

Belarus FM today
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Aleinik will arrive here in Islamabad on a two-day official visit to Pakistan today (Tuesday). He is visiting Pakistan at the invitation of Foreign Minister Bilawal. The two FMs will hold wide-ranging talks covering a range of topics of bilateral interest. They will undertake an overview of bilateral relations and explore enhanced cooperation.



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PM says Imran always wished to default country

‘PTI chief’s narrative of victimhood’ bound to fail: Information Minister

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday said Imran Niazi had a role in deepening economic challenges of Pakistan as he scrapped the deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and his non-stop agitation, long marches and sit-ins caused economic and political instability.

In a tweet on the social media platform Twitter, he said, "Looks like Imran Niazi's understanding of the economy and the broader environment in which it operates is quite limited. He also conveniently forgets his own role in deepening economic challenges. From scrapping the IMF deal, he has always wished Pakistan to default."

"This is in addition to the adverse impact his politics of non-stop agitation, long marches, and dharna has had on the economy in terms of causing political instability. Even Pakistani investors would shy away from investing their capital in such an unstable environment deliberately created by Imran Niazi. The terrible events of May 9 alone have cost the economy billions of rupees & are an irrefutable endorsement of his nefarious designs. This is not to mention the plethora of corruption cases he is involved in," he noted.

He further said, "Yes, we do face the economic challenges but the doomsday scenario is past us. Sincere efforts are being made to address the challenges through economic belt-tightening and timely policy interventions. We are also working with friends and partners to bridge the financing gaps where needed." "The real challenge for us is to reduce our dependence on imports and bring down inflation, which is possible when we make exports, investment and productivity the engine of the economy. This is where our efforts are headed," he concluded.

Meanwhile, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb said that during past 19 years , Imran Khan through fake pictures and artificial narrative hoodwinked the people and taught them anti-nationalism, terrorism and desecration of martyrs and Ghazis memorials.

Taking to her twitter handle, in response to Imran Khan's tweet, she said the photo shown by Imran in his tweet, claiming to be fleet of PTI MPA, was in fact of an year old fire in an oil depot in Nowshera. She said Imran tried to give the impression that the fleet of PTI MPA in Sindh was burnt when he refused to quit the party, which was total false.

She advised that now was the time for Imran to sit comfortably between two flags and put on a comedy show at night, that too to satisfy his wounded ego. The minister said that some night during the show, Imran should apologize for his heinous and unforgivable crimes to the parents whose children he had misled and tempted. She asked Imran to also seek forgiveness from the families of those martyrs and veterans whose sentiments he had hurt, because Allah Almighty does not forgive if someone violated the rights of fellow human beings.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb also said that during past 19 years , Imran Khan through fake pictures and artificial narrative hoodwinked the people and taught them anti-nationalism, terrorism and desecration of martyrs and Ghazis memorials.

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Government puts names of Imran, Bushra on ECL

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The federal government on Monday put the name of former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan on the Exit Control List.

The federal cabinet gave the approval regarding placing Imran Khan's name in the ECL through a circular summary. The PTI chief's name was put in the no-fly list in connection with Al Qadir Trust corruption case involving transfer of £190 million to the Supreme Court of Pakistan by the UK's National Crime Agency as a result of its settlement with a Pakistani real estate tycoon. The cabinet has also decided to put the name of Imran's wife Bushra Bibi on the Exit Control List. Following the recommendation of NAB Rawalpindi, the cabinet approved the inclusion of the names of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in the ECP.

Earlier, a German news agency, DPA, reported on Friday quoting two FIA officials that Pakistan's government has restricted former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife and hundreds of political aides from travelling abroad. Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, and more than 500 leaders and members of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party have also been added to the list, officials said.

"It is a standard practice in every case. All those who face court cases are barred from leaving the country," one of the officials told dpa. Khan on Friday "thanked" the government for putting him on the no-fly list. In a tweet, he said: "I want to thank the government for putting my name on the ECL as I have no plans to travel abroad, because I neither have any properties or businesses abroad nor even a bank account outside the country. "If and when I do get an opportunity for a holiday, it will be in our northern mountains, my favourite place on earth."

ATC to decide Umar's bail plea today

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Monday reserved its verdict in response to bail application of former federal minister Asad Umar in the Judicial complex vandalism case.

According to reports, the An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Raja Jawad Abbas was hearing the application in the matter. At the outset of the hearing, public prosecutor Adnan Ali accused Asad Umar during the court appearance of the former prime minister 'facilitated' the party workers for vandalism in the judicial complex.

Judge Raja Jawad asked the prosecutor to give a single example of when a terrorist came without weapons for an attack. Advocate Sardar Masroof, the counsel for Asad Umar contended that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) parties held a protest demonstration in Islamabad's Red Zone before the Supreme Court of Pakistan building despite enforcement of Section 144, but no one was booked for violation.

After hearing arguments from both sides, the ATC judge reserved its verdict on Asad Umar's bail in the case. The verdict will be announced today (Tuesday).

It is pertinent to mention that the Islamabad police had registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan and other party leaders for attacking, vandalising, and damaging the judicial complex during the former premier's appearance. According to the FIR, the leaders of a "political party" were leading the mob, adding that they provoked the people, which led to vandalism.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff, General, Syed Asim Munir, addressing officers during his visit to Quetta Garrison.

Efforts to weaken army's bond with people will never succeed

COAS emphasized upon operational preparedness for conventional, sub-conventional and 5th Generation Warfare

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, COAS visited Quetta Garrison where he addressed officers of Command & Staff College Quetta. While addressing the officers, COAS emphasized upon operational preparedness for conventional, sub-conventional and 5th Generation Warfare.

COAS said, "Those who are making futile efforts to drive a wedge and weaken the unbreakable bond between the people of Pakistan and its Armed Forces will never be able to succeed Insha Allah." Armed Forces of Pakistan remain perpetually indebted to the valiant and proud people of Pakistan who, through the recent manifestation of their unique love for their Armed Forces across the length and breadth of the country, have given a befitting reply to the nefarious designs of the enemy and their collaborators.

COAS further stated that the nexus between the internal collusive ele-

ments and external forces to create instability has amply been exposed to the people of Pakistan". Pak Army, being one of the strongest armies of the world, with the blessings of Allah and undaunted support of proud people of Pak, can neither be deterred nor coerced by anyone, Alhamdulillah. COAS also visited various welfare schemes for soldiers in Quetta Garrison. He was earlier received by Commander Quetta Corps.

British army chief arrives in Pakistan on 5-day 'Defence Engagement' visit: The British Army's Chief of the General Staff (CGS), General Sir Patrick Sanders, arrived on Monday in Pakistan for a five-day Defence Engagement visit as part of the longstanding defence cooperation agreement between the two countries.

During his visit, General Sanders would meet with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir, alongside other Defence Engagement activities and discussions on bilateral mili-

tary cooperation in response to climate change-related crises would be a key focus of the visit, a news release said.

The depth and warmth of the UK-Pakistan military relationship and friendship, underpinned by a shared history and 'living bridge' diaspora links, are highly valued by the UK. The existing defence relationship includes Pakistani officers undertaking training at the UK's Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the Advance Command and Staff Course and the Royal College of Defence Studies.

General Sanders' visit comes almost one year after Pakistan's devastating floods which left nearly one-third of the country submerged and affected an estimated 33 million people. The UK's Ministry of Defence was directly involved in providing assistance for flood relief operations, airlifting in eight boats and ten portable generators at the request of Pakistan's army chief.

Suo motu review law 'comes into effect' Punjab polls case hearing adjourned indefinitely

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Supreme Court Monday indefinitely adjourned the hearing on the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) petition against the top court's order of holding Punjab's general elections on May 14 after the court was apprised that a law for the review of suo motu judgements had come into effect.

The Supreme Court Review of Judgements and Orders Bill, 2023, came into force Friday after President Arif Alvi's assent. The law states that for reviewing a suo motu judgement, a bigger bench — than the one that issued the order — will hear the case. "In case of judgements and orders of the SC in exercise of its original jurisdiction under Article 184 of the Constitution, the scope of review on both facts and law, shall be the same as an appeal under Article 185 of the Constitution," the law reads.

A three-member bench — headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar — heard the plea. This is the same bench that issued the April 4 verdict — under Article 184 (3) or the suo motu law. It had directed the commission to hold elections in Punjab in the mid of May and ordered the federal and Punjab governments to provide assistance to the ECP.

Despite the top court's order, the federal government expressed its inability to provide funds to the election commission and the armed forces had said they could not provide security due to the ongoing law and order situation. So even with the presence of the order, the polls did not take place on May 14.

At the outset of today's hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan told the court that a law for challenging suo motu orders has come into effect. He added that under the new law's section 2, the orders issued under Article 184 (3) could be appealed against. "This law will have retrospective effect," he noted, at which Justice Akhtar said this is why ECP lawyer Sajel Swati is smiling.

Responding to the AGP, CJP Bandial said the situation is interesting. He added

that the court understands the need for reviewing suo motu orders. Through the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023, the government created a new "judicial jurisdiction", the CJP noted, adding that the rulers tried intervening with the court's administrative matters.

"But I am happy that this law [the review act] is only related to Article 184(3)." The CJP added that "everyone" should reconsider their stance. "After the May 9 incidents, try to find a silver lining. Try to bridge the differences. Try to bring balance and peace to the system and hold elections through the right procedure."

Moving on, the CJP told the attorney-general that he must have read the court's judgement in the audio leaks commission case. "Keep in mind that the court did not invalidate the commission," CJP Bandial remarked. It may be noted that the Supreme Court Friday stayed the proceedings of the high-powered judicial commission formed to probe the audio leaks related to the judiciary, as well as the federal government's notification on the commission's constitution.

Justice Qazi Faez Isa, when he resumed the proceedings of the audio leaks commission the next day, raised questions over the SC order stopping the judicial panel from working. Today, CJP Bandial said that the court has to protect the independence of the judiciary. The top judge remarked that things will not work when secret meetings take place.

"It is a historical accident that there is only one chief justice," he added. The CJP said that the court had seen the notifications for the Memogate Commission, Abbottabad Commission and the commissions set up in the Shahzad Saleem murder case. He said that all the judicial commissions are constituted at the will of the chief justice. "If you want to investigate something, it should be done through proper procedures. I will not form a commission constituting myself," he added. The top judge also gave the option of investigations through another judge, saying that "this political temperature will not improve livelihood and law and order".

Imran says PDM govt far worse than Musharraf's martial law

LAHORE (Agencies): Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan has criticised the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government and said that the incumbent set up is 'far worse than General Pervez Musharraf's martial law'.

In a Twitter message, Imran Khan wrote, "With complete disregard for the rule of law, this fascist government — far worse than General Musharraf's martial law, has a one point agenda which is to crush PTI." Imran Khan said, "Meanwhile, Pakistani economy is going into a free fall. Dollar is at Rs315 in the open market, while for non CNIC holders, the rate is between Rs320-

325. The gap between the official rate and open market rate is Rs30/\$."

The former premier said, "This dollarization of economy means no local or foreign investment into the country, which will result into contraction of the GDP and worse, lead to hyperinflation." "The PDM leaders have billions of dollars stashed abroad, and understandably they are not pushed. The question is, how on earth is the Pakistani establishment allowing the country to head towards a complete economic meltdown?" questioned the PTI chief.

Khan alleged that women are being mistreated to pressurise the political leaders. Earlier, addressing

Rana dismisses allegations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah on Monday rejected the allegations being propagated on social media about the mistreatment being meted out to female prisoners involved in the May 9th vandalism. Talking to a private news channel, the minister said that all those accused of the Jinnah House attack in Lahore would face legal consequences.

President, PM greet Erdogan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have felicitated Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his re-election to the office of the President of Turkey.

The President, in a tweet on Monday, said his win is reflective of the trust posed in him by the people. The President said Turkiye is a close friend and a country with which we have had brotherly relations for centuries.

Dr Arif Alvi said Pakistan and Turkiye have always stood by each other, expressing the confidence that the relations between the two countries would continue to prosper under the dynamic leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The President said Pakistan looks forward to working with the Turkish President to further expand bilateral cooperation with Turkiye in all areas of mutual interest.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also congratulated Turkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his presidential win. The Prime Minister wrote on twitter, 'Heartiest congratulations to my dear brother President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his historic re-election as President, Republic of Turkiye.'

The Prime Minister said Recep Tayyip Erdogan is one of few world leaders whose politics has been anchored in public service. He said the Turkish President has been a pillar of strength for the oppressed Muslims and a fervent voice for their inalienable rights. Shehbaz Sharif said Recep Tayyip Erdogan's presidential victory and that of AKP in parliamentary elections is significant in so many ways, reflecting the trust and confidence of the Turkish people in his dynamic leadership.

Erstwhile Fata deserve special attention: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has said that the people of erstwhile FATA (Federal Administered Tribal Area) have been facing multiple challenges since last four decades; and now they deserve special attention so as to bring them at par with other districts and address their long lasting deprivations.

He expressed these views while addressing the certificates distribution ceremony of skills development training for the youth of North Waziristan Tribal District here on Monday. Three-month skills development training programme for the youth of North Waziristan was arranged by Mari Petroleum Company in collaboration with Sarhad Rural Support Program and Sui Northern Gas under which 110 youth of North Waziristan were imparted technical training in different fields.

Addressing the ceremony, the Caretaker Chief Minister said that erstwhile FATA has been merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after 25th constitutional amendment in 2018 but still the province is not getting the due shares of newly merged districts in the National Finance Commission Award. He added that the population of newly merged districts is more than 5 million; and they must get their due shares.

He said that ever since he assumed the charge as caretaker chief minister, he has been trying to resolve the issues of the merged districts and get their legitimate rights from the federal government adding that merged districts' issues have been taken up with the Prime Minister while several letters have also been written to the federal government to

this end. The Chief Minister while expressing his resolve to get the due rights of the merged districts said that he will continue efforts at all levels to get the legitimate rights of the merged districts.

He remarked that the resources of the provincial government are very limited, but despite this, the caretaker government would utilize all available resources for the development of the merged districts. He said that he had decided to listen to the issues of the people of ex-FATA, and the people from all over the tribal district can visit his office on every Thursday to get their problems solved.

The chief minister felicitated the newly trained youngsters and urged upon them to utilize their newly acquired skills for self-employment and work for the development and prosperity of their localities. The Chief Minister also thanked Mari Petroleum, SRSP and concerned stakeholders for imparting training to the youth of North Waziristan.

He also urged private companies working on exploration of oil and gas fields in the province to take steps under their corporate social responsibility program to impart skills and provide employment opportunities to the youth of the backward areas of the province. Appreciating the role of Sarhad Rural Support Programme for improving the quality of life of the people in the backward areas of the province, the Chief Minister said that SRSP had been rendering valuable services in various fields with the participation of the community in less developed areas of the province for the past 34 years; adding that there has been significant improvement in the lives of the people of these areas because of the efforts of SRSP.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning Prof. Ahsan Iqbal addressing participants of National School of Public Policy.

CM distributes offer letters to newly selected lecturers

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that when a person adopts the teaching profession, he/she has to take classes for at least the next 30 years – which means he/she has to prepare their students keeping in view their future and the future of the country.

“I am sure the lecturers who are being given offer orders today would take it their utmost responsibility to enhance the respect of their profession [teaching] by generating properly educated, well-behaved, and responsible youth.”

This he said on Monday while speaking at the Distribution of Offer Letters to the newly selected lecturers here at CM House. The program was organized by Minister of Education Syed Sardar Shah.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that it was an easy task to opt for the teaching profession, but it was quite difficult to come up with all its responsibilities as it was the profession of the prophets of Allah.

He added that teaching is passion and a commitment

to yourself, your student, and with society, and the country.

CM Sindh said, “A great teacher takes a hand, opens a mind, and touches a heart,” and quoted a quote “Good teachers are costly, but bad teachers cost more,” and we are paying both.

CM Sindh said that it was the heaviest commission (SPCS exam) in which over 100,000 candidates appeared for 1500 posts.

After a lengthy process, the SPSC selected the 1500 best minds for the task to be given to them to prepare the future of the country. “Inshallah, these 1500 teachers selected through a competitive process would turn up in their classes in August (after summer vacation) and would demonstrate their teaching skills.”

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that on the directives of Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari the process of the recruitment of 50,000 teachers through a third party and the commission has been completed and now more than 1600 positions, teaching and non-teaching, being created to

meet the requirement of teachers.

The chief minister said that on the recommendation of the Minister of Education Sardar Shah 1200 positions of M.Phil. and Ph.D. teachers have been sent to Sindh Public Service Commission for selection.

He said that he was trying to strengthen and improve the education system by introducing modern teaching methods and recruiting qualified teachers so that the province and country could flourish.

“It is education that enables you to compete in the world and Inshallah we will do,” he vowed.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the education minister has told him that the attendance of the students and the teachers in colleges has been digitized.

“We want the teachers to demonstrate professional teaching skills and the students to get them engaged in the learning process, this is why the attendance of the teachers and students is being emphasized,” he said.

The CM Sindh disclosed that 28 libraries in the col-

leges have been digitized and the number of digital libraries would reach 58 by the end of the current financial year.

“This is a digital age, the college course, lectures, and books are available online, and with the establishment of digital libraries in colleges the students would be able to listen to the lectures being uploaded in the system and use books they need and make notes,” he said.

Syed Murad Ali Shah said that now his government with the help of Aga Khan and other leading educational institutions was launching a teacher licenses process to improve the quality of education.

Minister Education Syed Sardar Shah speaking on the occasion said that with the commitment of the chief minister and chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari the provincial government has appointed teachers purely on merit. He added that now well-educated teachers selected through a competitive process have been brought into our education system and it was producing results.

CM refutes women mistreatment allegations

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has strongly refuted the allegations of mistreatment of women in prison.

He emphasised the importance of respecting and honoring women, urging care before levelling such accusations, said a handout issued here.

Elections to be held on time: Ahsan

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said that elections in the country will be held on time.

Talking to the media here on Monday, he said in a sarcastic vein that ‘revolutionists’ could not bear with jails for one or two days.

He said, “The way Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is shattering reminds us of an English language phrase ‘the house of cards’.” He said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership faced jails even in tough situations, but never raised hue and cry.

Ahsan Iqbal said there were many people in the PTI who did not support the politics of its leadership and the one being promoted on the PTI’s social media. He said that no patriotic person could support negative propaganda being promoted by the PTI overseas social media against country’s defence institutions.

Ahsan Iqbal said that if burning of residence of Qauid-i-Azam in Ziarat could be termed terrorism, then burning of Jinnah House in Lahore could not be ignored by terming it political protest. Attacks on country’s institutions could not be termed political protest, he said adding that if red line had been crossed and terrorism had been committed, then it would be called terrorism.

He said that if any political worker would play role within the parameters of politics and democracy, then he would be considered as part of democracy.

To a question, he said Pakistan had met all conditions of International Monetary Fund and he hoped that soon matters with the IMF would be finalised which would definitely end uncertainty in the market.

Addl IGP takes notice of firing

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Javed Alam Odho on Monday took notice of an incident of firing within City Court premises and sought a detailed report from the DIGP South.

According to a spokesman for Karachi Police, Javed Alam Odho has asked the DIGP - South for a detailed inquiry report into the incident. He ordered to take departmental action against those responsible for negligence.

Earlier, a woman namely Saima was shot injured by her husband identified as Sikandar over a family dispute within the premises of City Court. Accused Sikandar had been arrested.

Woman shot injured by her husband

KARACHI (APP): A woman was shot injured within the premises of City Court on Monday while the accused involved was arrested from the spot.

According to SSP City Arif Aziz, victim namely Saima was shot injured by her husband identified as Sikandar over a marital dispute. Both had appeared in court for their case hearing at East Court. The victim had come with her father, a policeman, for the hearing of her case.

Accused Sikandar grabbed pistol of victim’s father and shot her injured during a heated exchange of words. Victim Saima was immediately shifted to the hospital for treatment. The accused had been arrested and further investigations were underway.

Referring to the incident of May 9, where 32 women were arrested and 11 of them were currently on judicial remand in women jail, the caretaker CM said he had reassured that surveillance cameras were installed and monitoring teams were in place to ensure security.

Speaking to the media during a late-night inspection of the Samanabad underpass project, the CM reiterated that safeguarding women was a responsibility and emphasized his commitment to ensuring the safety of mothers and sisters.

The CM declared that those involved in the attack on Jinnah House were being arrested without fail, emphasizing that no one, regardless of their influence or status, will be spared. He made it clear that the perpetrators will face trial and will not escape punishment.

He mentioned that action has also been taken against some police officers, while in other incidents involving wanted women, a lenient approach has been adopted,

focusing on calling them for investigation accompanied by female police officials. The CM highlighted that a female SSP was over-seeing these matters, and the female SSP and deputy commissioner were visiting the jail, again, to meet the women today.

The CM acknowledged that journalists hold a special responsibility and affirmed that their safety and well-being was a priority for the government.

Earlier, Commissioner Lahore/DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa gave a briefing on the Samanabad underpass project to the CM, who expressed satisfaction with the progress of the work. The CM commended the workers engaged in the project, expressing his delight at witnessing their commitment to this public welfare initiative even late at night.

He urged them to continue the work to open the Samanabad underpass for traffic by June 15. Provincial Minister Information Amir Mir, CCPO Lahore,

Chief Engineer LDA, and others were also present.

CM chairs meeting on health reforms

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a meeting at his office in which decisions were made in principle to attach hospitals of Kahna Nau, Sabzazar, Raiwind, Manawan, and Bedian with teaching hospitals and to relocate DHQ hospital Minawali to a new state-of-the-art building of mother and child hospital.

All the departments of the DHQ hospital in Mianwali will be shifted to the new facility and the existing hospital building will undergo a transformation into a modern gynaecology ward.

The chief secretary, secretary primary & secondary health, secretary finance, and CEO Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab participated in the meeting, while commissioner Sargodha and deputy commissioner Mianwali attended the meeting through video link.

Muqam congratulates newly elected officials

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam congratulated the newly elected President of Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors (CPNE) Irshad Arif and other officials.

The advisor also congratulated Tahir Farooq for becoming the unopposed president of the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter and said that the newly elected officials will play a key role for the welfare of journalists.

He has further said that

the confidence shown by the journalism community over the newly elected officials of CPNE is undoubtedly a matter of pride for the latter and they will have to work hard to fulfill the expectations of their community.

Adviser to the Prime Minister said that i hope that the newly elected body will play its necessary role in solving the issues of journalists while maintaining the quality of journalism. The adviser further congratulated Adnan Zafar from Daily Aaj Peshawar, Syed Aitzaz Hussain Shah from Daily Maidan Peshawar, Mumtaz Ahmed Sadiq from Daily Azadi Swat, Fazal Haq from Daily Times Peshawar for being appointed as the representative members of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the CPNE’s Standing Committee.



KARACHI: Federal Secretary Ministry of Housing and Works Ifikhar Ali Shallwani visiting Scheme-33, Gulzar-e-Hijri, Karachi a project of Federal Government Employees Housing Authority.

Overseas Pakistanis briefed about investment

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Overseas Community Global (POCG) visited Directorate Agricultural Information Punjab, here on Monday.

Punjab Agriculture Information Director General Muhammad Rafiq Akhtar briefed the members regarding the investment opportunities in Punjab. He said, “Agriculture sector has a key importance in the country’s economy.”

By investing in the agriculture sector, not only the

production inputs would be available to the farmers at a reasonable rate but it would also provide stability to the country’s economy, he added. He briefed the members about the vast opportunities of seed industry, pesticides, fertilisers and value addition of flowers and vegetables in the agriculture sector in the province of Punjab. POCG Lahore

President Adnan Chaudhry said that information and videos related to investment in agriculture sector would be delivered by POCG members in more than 50 countries in the world so that investors get awareness and they could invest in agriculture in Pakistan and take advantage of investment opportunities in the sector.

Secretary for resolving complaints

KARACHI (APP): Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Naveed Aamir Jeeva, on Monday, directed to resolve issues and complaints received from beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme on top priority.

The parliamentary secretary issued the directives during visit of office of the Director General, Benazir Income Support Programme, Central Zone, Karachi and later presiding over a review meeting, said a news release issued here.

Naveed Amir Jeeva said that incumbent government was sincere in its efforts to eradicate poverty and remain committed to facilitate deserving families across the country.

He directed the concerned officers to resolve issues and complaints received from beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme on top priority.

He further said that those who make illegal deductions from BISP Beneficiaries amount would face the consequences.

Excise Peshawar recovers 14400 gm hashish

PESHAWAR (APP): Following instructions issued by Secretary Excise, Ehsan Ullah and DG Excise, Akmal Khan Khattak to curb the menace of narcotics, the department has geared up its actions against narcotics dealers, smugglers and their facilitators across the province.

According to the spokesman Excise on Monday, a team headed by

Excise Officer (Narcotics Control), Zahid Iqbal Khan and Circle Officer, Arshad Zaman Khan, SHO Excise Israr Hussain and sub-inspector Adnan Shahid during a successful intelligence-based action at H Gol Chowk near Islamabad Motorway recovered 14400 grams of hashish from a car.


The spokesman said the narcotics were concealed in the doors of the car bearing

number plate APD-389 (Sindh). The smuggler named Muhammad Waheed, a resident of Mansehra was taken into custody and shifted to Excise police station Peshawar where a case was registered against him.

Secretary Excise, Ehsan Ullah has highly appreciated the efforts and services of the Excise Department Peshawar for the recovery of narcotics.



LAHORE: Flowers of amaltas tree blooming along roadside at Model Town.



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Works Directorate

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from experienced petty contractors registered with C&W department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) and Pakistan Engineering Council for petty nature of Civil, Electrical, Plumbing and Gas works etc. to be carried out at KUST and Hangu Campus from July 01, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The cost of each work will not be more than Rs. 1.00 million. The tender will be carried out on above/below basis at MRS 2022 (2nd Bi-annual) Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Tender form along-with terms & conditions can be obtained from the office of PA to Vice Chancellor on cash payment of Rs.300/- (non refundable) from May 30, 2023 up-to June 14th, 2023.

Bid must reach the office of PA to Vice Chancellor, KUST up-to June 14th, 2023 before 10:00am, which will be opened on the same day at 10:30am in the presence of members Works committee and contractors or their representative.

Director Works
Kohat University of Science & Technology, Kohat
Ph #, (0922)52914790
Website: www.kust.edu.pk



Meeting reviews measures to promote tourism sector

PESHAWAR (APP): A high-level meeting held here at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KP-BoIT) on Monday reviewed measures to promote the tourism sector to attract domestic and foreign investors for its faster development.

The meeting was jointly chaired by the Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce, Muhammad Adnan Jalil and Advisor to caretaker Chief Minister on Tourism and Culture, Zafar Mehmood. Officials of the Board of Investment and Trade and other concerned authorities attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the provincial minister and advisor to the chief minister were briefed about the possibilities, measures and goals of investment in the tourism sector of the province.

They were also informed in detail about the projects

of the Integrated Tourism Zones established in the tourism sector in the province, while considering the historical and strategic location of the province. They were further informed about the possibilities of economic development of the province through tourism.

They were told that many places have been divided into cluster zones and integrated development zones for the development of tourists' destinations in the province, in which various firms have been offered investment.

On this occasion the supervising provincial minister assured to provide all possible support and facilities during the necessary stages for the promotion of tourism on behalf of the industry department.

The provincial minister said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is blessed with natural beauty and many tourist

spots and their promotion can play the role of catalyst to make the province economically stable.

He said that the tourism sector of the province is playing the role of backbone in the economy while domestic and international investors also have a crucial role in its rapid development.

Adnan Jalil further said that our province is rich in natural beauty and laws and policies to attract investors for the development of tourism. In this regard, they will also benefit from the mutual consultation of other concerned departments.

On this occasion, the Advisor to KP Caretaker CM said that they are making every possible effort to promote tourism in the province and there is huge potential of development in this sector and can help our province to stand on its own feet on economic grounds.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister KP Muhammad Azam Khan with youth of North Waziristan on completion of their skills development training.

UNHCR team discusses plans with DG PDMA

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) led by Robina Shaheen, Evaluation Expert here on Monday visited the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Headquarters and discussed future plans and reviewed previous interventions in response to the devastating flood of 2022 with the Director General of PDMA Janat Gul Afridi.

During the meeting, the UNHCR delegation engaged in productive discussions with DG PDMA, exchanging valuable insights and experiences regarding the challenges posed by the flood and the subsequent relief and recovery efforts. The discussions emphasized the importance of collaboration

to address the immediate and long-term needs of affected communities.

Janat Gul Afridi expressed his gratitude to the UNHCR delegation for their visit and reiterated PDMA's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the population in the face of natural disasters.

He acknowledged the critical role played by international partners in supporting the efforts of PDMA and providing relief items to PDMA KP for further distribution to flood affected people across the province in 2022.

PDMA and the UNHCR delegation expressed their commitment to further strengthen their partnership in disaster risk reduction and emergency response. They emphasized the

need for coordinated efforts to build resilience, improve early warning systems, and enhance capacity-building measures to mitigate the impact of future disasters.

Afridi reiterated that PDMA will continue to support international organizations as per its policy, highlighting the importance of sustained collaboration in achieving collective goals.

The UNHCR delegation commended PDMA for its prompt and effective response to the devastating flood of 2022, which resulted in widespread devastation.

They also recognized the resilience of the affected communities and emphasized the importance of sustainable solutions that prioritize the protection of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and refugees.

Street criminals' gang busted; cash recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): The Faqirabad Division police on Monday identified nine hardcore street criminal gangs and arrested its 10 members during an operation here and recovered looted valuable items and cash from their custody.

According to a police spokesman, under the supervision of SP Faqirabad Division, Muhammad Umar the criminal gangs involved in active street crimes in the city were cracked down and in various successful operations in jurisdictions of police stations Paharipura, Faqirabad, Gulbahar, and Phandu the arrests were made.

The arrested accused

included Afghan nationals who were involved in robberies, motorcars, bike snatching and lifting, and other serious offenses.

The Faqirabad Division Police recovered three motorcars, 16 motorcycles, 62 valuable mobile phones, two lakh cash, and one digital camera from their possession while weapons used in the crimes at gunpoint were also recovered.

During the initial investigation, it was revealed that among the arrested accused some were the experts of changing the EMI number of stolen mobile phones, smugglers and dealers of stolen mobile phones to

Afghanistan, and also dealers of auto parts of stolen motorbikes and vehicles.

The arrested accused confessed to involvement in several street crimes within the limits of different police stations.

SHO Paharipura Ijaz Nabi, SHO Faqirabad Waris Khan, SHO Gulbahar Umar Afridi and SHO Phandu Aqib Khan led the crackdowns and identified the hardcore gangs of street criminals active in the city.

The police would hand over the recovered vehicles, motorcycles, mobile phones, and other items to their owners after verification and fulfilling the legal formalities.



PESHAWAR: VC SBBWU Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmad, Director, Directorate of Youth Affairs KP Irfan Ali Khan in a group with faculty of SBBWUP and its Affiliated Colleges during One Day session on "Climate Education & Action".

Governor opens mobile screening project

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Monday visited Shaheed Ahmad Elahi school Gulbahar and inaugurated mobile screening project of the Khyber Eye Foundation.

Free checkup, medicines and eyes glasses would be provided to children of poor eye sight of the government schools under the aegis of Khyber Eye Foundation project.

The Governor inspected classrooms and met with students besides inspecting eye equipment of the Khyber Eyes Foundation and met with the staff.

Provincial Ministers, chairman of Khyber Eyes Foundation and Director Education were present.

Release of arrears demanded F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Joint Action Committee (JAC) delegation held meeting with Vice Chancellor (VC) Islamia College University Peshawar and discussed issue of arrears pending from last year, on Monday.

The presidents and general secretaries of all employee's associations were present in the meeting held at VC Islamia College Office led by Dr. Inayat-ur-Rehman and Amir Izhar. The delegation argued VC Islamia College University to release arrears of employees as per 15% increase announced for 2022-23 fiscal year.

However, VC Islamia College University has turndown JAC demand due to alleged shortage of finance of the varsity, the press statement stated.

JAC argued to VC Islamia College Dr. Gul Majeed Khan to release longstanding arrears of employees within one week otherwise competent authorities including government VC should be responsible for the situation because the action committee will pave new plan in favor of their demands.

Civil society demands recruitment F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The political leadership condemned neglecting residents of Peshawar during recruitment of constables in police department. It is worthy to mention that interested candidates had protest in favor of their demands while Inspector General of Police has issued notice for recruitment of constables in 16 districts but neglected Peshawar which is not fair.

This was claimed by political leadership along with representative from every walk of life in their joint statement issued to press and stated that on one hand residents are facing high inflation and unemployment while on the other hand Peshawar's inhabitants are ignored during recruitment in police.

The civil society claimed unemployment has already distributed law and order situation in Peshawar because dacoities are reporting in brought daylight in the provincial metropolis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali cutting a ribbon to inaugurate mobile screening project of Khyber Eye Foundation in Shaheed Ahmad Elahi school Gulbahar.

MCMC prepares public servants for higher responsibilities: DG NIM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mid-Career Management Course is a crucial training program for public servants, preparing them for higher responsibilities and emerging development challenges in the modern world.

These views were expressed by Director General National Institute of Management Peshawar Captain @ Usman Gul while addressing trainee officers of Mid-Career Management Course on the eve of the inaugural session of the 37th MCMC at NIM Peshawar.

While addressing the participating officers, he

emphasized that by focusing on academic activities with a positive attitude towards learning and self-improvement, the trainee officers will emerge from this training as highly improved civil servants, poised to contribute to the betterment of the public and national development.

He urged them to wholeheartedly engage in the training process to maximize the benefits of the training. He also urged them to follow austerity measures as initiated by the Federal Government as the country was facing financial difficulties and it becomes our shared responsibility to save every single penny we can by judicious utilization of the resources.

He highlighted the significance of information technology and said that it has, on one side, facilitated the public service delivery but at the same time, it has given birth to many new challenges and therefore, it is incumbent upon the public servants to learn new IT skills so as to ensure effective and efficient public service delivery.

He said that the training is designed to impart the requisite IT, leadership and management skills to the participants to enhance their competencies and



make them better public servants. He also praised the crucial role which is played by the civil servants in national harmony and economic prosperity.

Chief Instructor MCMC Muhammad Tayyab gave a detailed briefing to the participants and explained the objectives and dynamics of the course.

D&SJ Peshawar issues first ever online Release Warrant

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: District and Session Judge (D&SJ) Peshawar Ishfaq Taj has issued first ever online Release's warrant in criminal of inmate named Muhammad Ilyas at Peshawar central jail, on Monday.

Following release of

prison, the judicial order has made history by issuing first ever release warrant.

According to details, Session Courts and Central Jail Peshawar has started online issuance of Release Warrant on trial basis from Yesterday (Monday).

During last meeting Criminal Justice Coordin-

ation Committee has directed to initiate online issuance of Release of Warrant to curtain corruption in the process despite using ordinary postal system.

Following release or obtaining bail, release warrant should be immediately forwarded to prison's administration via Session

Court-Central Jail fiber optic channel to ensure good governance and precious time.

It is second milestone for judiciary in provincial metropolis towards digitization after establishment of video link between Session Court and Central Jail Peshawar.

Girl killed in name of honor

PESHAWAR (APP): A 15-year-old girl who married against the will of her family and was on bail from the court was shot dead by her relatives in the vicinity of Inqilab police station here.

ASI Fazal Diyan told media persons that the girl had married against the will of her family and was residing with her husband in Kohat. She along with her husband was recovered from Kohat and a court had sent her husband to jail while she was allowed bail some three months back.

The ASI said that they received information that a girl was being secretly buried at a local graveyard.

The area police reached the graveyard and after initial investigation sorted out that it was the same girl who was on bail from the court. Later the police received information that the girl was killed by her relatives in Kochiyan Qilla area for honor.

The police also searched

the house of the accused for evidence and later arrested the father of the girl, Muhammad Gul, her uncle Juma Gul and cousins Nauman and Ehsanullah for their involvement in the girl's murder.

Mother killed

PESHAWAR (INP): A woman was gunned down and her three daughters were injured during firing incident in Peshawar, police confirmed on Monday.

Police said that incident was a family dispute when suspects shot dead a 50 years old woman (B) whereas her 17 years old daughter (A), 18 years old daughter (S) and 23 years old daughter (S) were injured by the firing in Sodezai area.

Upon receiving the information about the incident police and rescue teams rushed towards the scene. The Rescue authorities shifted all the injured ladies to hospital and one of the injured is said to be in critical condition.



PESHAWAR: Tehsil Mayor Dara Adam Khel Shahid Afridi addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Call for proper teaching, understanding of climate to students

PESHAWAR (APP): The speakers at a one-day awareness session on "Climate Education and Action" on Monday called for proper teaching and understanding of climate to students to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The awareness session was organized by Directorate of Youth Affairs in collaboration with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU).

Speaking on the occasion the Vice Chancellor, SBBWU Prof Dr Safia Ahmed highlighted the need of understanding and proper teaching and understanding of climate to students and added that these changes are affecting developing world but the developed countries are

least affected by the climate changes.

She said that Pakistan experienced the worst flood last year and the country can witness the devastating impact of global warming on daily lives of the people and suggested jointly efforts for preservation of the environment through planting more trees.

She also added that the young climate ambassadors would be the guardian of the planet and they would inspire and support climate action in their communities and networks.

The session addressed the importance of sensitizing and training young generation towards environmental sustainability and empowering them in the transition of green growth.

Directorate of Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irfan Ali Khan appreciated the efforts of the team of SBBWU including Dr Hamida Bibi, Incharge, Assistant Professor, Department of History and Pakistan Studies and Tasheen Zia, Deputy Registrar (A&M).

He said that Directorate of youth affairs work on four "Es" Education, Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Entertainment, adding that "If we implement these 4 Es then we can bring a positive change in our society."

He said the directorate has started the project with females because it wanted to start it from homes and would continue these effective activities in the future as well.

The session was also

addressed by a team from SBBWU and its affiliated College who had recently visited University of Nebraska at Omaha for on-campus (Omaha, USA) training of professional development activities on pedagogy, leadership, networking, climatology, sustainability and culture building under US Government funded project "Developing the Next Generation of Female Environmentalists (DNGFE)".

The DNGFE team included members Dr Sadaf Bashir, Assistant Professor Department of Political Science, SBBWUP, Lecturer Microbiology Sumaira, Lecturer Microbiology Dr. Mahreenul Hassan, Assistant Professor Department of Bioinformatics Dr.

Nousheen Bibi, Assistant Professor Department of Education Dr. Wilayat Bibi, Assistant Professor Department of Law Johar Wajahat, Lecturer Department of Economics Saira Khan and Mahrukh Zahir, Lecturer Government Girls Degree College Ekka Ghund/Incharge Principal of Government Girls Degree College, Chanda.

The DNGFE team shared their experiences, action plans, climate education and action steps for youth.

The Session was attended by 200 participants including students and faculty of SBBWUP and its Affiliated Colleges and later certificates and shields were distributed among the participants and organizing team.



In brief

Free medical camp held F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Security Forces are continuously focusing to provide basic health facilities to the locals living in far flung areas of Mohmand. For the purpose, Frontier Corps North organised a Free Medical Camp in village Shati Mina, Mohmand district. A total of 246 patients including men, women and children were checked-up and were provided free medicines. Doctors and nursing staff also gave awareness to the patients about seasonal diseases. Locals thanked Frontier Corps North for organising free medical camp in the remote area of Mohmand.

TMA obtained equipments F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Three loader vehicles and other cleanliness equipment were given away to Tehsil Municipal Authority (TMA), Landi Kotal by the Islamic Relief Organization on Monday. A simple gathering was initiated in Tehsil Municipal Officer (TMO) office that was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Haseeb-ur-Rehman, Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Irshad Ali Mohmand, Islamic Relief representative Sadeeq Khan, Tehsil Mayor Haji Shah Khalid, TMO Abdus Samad and scores of councilors. Additional Deputy Commissioner Haseeb-ur-Rehman on behalf of the Islamic Relief formally handed over keys of the loaders and other apparatus to the TMO, Landi Kotal. Speaking on the occasion the official said that the administrations strived hard to develop backward areas and for the purpose they initiated various uplift schemes. He urged the business community to join hands with them to work for the betterment of them of the bazaar. City Mayor Haji Khalid said appreciated the Islamic Relief for provision of loaders and cleanliness equipments to TMA aimed to keep clean the historical Landi Kotal bazaar and said they had been ignored for decades therefore a comprehensive infrastructure development projects need to be planned to advance the century old bazaar of Landi Kotal.

Residents hail Muqam F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: The approval of gas for Danwah, Siyar Dara, Sangar and Rabat Dara by the adviser of the Prime Minister and the provincial president of PML-N Engineer Amir Muqam is welcome. These views were expressed by Jahan Bahadur Advocate, a member of the Provincial Working Committee of the People's Party and the former president of District Bar Timergara, in a statement. But during a speech at a welcoming ceremony, the announcement of approval of gas for the above-mentioned areas has caused a wave of happiness in the people of the area. He said that the PDM government will work for the development and prosperity of Lower Dir. The People's Party plays an important role in the construction and development of the backward districts of the country. And he thanks to PML-N Provincial President Engineer Amir Muqam on the approval of gas. Meanwhile, Commissioner Malakand Shahidullah Khan has said that there is complete security in Malakand division and tourists with their families can visit Swat, Kalam, Dir Kumrat, and Chitral and other tourist areas without any fear.

Tribesmen facing multi-dimensional crisis

— resurgence of militancy, migration and corruption in education main reasons

F.P. Report

WANA: South Waziristan, a region deeply affected by militancy and military operations, continues to grapple with a deteriorating education system. Over the past decade, Operation Rah e Nijat forced the local population to flee to settled areas such as Tank, Dera Ismael Khan, and other regions. While the situation improved when they returned, the resurgence of militants and the migration of teachers have created new challenges.

Most teachers have settled in areas away from Waziristan, refusing to return due to the lack of basic amenities. An anonymous teacher revealed the grim conditions, citing the absence of hotels, internet access, electricity, and phone connectivity. Additionally, with only 10 to 15 students in most village schools, the presence of multiple teachers seems redundant. Some schools have even been declared closed due to ongoing law and order issues.

To meet enrollment targets, teachers are compelled to fabricate numbers, a practice known by the district education department. Female education faces additional hurdles, as there are no separate female hostels available. Following tribal customs, tribal elders are reluctant to send their female children to stay overnight in the houses of others. This lenient approach by the District Education Officer has resulted in significant setbacks for female students.

Efforts are underway to address these issues, but the entrenched subordinate staff within the education department, who have remained in their positions for decades, wield influence that prevents neces-

sary actions. This staff has been involved in fraudulent hiring practices, with over 2,200 teachers recruited illegitimately. They have also misappropriated PTC (Parent-Teacher Council) funds, amounting to more than 15 crores.

One teacher from the Servaki division disclosed that while funds were allocated for the construction of washrooms and play areas, the money was embezzled by office administrators and school owners. Consequently, there are no washrooms in these schools. Additionally, it has become customary for school owners to extort money from teachers, often ranging from 1,000 to 12,000 rupees per teacher. These unethical practices generate significant profits for the school owners, who can earn up to 50,000 rupees per month. In the face of monitoring visits, the school owners arrange bogus teachers to mask their corrupt activities. Refusal to comply results in reports being filed against the honest teachers, leading to inquiries from the district education office.

Teachers attempting to carry out their duties often face harassment from school owners, who pressure them to pay money instead of fulfilling their responsibilities. These school owners, who hold prominent positions within the tribe, have turned schools into guesthouses or storage spaces for livestock. Challenging their authority becomes impossible, as they hold influential government positions such as guard or sweeper. Their family members, too, neglect their duties as sweepers and caregivers, further compromising the quality of education.

When District Education Officer Ghulam Fatima attempted to enforce

accountability within her staff, the tribal elders lodged fake complaints with higher authorities, including the Deputy Commissioner and Additional Deputy Commissioner, questioning her understanding of local culture and traditions. The mafia within the male-dominated District Education Office in South Waziristan is so powerful that an honest management cadre officer, Malik Khan, was transferred from his position as Deputy DEO within two months. Meanwhile, a teaching cadre individual, previously transferred, was reinstated.

To combat corruption, the current accountant of South Waziristan district has played a crucial role in identifying and halting payments to bogus teachers. These individuals were recruited fraudulently, with their records hidden from the education office, and they received salaries without rendering any teaching services. The District Education Officer for Female Education in South Waziristan has made significant positive changes, including streamlining office records, redistributing powers among her subordinates, and withholding pay from absent and bogus teachers. However, both officers face immense pressure from the mafia to relent in their efforts.

The education crisis in South Waziristan demands urgent attention from relevant authorities. A multifaceted approach is necessary to tackle the challenges posed by militancy, migration, corruption, and the mafia's influence. The provision of necessary infrastructure, transparent hiring practices, and the empowerment of dedicated education officials are crucial to rebuilding the education system in this region.

Role of teachers cannot be denied

F. P. Report

LOWER DIR: Former Provincial Finance Minister Muzaffar Syed Advocate has said that the role of teachers in nation building and development of the country cannot be denied. He expressed these views while addressing a farewell ceremony and a dinner held at the Government High School Shamshi Khan Talash hosted by Ittihad e Asateza Talash chapter in the honour of Haji Khaliqur Rehman on his retirement from services here on Monday.

The event was attended by retired school principals, senior staff, teachers, members of Talash Qaumi Jirga and local elders. Tehsil Chairman Timergara Mufti Irfanuddin, former District

President of Senior Staff Association Principal Aftab Alam, Principal Aminul Haq, district spokesperson of SST Welfare Association Sajid Khan, Dr Khaista Rehman and others in their speeches praised the retired senior teacher and lauded his services for promotion of education and serving the teachers' community.

They said that the retiring teacher had rendered excellent services in the education department for 32 long years. They said that due to the retirement of Khaliqur Rehman, the education department had lost an excellent teacher and an excellent administrator whose vacuum cannot be filled.

The former provincial minister Muzaffar Syed said that teachers were the real architects of a nation and the nations that respect-

ed their teachers were ruling the world today. He urged the teachers to focus on character development of students along with teaching as the main objective of education was to provide useful, educated and good citizens to the society.

On this occasion, colleagues presented various gifts to the retiring teacher. Haji Khaliqur Rehman thanked the teaching community and senior staff for the honor and said that he would remember the love of his seniors and colleagues throughout his life. Another similar function was organized by the staff members of his school, Government High School Dheri Talash at Fishing Hut Chakdara here the other day wherein gifts were presented to him as a tribute.

Price committee reviews edible items' prices

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: District Price Control Committee Hafizabad revised prices of essential commodities with consultation of officers of different government departments, representatives of traders and consumers. Deputy Commissioner Umer Farooq Warriach presided over the meeting. Flour bag of 10 kg would sell at the rate of Rs. 1170 per bag while flour bag of 20 kg would be available at the price of Rs.2340 per bag in the market. Prices of rice, gram, pulses, ghee, beef, mutton, bread, milk etc. was also revised in the meeting.

DC warned the traders to implement new price list otherwise heavy fines would be imposed while in case repeated violation, criminal cases would also be registered with police station.

Meanwhile, ADCR Imtiaz Ali Baig visited fruit and vegetable market and witnessed process of auctioning of fruits and vegeta-

bles and reviewed quality and prices of fruits and vegetables. He imposed fine of Rs.30000 to shopkeepers to sell fruits and vegetables on arbitrary rates.

Admin monitors cleanliness condition: Officers of district administration Hafizabad are checking standard of cleanliness in the district for providing clean and pleasant atmosphere to citizens. In this connection, ADCR Imtiaz Ali Baig and Assistant Commissioner HR and Coordination Ishtiaq Ahmad visited different areas of city Hafizabad. They directed the MC Officers to improve cleanliness standard in the city and remove all bushes alongside minor (small canal) passing through district complex Hafizabad.

Solidarity rally held: Civil Society and Journalists took out a rally to express solidarity with Pakistan Army and to pay tribute martyrs of Pakistan Army led by president press Club Pindi Bhattian Mian Shah

Abbas Bhatti advocate and Mian Nazim Abbas Bhatti. The rally started from Dera Mian Nazim Abbas Bhatti and concluded at Gool Chowk. The participants of the rally were raising slogans in favour of Pakistan Army.

While paying rich tribute to martyrs of Pakistan Army, Mian Nazim Abbas Bhatti and Mian Shan Abbas Bhatti said that Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies are guaranty of protection and integrity of the country. They said that extremism was harm image of the country in the world and the whole nation was standing with Pakistan Army and Law enforcement agencies shoulder to shoulder. They condemned incidents of May 9 and demanded the government to take strict action against miscreants involved in damaging national and Army installation so that no one could dare to repeat such incident in future.

KUST syndicate approve proposals of F&PC for budget estimates



F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) held 57th Syndicate meeting under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, on Monday.

The meeting was attended by syndicate members comprising of Justice (Retd) M.Nasir Mehfooz (Nominee of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court attended the meeting online), Syed Hidayat Jan Ex-Secretary Govt. of KP (Nominee of Chancellor), Azhar Zahoor Dy. Secretary HED KP, Sadaqat Ullah Dy. Secretary Establishment Dept KP, Anila Faheem Dy. Secretary Finance Dept KP, M.Raza Chohan Advisor Academics HEC (Nominee of Chairman HEC), Dr. Muhammad Tariq Jan Registrar KUST, all Deans and elected members from Faculty and Administration cadres, KUST.

The meeting approved recommendations of Finance and Planning Committee (F&PC) for the budget estimates for the FY 2023-24 of KUST. The University was appreciated for the earlier projected surplus budget estimate during FY 2022-23 which was 59 million is projected

during FY 2023-24 as 105 million which is a remarkable increase in comparison to the earlier estimate and appreciated by all the members for the best financial management.

The surplus budget estimated for the FY 2023-2024 kept at 62 million. The members of the syndicate appreciated the Vice Chancellor and his team for their efforts for increasing the revenue streams and good returns on the investments. The members also appreciated efforts of Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan (VC KUST) in increasing student's enrollment by Academic Expansion that includes offering new applied science and market oriented degree programs that has also resulted in the increase in budget surplus.

Members of the syndicate acknowledged that these Financial indicators shows the best financial management and optimal university resources utilization practices adopted by the Vice Chancellor and his team for which the university has already received Best Financial Award from the Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The total budget of the University for the FY 2023-24 recommended by the syndicate is Rs.1501.485 million.

The meeting approved the creation

of 46 number of new positions for faculty cadre that was also appreciated for the vision and mission of the Vice Chancellor to strengthen departments and sections with qualified human resource.

The meeting also approved the agenda for the minimum salary of Rs. 25000/- to be paid to contract/contingent paid staff to facilitate the staff during the inflation in the current era. The meeting also approved the proposed Endowment fund policy by taking pride for KUST being the only university in the province to materialize this policy. A committee in this regard is constituted by the syndicate to further materialize this policy toward its implementation in true spirit and appreciated this move.

At the end of the meeting, the Vice Chancellor thanked the provincial government as well as the members of the syndicate that are cooperating and acknowledging the implementation of policies/proposals for the university for improving academic quality and sustainability and in establishing vibrant environment in the campus that has enabled to ensure best quality assurance practices in the campus.

PHC CJ visits to sub-jail Bara F.P. Report

KHYBER: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) paid a surprise visit to sub-jail Bara, District Khyber and inspected every barrack personally and gave a patient hearing to all the prisoners individually, on Monday.

The majority of the complaints received regarding the non-appearance of the counsels and prosecution witnesses are causing delays. Her ladyship then and there issued strict directions for the resolution of the emerging issue.

Sub Jail Bara consists of only three barracks with a huge population without having basic facilities to the inmates. The overcrowded population of jail has no open areas and an inadequate ventilation system to the barracks. This is causing the spread of communicable diseases but also other psychological problems to the inmates.

It was also observed that no basic health and hygiene kits and emergency medicines were in stock. Directions were also issued for the proper medical facilitation and treatment of the inmates. Chief Justice directed the IG Person, Deputy Commissioner, Khyber and other stockholders for immediately exploring the possibilities for extension of Sub Jail and to submit report positively to avoid any untoward situation. Her ladyship showed her concerns about the cases of under-trial prisoners and directed the District & Sessions Judge for the speedy disposal of the cases.

Police arrests five drug smuggler F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police arrested 05 alleged drug smugglers including women and recovered more than 23 kg of hashish in the premises of Rustam police station, on Monday.

According to the details, after the Rural Circle Police received information about drug smuggling, the Rustam Police team under the leadership of SHO Abdul Sajid adopted an immediate strategy, blocking the main road and checking suspicious persons and vehicles, three women riding in a high-speed rickshaw. And two men who tried unsuccessfully to smuggle drugs by adopting the style of house people. Rustam police team along with ladies police during the blockade three women riding in rickshaw (f) wife of Abdul Nasir, (s) wife Randa Khan, Azam Khan son of Abdul Nasser along with his wife Ali Sher and Kamran son of Dalfraz.

Scholars sought inquiry into teachers killing

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The scholars of Kurram district have condemned the brutal killing of teachers and workers in Teri Mangal School and demanded immediate exposure of the elements involved in the incident and severe punishment.

Addressing a joint press conference and protest in Parachinar, scholars belonging to various organizations, Allama Khyal Hussain Danish, Allama Syed Amin Shah Hussaini, Allama Baqir Hydari, Allama Syed Mufid Hussain, Allama Syed Muhammad Hussain Taheri, Allama Akhlaq Hussain Shariati, Allama Iran Ali condemned the killing of seven people, including four teachers, in Teri Mangal School on May 4 and said that the teachers were brutally killed by firing and axes in broad daylight in front of students.

The scholars demanded that action should be taken immediately against the elements involved in the crime

and the killers should be given severe punishment. It is regrettable that timely action was not taken.

The scholars said that the district administration should realize their mistake and take strong action on the incident and a fact-based report should be submitted to the higher authorities. And other employees should be appointed in their area. Scholars supported the Charter of Demand of Teachers Association and supporting the demands of young teachers for reshuffling.

Meanwhile, the education sector in Central Kurram's Zimashat Ali Sherzai area is facing a crisis as Govt High School Manato remains without a headmaster. The absence of leadership has created an unfavorable situation, leaving the school and its students in dire need of immediate attention.

In a joint written statement, prominent social leaders of Central Kurram, including Manatu, Malik Khat, Maseed Khan, and

Haji Nawab, expressed their concerns over the government's apparent neglect of public education. They highlighted the irony of the government's efforts to promote education while Govt High School Manato, a crucial educational institution in the area, struggles to function without a headmaster.

The community leaders stressed that the appointment of a headmaster should be treated as a top priority by higher authorities. They emphasized that the absence of proper leadership impedes the school's ability to provide quality education, hindering the development of the children in the region.

"We demand urgent action from the high and responsible authorities to appoint a headmaster for Govt High School Manato," the statement read. "Our children deserve access to quality education, and the appointment of a qualified headmaster will enable them to become competent and productive citizens."

Neglected plight of KP - power struggles & terrorism

Shamim Shahid

IT is a bitter reality that the supreme power in the Kingdom of Godfather Pakistan is monopolized solely by the military establishment, which has subjugated all state institutions. Among its victims, the media stands atop the list. Although Pakistan is officially hailed as a federation, where all its constituent units enjoy equal rights and powers, this equality remains confined to mere words. In practice, it is far from the truth.

Whenever Punjab faces challenging times or crises, little attention is paid to the other provinces. Punjab not only holds the majority population in Pakistan but also dominates the ranks and positions within the Pakistan Army. This demographic reality has led to the military establishment prioritizing the interests and rights of Punjab. This thought has been on my mind since April 2022 when the relations between former Prime Minister Imran Khan and the military establishment turned sour.

Since then, security incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have either been completely ignored or treated with secondary importance. The ongoing power struggle between Imran Khan and the military establishment has entered a decisive phase, resulting in the dismissal of

his loyalists for making trivial statements in press conferences. Ironically, during this period, loyalists of Pakistan-backed Taliban in Afghanistan have made their presence felt, resulting in increased terrorism and violence in the northern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

How did the militants of Pakistan's extremist organization, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, manage to return from Afghanistan? General Retired Faiz Hameed and his close associate Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif might shed light on this matter. Nevertheless, the powerful circles responsible for this will have to be held accountable, either now or in the near future.

Unfortunately, major acts of terrorism have occurred throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These include a suicide blast in Peshawar's Police Lines Jama Masjid during Zuhr prayers, attacks on anti-terror police stations in Bannu and Swat, and terrorist incidents in Dera Ismail Khan and Hangu, targeting a foreign company's plant. In areas such as Lucky Marwat, North and South Waziristan, and others, hundreds of people, including police officers and police workers, have fallen victim to ambushes and bombings.

Recently, Teri Mangal, a highly sensitive area near the Afghanistan border in Kurram district, witnessed a horrific incident of terror and bloodshed. Eight indi-

viduals, including five teachers, were brutally murdered. While locals classify it as a purely terrorist incident, some quarters attribute it to a property or land dispute. However, leaders from Shia and Sunni schools of thought in Kurram district are united in their demand for an impartial investigation into these incidents.

It is disconcerting to note that since 2004, neither judicial inquiries nor reports from any other institution have shed light on the major terrorism incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and across the country. Despite protests in Kurram district and Peshawar regarding the incident in Teri Mangal, there is a lack of awareness among those who hold real power, as well as the media, who seem focused on perpetuating political crises.

Among the victims of this tragedy were highly educated teachers. Ironically, while those responsible for upholding the law follow the orders of powerful circles, political parties and leaders remain preoccupied with their future prospects. Regrettably, the province finds itself burdened with a governor, Ghulam Ali, who has turned the governor's house into a center for personal gain. Similarly, despite being in the position of caretaker Chief Minister, Azam Khan has failed to ensure the protection of lives and property.



Tuesday, May 30, 2023

Ukraine claims Russia is plotting ‘a provocation’ at nuclear plant

KYIV (AP): Ukraine's military intelligence has claimed, without offering evidence, that Russia is plotting a "large-scale provocation" at a nuclear power plant it occupies in the south-east of the country with the aim of disrupting a looming Ukrainian counter-offensive.

A statement released by the intelligence directorate of Ukraine's Defense Ministry claimed that Russian forces would strike the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the biggest in Europe, and then report a radioactive leak in order to trigger an international probe that would pause the hostilities and give the Russian forces the respite they need to regroup ahead of the counteroffensive. In order to make that happen, Russia "disrupted the rotation of personnel of the permanent monitoring mission" of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency that was scheduled, the statement said. It didn't offer evidence to back up any of the claims.

The IAEA said in an emailed response to the AP that it did not have any immediate comment on the allegations, and Russian officials did not immediately comment on the Ukrainian claims. The White House said it is watching the situation closely and has seen no indication that radioactive material has been leaked. The claim mirrors similar statements Moscow regularly makes, alleging without evidence that Kyiv is plotting provocations involving various dangerous weapons or substances in

order to then accuse Russia of war crimes.

It comes as Moscow's military in Ukraine braces for a looming counter-offensive by Kyiv's forces, which hasn't started yet but could begin "tomorrow, the day after tomorrow or in a week, the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, Oleksiy Danilov, told the BBC in an interview. The Zaporizhzhia power plant is one of the 10 biggest nuclear plants in the world. It is located in the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region in southeastern Ukraine. The plant's six reactors have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features. Fighting near it repeatedly disrupted power supplies and has fueled fears of a potential catastrophe like the one at Chernobyl, in northern Ukraine, where a reactor exploded in 1986 and spewed deadly radiation, contaminating a vast area in the world's worst nuclear disaster.

Ukraine's national police said a 60-year-old man was killed by Russian shelling in the city of Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region, about 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the Russian border. Russia reported more attacks on its territory, with drones crashing in its western regions and areas on the border with Ukraine coming under shelling. Two drones attacked an administrative building of an oil company in Russia's western Pskov

region that borders Belarus, Latvia and Estonia, Pskov Gov. Mikhail Vedernikov reported. The building was damaged as the result of an explosion, Vedernikov said.

Another drone went down in the Tver region about 150 kilometers (90 miles) north of Moscow, local authorities said. Russia's Belgorod region on the border with Ukraine came under multiple rounds of shelling, killing one person, according to its governor, Vyacheslav Gladkov. In the neighboring Kursk region, which also borders Ukraine, one person was killed by cross-border mortar fire, its Gov. Roman Starovoi said. The British military said that Russia's private military force, Wagner, is withdrawing from areas around the eastern city of Bakhmut that Moscow claims to have captured earlier this month.

Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin earlier this week announced the pull-out, saying Wagner would hand control over the ruined city over to the Russian military. Some were skeptical, however: Prigozhin is known for making unverifiable, headline-grabbing statements on which he later backtracks. But the British Defense Ministry said in a series of tweets that Wagner fighters "have likely started to withdraw from some of their positions" around Bakhmut. "The Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister also corroborated the rotation out of Wagner forces in the outskirts of the town," the ministry said.

Two rangers shot dead in DR Congo's Park

DR CONGO (Agencies): Two guards at Virunga National Park have been killed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the latest bloodshed to rock the preserve designated as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site. In a statement, the park said the two guards "were shot and succumbed to their injuries" in Nyamusengera, a section near the Edward River, which marks the frontier with Uganda.

The Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) said the attack was likely to be blamed on the Mai-Mai, an armed group. Kambale Muhindo, a worker in Vitshumbi, a fishing village 5 km (3 miles) from the scene of the attack, told the AFP news agency that "a group of poachers wanted to kill a hippopotamus and to protect themselves they ambushed the guards." Blaise Kalisha, a human rights activist, said that "six guards have been injured and sent to the Vitshumbi Catholic hospital". Since 2020, different armed groups have carried out attacks and ambushes targeting guards in the park.

On May 18 this year, four park employees, of whom three were guards, were killed. The authorities blamed the same armed group. The ICCN warned of a resurgence of violence in February, after suspected Mai-Mai fighters killed a ranger in a third attack. Founded in 1925, Virunga National Park has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979. It is known for its fauna and landscapes as it's a vast expanse of deep forests, glaciers and volcanoes, with more species of birds, reptiles and mammals than any other protected area in the world.

But it is also known to serve as a base for a number of armed groups for more than two decades. The park has been caught in the middle of militia activity that has destabilised surrounding regions since civil wars fought around the turn of the century.

Mozambique cholera: Why outbreaks have sparked unrest

MOZAMBIQUE (BBC): False claims about the spread of a cholera outbreak in northern Mozambique have led to violent protests and deaths, according to health officials. The World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted instances in which misinformation about the disease has contributed to the unrest.

Through social media posts and local media reports, we've looked into some of these protests to understand what was behind the trouble. In one recent incident, a man was beaten to death in the town of Gurue in Zambezia province by people who falsely accused him of spreading cholera, according to health officials. The event was captured in a graphic video seen by the BBC that has been circulating on social messaging apps and shows the body of a man with a large crowd looking on. In another protest, four people were killed as police battled a group attacking homes and property belonging to local officials in Nacala Porto in Nampula province.

Further north in Cabo Delgado province, police fired into the air to disperse a crowd trying to attack a health centre in Meluco district. It is unclear what is fuelling the misinformation - which is largely spreading through word of mouth - although our monitoring of social media has provided some insight. Cholera thrives in conditions where water sanitation is inadequate. Some online posts claim falsely that measures implemented by local health officials, such as adding chlorine to water supplies and the use of purifiers, are in fact spreading the disease. The BBC's Jose Tembe in Maputo says almost all violent cases related to cholera stem from misinformation. "Also targeted are grassroots leaders who mobilise people to use the purifiers.

Sultan of Oman on ‘historic’ Iran visit



TEHRAN (AFP): Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, whose Gulf country has been a long-time mediator between Iran and the West, arrived in Tehran for a two-day visit. His trip comes just two days after Tehran freed Belgian aid worker Olivier Vandecasteele from almost 15 months in custody in exchange for diplomat Assadollah Assadi, who was held in Belgium over a 2018 plot to bomb an Iranian opposition rally outside Paris.

Oman helped facilitate the swap. The sultan met President Ebrahim Raisi who said bilateral relations can improve in areas including industry and "defence and security affairs", the presidency website said. "Tehran and Muscat have common views on regional cooperation, strengthening and stabilising the security, peace and prosperity of the

nations of the region," it quoted Raisi as saying. Oman's official news agency tweeted that memorandums of understanding and agreements on promoting investment had been signed.

The sultan's visit comes a year after Raisi visited Muscat, and follows a China-brokered rapprochement deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran announced in March. Ahead of the sultan's trip, the newspaper Asharq al-Awsat quoted Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi as saying Oman was optimistic the "historic" trip would be "beneficial in regional and global terms". Oman has close ties with Iran, and played a mediating role between Tehran and the United States in the build-up to a nuclear deal Iran and world powers reached in

2015. The sultanate was reported to have hosted secret US-Iran talks ahead of the signing of the deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, which gave Iran relief from international sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

The JCPOA collapsed in 2018 after Washington unilaterally withdrew from it and reimposed sanctions, prompting Iran to suspend the implementation of its own commitments to curb nuclear activity. Stop-start talks that began in April last year to restore the nuclear deal have yet to bear fruit. The last visit by an Omani sultan to Iran was in 2013 when Qaboos bin Said Al Said visited Tehran during the presidency of Hassan Rouhani, who was in office when the 2015 deal was sealed.

S Korean held for opening plane emergency exit door

SEOUL (AP): A man who opened an emergency exit door during a flight in South Korea was formally arrested and faces up to 10 years in prison on a charge of violating the aviation security law, officials said. During a preliminary questioning, the 33-year-old told investigators that he felt suffocated and tried to get off the plane quickly, according to police.

Twelve people were slightly injured after he opened the door of the Asiana Airlines Airbus A321-200, causing air to blast inside the cabin and terrifying passengers. Some testified they suffered severe ear pain and saw others screaming and crying. A video shared on social media shows passengers' hair being whipped by air blowing into the cabin. Normally, the emergency exit doors cannot be opened mid-flight due to the difference in air pressure inside and outside of the aircraft. But during incident, the man succeeded in opening the door likely because the plane was flying at a low

altitude while preparing to land and there wasn't much difference in pressure, according to Asiana Airlines officials. The Transport Ministry said the plane was at 700 feet (213 meters) when the man pulled the door open. The plane was preparing to land in Daegu on an hour-long flight from the southern island of Jeju with 200 people on board. They included teenage athletes on their way to a track and field competition, according to Asiana Airlines.

A district court in Daegu approved a warrant to formally arrest the man. Police earlier sought the arrest warrant, citing the gravity of the crime and a possibility the man may flee, according to Daegu police. "I wanted to get off the plane soon," the man, whose face was covered by a black hoodie, a cap and a mask, told reporters at the court ahead of its review of his arrest warrant. "I'm really sorry to kids," he said, in a likely reference to the teenage athletes. Daegu police said they have up to

20 days to investigate the man before determining whether to send him to prosecutors for a possible indictment.

If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison for breaching the aviation security law that bars passengers from handling entry doors, emergency exit doors and other equipment on board, according to the Transport Ministry. Daegu police said the man, surnamed Lee, told them that he was under stress after losing a job recently and that he wanted to get out of the plane soon because he was feeling suffocated just before landing. The people who were taken to hospitals were mainly treated for minor problems such as breathing difficulties. Asiana Airlines said in a statement that starting, it stopped the sale of emergency exit seats on its 174-seat A321-200 planes and the 195-seat A321-200s as a safety precaution. Lee was seated near the emergency exit, airline officials said.

US, Saudi Arabia call for warring sides in Sudan to extend truce

CAIRO (AP): The United States and Saudi Arabia called on warring sides in Sudan to extend a fragile cease-fire due to expire Monday, as weeks of fighting reached a stalemate in the capital and elsewhere in the African country. The Sudanese army and a rival paramilitary force, battling for control of Sudan since mid-April, had agreed last week to the weeklong truce, brokered by the US and the Saudis. However, the cease-fire, like others before it, did not stop the fighting in the capital of Khartoum and elsewhere in the country.

In a joint statement, the US and Saudi Arabia called for an extension of the current truce which expires at 9:45 p.m. local time Monday. "While imperfect, an extension nonetheless will facilitate the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese people," the statement said. The statement also urged Sudan's military government and the rival Rapid Support Forces to continue negotiations to reach an agreement on extending the cease-fire.

The fighting broke out in mid-April between the military and the powerful RSF. Both military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan and RSF leader Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo led the 2021 coup

that removed the Western-backed government of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok. The conflict has killed hundreds of people, wounded thousands and pushed the country to near collapse. It has forced nearly 1.4 million people out of their homes to safer areas inside Sudan, or to neighboring nations, according to the UN migration agency. Residents reported renewed sporadic clashes in parts of the capital's adjacent city, Omdurman, where the army's aircraft were seen flying over the city. Fighting was also reported in al-Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur. In a separate statement, the US and Saudi Arabia accused both the military and the RSF of violating the cease-fire, saying that such violations "significantly impeded delivery of humanitarian assistance and restoration of essential services."

The statement mentioned airstrikes by the military including one that reportedly killed at least two people in Khartoum. The RSF also continued to occupy civilian homes, private businesses, and public buildings, and loot some residences. "Both parties have told facilitators their goal is de-escalation to facilitate humanitarian assistance and essential repairs, yet both parties are

posturing for further escalation," the statement said. The conflict has come to a stalemate as neither side has been able to deliver a decisive blow to the other after six weeks of fighting. In the first two weeks of the war, army airstrikes targeted RSF camps in and outside the capital, crippling the paramilitary force's bases. That forced the RSF to deploy in densely populated areas, where they seized people's houses and other property, and are using them as cover against the military's airstrikes.

The detention of Dr. Alaa Eldin Awad Nogoud, a prominent surgeon and pro-democracy activist, in Omdurman caused an uproar in the country, with medical and rights groups in and outside of Sudan demanding his release. A group of armed men stormed Nogoud's home and detained him, according to the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate. He was taken to an unknown location, it said. The Forces of Freedom and Change, the pro-democracy coalition, said the armed men claimed they were members of the military and the intelligence service. It said Nogoud's detention was part of a campaign targeting pro-democracy activists, and urged his immediate release. The development came after

Nogoud told a television station last week that the military seized medical aid provided by the World Health Organization and stored it at a military hospital in Omdurman, according to local media. He said that doctors were denied access to the facility when they demanded a share in the aid to other hospitals. They were told that permission was needed first to get access, he said.

A spokesman for the military declined to comment. The US-Saudi statement came two days after Burhan demanded in a letter to the UN secretary-general that the UN envoy to his country be removed. The UN chief was "shocked" by the letter, a spokesman said. The envoy, Volker Perthes, has been a key mediator in Sudan, first during the country's fitful attempts to transition to democracy and then during efforts to end the current fighting. Burhan's letter came after Perthes accused the warring parties of disregarding the laws of war by attacking homes, shops, places of worship and water and electricity installations. In his briefing to the UN Security Council last week, Perthes blamed the leaders of the military and the RSF for the war, saying that they have chosen to "settle their unresolved conflict on the battlefield rather than at the table."

Russia launched ‘largest drone attack’ on Ukrainian capital

KYIV (AP): Ukraine's capital was subjected to the largest drone attack since the start of Russia's war, local officials said, as Kyiv prepared to mark the anniversary of its founding. At least one person was killed, but officials said scores of drones were shot down, demonstrating Ukraine's air defense capability. Russia launched the "most massive attack" on the city with Iranian-made Shahed drones, said Serhii Popko, a senior Kyiv military official. The attack lasted more than five hours, with air defense reportedly shooting down more than 40 drones.

A 41-year-old man was killed and a 35-year-old woman was hospitalized when debris fell on a seven-story nonresidential building and started a fire, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. Debris from a drone damaged the building of the Ukrainian Society of the Blind. Organization member Volodymyr Golubenko came to pick up his things. He was helped by his son Mykola, who searched for his father's belongings among the rubble and at the same time tried to describe to his father what his office looks like now. "This wall on the right is destroyed and on left also," said Mykola to his father.

Volodymyr Golubenko worked at this place for more than 40 years. He says it is a home for many blind people, because they come here to talk and support each other. "If you don't even have a job, it's difficult to get a job now,

because these events (war) have been going on since last year. At least people come here to chat," said Volodymyr. Like Golubenko, many people in his district heard the sound of Shahed drones for the first time. Among them was 36-year-old Yana, who has three boys. The family hid in a corridor all night. "Something started to explode above us. The children ran here in fear," said Yana.

Ukraine's air force said that was also record-breaking in terms of Shahed drone attacks across the country. Of the 54 drones launched, 52 were shot down by air defense systems. Russia has repeatedly launched waves of drone attacks against Ukraine, but most are shot down. Ukraine has also claimed this month to have downed some of Russia's hypersonic Kinzhal missiles, which Russian President Vladimir Putin has touted as providing a key competitive advantage. In the northeastern Kharkiv province, regional Gov. Oleh Syniubov said a 61-year-old woman and a 60-year-old man were killed in two separate shelling attacks. Kyiv Day marks the anniversary of the city's official founding. The day is usually celebrated with live concerts, street fairs, exhibitions and fireworks. Scaled-back festivities were planned for this year, the city's 1,541st anniversary.

The timing of the drone attacks was likely not coinci-

dental, Ukrainian officials said. "The history of Ukraine is a long-standing irritant for the insecure Russians," Ukraine's chief presidential aide, Andriy Yermak, said on Telegram. "Today, the enemy decided to 'congratulate' the people of Kyiv on Kyiv Day with the help of their deadly UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles)," Popko also wrote on the messaging app. Local officials in Russia's southern Krasnodar region said that air defense systems destroyed several drones as they approached the Il'sky oil refinery.

Russia's southern Belgorod region, bordering Ukraine, also came under attack from Ukrainian forces, local officials said. Regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported that a 15-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy were wounded in the shelling. Drone attacks against Russian border regions have been a regular occurrence since the start of the invasion in February 2022, with attacks increasing last month. Earlier this month, an oil refinery in Krasnodar was attacked by drones on two straight days. Ukrainian air defenses, bolstered by sophisticated Western-supplied systems, have been adept at thwarting Russian air attacks - both drones and aircraft missiles. Earlier in May, Ukraine prevented an intense Russian air attack on Kyiv, shooting down all missiles aimed at the capital. The bombardment, which

additionally targeted locations across Ukraine, included six Russian Kinzhal aero-ballistic hypersonic missiles, repeatedly touted by Russian President Vladimir Putin as providing a key strategic competitive advantage and among the most advanced weapons in his country's arsenal. Sophisticated Western air defense systems, including American-made Patriot missiles, have helped spare Kyiv from the kind of destruction witnessed along the main front line in Ukraine's east and south.

While most of the ground fighting is stalemated along that front line, both sides are targeting other territory with long-range weapons.

Against the backdrop of drone attacks, Russia's ambassador to the U.K., Andrei Kelin, warned of an escalation in Ukraine. He told the BBC his country had "enormous resources" and it was yet to "act very seriously," cautioning that Western supplies of weapons to Ukraine risked escalating the war to a "new dimension." The length of the conflict, he said, "depends on the efforts in escalation of war that is being undertaken by NATO countries, especially by the U.K." Kelin's comments are typical of Russian officials' rhetoric with regard to Moscow's military might, but contradict regular reports from the battlefield of Russian troops being poorly equipped and trained.

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Erdogan’s victory in the global prism

PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed victory in Turkey's presidential election on Sunday, a win that would steer his increasingly authoritarian rule into a third decade. Addressing his cheering supporters from the top of a bus in Istanbul, Erdogan proclaimed that voters had given him the responsibility to rule for the next five years. The seasoned politician termed his victory, a win for the entire Turkish nation. Earlier, the head of the High Election Board told a news conference that Erdogan was leading Kilicdaroglu with 54.47% support, with 54.6% of ballot boxes logged. Erdogan's opponent Republic People's Party has not responded to the victory of the conservative leader so far.

The Republic of Turkiye held nationwide parliamentary and presidential elections in its country. Through direct polls over 64 million registered voters across 81 provinces and 87 electoral districts elected their parliamentary representatives and also chose the country's most powerful executive out of four presidential candidates including incumbent ruler Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The recent Turkiye election was contested by three main coalitions that put forth their electoral manifestos before the public to grab the attention of the voters. President Erdogan led an alliance of three conservative parties with a highly lucrative agenda including a fast recovery from the recent earthquake disaster along with the construction of 650,000 homes, a 20% decrease in rising price hikes, and managing a voluntary return of millions of Syrian refugees to their country. Erdogan also vowed to continue his fight against anti-Turkey's separatist movements and start a jihad against extra-liberal tendencies including LGBT rights in Turkey's conservative society. Erdogan's rival, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, a former civil servant, economist, and leader of the center-left Republican People's Party has formed a coalition with six opposition parties to defeat the long-term Turkish ruler and conservative leader of Justice and Development (AK) Party. Kilicdaroglu put forth the idea of change in the two decades long of the AK Party rule.

The coalition promised to lower inflation, settle refugee issues, reconstruct earthquake-hit regions, fix the foreign policy issues with the West, and gain visa-free entry for Turks to travel to the EU's Schengen area. Meanwhile, the left-wing Labour and Freedom Alliance pursued a significantly distant manifesto than the other groups which include legislation to protect LGBT rights, solutions to the Kurdistan issue through negotiations, along with bringing improvements in governance and economy. e election had been seen as one of the most consequential yet for Turkey, with the opposition believing it had a strong chance of unseating Erdogan after his popularity was hit by rising inflation and a cost-of-living crisis in recent years. There had been a close contest between Turkey's reformist leader Teyyip Erdogan and former economist-turned-politician Kemal Kilicdargolu during both phases of the electoral contest. Interestingly, the left-wing Labour and Freedom Alliance also support Kemal Kilicdargolu in the presidential format but their joint work could not prove to be fruitful, and Erdogan's charismatic personality, vibrant foreign policy, and reinvention of Ottoman era legacies in domestic and regional affairs played a crucial role in pushing Erdogan to the victory stand. The electoral process overall remained smooth and peaceful, while nominal electoral irregularities had been reported in some areas, particularly in earthquake-hit regions. There are mixed sentiments in the masses regarding Erdogan's third-time consecutive victory for the topmost and most powerful slot in the country. At the global level, there is also a mix of joy and derision over the victory of a conservative Muslim leader, who always stood for Muslim brotherhood, pursued an independent foreign policy, and confronted Western hegemonism and monopoly at the global level.

Thus Erdogan's victory had been celebrated in the central Asia, Palestine, Pakistan, Russia, and other multiple nations but it had been mourned in the Western capitals and much of the Middle East after Turkey took a more confrontational approach in its foreign affairs with certain regional and extra-regional players in recent past. Interestingly, the West was utterly annoyed with Erdogan's conservative policies and hoping for a change through the election but Erdogan's surprising victory trashed their plans regarding the revival of Western-style democracy in Turkiye. Erdogan's victory also means further strengthening of economic and military ties between Ankara and Moscow, Turkiye's opposition to Finland, Sweden's inclusion into NATO, and the continuation of Ankara's anti-US and anti-West posture for another half a decade that matters for the US strategists amid worsening NATO-Russia rivalry in Eastern Europe and intensifying Washington-Beijing tussle in trade, regional security, and global diplomacy. At the same time, Muslims across the globe particularly in South Asia hope that the Turkish revolutionary leader would be able to reinvent a great Islamic legacy in Western Asia by craving a purely Ottoman-era Turkiye that will not only pave the way for Mulsim dominance in the region but also prove to be Masiah for destitute Muslim communities across the world. Apparently, Erdogan will succeed in transforming Turkiye into a modern Muslim welfare state, but Tukiye's role in the 13th century is less likely to be revived in the contemporary world. The West has to face this hard net for another five years term while Russia, China, and Pakistan would be able to steer their interests through collaboration with Erdogan's government in the future. After all, Erdogan has proved to be a great leader of the Muslim world and Turkish people stamped their confidence in his leadership for the consecutive third time. Pakistanis also have great respect for him and have high hopes for the future.

THE China-brokered agreement in March to restore diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran caught the entire planet by surprise - not only because of its implications for Middle Eastern realignments but also because of Beijing's conspicuous midwife role, with states such as the US scarcely even aware of the magnitude of what was transpiring. It was an unmistakable signal that China had definitively emerged as a diplomatic world power, with clear ambitions to achieve much, much more.

Once upon a time, China scarcely seemed to have a foreign policy beyond vague pronouncements about non-interference in others' domestic affairs. The Belt and Road initiative profoundly changed all this, through massive infrastructure investments in a multitude of Asian and African states. While many developing nations have benefited immensely from Chinese-engineered roads, ports, bridges and railways, the flipside can be seen in how heavily indebted states such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Angola have become locked in a straitjacket of

Chinese domination.

In Afghanistan, Chinese diplomats have exploited the West's withdrawal to become one of the few states systematically engaging with the Taliban. China has also agreed to invest \$400 billion in Iran's economy in exchange for heavily discounted Iranian oil - one of many factors that have caused the interests of Tehran, Moscow and Beijing to enmesh evermore closely. Economic and political cooperation between Beijing and Arab Gulf states has notably flourished, with China now Saudi Arabia's largest export market.

China is an unparalleled economic powerhouse. In recent decades, Chinese leaders ruthlessly tended to prioritize rapid economic expansion over everything else, creating millions of jobs for immense new cohorts of young people emerging every year from schools and universities. In just a decade, Chinese average household income increased by 400 percent. But having scrapped constitutional presidential term limits and embarked on his third term, Xi Jinping's authoritarian security-first predilections have unmistakably come to the fore.

Baria Alamuddin

With policies that have had a chilling impact on international trade relations, such as punitive measures against certain foreign businesses, the risk for China's leadership is that the resulting economic slowdown could fuel turbulent dissatisfaction among its population.

The Ukraine conflict was a wakeup call that major foreign invasions or global superpower confrontations weren't just a relic of the 20th century. This realization has dramatically prompted NATO states to re-evaluate their collective security - particularly throwing into relief the challenges emerging from China, which has 10 times the GDP and 10 times the population of Russia. Indeed, with Beijing's unique relationship to Vladimir Putin, we may yet see China again come to play the role of peacemaker before too long. It is entirely Xi Jinping's choice whether he desires history to know him as a war-monger and autocrat, or a champion of global peace, stability and prosperity.

While American foreign policy under Donald Trump then Joe Biden has become

inexorably more hostile toward China, European states have been more conflicted - wishing to prioritize trade but unable to wholly ignore glaring human rights violations and strategic challenges. Muslim states seeking closer alignment with Beijing have likewise struggled to address the systematic abuse of millions of Uyghurs. Is West-China armed confrontation inevitable? Everybody hopes not, but an extraordinary number of flashpoint issues have emerged between the two blocs, the most inflammatory of which is Taiwan. If Beijing is hellbent on armed invasion to reabsorb Taiwan back into China, as many of its public pronouncements indicate, and if Washington is serious about military action to prevent this, then it simply becomes a question of when confrontation would occur and how far-reaching it would be.

The recent G7 summit sought to take a middle-ground approach of "de-risking," whereby Western companies wouldn't fully disengage from China, but would reduce the risk of being caught in the crossfire

of future escalatory scenarios, along with limitations on the sales of sensitive equipment. One of the reasons Russia must be definitively defeated in Ukraine is that leaders such as Xi should ultimately look at the decisions Putin made and think: "I don't want that to happen to me." Just as the 2003 Iraq invasion was an unmitigated disaster, the Ukraine invasion should leave a large enough wound in the global psyche for no leader to consider any further such war of aggression for at least another century. Full-blown direct confrontation between America and China would be a recipe for Armageddon. Such scenarios should be a wakeup call to leaders in China, America and elsewhere that we are all better off when this newly multilateral international environment is governed by a strict system of mutually binding rules, in which leaders are beholden to behave responsibly - and with real penalties for all those who violate their obligations. China and the US have been locked in a zero-sum mentality, when in fact the opposite is true: trade between them has soared in the past two decades since China joined the World

Trade Organization, with China now the US's third-biggest export market, and total merchandise trade between the two countries climbing to nearly \$700 billion in 2022 - despite all the economic saber-rattling!

If both sides can put their playground one-upmanship and petty differences aside then the entire planet thrives. America's climate envoy John Kerry is due to hold talks with China about issues such as reducing global dependence on coal and methane reduction, a critical reminder of the necessity of superpower cooperation in ensuring the planet's very survival. America and its allies must up their diplomatic game for addressing this full spectrum of East-West challenges, particularly as - unlike Iran, North Korea and perhaps even Russia - China is too big and too crucial to be simply contained or sidelined. However, Beijing too must learn that if it desires to be a world-class power, it must lead by example and accord the people of Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang and Taiwan the dignity and rights that will allow China to take its rightful place as a global force to be admired and emulated.

Arab News

Presidential hopeful DeSantis’ potent union with Musk

FOLLOWING a series of unforeseen technical glitches that resulted in minor delays, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is deemed a pinnacle of leadership and representative of his constituents, last week took to the magnificent realm of Twitter's auditorium alongside the highly regarded and illustrious tycoon and astute investor Elon Musk and tech investor David Sacks. With a momentous declaration that was widely covered by the US media, DeSantis announced his decision to throw his hat into the vibrant arena of the US Republican presidential primary elections.

DeSantis exposed the lousy state of the union, promising to get the job done. "My pledge to you is this: If you nominate me, you can set your clock to Jan. 20, 2025, at high noon because, on the west side of the US Capitol, I will be taking the oath of office as the 47th president of the United States," the governor said. The first reaction came from none other than former president and fellow Republican 2024 election hopeful Donald Trump, who used his Truth Social platform to express his critique of DeSantis, through a peculiar post that swiftly engendered a state of confusion among readers. Trump's statement featured a comparison

between his metaphorical "red button" and that of the governor, with the former claiming superiority in size, quality, potency and operational functionality. Furthermore, Trump insinuated a conversation with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, signaling a forthcoming amicable relationship, thus adding an additional layer of intrigue to his enigmatic message.

Within the intricate landscape of American politics, conservatives have come to regard 44-year-old statesman DeSantis as a formidable contender, poised to rival the former president and potentially win the Republican nomination. Evidencing this emerging dynamic, a chorus of influential Republican legislators, coupled with an array of right-wing media outlets, has begun to fervently rally behind this rising star, enthusiastically endorsing his leadership aspirations and advocating for his ascendancy as the torchbearer of the party's principles and vision. This groundswell of support signifies a momentous shift within Republican circles, heralding a captivating interplay of power and influence as the party navigates the critical journey toward the White House. But why Musk? During a contemplative period last year, as Musk pondered the prospect of acquiring the popular

social media platform Twitter, DeSantis distinguished himself as an outspoken advocate among the ranks of Republican politicians who openly rallied behind the visionary tech billionaire's quest. However, the governor exhibited an unprecedented level of determination, surpassing the actions of his GOP counterparts. Leveraging the considerable weight of the Florida pension fund's investments in the company, he unequivocally declared his intention to mobilize the formidable influence of the nation's third-largest state against the board of Twitter, should they persist in their reluctance to engage in negotiations with Musk over a potential acquisition. This resolute stance showcased DeSantis' unwavering commitment to ensuring a favorable outcome and underlined his steadfast dedication to safeguarding the interests of conservatives, who had long perceived Twitter as an antagonistic platform. The convergence of interests between the young politician and the investment tycoon has been steadily maturing over a considerable time. In a notable development last June, Musk took to the digital realm, expressing his inclination toward endorsing DeSantis for the upcoming

Dalia Al-Aqidi

2024 presidential race.

By offering his public support, Musk effectively offered an expansive platform for DeSantis to directly engage with a substantial audience of social media users. Throughout his tenure as governor, DeSantis has been embroiled in repeated clashes with social media platforms and technology companies, primarily driven by a perception of conservative voices being subjected to censorship. In 2021, DeSantis took a proactive role in championing new state legislation that rendered it unlawful for technology platforms to impede or diminish the visibility of content that may potentially transgress their terms of service. This legislative maneuver opened avenues for legal recourse for aggrieved individuals. Collectively, these efforts reflect DeSantis' steadfast commitment to protecting conservative viewpoints while navigating the complex terrain of social media and technology governance.

In the wake of Musk's acquisition of Twitter, a notable transformation has taken place on the platform, wherein it has emerged as a haven for free expression, particularly serving as an enclave for conservative perspectives that have frequently encountered stifling limita-

tions. Recognizing the prevailing sense of marginalization experienced by conservative voices, Musk has prioritized cultivating an environment that fosters uninhibited discourse and unfettered freedom of speech. Under his stewardship, Twitter has undergone a significant metamorphosis, now standing as a prominent digital realm where individuals from across the ideological spectrum can articulate their views without the pervasive specter of censorship and suppression.

Amid the self-proclaimed commitment of the far-left to champion free expression and speech, a troubling pattern has emerged, as characterized by the systematic suppression and marginalization of conservative voices across various platforms. This profoundly concerning trend reflects a problematic mindset, commonly known as the "Free speech for me, but not for thee" mentality, whereby proponents of certain ideologies selectively endorse the principles of open dialogue and the free exchange of ideas, but deny those very principles to individuals with differing viewpoints. Despite professing dedication to inclusivity and a diversity of opinions, the far left's actions have consistently demonstrated a propensity to silence and stifle conservative perspectives, there-

by casting a shadow of doubt on their professed commitment to genuine freedom of speech. Twitter debunked their falsehoods and illuminated the underlying ideologies driving the left's thought processes.

By choosing to commence his campaign alongside the prominent figure of Musk, DeSantis has strategically opted to leverage the influential power of Twitter - a central social media platform. This decision aligns with the young politician's adept utilization of a "high velocity public relations approach," a dynamic strategy he has successfully cultivated during his tenure in Florida. This carefully calculated move demonstrates DeSantis' astute recognition of the social media platforms' impact in shaping public opinion and mobilizing support. By aligning himself with a renowned tech visionary like Musk and his Twitter platform, DeSantis aims to amplify his message and reach a broad audience, ensuring his campaign resonates and gathers momentum in this increasingly interconnected and digital age. This strategic alliance serves as a testament to the governor of Florida's acumen in adapting to the evolving landscape of political communication and his ability to harness the power of social media to bolster his political aspirations.

Preventing war in space: Fill the space policy vacuum now

AS Saudi astronauts were taking a "giant step" for the Kingdom and the Arab world by stepping into the International Space Station last week - inspiring the whole region, especially women, thanks to Rayyanah Barnawi becoming the first Arab woman in space - and joining their UAE colleague who was already on the ISS, I was listening to the first conference of its kind on "Preventing Space War," sponsored by Arizona State University's Interplanetary Initiative. It was unsettling to hear about war when the majority of the world is still taking its first steps in space, enthralled by its potential for all humanity.

The conference shed some much-needed light on what is happening in space, with different and divergent views of how various countries see space. Space today is a Wild West domain, with different powers vying for control and dominance. It is also a mess, with thousands of pieces of debris and discarded satellites, or space junk, circling in low Earth orbit, threatening astronauts on both the ISS and the Chinese space station, Tiangong. There is the potential for war to be sparked in space, as a result of a miscalculation or a misunderstanding, in the absence of transparency. All of this is happening at a time when space law, governance and space policies are either weak or entirely lacking.

The UN's Outer Space Treaty of 1967 is outdated,

with space technology light-years ahead of it, and the private sector's big role in commercial space activity is unregulated. But most concerning is that big power competition and tensions are reaching space, mirroring the conflicts on Earth.

During the conference, US space officials and experts alike drew a picture of space that is contested, while expressing concerns about potential conflict if the domain remains without rules and if the current confrontations on Earth extend into space. Space forces are being created by different nations and the strategic picture of the new space era, in low Earth orbit and beyond, is as complicated and dangerous as it is on Earth.

The US sees the new era of space as one that is contested, but also vital to its national security and economic prosperity, as well as to space exploration and its ability to project power globally. China and Russia, meanwhile, accuse the US of "weaponizing" outer space. In a joint statement made by President Vladimir Putin and President Xi Jinping in 2022, they pointed to the US when they decried "attempts by some states to turn outer space into an arena of armed confrontation" and vowed to make "all necessary efforts to prevent the weaponization of outer space." The US blames China and Russia for the debris in space because of their respective anti-satellite tests in 2007 and 2021. These two tests produced thousands of pieces of debris that are still circling

in low Earth orbit, threatening space activity, the Americans complain. This prompted Lt. Gen. DeAnna Burt, the US Space Force's deputy chief of operations, cyber and nuclear, to ask "where is my Greenpeace for space?"

The US last December led a process at the UN General Assembly and passed a resolution calling for a halt to one type of anti-satellite testing, with 155 countries voting in favor. China voted against the resolution and the Chinese military said the aim of the US step was to "strengthen themselves and weaken others," because the "US military has already developed enough (anti-satellite) capability that no more testing was needed," according to the South China Morning Post. Also in 2022, China denied "responsibility" for a rocket that slammed into the moon. Its Foreign Ministry said that China "conscientiously upholds the long-term sustainability of activities in outer space." Space is getting too congested. There has been staggering growth in the number of satellites in space, up 500 percent since 2008, along with an increase in the number of launches and the payloads in orbit. According to Burt, the US has gone from tracking 13,000 objects in space to more than 45,000, including 2,700 pieces of debris from the Chinese test.

Both Russia and China, Burt said, "use space as a war-fighting domain and are developing sophisticated

space capability intended to deny the US and our allies a space-enabled advantage." China, she added, is "building outer space architecture to track and target US forces across all domains in order to fight and win a modern military conflict." The Russians have, on the other hand, "demonstrated their belief that supremacy in space will be a decisive factor in winning future conflicts." Burt said: "Space is more congested, more contested and includes increased competition from adversaries able to execute space-enabled attacks on our forces across air, land and sea." She lamented the change in reality from when "space superiority was a given." Today, the US "can no longer assume freedom of operations in orbit. A military service dedicated to maintaining space superiority is required." The US Space Force was established in 2019 to maintain America's superiority and enable it to continue to operate in space "in a time and place of our choosing," according to Burt.

America's strategy to maintain superiority in space was called "competitive endurance" by Burt. She said the US will continue to lead and show responsible behavior in space. While space experts highlighted the importance of communication and notification as key principles that reduce risk and prevent conflict in space, communication is currently missing from the Chinese-American

relationship, whether on Earth or in space. Burt told the conference that the Chinese are not responsive to any US warnings about potential collisions in space, or even close encounters that could affect the Chinese space station. She said: "We get no response, no 'thank you,' no 'have a nice day.' Nothing."

However, experts challenged the US argument about superiority in space. Christopher Johnson, space law adviser at the Secure World Foundation, questioned space superiority, calling it "illogical and not permissible under the Outer Space Treaty." He said sovereignty "does not exist in space," and "space is a shared domain." He added that claiming dominance in a shared domain "builds to escalation, tension and anxiety akin to saber-rattling." According to the Outer Space Treaty, countries should use "outer space for peaceful purposes," but some experts thought that the treaty's preamble was "aspirational," when they were asked about the legality of placing weapons systems in space. Lt. Col. Matthew King, chief of international and administrative law for the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said: "It is not prohibited under any law that I know." Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty specifies only nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, leaving a loophole. All participants agreed that international law and the principles of armed conflict apply in space.

One of the interesting issues discussed was whether a commercial asset should be considered a military asset if it is seen as such by an opponent, recalling the situation in Ukraine and the use of commercial satellites in the conflict there. While some agreed they are military assets, it was obvious there is an urgent need for a conversation about the role of the private sector in space, especially during conflict.

Burt spoke at length on the importance of having space law, norms and rules that govern behavior in space, saying that "having something is better than having nothing." She said that, although the US has not ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, it follows it "customarily every day," implying that the US might do the same in space. The Artemis Accords have their own norms, but they are adhered to only by the 24 signatory nations. She said that "there is no victory in space." True, but there will not be peace either if no new or updated Outer Space Treaty is agreed to by all the states, especially the big powers. Amid the current tense relations between the US, China and Russia, preventing war in space will remain an aspiration. In his "Our Common Agenda," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a multi-stakeholder dialogue on outer space as part of his Summit of the Future this year. Time is of the essence for this conversation to start.

Putin’s mini-Nato is falling apart

RUSSIA has moved ahead with its plan to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus: the first time Russia will store part of its nuclear arsenal in another country since the breakup of the Soviet Union. On the face of it, it signals strength. The truth is the opposite. The day of the original announcement back in March was Belarus Freedom Day - an unofficial holiday celebrated by the oppressed Belarusian opposition. The decision was deliberately timed to try and shore-up an unstable country in case it echoes Ukraine in tipping Westwards in the years ahead.

Elsewhere in Europe, the picture is equally gloomy. In Georgia and Moldova, mass protests have been seen against Kremlin activities, and even in Serbia - a traditional ally of the Kremlin - the Foreign Minister accepted several weeks ago it may end up sanctioning Russia. Meanwhile, it is Moscow's imitation version of NATO - the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), established in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union - where it is most seriously struggling to maintain legitimacy among its members. The CSTO was formed with the objective of enhancing regional stability and comprises six member states: Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

Article 4 of the CSTO treaty - comparable to NATO's Article 5 -

includes a supposedly ironclad commitment to defend other member states from aggression, yet Russia has consistently failed to provide the expected support. For over 30 years, the CSTO had refrained from deploying troops to conflict zones to protect its member states, despite repeated appeals from Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Similarly, CSTO member states have displayed wavering support for Russia in light of Putin's calamitous war in Ukraine. Last year, Kyrgyzstan cancelled its joint military exercises with Russia, and among all CSTO countries, only Belarus has explicitly endorsed Russia's war. Significantly, Armenia's Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, announced that his country, a longstanding Russian ally, is currently contemplating withdrawal from the CSTO. Pashinyan's announcement follows Russia's failure to fulfil its CSTO responsibilities towards Armenia. Last year, Yerevan sought CSTO assistance during its violent dispute with Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh territory. Pashinyan highlighted that due to Russia's absence, Armenia and Azerbaijan had to turn to Western institutions like the EU to facilitate a peace agreement, as the regional security system under the CSTO was ineffective.

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded to Pashinyan's statements by emphasizing, "cer-

tainly, we will continue our dialogue with our Armenian friends." However, it remains uncertain whether Pashinyan will be receptive. Following Russia's failure to support Armenia during its conflict with Azerbaijan, hundreds of protesters gathered in the capital, urging the government to withdraw from the CSTO. Pashinyan stated that, in addition to the CSTO's failure to provide the promised military support, Armenia's association with the CSTO has hindered its ability to defend itself, since it has prevented Armenia from procuring weapons from Western sources. Russia's failure to assist Armenia comes as no surprise. Putin perceives the CSTO as a unilateral means to assert control over the post-Soviet region and promote the interests of the Kremlin, rather than an institution based on reciprocity. Consequently, countries that were once under Putin's sphere of influence have begun seeking cooperation elsewhere.

As a result, negotiations by Western actors have afforded Armenia and Azerbaijan significant advancements towards a potential resolution. Armenia has expressed its willingness to recognise the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave as part of Azerbaijan, provided that Baku protects the rights of ethnic Armenians. On May 25, during the meeting with Putin, Azerbaijani President

Ilham Aliyev emphasised that "there is a possibility of coming to a peace agreement." NATO should seize the current opportunity to demonstrate the CSTO, particularly under Russia's leadership, is merely a symbolic entity lacking substance. The growing anti-CSTO sentiments provide an opportunity for NATO to expose Russia's disloyalty. NATO member states should utilise information operations to reach out to Russia's proxies in countries like Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, and the Balkans and convey the truth - that Russia refused to assist its treaty-bound ally, Armenia, when they needed it the most, and it is only a matter of time before Moscow does the same to them.

Russia continues to portray NATO as a malevolent actor in the Global South and as responsible for the conflict in Ukraine. Now, NATO member states should engage with Latin American countries and put a spotlight on Armenia's contemplation to leave the CSTO. With Putin preparing for the Africa-Russia summit in July, it is also crucial for African nations to learn the truth about Putin's treatment of his Armenian ally and its new inclination to align with the West. Putin's plan to undermine NATO has been halted. Now it is time for NATO member states to turn the tables and expose the CSTO as nothing more than an empty shell.

Ivana Stradner

Biden’s Democrats are talentless, extreme - and about to face a reckoning

Doughlas Murray

THE worst-kept secret in American politics is out: Ron DeSantis is running for president. For months, the governor of Florida has been eyeing up the opportunity of running as the Republican nominee. He has done all of the things you need to do - including a trip to the UK last month. He has also sat it out quietly as his main rival - Donald J Trump - has taken potshots at him.

It was an unenviable position for a putative candidate to have been in. Most polls show Trump way ahead of the other candidates among Republican voters. Despite - or because of - his legal troubles, he has settled at around twice the polling of his nearest rival. A poll this week showed Trump as first choice for 53 per cent of Republican-leaning voters and DeSantis at 26 per cent. Other contenders linger on single digits.

Some have taken such polls to suggest that Trump is unassailable. But all of them were taken before DeSantis was actually running. Now he has declared his candidacy, several things will happen. The first is that the Left's attacks on him will heat up. This week Vanity Fair headlined a piece to suggest that DeSantis would happily share a platform with neo-Nazi sympathisers to launch his campaign. He should expect more of this, and it won't hurt him at all on his own side. Republican voters have been through - and seen through - political hit jobs of this kind for years now.

The second thing is that DeSantis now has the opportunity to lay out what he would do in the Oval office. At this week's online Twitter launch with Elon Musk, the governor managed to get into detailed policy as well as broad direction of travel announcements. But the third thing is that now DeSantis can - and should - respond to Trump's barrage against him.

For months, Trump has been attacking DeSantis by trying out

nicknames on him (the most inane being "Ron DeSanctimonious", which doesn't even fit the target). He has also started to try to criticise DeSantis's record. This is an unwise move. As governor of Florida, DeSantis has overseen a massive amount of growth in his state. Florida has become the number one destination in America for people fleeing Democrat-run, crime-ridden cities. During Covid, DeSantis took the bold decision to avoid locking down and was proved right. Furthermore, he has not only picked culture war battles but has also won them.

As a result, when DeSantis was asked about Trump's recent attacks on him yesterday, he had the chance to point out that it is strange to be attacked by Trump from his Left. In an open debate between Trump and DeSantis, the former may revert to his bully-boy tactics, but the latter has achievements to run on. In any case, all this means that the Republican primary has become interesting. The party now has an opportunity to have meaningful policy and direction-of-travel discussions - not least the question of whether the party wants to keep looking back to the 2020 election (which Trump still claims to have won) or forward to actually winning the next election.

It is a healthy position for a party to be in. The vibrancy of the debate within the American Right might be fruitfully contrasted with the lack of anything similar among their British counterparts. But the bigger comparison is with the state of the Democrat party.

Last month Joe Biden released a video announcing his plan to run for re-election in 2024. The 80-year-old president is already the oldest man to have held that office, and it is not a reflection on everyone his age simply to note that Biden does not always seem to be up to the job. Though his vice-president, Kamala Harris, appeared in the launch video, she did not

speak. The clear intimation was that Harris just could not be unstuck from the ticket so may as well stay along for the ride. The only Democrat to have announced that they wish to challenge Biden is Robert F Kennedy Jr. In some polls he has been as close to Biden for the Democrat nomination as DeSantis is to Trump. But Kennedy is an outlier, someone who has picked up a certain amount of notice not just because of America's love of dynastic politics, or his own often idiosyncratic views, but because nobody in the true mainstream of the party is challenging Biden.

In part that is because to try to kill the king at this moment would be seen as an act of lèse-majesté within the party. The assassin would not be rewarded. But the bigger problem for the Democrats is that, if you get rid of Biden, you have to jump down a generation from those who have held the party in their grip for so long. As Americans have been reminded from seeing Senator Dianne Feinstein wheeled into the chamber at the age of 89, the Democrats have a generational problem. Biden, Feinstein, Nancy Pelosi and others have controlled their party for a long time - too long for its own good. One result of this is that, while the Republicans can go down a generation and find plenty of talent (not least DeSantis, Senator Tim Scott and Governor Glenn Youngkin), the Democrats have a talent drought.

Nothing seems to grow below Biden. There was a time when Secretary of State Anthony Blinken was talked about as a successor. But the American electorate have hardly seen Blinken for the past two and a half years. Any foreign policy credit that can be picked up - and there is precious little of it - has been picked up by the president. Just about the only name being bandied about to take up the Democrat mantle is Gavin

Newsom, the governor of California. By contrast with DeSantis in Florida, Newsom presides over a state where 1 per cent of the population were chased out in a single year. They are leaving the state not just because of the high tax burden but because of the disintegration of the cities.

Newsom managed to ruin San Francisco as mayor before trying the same policies on a state-wide canvas as governor. He may be one of the only talked-about successors to Biden, but he would be the most talked-about candidate imaginable for the Republicans. If Newsom ever runs for the presidency, you can expect plenty of Republican commercials focusing on any one of his state's filthy, zombie-ridden, crime-infested and tent-encamped streets.

As things stand, there is a significant ideas battle going on across the American Right and none at all on the American Left. Biden ran as a unifying moderate, but has governed as an anti-Republican - specifically an anti-Trump - Leftist. The Democrats who exist under him seem to spend most of their time trying to both pander to, and not get destroyed by, the extremists on their own side. Newsom himself recently set up a taskforce to look into the paying of reparations to descendants of slaves in California. The group came back with a recommendation that billions of dollars should be paid to black Americans in the state for such crimes as "overpolicing". Even Newsom has had to distance himself from the monster he created. He, Biden and other Democrats are hoping that the Republicans run Donald Trump as their candidate in 2024, so that they can spend their campaign simply pointing at him and reminding voters that they are not Trump. But if the Republicans choose wisely and well, the Democrats could yet be robbed of that opportunity and the one reason they have to ask the public to return them to office.

The Telegraph

Putin’s tactic of inaction could backfire at home

Tatiana Stanovaya

NOTHING is happening in Russia. At least, that's the impression given by Vladimir Putin over the past six months. On some level, the president has been extremely active, secretly micromanaging the war effort and publicly pretending to be dealing with routine matters from meetings on the economy to the launch of a tram line in the occupied Ukrainian city of Mariupol. Yet there are no presidential initiatives in the works for adapting the country to the new wartime reality and all that it involves.

Putin has stubbornly remained disengaged in this sense, despite drone strikes on the Kremlin, mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin's crusade against the Defense Ministry, and even Ukraine's looming counteroffensive. He prefers to give lectures on history and offer optimistic assessments of Russia's economic prospects - and pessimistic ones of the West's. This doesn't mean, of course, that there really is nothing happening in Russia: quite the contrary. But what is happening has far less to do with the president's plans or strategic interests than it does with the corporate interests of individual departments and figures. What is happening is largely a response to the worsening conditions facing Russia.

Take the digitization of Russia's system for issuing conscription notices, a move forced by the difficulties surrounding conscription during a war that is not going according to plan. Or how repression has deepened, in an attempt at self-preservation

by the system amid fast-growing geopolitical risks and fears of defeat. Repressive inertia and self-aggrandizement by major institutions such as the FSB and the defense and finance ministries have driven many recent decisions, including the return of ideology. Justice Minister Konstantin Chuichenko has spoken openly about the possibility of introducing a new official ideology that would extend to education, cinema, theater, and poetry. This process has long since ceased to be under Putin's direct control and is now developing independently of him, albeit with his passive consent. Here and in other important debates, Putin's voice is absent. Should Russia's borders be closed? Should those who have already left have their rights restricted? Who is to be exempted from mobilization? How are those designated as "foreign agents" by the state to be punished? What should be done about Prigozhin? How should the country respond to incidents like drone strikes and attempts to assassinate "ultra-patriots"?

The positions of parliamentarians, party leaders, cabinet ministers, military bloggers and the security services on these and other matters are all well known. Yet Putin says nothing, intervening only to take steps such as retreating from the key Ukrainian city of Kherson, suspending Russia's participation in the New START nuclear agreement, or pulling out of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Even in his long-awaited address to the Federal Assembly, he merely listed measures

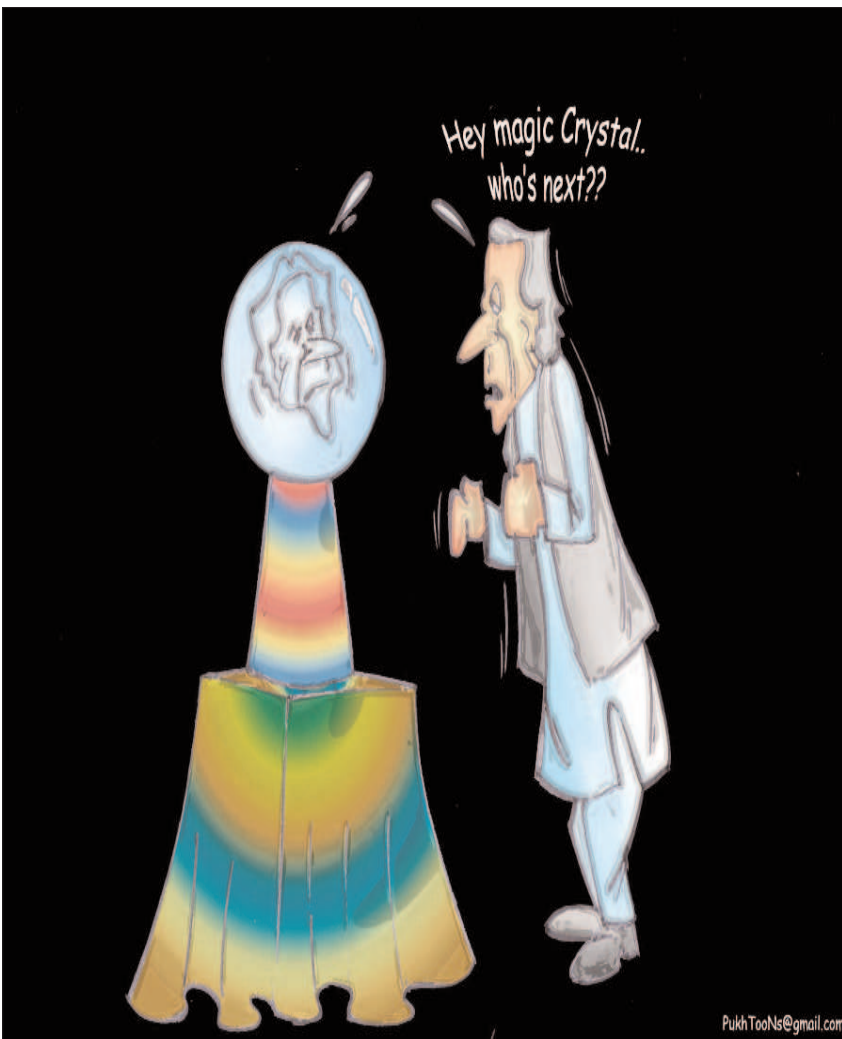
already taken by the government. Today, Putin is just about the only person in Russia who is not increasingly engaged in politics, from former president Dmitry Medvedev, State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, and Security Council head Nikolai Patrushev to Prigozhin, the war bloggers, and television hosts. It is as though the president has recused himself, devoting himself to secret military and geopolitical matters, the details of which are known to few. This is not a sign of fear or weakness. Rather, it reflects Putin's growing messiah complex. At present, literally all his political hopes and plans hinge on external changes that are out of his control. Putin has no instruments or resources with which to change the situation in his favor. Yet he believes that the world will change all the same and deliver him Kyiv's capitulation.

Putin's plan is to wait out what he sees as the inevitable transformation of the West and Ukraine. Any fear of a Ukrainian counteroffensive has given way to the conviction that little will change on the battlefield, beyond minor setbacks that he is prepared to tolerate. The calculation in the Kremlin is that absent a military breakthrough, Ukraine's elite will fracture, leading to the emergence of a "party of peace" (i.e., capitulation), while in the West, internal divisions will force cuts to military and political support for Kyiv. Putin's hopes cannot be dismissed as completely baseless, but his problem is that this approach is anathema to Russia's restless political class. For all its loy-

alty and pliability, it has evolved dramatically during the war. These days, Russia's elites are liable to see defeatism in inaction. All of this creates the conditions for the political ambitions of parastatal actors to soar. Despite their reputation for being instruments of the Kremlin, they are gradually building political capital and may one day run out of patience with the regime and challenge it. Already, Putin is struggling to explain what exactly he is waiting for.

In the first months of the war, many took notice of how the once-marginal pro-war "ultra-patriots" had matured politically and come to dominate the information space. Today, the officious hawks, such as Medvedev, Volodin, and Patrushev, are losing their place in Russian politics to the angry patriots, including Prigozhin, former Donbas commander Igor Strelkov, and the war bloggers. The former seem like opportunists and armchair generals, while the latter, having emerged in combat conditions, look much more like the real thing. The regime is not under threat so long as Putin's ratings remain stable, and besides, the levers of power are still completely under his control. Yet his public paralysis and refusal to assume responsibility for the resolution of the most pressing problems facing Russia cannot but render him and his courtiers politically irrelevant and create a vacuum to be filled by the ultra-patriots. The day may come when Putin finds himself dependent on a once harmless bunch made dangerous by his opacity and inaction.

The Moscow Times



How futuristic technology can help us honor WWII’s dead

Sébastien Roblin

OVER the past 13 years, Tim Taylor and Christine Dennison have scoured the ocean floor using autonomous underwater robots to discover and document the wrecks of seven US submarines lost in World War II. But their most recent discovery, of which they are releasing video footage and photos in anticipation of Memorial Day, has a particularly personal resonance.

The USS Mannert L. Abele, which the explorers found 4,500 feet under the Pacific Ocean and 81 miles from the nearest landmass, was the first American ship sunk by an unusual type of rocket-powered Japanese kamikaze plane. Part of Taylor's interest in undertaking the search stemmed from knowing that his father had cheated death when an explosive-laden Japanese kamikaze plane bounced off the bulwark of his own ship near the coast of Okinawa. "He was on the deck and had come out to get supplies," Taylor recounted to me. "As he opened the hatch, the kamikaze was heading right at him. His buddy on the 40-millimeter gun struck it." Not everyone was so lucky. Taylor pointed out that "We lost over 12,000 men at Okinawa."

Taylor and Dennison are ensuring that more families of those lost know where their loved ones' deep-water graves reside. They are racing against time as underwater development threatens many of these wrecks. On Memorial Day, some people remember history, but Taylor and Dennison do them one better by fighting to preserve it. Budget constraints hinder the Navy from devoting resources to undertaking these kinds of searches, according to Taylor, and his team is showing how private groups can fill the gap. While it's understandable that the Pentagon doesn't devote more funding to recovering historic remains given its needs for the present and future, it's also unfortunate that such important work doesn't have stronger public support.

For Taylor and Dennison, it's important to preserve the history of these wrecks and respect the sanctity of those entombed within them. And as the ranks of those alive during World War II have shrunk, it's vital to give those who remain closure while it's still possible. "As a society we have got to remember that these men are out there and that they did what they did. And these sunken ships are war graves," Taylor said. He noted that the ocean is getting "smaller" as it gets colonized by human activity such as mining, cables being laid, gas work and other industrial output so that now, "These graves are in jeopardy. They can be dug up - in fact, in some cases commercial interests are harvesting some of

these for steel."

The Abele was northwest of Okinawa when she met her terrible fate on April 12, 1945. In October 1944, Japan had begun the large-scale use of kamikaze attacks, in which pilots crashed their planes into Allied ships so they could be sure of reaching their target even though the pilot would die in the process. The US Navy realized the radars on their large warships for troop transports and aircraft carriers didn't give them enough warning time to intercept the suicidal attack craft. So the Navy began setting "pick-et" stations of relatively smaller destroyer-type warships dozens of miles away from the main fleet to detect approaching kamikazes. Of course, destroyers comprising the picket stations like the Abele didn't have their own pickets. Of the 101 destroyers assigned to picket duty during the battle, 42 were hit by kamikazes and 10 sunk. An estimated 7,000 Allied service members died from kamikaze attacks in total, nearly 5,000 of them at Okinawa.

Japanese kamikazes were detected swarming towards the Abele that afternoon, as detailed in the book "Three Minutes Off Okinawa" by the ship's electronics officer, Roy S. Andersen, and the official Navy history. Though the Abele managed to shoot down two aircraft and damage or fend off others, at six minutes in, a Japanese fighter plunged into the destroyer's engine room and exploded, cutting off all electrical power. Just a minute later, another, much more unusual, plane slammed into the destroyer's hull. The Abele had been struck by a unique rocket-propelled kamikaze plane called the MXY7 Ohka ("Cherry Blossom"), which due to its very short range had to be carried under the belly of a larger bomber until close to US ships, whereupon it was released to soar toward its target at immense speed. The detonation of this manned missile's 1.3 tons of explosives caused the ship to seemingly break into two and begin sinking. In a matter of minutes, 84 sailors and officers had been killed. Japanese aircraft strafed the surviving crew as they jumped into the oil-slick water, but two smaller landing craft escorting the Abele shot down two more planes and beat off the rest, managing to rescue 255 crew members.

Nearly eight decades later, modern robotics technologies allowed Taylor and Dennison to find the destroyer's submerged hull. In the past, Taylor noted, it would have been practically inconceivable for a small, private team to have undertaken the cumbersome search process that, Taylor estimated, would have taken four to five times as long and cost sig-

nificantly more money. While a philanthropic private investment group funds the expeditions, according to Taylor, the pay for the subsequent efforts to contact families and educate the public comes from Taylor and Dennison, as well as the nonprofit Ocean Outreach. Even with funding, the stars have to align to organize such expeditions - they need ships available within acceptable range of the search area, an available crew, the possession of necessary permits and acceptable weather conditions.

Even then - and with the fairly good historical records of the Abele's sinking - finding its exact location was far from guaranteed. "Back then it wasn't like today with GPS," Taylor said of those who tried to record the place it met its demise. "A mile off under the sea takes a lot of looking! It was also in a very volcanic area, so there was a lot of activity on the sea floor. Time is our enemy. It's still a big ocean." It was on their last remaining day of a more-than-month-long search, just before bad weather would force them to conclude the expedition, that they spotted the Abele's wreck. Taylor and Dennison worked closely with the Navy after they made the discovery. They waited for the Naval History and Heritage Command, responsible for preserving, analyzing and sharing the service's history, to authenticate the discovery of the Abele before announcing it to the public, not wanting to give families false hope. They are releasing footage and photos of the downed ship to reach more of those families and so others can join in honoring those lost on Memorial Day.

"We're not treasure hunters," Taylor told me. "We're looking to keep the story of these guys alive. World War II is a time in our history where we fought the bad side of human nature and won." Taylor and Dennison's years of work represent an ideal form of commemoration - one aimed at honoring the sacrifices of the past and preserving what otherwise risks being lost to memory, but also looking forward and thinking about how rediscovering the past can be used to help us heal and build a better future, as they hope to employ the special autonomous underwater technology they created to help others map the ocean floor for environmental and other purposes. This is the best sort of historical inquiry: not an exercise in nostalgia for past triumphs or bitter ax-grinding over defeats, but an honest excavation of transformative events with an eye on how they impact us today and can hold lessons for the future. It's an effort we should undertake with renewed vigor every Memorial Day.

CNN

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Governor for standardizing ‘Islamic financial contracts’

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Mr. Jameel Ahmad said that collaboration among regulators, financial institutions, industry players, and Shariah scholars is essential for bringing standardization of Islamic financial contracts and simplifying the processes.

He was addressing the Inaugural International Conference on Islamic Capital Markets (ICM) jointly organized by Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI) and Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). The theme of the conference this year was ‘ICM Development with Ecosystem Completion: Innovation, Growth, and Transformation’.

Mr. Ahmad spoke at length on key issues and challenges in development

of Islamic capital market. He was, however, convinced that the solutions are well within reach and hoped that the insights and knowledge exchanges during this conference will help in developing a roadmap for sustainable, diversified, and inclusive Islamic Capital Market in Pakistan.

The Governor noted that Islamic finance as a global industry has crossed the USD 3 trillion mark and the Islamic capital markets account for around 31 per cent share of this growing pie. He, however, noted that Islamic capital markets are in nascent stages of development in most jurisdictions.

He attributed this to gaps in institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks, inefficient price discovery and lack of diversity in instruments and investors. The Governor showed satisfaction that Islamic banking has grown into a sys-

temically important sector in the country both in terms of assets base and current market share.

Highlighting the challenges pertaining to the development of Islamic capital markets, particularly of Islamic Debt Market, the Governor reminded that the conversion of public debt into Shariah compliant instruments remains the biggest challenge.

The lack of adequate sovereign assets has remained a major impediment to regular issuance of asset-based Sukuk until recently.

He informed the audience that the SBP has constituted a high-level working group to develop practical solutions on alternate Shariah compliant structures, especially Asset Light Sukuk Structures.

For building a robust Islamic corporate debt market, Governor SBP emphasized the need for develop-

ing coordinated and sustained efforts on multiple fronts to provide an enabling tax, regulatory and policy environment. Noting the importance of retail investors, he stressed the need for investor education programs to complement the efforts for strengthening the market infrastructure. He also emphasized the need to embrace Islamic fintech, digital finance, climate finance, and innovation with a futuristic view to achieve holistic and sustainable development of an inclusive Islamic capital market.

He envisioned that Pakistan’s Islamic Capital market to be a fair, modern, efficient and globally competitive market, responsive to the needs of its stakeholders, and based on sound regulatory principles, which should provide the impetus for sustainable economic growth.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addressing a delegation of Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan during a meeting on budget proposals.

Govt to present business friendly budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said on Monday that the government would try to provide a business-friendly budget in order to support the masses and boost economic growth.

He was talking to a delegation of the Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan (ABAD) that called on the minister here.

Dar appreciated the proposals presented by the delegation and assured them the government was taking concrete steps to overcome the economic challenges and for strengthening the economy of the country.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Revenue, Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Chairman RRMCC, Ashfaq Yousif Tola, Chairman FBR, and senior officers from FBR.

Earlier, the delegates apprised the finance minister of the challenges currently faced by the construction industry and presented their proposals for the upcoming Federal Budget.

The delegation also assured support to the government in its efforts for overcoming the economic challenges and to boost the economic and business activities in the country.

The delegation thanked the finance minister for considering their budget proposals.

Markets diverge after US debt deal

PARIS (AFP/APP): Asian and European stock markets wobbled Monday after President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy reached a deal on lifting the US debt ceiling to avoid a disastrous default.

Among major Asian markets, Tokyo and Shanghai finished in the green but Hong Kong was unable to maintain their early gains and turned lower.

Paris and Frankfurt rose at the open but were down in early afternoon deals. Wall Street and London were closed for a holiday.

After weeks of wrangling, the two announced that an agreement had finally been reached and urged lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to vote for it before the government runs out of cash on June 5.

However, there is some nervousness on trading floors as the bill contains plenty of elements that are likely to anger Democrats and Republicans alike.

“We should not expect a smooth passage,” said Clifford Bennett, chief economist at ACY Securities. “There is a slight risk of this being a giant case of the devil in the details.”

“A default can most probably be avoided at this stage. Such default avoidance is still not a complete certainty; however it is now much less of a risk,” Bennett added.

The breakthrough lifts the threat of a debt default by the US that economists warn could hammer the global economy and cause market turmoil.

The bill will suspend the debt ceiling until January 1, 2025, and place curbs on federal spending that will please some Republicans, but it does not deliver the big cuts right-wingers wanted and progressive Democrats would have balked at.

“The agreement prevents the worst possible crisis,” Biden said at the White House on Sunday. “I strongly urge both chambers to pass that agreement.”

SCCI to resolve traders’ issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) expressed its firm resolve to raise business community issues at every forum.

This was stated by acting president of SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi while talking to various traders’ delegations here at the chamber’s house on Monday.

The traders’ delegations include Anjuman e Tajraan Kochi Bazar president Sadder Gul, president of Pakistan Chemists and Drug Association G.T Road Peshawar Fazal e Wahid, former president Shah Qabool Bazar Faiz Rasool, Muhammad Ishtiaq Paracha and Bara Power Looms Association Raza Khan Afridi, CEO Musa Silk Factory, Daud Khan and others.



Members of the delegation extended heartfelt felicitation to Ejaz Khan Afridi for taking charge as acting president of the chamber. Traders expressed hope that the acting president would play his important role in resolving their issues.

Ejaz Afridi speaking on the occasion said there will not be allowed any kind of discrimination and injustice with traders and shopkeep-

ers. The acting president said the SCCI believes in selfless services to the business community. He said the door of the chamber is always open for traders.

Ejaz urged the government to provide facilities and incentives to traders, shopkeepers and industrialists which had become a major source of employment for many people and families.

Furniture sector:

FPCCI calls for granting formal industrial status

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FPCCI), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Region has demanded for granting formal industrial status to the furniture sector and taking sincere steps to resolve its problems.

The demand was made during a meeting held here on Monday at FPCCI Regional Office Peshawar with Coordinator Sartaj Ahmed Khan, in the chair. Besides, office bearers of the furniture association, the representatives of the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BoIT), Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, State Bank of Pakistan, Bank of Khyber, Bank Al Habib and other institutions also attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to listen to the problems of the people associated with the furniture business and make it possible for them to have access to concerned authorities and commercial banks for starting a new business under

the Prime Minister Scheme and or to expand the ongoing business through loan schemes including special schemes of solar system and creation of awareness about loan schemes and procedures for installation was also to be provided.

In the meeting, the furniture sector business community of Peshawar informed about their problems and said that more than 800 units are operating only in Tehkal area of Peshawar equipped with machinery worth millions of rupees, but problems including massive load shedding of electricity and multiple taxes pushed the business down to the brink of collapse due to which many workers and entrepreneurs have to take other jobs to feed themselves and their families.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, Coordinator FPCCI KP Region, Sartaj Ahmad Khan said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Caretaker Minister are making all-out efforts for promotion of business

activities and strengthen the national economy.

He demanded for declaring furniture as formal industry, saying the province has no shortage of skilled workforce to produce quality furniture products.

During the meeting, the representatives of commercial banks gave detailed briefing to the participants regarding business loan schemes and said that their communication with them will continue till the realization of practical benefits.

The FPCCI Coordinator told the participants that all those businessmen concerned over higher power tariff can get financial support through schemes from banks for installing solar systems, but also stressed the need for awareness about these schemes.

The officials and entrepreneurs of the furniture association participating in the meeting expressed their gratitude to FPCCI officials and expressed the hope that the joint struggle will sustain the furniture business in the near future and significant progress will be made in solving the problems.

SMEDA, CCP to collaborate for SME uplift

LAHORE (APP): The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) have agreed to join hands to create conducive policy environment for development of SME sector in the country.

In this connection, SMEDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Farhan Aziz Khawaja and CCP Chairperson Rahat Kaunain Hassan held a brainstorming session here at SMEDA head office on Monday and derived a set of common goals for economic prosperity of the country through SME development.

Others who attended the meeting from both the organisations included Nadia Jehangir Seth, GM Policy Planning division and Sheharyar Tahir, Head External Relations Department of SMEDA. The CCP chairperson was accompanied by Ms Maryam Zafar, Joint Director of CCP on this occasion.

The CEO SMEDA proposed forming a joint group for ensuring achievements of the common goal of creat-

ing level playing field for sustainable growth of SMEs in the country. He also urged to exchange the research work conducted in both the organisations. He said that SMEDA is going to launch

its latest research report regarding Income Tax Regime on SMEs at Islamabad on coming Thursday. He hoped that the report would help government to ease income tax on SMEs.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): PQA shipping activities were recorded on Sunday, where three ships namely, MSC Rafaela, CMA CGM Figaro and Al-Jassasiya carrying Containers and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Pakistan Gas Port Terminal respectively. Meanwhile another ship, Serenity Gas with 4,590 tonnes of LPG is also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same period.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Maersk Shesapeake, CMA CGM Figaro and MSC Rafaela left the Port on Monday morning on 29th May, & three more ships, Olita, Zeze Start and Maran Gas Asclepiu are expected to sail on 29th May, 2023.

A cargo volume of 179,902 tonnes, comprising 140,715 tonnes imports Cargo and 39,187 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,381 Containers (2,084 TEUs Imports and 2,297 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 06 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Serinity Gas and Hafnia Providence & four more ships, Ton Hill-II, Northern Jamboree, MSC Denisse and Lana carrying LPG Gas oil, Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at SSGC, FOTCO, PIBT and QICT respectively on Monday, two more container ships, Maersk Atlanta and MSC Maria Elena are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

Rupee devaluation continues against US Dollar in interbank

ISLAMABAD (INP): The US Dollar on Monday continued its upward trend against the Pakistani Rupee and gained 30 paise to reach at Rs285, posing a new challenges to already struggling economy. In the open market, the US dollar is being sold at Rs311.

Just two weeks ago, Pakistani rupee had experienced a sharp decline, hitting a record low of 298 against the American currency due to political tumult in the country.

On Monday, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar addressing a Pakistan’s First International Conference

on Islamic Capital Markets assured the nation that government has been trying to fix the economy. The conference was jointly organized by the SECP and AAOIFI.

Asian markets rose Monday on news that President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy have reached a deal to lift the US debt ceiling and avoid a calamitous default.

After weeks of wrangling, the two announced that an agreement had finally been reached and urged lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to vote for it before the government runs

out of cash on June 5.

However, there is some nervousness on trading floors as the bill contains plenty of elements that are likely to anger Democrats and Republicans alike.

For now, dealers are upbeat as the breakthrough lifts the threat of a debt default by the United States that economists warn could hammer the global economy and cause market turmoil.

The bill will suspend the debt ceiling until January 1, 2025 and place curbs on federal spending that will please some Republicans, but it does not deliver the big cuts right-wingers

wanted and progressive Democrats would have balked at.

“The agreement prevents the worst possible crisis,” Biden said at the White House on Sunday. “Which means no one got everything they want.”

“But that’s the responsibility of governing. I strongly urge both chambers to pass that agreement.”

He added: “It takes the threat of a catastrophic default off the table, protects our hard-earned and historic economic recovery and... represents a compromise that means no one got everything they want.”

Grand opening ceremony of PC Legacy Nasirabad held

F.P. Report

NASIRABAD, Hunza: The grand opening of PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza took place in the beautiful valley of Hunza, surrounded by the snow-capped mountains. The event was attended by Mr. and Mrs. Murtaza Hashwani, CEO of PSL and Deputy Chairman, Hashoo Group, Senior Minister of Gilgit Baltistan Col. Ubaidullah Baig, Rani Atiqa Sahiba of Hunza, Shehryar Khan, Mir of Hunza, Owners Mr. Ayaz Kalani, Mr. Mehboob Ali Bhulani, Mr. Fida Ali Sawani and Mr. Nizarshah, local dignitaries, Hashoo Group executives and guests from all over Pakistan.

The brand PC Legacy is a new chain of four-star hotels by Hashoo Group, which already owns and operates Pearl-Continental Hotels and Hotel One across Pakistan. PC Legacy will bridge the gap for travellers between five-star and select-service hotels. Situated in one of the world’s most picturesque locations, and overlooking Rakaposhi, PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza offers breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the magnificence of nature. The hotel features 57 meticulously



designed rooms and suites, state-of-the-art facilities, and a range of dining options, promising a truly remarkable stay.

The breathtaking ceremony took place in the idyllic outdoors of the hotel, with an unobstructed view of the enchanting Rakaposhi mountain. The CEO of Hashoo Group, Mr. Murtaza Hashwani, a pioneering force in the Pakistani hospitality sector, unveiled the PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza and addressed the guests, reflecting upon the journey that led to the creation of PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza.

“It gives us immense pride to declare that we have already attained a remarkable 40% representation of female employees at PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza, and we are dedicated to ele-

vating this figure to 50%. This distinction makes us the first hotel in Pakistan to achieve such a significant proportion of women in our workforce” he added.

The afternoon was filled with moments of inspiration. Ms. Samreen Kalani, Mr. Faisal Sawani, Sheryar Mohammad and Salman Mehboob Ali shared their views, emphasizing the collaboration and shared vision behind this exceptional venture. Their words resonated with the audience, underscoring their commitment to providing unparalleled luxury and service, as well as giving back to the community. The Senior Minister, Col. Ubaidullah Baig’s attendance highlighted the significance of this landmark occasion, symbolizing the importance of the region as a prime destination for tourism and development.

Adding to the enchant-

ment of the evening, the internationally acclaimed “Gurgu”, a group of musicians from Lief Larson Music Centre, Hunza, along with Mr. Niaz Baltistani, a renowned singer from Gilgit-Baltistan took the centre stage, captivating the guests with a mesmerizing performance. The melodic tunes echoed through the mountains, creating an unforgettable ambience that perfectly complemented the surroundings.

Embarking on this exciting new chapter, PC Legacy Nasirabad Hunza aims to redefine the standards of luxury hospitality in the region. Travellers from around the world are invited to embark on an extraordinary journey of relaxation, rejuvenation, and discovery, while indulging in the unparalleled beauty and tranquility that this remarkable destination offers.

Public Notice

In the Court of Hamid Sajjad Civil Judge XIV, Peshawar, Suit No. 396/1 next date 31/05/23, Case title - Bi Bi Khatoon vs Alif Shah Summon to - 2 Ihsan Ullah S/o Alif Shah R/o Lahore 7 Haaeb ur Rehman S/o Shehbaz Khan R/o Lahore 8 Zahid S/o Shehbaz Khan R/o Saudi Arabia 10 Abdul Khalaq S/o Gulzar R/o Karachi (Defendants). The above defendants are directed to appear before this Court on 31/05/2023 personally or through attorney or through counsel in failure an ex-parte proceeding will be proceeded against you. Seal of the Court.

Lost & Found

It is informed that the Constructors/Operators Licence of M/s BUKHZEZ CONSTRUCTORS bearing No. C-5/25043 issued by PEC, has been lost. Any person, who finds it, is requested to return the same address: Village Pulgran PO Bhara Kahu District Islamabad.

Name Correction

My Father’s correct name is Ubaid Ullah only while in my educational documents it has been written Ubaid Ullah Jan. It may be corrected please. Noman Khan S/o Ubaid Ullah, Rahatabad Peshawar.

Public Notice

It is published through this Notice that I Waheed Anwar S/o Noor Khana Din R/o Rehmat Abad District Karak, presently R/o at Reyad Saudi Arabia is the owner of plot No. 135, Sector F-2, Size 5 Marla, Phase-II, KDA, Kohat has appointed Mr. Muhammad Imran S/o Badshah Gul R/o Muhammad Zai, District Kohat, through (special) deed No 428 Bahi No. 04 Volume No. 238, page No 237, dated 31/08/2020 which is registered in the office Kohat of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar. The attorney holder now wants to transfer the above said plot. If any bank/institution/firm/person has any objection about the transfer he should contact the Housing Officer UADA within 15 days in writing with proofs otherwise plot will be transfer and no objection will be accepted (Project Director Urban Area KDA Kohat).

Lost & Found

Mr. Abdul samad Khan S/o Haji Mukhtiar Ahmad R/o Hayatabad, Phase-I, Sector-E, Street No. 5, House No. 90, Peshawar is requesting that he has lost the original allotment order of Plot No. 158, measuring 10 Marla situated at Abbottabad Township Scheme. Now he is requesting for issuing a duplicate allotment order of the said plot. In this regard, if there is any objection/claim by anyone, please inform the undersigned 15 days. Otherwise, a duplicate allotment order of the plot will be issued to the applicant by relevant officials of Abbottabad Development Authority. Housing Officer of Abbottabad Development Authority.



In brief

Govt plans 250 sports stadiums

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal said that government under the vision of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has taken practical steps for the effective sports infrastructure as 250 state of the art sports stadiums would be constructed across the country. While talking to Radio Pakistan, minister said that government would lay a network of sports grounds across the country as sports gave the youth a healthy life and mental strength to fight the challenges in life. The creation of a state-of-the-art stadium would help the growth of sports in the country, he added. He also lauded the efforts of Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for his efforts of promotion of cricket in the country.

Babar set to embark on Hajj journey

LAHORE (Web Desk): Pakistan's cricket team captain, Babar Azam, is preparing to undertake the holy pilgrimage of Hajj this year, according to media reports. The skipper will join thousands of fellow Pakistanis on this sacred journey, accompanied by his mother. Sources reveal that Babar Azam is scheduled to depart for Saudi Arabia in the second week of June. In addition to Babar, several other prominent cricketers, including Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan, Faheem Ashraf, and Fakhar Zaman, are also expected to perform Hajj this year. Joining the cricketing fraternity on this spiritual endeavor is former Test cricketer Inzamam-ul-Haq, who will be accompanied by his wife, The Minister for Religious Affairs, Mufti Abdul Shakoor, previously announced in March that approximately 179,210 Pakistani pilgrims would participate in Hajj this year. Prior to their Hajj plans, Babar Azam, Iftikhar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, and Haris Rauf, along with other national cricketers, undertook the lesser pilgrimage of Umrah during the holy month of Ramadan. Notably, the Pakistan cricket team is not scheduled for any international assignments until late July when they are slated to tour Sri Lanka for a two-match Test series. However, there is a possibility that the ICC Test Championship matches might be converted into One-Day Internationals (ODIs) if Sri Lanka qualifies for the World Cup. As the cricketers stars prepare for their spiritual journey, fans and well-wishers eagerly anticipate their safe return, hoping that their spiritual experience brings blessings and further success to the Pakistani cricket team.

Klopp won't take break

LONDON (Agencies): Jurgen Klopp insists he does not need a break from management as he looks to put Liverpool back on track after their troubled season. Klopp's side missed out on Champions League qualification after finishing outside the top four for the first time in a full season under his leadership. A 4-4 draw at Southampton on the last day of the season stretched Liverpool's unbeaten top-flight run to 11 games, but they had to settle for a fifth-place finish in the Premier League. Klopp is the Premier League's longest-serving manager and there had been claims the intense German might be willing to walk away from Liverpool due to burn-out. But, asked if he needs time off from football, Klopp said: "No, no, no, not at all. Honestly, I'm completely fine."

34th National Games

Aqeel overcomes Huzaifa to claim gold in tennis event

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan No 1 Aqeel Khan staved off challenge from rising tennis star Huzaifa Abdul Rehman of Pakistan Army 7-5, 6-1 in the showdown to earn gold medal for Wapda in the Men's Singles tennis event of the 34th National Games here at the PTF Tennis Complex on Monday.

The first set saw a thrilling battle between the 21-year-old Huzaifa and 43-year-old Aqeel. Huzaifa went up 3-1 but Aqeel broke back and had a second break to lead by 5-3. Huzaifa came back to take the next two games to level the match five-all.

Then Aqeel held his own service game and broke Huzaifa in the crucial 12th game to take the first set 7-5.

Huzaifa put up resistance in the send set but seasoned Aqeel utilised all his expertise to win it 6-1. But the

score line does not reflect the quality of the game as Huzaifa displayed his class, showing that soon he will be a force to be reckoned with in the tennis circles.

In the Women's Singles final, Sarah Mahboob of beat Ushna Suhail, also from Wapda 6-4, 3-6 (10-8) and earned the gold medal.

Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan-ur-Rehman Mazari, who attended the closing ceremony as the chief guest, appreciated the PTF management and Balochistan Tennis Association for organizing the event in a professional and befitting manner.

He congratulated all the medal winners and lauded them for exhibiting their talent and potential. PTF President Salim Saifullah Khan also conveyed his good wishes to the medal winners.

Punjab sports contingent wins 2 more medals at 34th National Games

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab sports contingent added two more medals to its tally at the 34th National Games on Monday in Quetta.

According to the information made available here by Sports board Punjab overall, Punjab athletes have taken their tally of medals to 65 including three gold medals, 11 silver and 51 bronze medals so far in the ongoing National Games.

Meanwhile Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail has greeted Punjab's all medal winners in the 34th edition of National Games.

As per latest results, a Punjab athlete bagged a bronze medal in the discus throw competition while another bronze medal came Punjab's way when a Punjab weightlifter secured third position in 73kg weight category of weightlifting event behind Army and Wapda competitors.

In the National Games Table Tennis Women's Singles semifinal match, Hoor Fawad of Army defeated Punjab's Fatima Khan by 4-3 (5-11, 11-3, 11-9, 11-6, 8-11, 6-11 and 11-6).

Mbappe named best French footballer for fourth time in row

PARIS (AFP): Kylian Mbappe was voted the Ligue 1 player of the season for the fourth successive time Sunday after helping Paris Saint-Germain win a record 11th French title.

The France star has scored 28 goals in the league this term and is on course to finish as the division's top scorer for the fifth season running.

"It's a pleasure, I always wanted to win, to write my name into the league's history. But even with all the ambition I have I didn't expect to win so quickly," said Mbappe on receiving

his award.

Mbappe, scorer of 40 goals this campaign, snubbed Real Madrid at the end of last season and signed a new three-year contract to stay with PSG.

According to reports, the 24-year-old's contract will run out next year unless he exercises an option to stay until 2025.

Asked about his future at the awards ceremony, Mbappe replied: "I will be here again next season."

He is the first four-time winner of a prize first awarded in 1994, surpassing Zlatan Ibrahimovic

who won the accolade on three occasions with PSG.

Franck Haise of Lens was named coach of the season after leading the club to second place and a return to Champions League football for the first time in two decades.

Lens goalkeeper Brice Samba was also honoured while Paris Saint-Germain left-back Nuno Mendes earned the best young player award.

He was one of four PSG players in the team of the season alongside Mbappe, Lionel Messi and Achraf Hakimi.

Anderson, Robinson expected to be fit for England's Ashes bid

LONDON (Agencies): England head coach Brendon McCullum expects James Anderson and Ollie Robinson to be fit for the Ashes clash with Australia despite ruling the pace bowlers out of this week's Test against Ireland.

Anderson strained his groin while on Lancashire duty and Robinson suffered an ankle issue playing for Sussex earlier this month.

The pair will remain sidelined when England host Ireland at Lord's in a four-day match prior to the first Ashes Test. The five-match series against Australia begins on June 16, but McCullum is confident Anderson and Robinson can return in time for the opener in Birmingham.

"For the first Ashes Test, I think they should be fit," McCullum said on Monday.

"They won't be fit for this one against Ireland. We'll just have to monitor it over this next sort of while, but we've got some great options right throughout the squad."

"When I first took over this job, people said there wasn't much depth in English cricket and I disagree with that completely. I think there is an immense amount of depth and we've got plenty of good options throughout the squad."

England already have fitness concerns over a number of other bowlers, with Jofra Archer and Olly Stone struggling with elbow and hamstring problems respectively.

With Anderson and Robinson ruled out, Stuart Broad will lead the bowling attack against Ireland but Mark Wood will have to be assessed before a final decision is made on his fitness.

"He is bowling over there at the moment and seems to be getting through his work so hopefully he will be fine too," McCullum said of Wood. "We've still got a couple of days and will make the decision when we need to, but he seems to be progressing well."

All eyes were on captain Ben Stokes during England's

training session on Monday.

There are doubts over how much he will bowl this summer following an Indian Premier League series where he only played twice and sent down just one over for Chennai Super Kings.

McCullum remains positive the talismanic all-rounder can still make an impact with the ball. Asked if Stokes will bowl against Ireland, McCullum responded: "I don't know. You'll have to ask Stokes. He's progressing well too."

"He looks really fit as well, looks in great order and has a big smile on his face."

"He is delighted to be back around the group and as our leader, having that sort of energy he brings is fantastic so again we'll monitor that and see what happens."

"I think he'll bowl at some stage throughout the summer, yeah, no doubt. "He is a world class all-rounder and if he is able to bowl, fantastic. If not, we'll find a way."

ICC confirms squads for World Test C'ship 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Cricket Council on Monday confirmed the Australia and India squads for the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2023 Final to be played at The Oval from June 7-11.

With the start of the support period today (Monday), any changes to the squad could now only be made with the approval of the Event Technical Committee, the ICC said in news release.

Billed as the Ultimate Test, the WTC Final has June 12 earmarked as a reserve day to make up for any loss of play on the scheduled five days.

This is the second edition of the WTC, which was introduced in 2019 to add context to the longest format of the game. New Zealand were the champions of the inaugural edition, beating India by eight wickets in the final in Southampton.

The winners of the WTC Final will take home a purse of \$ 1.6 million while the losers will get \$ 800,000.

The squads:

Australia: Pat Cummins (captain), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Marcus Harris, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Josh Inglis, Todd Murphy, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, David Warner.

Reserves: Mitch Marsh, Matt Renshaw.

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Ravichandran Ashwin, KS Bharat, Shubman Gill, Ravindra Jadeja, Virat Kohli, Ishan Kishan, Axar Patel, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Mohammad Shami, Mohammad Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Jaydev Unadakt, Umesh Yadav.

Reserves: Yashasvi Jaiswal, Mukesh Kumar, Suryakumar Yadav.

Sidra Amin leads Dynamites to third straight win



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dynamites captain Sidra Amin made 95 off 100 balls to help her side to their third straight win in the Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament as they beat Blasters by 78 runs at the State Bank Ground on Monday.

The right-hander struck 13 fours and stitched a 130-run partnership for the second wicket with Bismah Maroof, who made 95-ball 65 (hitting two fours and a six). The two came together when Khadija Chishtu was out caught and bowled for five by Diana Baig with 23 runs on board.

Sidra and Bismah now lead the tournament batting charts with 195 runs at 97.50 and 94 runs at 94, respectively.

The partnership pushed back Blasters bowlers and propelled Dynamites to 214 for four in 45 overs, Diana and Saba Nazir picked up

two wickets each.

Blasters were all out for 136 in 37.3 overs as off-spinner Rameen Shamim took three wickets for 25, while Nashra Sundhu, Ghulam Fatima and Maham Manzoor picked up two wickets each.

Blasters captain Muneeba Ali top-scored with 33 and the second best performance with the bat in the innings came from opener Ayesha Zafar, who made 30.

Fatima, the leg-spinner, has the most wickets in the tournament with eight scalps at 7.88. Diana Baig and Aliya Riaz follow her with six and five wickets, respectively.

Challengers, who are yet to win a match, will play Blasters on Wednesday.

Scores in brief: Dynamites beat Blasters by 78 runs

Dynamites 214-4, 45 overs (Sidra Amin 95, Bismah Maroof 65, Aliya

Riaz 21; Saba Nazir 2-36, Diana Baig 2-37)

Blasters 136 all out, 37.3 overs (Muneeba Ali 33, Ayesha Zafar 30; Rameen Shamim 3-25, Maham Manzoor 2-17, Nashra Sundhu 2-28, Ghulam Fatima 2-28)

Player of the match – Sidra Amin (Dynamites).

Bismah charged for code of conduct violation

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dynamites' Bismah Maroof has been fined 20 per cent of match fee for a level 1 breach of the PCB's Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel during her side's match against Blasters in the ongoing Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament 2022-23 at the State Bank Stadium on Monday.

Bismah was found to have violated Article 2.8 of the PCB Code of Conduct, which reads as: "Showing dissent at an Umpire's decision during a Match".

The incident happened in the 40th over of Dynamites innings when Bismah showed obvious disappointment over the umpiring decision when she was given out LBW.

The charge was imposed by on-field umpires Alay Hyder and Sabahat Rashid.

Bismah accepted the charge and the fine was imposed by the match referee Mohammad Anees.

PCB Level-II umpiring course to get underway

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will organise four-day-long Level-II umpiring course from Tuesday, May 30, here at its headquarters.

The course will be attended by 65 candidates, who passed the Level-I course in 2021.

The course will further strengthen the PCB's pool of umpires and the successful candidates will be inducted in the PCB's development panel of umpires, who will officiate the district cricket association matches in the upcoming season. This will be the first induction in the panel since 2016-17 season.

The candidates will undergo comprehensive training on the first three days and will take a written examination and interviews on the last day.

The trainers for the course are Ahsan Raza, member ICC Elite Panel of Umpires, Asif Yaqoob, member ICC and PCB International Panel of Umpires, and Nasir Hussain from the PCB Elite Panel of Umpires.

There are three tiers of the PCB Panel of Umpires Elite, Supplementary and Development, with the umpires beginning their careers from the development panel and graduating to elite based on their performances.

These 65 were amongst the 350 candidates who passed the Level-I Umpiring Course in 2021 after attaining at least 60 per cent score. The maximum age limit to appear in the Level-II course is 45.

Djokovic advances to French Open second round



PARIS (Agencies): Novak Djokovic launched his quest for a record-breaking 23rd men's Grand Slam singles title with a no-nonsense 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (1) first-round victory over debutant Aleksandar Kovacevic at the Roland Garros Open on Monday.

The two-time champion breezed through the first two sets before encountering resistance from the 24-year-old American, whose lack of experience then showed in the tiebreak on the world's biggest clay court.

Djokovic ended the contest with a sizzling service

return on his first match point and will next face Hungarian journeyman Marton Fucsovics for a place in the third round.

"It's always a pleasure to come back here, one of the best tournaments in the world," said Djokovic, who made his Roland Garros debut in 2005.

"I'm very motivated to go far here, all the way I hope."

Djokovic did not have an ideal buildup to the clay-court Grand Slam, missing the Madrid Masters and being eliminated in the last eight at the Italian Open in

Rome, but he looked in good form in wind conditions.

On court Suzanne Lenglen, Benoit Paire kept his cool but could not avoid yet another defeat in the main tour when he was beaten in five sets by British 14th seed Cameron Norrie.

Paire, once a wild card, was up a break in the decider but could not close out the match. "I'm happy with all the efforts that I've been making for some time. So today it was a great match," said world No. 149 Paire, who has not won in the main draw in a top tier

event since August.

On 'favorite court,' Sloane Stephens eases into second round

PARIS: Back on her "favorite court in the world," Sloane Stephens looked sharp in her opening match at the French Open with a 6-0, 6-4 win over two-time major finalist Karolina Pliskova.

While Stephens' only Grand Slam title came at the 2017 US Open, she has had sustained success at Roland Garros, finishing as a runner-up to Simona Halep in 2018 and reaching two other quarterfinals on the red clay in Paris, including last year.

"This is my favorite court in the world, so I'm super happy to be back," Stephens told the crowd on Court Philippe Chatrier. "To start a Slam on your favorite court, your favorite surface, is always incredible."

Stephens helped American women go 4-0 through the first few hours of play on Day 2 of the tournament after a 1-4 start Sunday, when the only U.S. victory came in a match between two players from

the country: Jessica Pegula beat Danielle Collins.

Madison Keys, the runner-up to Stephens in New York six years ago and a semifinalist at Roland Garros in 2018, beat Kaia Kanepi 6-1, 3-6, 6-1 on Monday to improve her career record in the first round of majors to 35-5.

Keys next plays American qualifier Kayla Day, who eliminated French wild-card entry Kristina Mladenovic 7-5, 6-1.

Also, Croatian-born American Bernarda Pera beat former No. 2-ranked Anett Kontaveit 7-6 (6), 6-2.

A n a s t a s i a Pavlyuchenkova, a finalist in Paris in 2021, breezed past Czech teenager Linda Fruhvirtova 6-2, 6-2, and 22nd-seeded Donna Vekic beat qualifier Dayana Yastremska 6-2, 7-5.

Stephens was down a break in the second set against Pliskova but then won three straight games to close it out. She had a 19-16 edge in winners and committed only 10 unforced errors to 31 by Pliskova, who lost in the finals of the US Open in 2016 and

Wimbledon in 2021.

"This court is a bit tricky. You have to play on it a lot to understand when the wind is blowing and where it's coming," Stephens said. "The more you play on it, the more you understand it. But it's a very complicated court. But that's what makes it so amazing."

Stephens won a small clay-court tournament in Saint Malo, France, at the start of the month and reached the semifinals of the Morocco Open last week after playing a total of three matches at bigger clay events in Madrid and Rome.

"Last year, my clay season wasn't great, but I played amazing at Roland Garros last year," Stephens said, "and this year, I really wanted to get matches and play a lot and to see where that got me."

Pavlyuchenkova said she had feared for her career a year ago due to a knee problem. She said she was forced to go through extensive rehabilitation and stopped playing tennis completely for around five months, with the lack of physical activity during the process leaving her out of shape.



In brief

IRSA releases 180,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 180,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 178,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1428.29 feet and was 30.29 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 61,400 cusecs and 68,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1123.30 feet, which was 73.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 47,300 cusecs and 43,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 74,800, 71,200, 41,700 and 14,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 34,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

5 stolen motorcycles, gold recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested bandit involved in theft cases during crackdown and also recovered gold ornaments worth millions of rupees and 05 stolen motorcycles from his possession here on Monday. According to police spokesman, the accused was identified as Shakeel involved in many theft cases. R. A. Bazaar police have registered a case against him and further investigation was in progress. SHO said that other accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be arrested soon. SP Potohar Muhammad Waqas Khan appreciated the performance of police team said that strict action would be taken against the anti social elements and operation against such elements and active organized gangs will be accelerated.

Employees welfare association takes oath

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Monday said that employees should perform their duties with honesty, hard work, and sincere spirit for the overall development of the organization. In his speech at the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of the Employees Welfare Association (EWA), he said that employees who work hard would be encouraged and their rights would also be fulfilled as per the rules. The Vice-Chancellor said on this occasion that we should all focus on our responsibilities. Dr. Nasir, while appreciating the efforts of all the previous leadership and administration of AIOU, said that they all played their role in the development of AIOU strategically, and with their sincere efforts, AIOU is included in the "mega universities of the world". He said that we must learn from past experiences and should work together for the prosperity of AIOU. Dr. Nasir agreed to establish a community center in the residential colony of AIOU for the facilitation of employees. He further nodded upgrading the posts of Imams, Muazzins, and Khateeb for the mosques at the request of President EWA. VC AIOU also agreed to revise the canteen policy, increment in the overtime of daily wagers and gardeners, hold DPC as soon as possible, and adoption of Prime Minister's package and said that all these demands will be included in the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the executive council for approval.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Legal Reforms, Accountability Irfan Qadir addressing the press conference regarding legal issues.

Pakistani leaders line up to congratulate Erdogan on his re-election

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistani leaders including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, former president Asif Ali Zardari and JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman have felicitated Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his historic re-election as President of Türkiye for the third time.

Taking to his Twitter handle, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wrote a congratulatory message to President Erdogan on his re-election, saying: "Heartiest congratulations to my dear brother H.E. President @RTERdogan on his historic re-election as President, Republic of Türkiye. He is one of few world leaders whose politics has been anchored in public service. He has been a pillar of strength for the oppressed Muslims & a fervent voice for their inalienable rights. His presidential victory & that of AKP in

parliamentary elections is significant in so many ways, reflecting the trust & confidence of the Turkish people in his dynamic leadership. The bilateral relations between Pakistan & Türkiye will continue to stay on an upward trajectory. I keenly look forward to working with him to further deepen our strategic partnership in line with the excellent brotherhood between our two peoples."

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also conveyed his felicitations to President Erdogan. He tweeted: "Heartiest congratulations to H.E. @RTERdogan on his re-election. His historic victory reflects the trust of the Turkish nation in his visionary leadership. Wishing Türkiye eternal peace and prosperity as we continue our unique journey of brotherhood."

Former president and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians,

Asif Ali Zardari has congratulated Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on being elected as the President of Türkiye for the third time. In his message, Zardari said that Erdoğan's victory is a manifestation of his popularity among the Turkish people. He prayed that Türkiye reaches new heights of development under his leadership.

In his congratulatory message posted on Twitter handle, JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman wrote: "I heartily congratulate the Honorable President @RTERdogan on behalf of the nation of Pakistan and JUIP for being undefeated once again in the presidential election of Türkiye. Under his leadership, the journey of the development of the Turkish nation will continue and new goals of Türkiye's relations with Pakistan and the Islamic world will be reached, In sha Allah."

Around 37, 485 calls have been received from helpline 1099

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 37,485 calls have been received from helpline 1099 during the last three months, said an official of the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) here on Monday.

Talking to APP the Director Helpline Muhammad Kashif Kamal has said that from January to April 2023, a total number of 37,485 calls has been registered to the helpline of 1099. According to details (Inbound, Outbound, Visits, Applications, Fax, emails), 37,222 calls were received and 236 calls have been received via Mobile APP.

Around 426 total services were provided by the Ministry of Human Rights.

He further added that people can also contact the helpline @ mohr.gov.pk and the ministry will ensure service delivery, he added.

Around 286 calls to voice mails and around 390 legal advice were dealt by the helpline. The Ministry will ensure service delivery and redressal of the complaints by Pakistani citizens, he added.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Dhok Hasu, Major Masood, Gulshanabad, Industrial, Dhok Mingtal, Khanna Road Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, River Garden I & II, Swan Garden II, Kahota City II, Hanif Shaheed, RCCI-I, II, III, IV & V, Chowk Pindori, Sehla Feeders, Islamabad Circle, AIQU, H-8/2, N-I & II, Tufail Shaheed, Cheraah, Farash Town, Karpa Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Cantt, CMH Jhelum Feeders from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM, Attock Circle, Ghurghashti, Bara Zee, Maskinabad, Shah Dir, Radio Pak 1&2, Lawrencepur, Qaziabad, GBHP.

‘No compromise on country’s dignity, honour’: Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mohammad Ishaq Dar Monday said that the civil and military leadership were on the same page against miscreants involved in the 9 May incidents who will be brought to justice.

Talking to a private news channel he said that such incidents should be condemned, adding that the government was committed to strengthening the national economy and all stakeholders should play their role in this regard.

While criticizing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), he said the Khan's government had "brought the country to the brink of default", but the current rulers "preferred" to save the nation instead of its votes. The finance minister said that we all have to work together to get the country out of the crisis due to the wrong policies of the previous government.

PTI must realize that its dirty politics was not in the interests of Pakistan and was also alarming for its future as well, he mentioned. He said that if Khan was serious about prioritizing national interests, he should win the trust of the nation, state institutions and armed forces and to prove himself that he was not following any foreign agenda.

Govt to present business-friendly budget: Dar: Federal Minister for

Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said on Monday that the government would try to provide a business-friendly budget in order to support the masses and boost economic growth. He was talking to a delegation of the Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan (ABAD) that called on the minister here.

Dar appreciated the proposals presented by the delegation and assured them the government was taking concrete steps to overcome the economic challenges and for strengthening the economy of the country.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Revenue, Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Chairman RPMC, Ashfaq Yousif Tola, Chairman FBR, and senior officers from FBR. Earlier, the delegates apprised the finance minister of the challenges currently faced by the construction industry and presented their proposals for the upcoming Federal Budget.

The delegation also assured support to the government in its efforts for overcoming the economic challenges and to boost the economic and business activities in the country. The delegation thanked the finance minister for considering their budget proposals.

HEC training for IPFP Fellows' Cohort-I of 2023 concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has organized certificate distribution ceremony for Cohort-I of 2023 of the National Faculty Development Programme for IPFP Fellows at National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE).

Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) programme of HEC provides an opportunity to fresh PhDs to obtain academic experience and mentorship for one year in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), federal/provincial government postgraduate colleges or public sector R&D organizations, prior to their formal entry into the academic job market.

Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, the chief guest of the ceremony, appreciated for the participants for their performance in the three-week intensive programme and emphasised the exemplary role of teachers in the continuous progress of Pakistan.

He encouraged the participants to try new methods, take on challenges, and set high targets and achieve them. Emphasising the importance of professional development, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed affirmed that a teacher not only taught curriculum but also played a crucial role in polishing students' attitude and skills.

In her welcome address, Managing Director NAHE, Noor Anna Malik extended congratulations to the participants who had successfully completed the training programme.

She emphasised the importance of implementing advanced knowledge and practices learned by

fresh PhD graduates. She highlighted the modern society's demands for updated information, high-quality teaching, and learning from teachers. She informed the audience that various other new initiatives were under consideration for capacity building of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) faculty and administration at different stages of their careers. NFDP is structured to accelerate the transfer of essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes in three dimensions of a successful career as a faculty member, including effective teaching and learning, course designing, lesson planning & delivery, research, and professional practices. Successful completion of NFDP is a prerequisite for the placement of IPFP fellows at HEIs for a period of one year.

While the delegation also assured support to the government in its efforts for overcoming the economic challenges and to boost the economic and business activities in the country. The delegation thanked the finance minister for considering their budget proposals.

He encouraged the participants to try new methods, take on challenges, and set high targets and achieve them. Emphasising the importance of professional development, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed affirmed that a teacher not only taught curriculum but also played a crucial role in polishing students' attitude and skills.

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She emphasised the importance of implementing advanced knowledge and practices learned by

Makkah municipality recruits 22,000 people for Hajj

ISLAMABAD (APP): Makkah municipality has completed preparations for Hajj, including recruiting 22,000 workers to boost pilgrim services. Spokesperson Osama Zaituni said that the municipality has mobilized all its human and mechanical capacities, supported by assistance teams including public security and scouts, temporary health monitors, as well as a large fleet of equipment and machinery, to provide the highest levels of municipal services to pilgrims.

Zaituni added that the municipality has prepared its 13 sub-municipalities and three subsidiary municipalities, as well as

28 centers in Makkah, geographically distributed to cover the entire area of the holy sites, and provided them with all the machinery and manpower needed, in addition to recruiting 22,000 people to cover all fields, Arab News reported.

Meanwhile, the Saudi Arabia's General Directorate of Passports has expressed its readiness to effectively manage procedures for pilgrims during Hajj at airports, land borders and seaports. It has also reiterated its commitment to utilizing all available resources to facilitate the entry process for pilgrims, including the implementation of cutting-edge devices at ports to streamline operations.

ANF seizes over 852 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in their ongoing operations against drug smugglers managed to recover over 852 kg drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He informed that in two operations near Islamabad

Motorway Toll Plaza, drugs were recovered and two accused were sent behind the bars.

In an operation, four kg charras was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Karak while in another operation, one kg charras was recovered from the possession of an accused

resident of Khyber. In third operation in Islamabad, E-11/2 area, 60 intoxicated tablets were recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Islamabad. In an operation at Lahore International Airport Cargo, 184 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for Australia.



ISLAMABAD: A view of heavy traffic jam at Islamabad Expressway.

Expertise and CPEC to boost Pakistan's chemical industry: Experts

ISLAMABAD (INP): Expertise and CPEC to boost Pakistan's Chemical industry, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday quoting experts.

China is currently a world leader in terms of the chemical industry, and it saw a significant increase in investment and exports last year.

According to Professor of H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry, China has emphasised the advancement of the cracking industry, which produces chemicals necessary for various applications, such as soap, dye, leather, textiles and cement.

"China now sells its chemical products globally, said Pakistan enterprises can cooperate with China in this sector to develop their own cracking industries," he added. Pakistan's chemical industry can also benefit from China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) when the 4 special economic zones (SEZs) are constructed.

"Local production of chemicals is very important. If Pakistan can establish a good chemical industry, build cracking plants and produce the chemicals locally from indigenous resources, our imports will be greatly reduced," said

Raza Shah.

Chemicals are essential for all industries and every walk of life. However, Pakistan's chemical sector is mostly dependent on imports and at a very initial stage.

The chemical industry necessitates a high level of expertise, but Pakistani graduates have had little exposure to it. To address the skilled worker shortage, it is critical to strengthen collaboration between industry and academia in this sector. "Our organization specializes in chemical research, and possesses state-of-the-art facilities. Private sector currently lacks access to these resources."

With the collaboration of private industries and academic institutions, the chemical manufacturing sector in Pakistan can flourish," Raza Shah added.

There will be separate areas for chemical industry to produce chemicals for the main industries," said Amir Qaiser, representative of Chemical Linkers Pakistan Beijing office. "We can also export chemicals from there. Pakistan has abundant raw materials for chemicals, so it can be a very potential industry."

Haqqani raise issue in meeting

KABUL (Agencies): The governor of Baghlan, Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Haqqani, called the cooperation of people with government officials an important element in building good governance. He raised this issue in a meeting with some elders of the Tala and Barfak districts of Baghlan province of Afghanistan. Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Haqqani called the consolidation of the Islamic system in need of the all-round cooperation of the people.

The Frontier Post

Zil-Qadah 09, 1444 — Tuesday, May 30, 2023

IEA seeks to promote Banking

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for administrative affairs, in a meeting with the officials of Islamic Bank of Afghanistan, said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan strives for the development of Islamic banking in the country. Jaweed Ahmad Zahiri, the executive chairman of the Islamic Bank of Afghanistan, expressed his satisfaction with the efforts of the officials of the Islamic Emirate in maintaining the Islamic banking system in Afghanistan.

Afghan farmers face locusts, flooding

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock said that the invasion of locusts, and flooding have seriously damaged the agricultural sector of the country.

“We are witnessing another setback from locusts in the north of the country, which have challenged our farmers and their land, which is more than a thousand acres of land. If the government doesn’t help us, our farmers and country will face big losses,” said Merwis Haji Zada, deputy of the Chamber of Agriculture and Irrigation.

According to the Ministry of State for Disaster Management, in one month, nearly 20,000 acres of agricultural land was destroyed and 42 people died and 45 others were injured due to flooding.

“In the last month, in different parts of the country, due to floods and rain, there have been human and financial losses, leaving 42 dead and 45 injured, destroying 341 houses and 19,573 acres of agricultural land,” said Shafiullah Rahimi, a spokesman for the ministry.

According to the ministry, flooding have also caused financial loss in

Kapisa, Maidan Wardak, Takhar, Badakhshan, Ghor, Kandahar, Kunar, Nuristan, Khost, Daikundi and Nangarhar.

“Land and labor are major and fundamental factors of a country’s economy, and flooding and natural disasters can have negative and unfavorable effects on the country’s economy,” said Abdul Zahor Mudaber, a political analyst.

The Ministry of State for Disaster Management said that in the past month, 341 houses and 20,000 acres have been destroyed and 13,000 animals have been lost due to flooding.

Kabir: Public services on IEA priority in Panjshir

PANJSHIR (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister for political affairs in a meeting with teachers and scholars of Panjshir said that providing public services, and facilities and addressing the Panjshir resident problem is the priority of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

The Deputy PM, Mawlawi Kabir met local officials, teachers, and scholars of Panjshir in his office on Sunday, a statement said released by his office.

The scholars and teachers of Panjshir during the meeting announced their support for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, adding enemies spread rumors in the country to create mistrust and disunity the country.

Those who spread rumors on the situation in Panjshir have no place here in the country and the people of the province will not believe in it, at the meantime, they have shared their problem with the deputy PM Kabir.

For his part, Deputy PM, Mawlawi Kabir, called it one of the most beautiful provinces of the country, adding that providing facilities, and public services and addressing the problems of its residents is the responsibility of the Islamic Emirate. Meanwhile, Mawlawi Kabir, expressed his satisfaction with the activities of the scholars in that province, adding that the Islamic Emirate will give the necessary instruction to the relevant departments to address the problems of Panjshir residents.

Tourists hails IEA’s facilities

KABUL (Agencies): Two British tourists, in a meeting with Mohammad Nabi Baha, the chairman of the Afghan-Tour State company of the Ministry of Information and Culture, hailed the facilities provided by the Islamic Emirate for foreign tourists in Afghanistan.

According to reporter, in the meeting, while Qadratullah Noori, the manager of the “Afghanistan Travel Adventure” tourism company and the host of these tourists, was also present, the British tourists Joseph and James thanked the hospitality of Afghan people and the officials of the Afghan-Tour State Company of the Ministry of Information and Culture.

They said they have been around the country from Kabul down to Kandahar Herat and Nuristan, and they thanked to Afghan-Tour organization hospitality.

Touring the country they said that Afghanistan could be the Jewel and Crown of Asian Tourism, adding that everything that Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and other regions have, Afghanistan has in better.

The British tourists expressed satisfaction over maintaining security in Afghanistan and said that they will encourage their friends to visit Afghanistan.

“About 20 per cent of silkworms have been grown in Injil, Guzara, and Pashtun Zarghun districts, which has had good results, and the financial status of the farmers has improved.”

Meanwhile, according to the district official, women perform most of the work in the silk industry.

“Almost 60 per cent of the silk industry is done by women,” said Ahmad Shah Qawami, the district’s head of the silk workers’ union in Zinda Jan. Silk is one of the most important contributors to the global textile and clothing business, constantly expanding and changing in terms of demand.

The luxurious feel, shiny appearance, resilience, strength, and light weight of silk fibre are just a few of its many attributes.

Silk is frequently used in various garments, including dresses, bridal gowns, neckties, and scarves, and in home furnishings, including wall hangings, pillows, upholstery, and draperies.

Deputy PM urges local admins to focus on people’s economic issues

KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister for administrative affairs Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, in a meeting with the governor of Takhar said, local administrations should focus on the economic problems of people.

Deputy PM, Hanafi, met with Mawlawi Zia-ur-Rahman Madani, the governor of Takhar, a statement said released by his office.

In the meeting, the Governor of Takhar shared details with Deputy PM, on the security situations, local governance, economic situation, and problems of the people of Takhar, according to the statement.

He called the economic situation and unemployment the main problems of



the people of Takhar and asked the officials of the Islamic Emirate to take serious action in this respect.

Meanwhile, Deputy PM

Hanafi, said providing security, dealing with economic problems, and providing services to people are the duties of the Islamic Emirate at the national and

local levels, and there is a need for local officials to focus on the economic problems of the people and make maximum use of the available facilities.

IEA’s Prime Minister congratulates Tayyip Erdogan on his victory

KABUL (Agencies): Prime Minister of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, has extended his heartfelt congratulations to Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his re-election.

Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, won an election runoff Sunday after the strongest challenge to his 20-year rule.

The IEA Prime Minister expressed his sincere hope for increased strength, stability, and dedication to religious service in Turkey under President Erdogan’s leadership.

Akhund also noted the

bond of brotherhood and friendship between the people of Afghanistan and Turkey and conveyed his aspirations for continued cooperation and mutual support between the two nations in various fields.

He also said Erdogan’s successful re-election will further strengthen diplomatic ties and shared values between the two countries.

Official results showed Erdogan’s challenger, Kemal Kilicdaroglu won 47.9% of the votes to Erdogan’s 52.1%, pointing to a deeply divided nation.

The election had been seen as one of the most con-



sequential yet for Turkey, with the opposition believing it had a strong chance of unseating Erdogan and reversing his policies after his popularity was hit by a cost-of-living crisis.

Instead, victory reinforced his image of invincibility, after he had already redrawn domestic, economic, security and foreign policy in the NATO member country of 85 million people.

Afghanistan among global hunger hotspots: UN report

KABUL (Khaama Press): According to a recent UN early warning report, Afghanistan is one of the world’s hunger hotspots, which also warned of rising acute food insecurity in several parts of the world.

In 2023, there will likely be a severe food shortage in

3,600 boxes of silkworms distributed

HERAT (Khaama News): More than 3,500 boxes of silkworms have reportedly been distributed to farmers in Zinda Jan, Injil, Guzara and Pashtun Zarghun districts in the western province of Herat.

According to the Herat Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock, more than 3,500 boxes of silkworms have been distributed to farmers this year.

“We grew about 3,600 boxes with the help of institutions, about 80 per cent of which we have grown in the Zinda Jan district,” said Khalil Ahmad, general director of the Herat agriculture directorate.

“About 20 per cent of silkworms have been grown in Injil, Guzara, and Pashtun Zarghun districts, which has had good results, and the financial status of the farmers has improved.”

Meanwhile, according to the district official, women perform most of the work in the silk industry.

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18 “hunger hotspots” across 22 countries, including Afghanistan, according to a report released Monday by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program.

“The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warn that acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further in 18 hunger hotspots – comprising a total 22 countries – during the outlook period from June to November 2023,” the report said. According to the report, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen are the countries with the highest concern: Sudan, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Haiti.

As a result, immediate humanitarian intervention is required to save lives, preserve livelihoods, and avoid starvation and death, particularly in areas where severe hunger is at a high risk of worsening from June to November 2023.

According to the WFP report in March 2023, roughly nine million people in Afghanistan are on the verge of facing acute starvation amid the unprecedented economic and humanitarian crisis.

Attempts to reduce hunger and improve nutrition in Afghanistan face significant obstacles due to decades of complicated and lengthy conflicts, a changing environment, gender inequality, rising urbanization, underemployment, and the recent change of government in the war-torn country.

Food insecurity is on the rise, and more than half of the country’s population lives below the poverty

line, partly due to conflict and insecurity cutting off entire areas from livelihood opportunities.

Nine out of ten Afghans do not consume enough food, and two-thirds of the population, or 28.3 million people, are expected to require humanitarian aid in 2023, approximately four million more people than in 2022. Since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021, the situation has worsened due to the severe economic crisis, sanctions and new decrees which have restricted Afghan women from working with aid agencies.

The ban on female aid workers exacerbated the situation, as most aid agency workers were female. Women and girls are hit hardest nationwide by the ongoing humanitarian and economic crisis.

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1.3m Afghan refugees return home in past 20 months



KABUL (Khaama Press): The acting Minister for Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR),

Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani, said that as many as 1.3 million Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan from various countries over the past 20 months.

These 1.3 million returnees came from various countries, including Pakistan, Iran, Europe and other countries. The return and reintegration of these returnees and their families have been made easier with

the help of the Afghan government and international aid agencies.

Taliban officials link the rise in Afghan refugees coming home from neighbouring countries, including Iran and Pakistan, to the overall security improvement in the country.

However, the UNHCR stated that a strong correlation exists between the ongoing return of Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries and the rising inflation and lack of economic employment in the

host countries.

The officials said some returnees were introduced to aid agencies such as International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive necessary aid.

Following the Taliban’s takeover of power in August 2021, the number of Afghan refugees entering the neighbouring countries of Iran and Pakistan has risen once more. While some Afghan refugees have been forcefully deported, others willingly left the host countries, the officials said.

Allah Gul meets acting Afghan envoy to Iran



KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghan Embassy’s head of mission in Tehran Fazal Mohammad Haqqani met with Allah Gul Mujahid, a former member of Afghanistan parliament and emphasized that Islamic Emirate will try to pave the way for the return of Afghans to the country.

The Afghan Embassy in Tehran in a series of tweets said about the meeting with the former well-known Afghan politician and his interest to return to Afghanistan.

While emphasizing that Afghanistan is the common home of all people, Fazal Mohammad Haqqani said that the ruling regime will provide the ground for the return of Afghans.

Meanwhile, the controversial Afghan politician Allah Gul Mujahid has reported his possible return to the country in the coming future.

Following the return of the Taliban to power on August 21, hundreds of former government officials

left the country and most of them migrated to the neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan.

Allah Gul Mujahid was a popular political figure of the previous government, who was detained and humiliated by the Taliban security forces in the early days of the Islamic Emirate.

Following his release, Mujahid left the country for Turkey and headed to Iran after spending one year in Turkey, according to unofficial sources.

Weather bureau issues heavy rain, flood warning

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan Department of Meteorology issued a warning Monday on the possibility of heavy rain and floods in 19 provinces over the next two days.

In a warning on their website, they said heavy rains and floods could be expected on Monday and Tuesday in Badakhshan, Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Kabul, Logar, Paktia, Khost, Paktika, Zabul, Ghazni, Maidan Wardak, Bamian, Daikundi, Parwan, Panjshir and Kapisa province.

According to the department, the amount of rainfall is predicted to be between 10 and 30 mm.

Last week, the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) reported that over the past month, at least

42 people died and 45 were injured in 13 provinces due to natural disasters.

Shafiullah Rahimi, a spokesman for the ministry, said in a video that during this period, 341 houses were completely or partially destroyed, 19,573 acres of agricultural land were damaged, and 1,354 livestock were lost in these provinces, mostly in flash floods.

According to Rahimi, these incidents took place in the provinces of Kapisa, Maidan Wardak, Takhar, Badakhshan, Ghor, Kandahar, Kunar, Nuristan, Laghman, Paktia, Khost, Daikundi and Nangarhar.

In addition to this, recent floods caused huge financial losses to residents.

The press office of the governor of Ghor has said that a joint delegation from

various government departments visited Taywara and Pasaband districts of the province, to assess the flood damage.

“Five thousand, eight hundred and ninety-five acres of agricultural land, 105 drinking water wells, and water springs were destroyed in two districts, 74 shops were partially destroyed and some were completely destroyed,” the statement said.

In addition, 32 houses were partially destroyed, along with 201 small water dams, fourteen culvert bases and 559 small water reservoirs and canals.

Ghor’s press office said the team had shared the results of its investigations with the local administration, but no help has yet been received for the flood victims.

Online taxi services launched in Kandahar province

KANDAHAR (Khaama Press): A local entrepreneur has launched online taxi services in Afghanistan’s southern Kandahar province for the first time, according to local sources.

Samiullah Payegham, a local resident has started

providing online cab services in Kandahar province, a new initiative of its kind that has not been experienced in the province thus far.

Mr. Payegham said that although the majority of people in Afghanistan are not familiar with the use of

technology, there is still a business opportunity, as no online taxi service providers operated in the province before.

Previously, there used to be several online taxi service providers in Kabul and other major cities of Afghanistan. “Bubar” was a familiar name to many people who used online taxis.

However, with the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul in August 2021, the company ceased operations mainly due to economic issues and security challenges.

The new online taxi service provider “Sayar” which translates as “mobile” is freshly launched in Kandahar province and possibly will take some time for users to get familiar with the technology and all.

Based on previous constraints including internet issues, security challenges and lack of people’s knowledge, Sayar needs to be patient and see whether the project would be successful.



PTI’s Kaneez quits party positions over May 9 violence

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Desertion from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continued on Monday, as another party leader Kaneez Fatima announced to quit the party and politics over May 9 violence. The female politician was part of Pakistan Tehreeke-e-Insaf since 2010.

Addressing a press conference at the Islamabad National Press Club, Kaneez Fatima strongly condemned the May 9 riots and added no patriotic Pakistani can support the attacks on military installations. She announced taking a break from politics after quitting all party positions she held in PTI. “I want to give time to my family.”

“No one forced me to take this decision,” Kaneez Fatima said. A number of senior party leaders including, Aamer Kiani, Asad Umar, Ali Zaidi, Imran Ismail, Fawad Chaudhry, Shireen Mazari, Maleeka Bokhari, Malik Amin Aslam and others have parted their ways with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in the wake of May 9 violence.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) ticket holder from Narowal, Punjab, Sajjad Mahis, bid farewell to the party over May 9 violent protests. In his video statement, Sajjad Mahis said that May 9 was the darkest day in Pakistan’s history, adding that the military and institutions are the backbone of our country. Those who attacked institutions and installations should be punished as per law, he added.

Ticket-holder from Narowal Sajjad Mahais quits PTI: As desertion from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continued, a

Senator Saifullah Niazi rejoins PTI

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Saifullah Niazi has rejoined Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) three days after leaving the party over May 9 vandalism.

The party leader had announced to quit the party over May 9 incidents while addressing a press conference in National Press Club. However, Saifullah Niazi was among the PTI Senators including Faisal Saleem Rehman, Hamayun Mohmand, Zarqa Taimur, Seemi Ezdi, Falak Naz Chitrali, Fiza Muhammad and Zeeshan Khanzada who addressed a joint press conference outside Parliament House on Monday and condemned the May 9 incidents.

The PTI Senators said that they had also submitted a condemnation resolution in Senate Secretariat. Investigations should be conducted against those involved in May 9 mayhem and they should be tried in civilian courts, they added. The PTI Senators also supported Pakistan army saying that we salute our armed forces. During joint press conference, when media questioned Saifullah Niazi about his affiliation with PTI, Senator Zarqa replied that they are respectable Senator.

ticket-holder from Narowal, Sajjad Mahais, on Monday parted ways with embattled Imran Khan over May 9 mayhem.

Mahais made the announcement in a video statement, calling the May 9 a “darkest day” in the history of Pakistan. “Army and its institution are backbone of our country,” he said while demanding actions against all those involved in attacking these institutions and military installations.

“I strongly condemn the disturbing incidents,” he said, adding the May 9 events had forced him to leave the PTI. “I am stepping down from all PTI positions and withdrawing as part’s candidate in PP-49,” Sajjad Mahais said. It is recalled that the outgoing politician had contested the 2018 general elections on the PTI ticket in the same constituency.

So far, several PTI leaders, including Ali Zaidi, Imran Ismail, Fawad

Chaudhry and Shireen Mazari, have left the party after the government launched a crackdown on the Imran Khan’s supporters over violent protests. On May 9, violent protests erupted after Mr Khan was arrested from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) premises in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

His party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Lahore Corps Commander’s House and the Mianwali airbase in response to the arrest of the PTI chief. The Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi was also stormed by the mob for the first time, an action that was widely condemned by the civil and military leadership of the country.

Thousands of PTI supporters were arrested following the violence that the Pakistan Army and ruling coalition described as a “dark day” in the history of the country.

Court extends Asad Qaisar’s interim bail till June 5

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): An Additional District and Session Judge (AS&J) of Islamabad Tahir Abbas Sipra on Monday extended the interim bail of former speaker and PTI leader Asad Qaisar in a case incriminating him in Police Station Sangiani.

Appearing before the court on Monday, a senior criminal lawyer Sher Afzal Marwat contented that his client has properly joined the investigation saying the court has to examine grounds of the application for interim bail. He further argued that up to the satisfaction of the court the matter may be decided, adding there is also Islamabad High Court verdict to substantiate the claim of the applicant.

“What has been written in the application,” the court questioned. “Police standing at the gate of the court not allowing entry,” the counsel replied. “You know prevailing circumstances,” counsel Sher Afzal further said. “That is not written in the plea, I don’t know the circumstances,” the judge said. “We are submitting another plea,” counsel said. Earlier, Asad Qaisar’s counsel filed another petition with fresh grounds for exemption from attending the hearing. Accepting the application of the accused persons’ counsel in the matter the court granted exemption to the former speaker and adjourned further hearing of the case till June 05.

Mina tents are being prepared to receive Hajj pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The tents of Mina have started to be prepared with all the equipment to receive pilgrims this Hajj season. Mustafa Hadi, the general supervisor for one of the companies in Mina, stated that they have started preparing the camps in Mina.

The preparation includes the maintenance of electricity, plumbing, paints and gypsum works, preparing toilets inside the camps, in addition to the decorations, Saudi Gazette reported. He said that during the upcoming days, they will start equipping restaurants, as well as the tents with beds and blankets, and complete all the preparations inside the campus to receive Hajj pilgrims during the Tarwiyah (water provision) day and the three Tashriq days.

It is noteworthy that Mina cannot be inhabited except during the Hajj period, and it is located inside the holy sites borders between Makkah and Muzdalifah, 7 km far from the Holy Mosque.

Meanwhile, a total of 773 pilgrims of the government Hajj scheme were given a rousing welcome by the Pakistan Hajj Mission and hotel management upon their arrival in the sacred city of Makkah Mukarrama.

Director General Hajj Abdul Wahab Soomro, Director Hajj Faheem Khan Afridi, Joint Secretary Admin and Finance, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sajjad Haider Yaldram, along with officials from the Pakistan Hajj mission and hotel management, extended a heartfelt welcome to the hajj pilgrims.

The pilgrims were greeted with a cascade of rose petals and treated to a delectable spread of biryani, accompanied by refreshing juices. Additionally, they were presented with delightful gifts including sweets. Each hajj pilgrim was provided with an identification card that was equipped with scanning technology, enabling them to determine the building number and gather supplementary details.

These government scheme pilgrims had arrived in Madinah through three flights on May 21. This year, a total of 179,200 Pakistani pilgrims are expected to perform Hajj. Out of this number, approximately 81,230 pilgrims will be partaking in Hajj under the government scheme, while the remaining individuals will be facilitated by private tour operators, as per the authorities’ arrangements. The last flight carrying Pakistani pilgrims is scheduled to depart for Saudi Arabia on June 21, according to the Pakistani Ministry of Religious Affairs.



MUZAFERABAD: Protestors cuffed their hands and chanting slogans during a protest at Azadi Chowk against the alleged punishment of life imprisonment to Hurriyat Leader Yasin Malik by India.

Tareen likely to ‘announce new political party’

LAHORE (Agencies): In a bid to take advantage of the mass exodus of leaders from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), seasoned politician Jahangir Khan Tareen (JKT) — once Imran Khan’s closest aide — is likely to announce his new party, mostly comprising the former ruling party’s defectors, during the next 72 hours, well-placed sources said.

The development came during a luncheon hosted in honour of JKT and his aides at the residence of former PTI leader Aleem Khan. JKT, accompanied by “important political personalities” is likely to announce the launch of a new political party, the sources added. Tareen made telephonic contacts with more than 100 political leaders, including current and those leaders who have recently bid adieu to the PTI after the May 9 mayhem.

The former ruling party has been feeling the heat of the state’s might after enraged PTI workers allegedly attacked sensitive military installations, including the Lahore Corps Commander’s House and the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi follow-

ing the arrest of party chairman Imran Khan on May 9 — a day the army dubbed as “Black Day”. The exodus of leaders from the party started when the government decided to try the May 9 vandals in the military courts. Tareen was the secretary general of the PTI before he was ousted from politics in 2017 after the Supreme Court disqualified him for being “dishonest” on a petition filed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hanif Abbasi. However, despite the disqualification, Tareen remained part of the PTI and was crucial in wooing independent lawmakers to join the Imran Khan-led party after the 2018 elections. His efforts proved critical as they helped Khan secure the prime ministership in 2018.

But after coming to power Tareen and Aleem Khan’s relationship with the PTI turned sour. In May 2022, the former prime minister revealed the reason behind his differences with both leaders and said that both were seeking “illegal benefits from him.” Speaking during a podcast, Khan — who was removed from

office via vote of no-confidence in April last year — had claimed that differences with both leaders developed when he refused to entertain their requests.

“Aleem Khan expected me to legalise his 300-acre land near Ravi”, Khan said, adding “From then onwards, I developed differences with him.” While talking about Tareen, Khan said: “Tareen stood with those who are the biggest dacoits in the country. When I ordered a probe into the matter [sugar scandal], differences developed with Tareen.”

During the luncheon today, a large number of current and former leaders of the PTI, including Aleem Khan and Aun Chaudhry were among the attendees of the event. Following the lunch, JKT and Aleem Khan discussed plan about a new political party, the sources added. “Instead of forming a pressure group, we should form a new political party,” the participants suggested to JKT. “Those who are parting ways with the PTI should be provided a new platform,” the participants said.

Political parties failed to promote democracy: Siraj

F.P. Report

LAHORE (Amir Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has said that the ruling and former political parties have failed to promote the democratic traditions in the society, and they are still desperate for the establishment’s support.

While talking to the members of different social media channels at Mansoorah on Monday, he said that the country could not move forward without empowering the masses to elect their representatives freely and fairly. Sirajul Haq congratulated Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his victory in Turkey’s presidential election, saying the Turkish president is a powerful voice of Islam who always spoke for the rights of the people of Kashmir. He hoped the

relations between Turkey and Pakistan would further strengthen in future.

The JI chief said August 14, 2023, is most suitable day for the national poll. The JI, he added, had initiated efforts to develop consensus among the political parties on the election date, and it was still trying to bring all of them to the table for dialogue. He reiterated the JI had always discouraged the victimization of innocent political workers and their trial in the military courts. He added that it also strongly condemned May 9 incidents and considered them an attack on the state.

Siraj said the fight between the PDM and the PTI was for the protection of self-interests, leading to the prevailing economic, political and constitutional

crises. The inflation and unemployment, he added, were the result of the flawed economic policies of their governments as they always relied upon the debt-servicing instead of devising plans of self-reliance and discouraging corruption by introducing good governance. He said the common man pays taxes of more than two dozen types. He said if the state introduced Zakat and Ushar system, more than 70 million people would be ready to pay taxes under the Islamic system. For this, he said, the government had to win the trust of the public in a sense that their money would not go into the hands of corrupt people. The JI, he added, was the only party which could make it possible and put the country on track.

No decision so far to put Imran under house arrest

LAHORE (PPI): No decision has been taken as yet to place Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan under house arrest, said Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi while talking to media persons in Lahore.

Reports in media had suggested that authorities might declare Mr Khan’s Zaman Park residence in Lahore a sub-jail and put him under house arrest. Thousands of workers who have been arrested in connection with the May 9 violence also include women, with the PTI claiming that their female supporters have been mistreated in prisons.

Caretaker Punjab CM Mohsin Naqvi said that there was no incident of mistreatment of women. “News about women’s mistreatment are baseless and misleading, propaganda is being made about mistreatment of women,” he said.

Talking to media in Lahore, Mohsin Naqvi said that the May 9 like incident had never happened before in the history of Pakistan. No one involved in the Jinnah House incident had been released, and no one would be released in future as well, he said. To a question, he said that Khadija Shah’s identity parade was going on. The question

came as a video of Shah went viral on social media Sunday in which she was seen apologising for her ‘actions’ on May 9.

The attackers on Jinnah House would not be spared no matter how much influence he had. Those responsible for the attack will be punished, he added. The caretaker chief minister said that incidents like mistreatment of women in jail had not happened in history. If a policeman committed an immoral act, he would be punished.

On the other hand, Punjab Information Minister Aamir Mir has also termed the propaganda of mistreatment of arrested women involved in the May 9 incidents as false and misleading. He said that the police were dealing with the women in jails with courtesy according to the law, the person planning the May 9 events was trying as usual to mislead the public.

Khan’s party has been feeling the heat of the state’s might after his enraged workers attacked military installations, including the Lahore Corps Commanders House and the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, following his arrest in a corruption case on May 9 — a day the army dubbed as ‘black day’. In an address, PTI Chairman Khan asked the

judiciary to intervene in the alleged mistreatment of his female workers during their time behind bars, calling for the Supreme Court to take a suo motu notice on the matter.

But the chief minister rejected the claims. CM Naqvi said 32 women were arrested and only 11 of them were still in jail now. The top provincial official added that it was his government’s duty to ensure that “mothers and sisters remain safe”.

Punjab constitutes committee to probe alleged torture of PTI women in jail: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday formed a committee to investigate the allegation of torture of women in prison.

The two-member committee comprises Lahore Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider and SSP Investigation Dr Anosh Masood. The team will visit the Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore and hold meetings with women inmates. The committee will investigate the allegations levelled by the PTI in this regard. Thousands of workers who have been arrested in connection with the May 9 violence also include women, with the PTI claiming that their female supporters have been mistreated in prisons.

Govt & Parliament have no friction with judiciary: Irfan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Accountability Irfan Qadir on Monday dispelled a notion that both the government and the Parliament were at odds with the top judiciary. “There are some rumours that the government and the Parliament are against the Supreme Court, which are totally baseless and have no reality. The government has desire to see a strong judiciary,” the SAPM said while addressing a news conference.

“I want to inform the nation that the present government desires to strengthen judiciary and the Supreme Court as we have no friction against the courts, instead we are standing with the apex court.” However, he said, being the mother of all the institutions, the Parliament was the supreme forum and implementation of its deci-

sions was crucial to run the affairs of the country in an effective way.

As regards the appointment of judges in the Supreme Court, he said, judges should be appointed on the basis of “seniority-cum-fitness”. He said all the institutions were bound to follow the Constitution. In the mature democracies across the globe, he said, all the institutions were working within their domains enshrined in their constitutions.

“We all are also bound to work according to the Constitution of our country and following the Constitution always enhances everyone’s respect,” he remarked. Irfan Qadir said he had expressed his reservations when the government of Yousaf Raza Gillani was removed by the apex court. He was of the view that the Parliament had the power to remove the prime ministers through a no-confidence motion, while no other insti-

tution had such power.

Recalling the lifetime disqualification of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in the Panama Papers case, he said it had not been written in the Constitution. Nawaz Sharif, he added, was also barred from heading the party which was against the law. Irfan Qadir asserted that as per Article 184/3, the Supreme Court could take the so-moto notice, not the chief justice of the honourable court.

He said as per the Constitution, no one but the Election Commission of Pakistan was empowered to announce the date of elections. To a question, he said constitutional courts should be established to hear political cases as such a practice was being followed across the globe. Constitutional experts including ex-judges, parliamentarians, media, business and other sectors should be included in the constitutional courts, he added.

President directs FBR to make payment to citizen

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to apologize and make payment to a citizen whose three imported vehicles were mishandled by Customs Department. The Customs Department’s officials, wrongly auctioned the vehicles at a low price of almost Rs3-million without any notice to the citizen, and the Customs Duty paid by him was refunded to some unauthorized clearing agents, who later disappeared with the money.

The President directed FBR to verify all receipts/documents, refund the amount as per the assessed value of the vehicles, and refund the duties/charges paid in favour of importers/owners. He also directed the citizen to provide all documents and reconcile with Customs Department enabling FBR to make payment within 30 days. He observed that interest should be added to the payment since the auction money was lying with the exchequer.

The President gave these directions while accepting a representation filed by

Ifitikhar Ahmed Awan (the complainant) against the orders of the Wafaqi Mohtasib. The complainant had stated that overseas Pakistanis, living in Japan, legally imported three vehicles for the personal use of their families and the freight against the vehicles was paid. However, FBR did not release the vehicles and sold the three cars in an auction at a low price of Rs3,019,385. Feeling aggrieved, the complainant approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib, who directed FBR to make payment of sale proceeds of vehicles to owners, after verification as to why they were being paid such a low amount.

The complainant then filed a representation with the President praying that Customs Department should be ordered to make payment of sale proceeds of the vehicles at prevailing market rates as well as refund all the duties/charges which were paid. During the proceedings, it was pointed out that after the completion of all formalities, the ship carrying the vehicles landed at another terminal and the Customs Department auctioned the vehicles without any notice to the importer,

and that the Customs Duty was refunded to unauthorized clearing agents, which resulted in huge financial loss to the importers/owners.

During the hearing, FBR’s representative admitted the fault of the Customs personnel in handling the matter due to a lack of communication and system barriers. He said as per Customs Rules, if the goods were not cleared within 15 days of the date of arrival at a Customs Station, the same could be sold in an auction. He further informed that FBR had initiated disciplinary proceedings against Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid and Sirajul Haq under Article 63 of the constitution. The Registrar Office of the high court raised objections over the petition adding that Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court and the matter does not belong to the jurisdiction of the Lahore High Court.

He added that the licences of the agents, who disappeared with the money, had also been cancelled. The President concluded that mishandling of the imported vehicles on the part of the Customs Department was not denied and maladministration had been established. He said due to the negligence of officials, importers/owners suffered a huge financial loss and mental agony.

LHC plea seeks reinstatement of Nawaz as PML-N chief

LAHORE (PPI): A petition in the Lahore High Court (LHC) sought reinstatement of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif as President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, according to a report on Monday.

Imran Khan, Shaikh Rashid, Sirajul Haq, the Election Commission of Pakistan, federal government and the prime minister have been made party in the petition filed in the high court. “Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from the National Assembly in year 2017. Imran Khan, Shaikh Rashid and Sirajul Haq had filed petition for removal of Nawaz Sharif from the party office,” according to the plea. “In year 2018, the Supreme Court ordered removal of Nawaz Sharif as president of the party.”

“The Supreme Court has disqualified Imran Khan from NA-95 Mianwali. Imran Khan and his collaborators Shaikh Rashid and Sirajul Haq should be removed as party heads,” petitioner further argued. “Imran Khan, Shaikh Rashid and Sirajul Haq have not remained truthful and trustworthy,” according to the plea. The plea seeks the court order for reinstatement of Nawaz Sharif as president of the party. It also seeks court ruling for proceedings against Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid and Sirajul Haq under Article 63 of the constitution. The Registrar Office of the high court raised objections over the petition adding that Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court and the matter does not belong to the jurisdiction of the Lahore High Court.

‘Shehryar being kept in death cell at Jail’

ISLAMABAD (INP): Advocate Sher Afzal Marwat has expressed serious concerns over the detention of PTI leader Shehryar Afridi in a “death cell” at the Adiala Jail.

During a hearing at the Islamabad High Court, the lawyer told Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir about Afridi’s deteriorating health conditions stated that the PTI leader’s arm was paralyzed. Marwat urged the court to grant Afridi permission to meet his children and transfer the PTI leader to an A-class jail.