing Pakistan.

Upon completion, this project is expected to benefit thousands of families in Afghanistan with electricity and generate tens of millions of dollars annually from electricity transit fees.

While construction of the project in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan is nearing completion, the practical work in Afghanistan has yet to begin, despite the World Bank's agreement to proceed.

The project is valued at \$1.2 billion, with \$360 million allocated for Afghanistan and \$260 million already funded by the World Bank under the previous government.

The delay in starting the

CASA-1000 project exacerbates the ongoing electricity shortage in Afghanistan, which continues to affect daily life and economic stability. The lack of reliable electricity supply is a major challenge for businesses and households, impacting productivity and quality of life.

Addressing the electricity shortage is crucial for Afghanistan's development and stability. The timely execution of the CASA-1000 project could play a significant role in alleviating the energy crisis by providing a more stable and sustainable power supply, which is essential for the country's economic growth and development.

Residents urge govt to address challenges

B A D A K H S H A N (TOLOnews): Several residents of Khastak Valley in Joram district, Badakhshan, express concern due to lack of access to telecommunication services.

They are urging the officials in the caretaker government to address their challenges.

However, the head of Afghan Telecom in Badakhshan has announced the activation of three telecommunication network sites in this area.

Din Mohammad, a resident of Joram district, Badakhshan, said, "We have no access to any telecommunication network here, we are facing many problems, for instance, if we encounter an issue, we have to walk for one or two hours to find a spot to make a call."

Inamullah, another resident of Joram district, Badakhshan, added, "Our request of the government is to take practical steps to address the problems of the people and to cooperate with us."

However, provincial officials of Afghan Telecom in Badakhshan say that three telecommunication network sites are to be established in Khastak valley and preliminary work has already begun.

Abdul Hamid Hakimi, the provincial head of the state-owned Afghan Telecom: "Furthermore, in Khastak valley the GPS and preliminary work in three areas have been completed and the telecommunication networks will be activated soon."

Badakhshan, located in the northeast of the country, is one of the provinces where most of the districts' residents do not have access to telecommunication and internet services and are constantly requesting the authorities to resolve this challenge.

Public library opened

L A S H K A R G A H (Pajhwok): A public Library has been opened in the Sangin district of southern Helmand province to promote reading culture, an official said.

Mawlawi Sultan Mohammad Hanif, deputy head of the Information and Cultural Affairs, told Pajhwok Afghan News they strived to facilitate youth in different fields and the opening of a public library in the district was part of these efforts.

District Chief Mawlawi Abdul Matin Haji Lala thanked officials of the Information Department for the opening of the public library in the district.

He said: "Sangin is a war-torn district, people here have been deprived of basic facilities, the opening of a library in this district is an encouraging step for its people."

He asked youths not to waste their time and visit the library or study books.

Ahmad Muntagim, a resident of Sangin, said: "In the past, there was no such library where we could study, now we can study here peacefully."

‘We are united under one emir’s leadership, we have not fought for power’



KANDAHAR (Ariana News): Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani stressed at a seminar held in Kandahar province recently that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) is united under one emir's leadership.

"We would not become sad about the martyrdoms, but we would become sad about being referred to as Haqqani and so-and-so," Haqqani said. "The three security institutions are united as before the conquest when there was no distinction among the Mujahideen."

"We are not the ones who fought for power," Haqqani said. "Our jihad was for the sake of Allah's

religion. There were no problems among the Mujahideen during the conquest of Afghanistan, thanks to our unity."

At the seminar, Abdul Haq Wasiq, the head of the intelligence agency, noted that the physical and hot war was over, but the cold and intellectual warfare continued. He added that the main purpose of the war was to disperse the Islamic Emirate.

Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, the Acting Minister of Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, said at the event that the "enemy" gives various titles to the officials of the Islamic Emirate, such as "strict, moderate, bright-

minded", but they must adhere to "consensus and complete obedience."

Noor Mohammad Saqib, Acting Minister of Haj and Religious Affairs, also stressed that obedience to the emir is the secret of the Islamic Emirate's success.

He added that in the past, "there were many movements that had scholars, but because of lack of obedience, they were destroyed."

Mohammad Yaqub Mujahid, the Acting Minister of National Defense, also said that the Islamic Emirate forces should be informed about the methods, means, and content of the ideological war against the Islamic Emirate.

He stressed that

Afghanistan has a regular, independent, and Islamic army and efforts are ongoing to train, modernize and equip it.

Mawlawi Hebatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), also spoke at the seminar and stressed obedience to orders, unity, and abandonment of "regional discrimination," warning that distrust would lead to failure.

"Be careful not to be arrogant with power and be like a soulless corpse in the face of obedience and do not interpret the orders of the seniors. Exercise perseverance. This is jihad for you," Akhundzada said.

Athletes stage power display to raise support for flood victims

GHOR (Khaama Press): Several athletes from Ghor Province organized a power display to raise awareness and gather aid for flood victims in the province at the "Flood Victims' Town" in the city of Firuzkuh, the provincial capital.

Abdul Qasim Ferdowsi, a boxer from Ghor, stated, "Many residents of Ghor who lost everything due to devastating floods and are now living in the 'Pasht-e-Gaomurk' area of Firuzkuh need shelter, food, clean drinking water, and other necessities."

We athletes from boxing, parkour, and Muay Thai organized these power displays to attract the attention of the central government and aid organizations to these displaced people."

Ferdowsi, also known as the "Snowman of Afgha-

nistan," expressed concern about the situation of the flood victims in Ghor and emphasized the need for urgent assistance from both the government and national and international aid organizations.

Nazemuddin Nizemi and Zubair, two other athletes from Ghor, also expressed deep concern for the flood victims, stating that these people are currently living in very difficult conditions. Meanwhile, the displaced persons now residing in the Flood Victims' Town in Firuzkuh have complained about their dire living conditions.

Subhan, a resident of Marghab District in Ghor whose entire possessions were destroyed by the flood, said, "We have been living in 'Pasht-e-Gaomurk' for about five weeks,

and we have received no help from the government or organizations. We have no shelter, no clean drinking water, our children have no access to education, and most importantly, we have no food."

M. Hussain, another flood victim from Marghab District in Ghor, said, "We have been living under the sun for over a month with no assistance so far. We currently have nothing."

The displaced people are also concerned about the rise in diseases in the flood victims' camp, stating that many children are ill.

Recently, local officials in Ghor reported that 400 families displaced by the destructive floods, who had left their original areas, have settled in Firuzkuh and the Flood Victims' Town. They also mentioned ongoing

efforts to provide the best services for disaster survivors and to build shelters for the flood victims.

The recent devastating floods in Ghor Province have resulted in numerous casualties, including women and children. Many homes and shops have been destroyed, agricultural lands and orchards have been lost, and thousands of livestock have perished.

The dire situation faced by the flood victims in Ghor underscores the urgent need for coordinated relief efforts and support from both national and international communities.

The efforts by local athletes to raise awareness are commendable, but substantial aid and resources are required to address the immediate needs of the displaced families.

‘PO plays a crucial role in expanding relations’



KABUL (TOLOnews): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, emphasized the important role of the Islamic Emirate's Political Office (PO) in broadening the interim government's political relations with the international community.

The Arg stated in a press release that Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met with Suhail Shaheen, the head of the Islamic Emirate's Political Office, during his visit to Qatar.

In this meeting, Shaheen mentioned that embassies of some countries that are not active in Kabul use this office to communicate on

important and bilateral issues.

The Arg's statement reads: "Mawlawi Abdul Kabir praised the activities of the Islamic Emirate's Political Office in Doha and highlighted the significance of this office, stating that it is influential in expanding the Islamic Emirate's relations and its role in resolving certain issues and progress cannot be overlooked."

Meanwhile, some political analysts have shared their views on the significance of the Islamic Emirate's Political Office in Qatar.

Sayed Akbar Sial Wardak, a political analyst,

said: "In my opinion, the Islamic Emirate's Political Office aims to negotiate politically with the US Embassy or other countries' embassies located there."

Another political analyst, Sameem Shamsi, stated: "If the Islamic Emirate closes its office and establishes Afghanistan's political representation in one of the provinces, foreign embassies will be compelled to reopen their embassies in Afghanistan."

The Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs traveled to Qatar on Thursday to attend the funeral ceremony of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's Political Bureau.

Afghan man arrested in Berlin after allegedly murdering wife

KABUL (Khaama Press): Austrian media reported that an Afghan man, accused of murdering his wife, was arrested at Berlin Airport while attempting to flee Europe.

According to reports, the 31-year-old man fatally stabbed his 29-year-old wife in Vienna, Austria. Her body was discovered by relatives on Thursday, August 1, in an apartment in Vienna-Middle. The woman had been killed by knife wounds to her neck and chest.

Relatives of the victim told Austrian media outlet Heute, "We came to the

apartment last night and requested the police to open the door. Now she is dead, and it is too late." They mentioned that an argument had occurred between the couple the night before the incident.

The report states that the victim had recently married the suspect and had been living in Austria for the past two months. The suspect had lived in Vienna for 14 years and had arrived in Austria from Afghanistan at the age of 17, recognized as a refugee.

The suspect managed to travel 700 kilometers undetected and arrived in

Germany. He was arrested on Thursday while attempting to leave Germany at Berlin Airport.

Investigations into the man's case are ongoing. German authorities have arranged for his extradition to Austria.

The recent increase in violence and attacks across European countries underscores a growing concern about security and the effectiveness of law enforcement measures.

These incidents reveal the complexities of dealing with cross-border crime and the necessity for enhanced cooperation

between nations to combat criminal activities.

As Europe faces a surge in violence, it is imperative for authorities to strengthen their efforts in preventing and responding to such incidents to ensure the safety and security of their communities.

Cricket League to kick off on 12th: ACB

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) has announced that the ninth edition of the Shpageeza Cricket League (SCL) will commence on August 12 at the Kabul International Cricket Stadium. This year's tournament will feature five teams: Speenghar Tigers, Band-i-Amir Dragons, Amo Region, Mis-i-Ainak Region, and Bost Region. The opening match will see Speenghar Tigers facing off against Band-i-Amir Dragons on August 12. Over the course of 14 days, 21 matches will be played, including 10 double headers. The tournament will conclude with the final on August 25. The last SCL was held in 2022, where Speenghar Tigers emerged as champions. The league did not take place in 2023 due to various issues.



level I have reached and how much I have improved." Another participant, Rahima, said: "The reason I turned to painting was that I wanted to reduce my depression because staying at home is very difficult."

At the same time, a seven-day seminar and painting exhibition has also been organized by an institution for female students in another part of the capital.

Sayed Anwar, the seminar organizer, said: "The

purpose of holding this program is to motivate young people, especially women. More than 120 people participated in this program and showcased their art."

Sahar, a participant, said: "My request from the Islamic Emirate is to create more such spaces so that we can support our society through our work."

After the closure of schools for girls above the sixth grade, many girls have turned to arts such as painting, handicrafts, carpet weaving, calligraphy, and embroidery.

