

Cops embraces martyrdom

LAKKI MARWAT (INP): A policeman embraced martyrdom in a shootout with armed men riding motorbikes in Lakki Marwat on Friday. A shootout took place between Shehbaz Khel police and armed men riding motorbikes during which the policeman identified as Zakaria embraced martyrdom. The accused managed their escape good while the martyred policeman was shifted to Tattar Khel Hospital for post-mortem.

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Dar unveils Rs14.4t relief-oriented Federal Budget

Solar products exempted from custom duty

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday announced the exemption of customs duty on the raw material used in the production of solar energy products.

"This exemption encompasses essential components such as inverters, solar panels, and batteries, marking a positive step towards promoting renewable energy in the country," the minister said while announcing the federal budget for the fiscal year 2023-24.

Dar emphasized that Pakistan's energy requirements were being met through costly imported items, leading to a surge in inflation. He highlighted the country's dependence on these expensive imports as a significant factor contributing to the rising costs and economic challenges faced by the nation.

IT sector to become engine of growth in coming years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday announced that Information Technology and IT-enabled service providers will be allowed to import software and hardware equal to one percent of their exports without any tax.

Presenting the Federal Budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 on the floor of the National Assembly, he said the limit of these imports will be \$50,000 dollars annually. He said it will be ensured to automated exemption certificates for the exporters of IT and IT services.

He expressed the confidence that the IT sector will prove to be an engine of growth in the coming years. He said that at present, concessional 0.25 percent income tax is in place for promotion of IT exports and the same facility will be continued till June 2026, 30 June.

35% increase in salaries, 17.5% in pensions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday proposed 30-35 percent increase in the salaries on ad-hoc basis and 17.5 percent enhancement in the pensions of the Federal Government employees, realizing their financial hardships due to the increased inflation. Presenting the Federal Budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, the minister said the government had decided to give 35 percent ad-hoc relief in the salaries of employees from Grade-1-16 and 30 percent to Grade-17-22 employees aimed at increasing their purchase power.

He also announced increasing the minimum pension fixing it at Rs 12,000 and minimum monthly wage from Rs 25,000 to Rs 32,000 within the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

Govt earmarks Rs10b for youth small loans

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday announced that the government has earmarked Rs10 billion under Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) for provision of small loans to the youth to establish their businesses in the Federal Budget 2023-24.

The Finance Minister made these remarks while presenting the Federal Budget 2023-24 here at the National Assembly. He said the government has allocated Rs 5 billion under Prime Minister Youth Skills Programme (PMYSP) to impart specialized training to make skilled and trained human resource. Senator Dar said it was the foremost priority of the incumbent government to empower the youth financially as they were future leaders.

Govt allocates Rs107b in energy sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government has allocated Rs107 billion for power production, distribution and transmission in the budget 2023-24.

Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar told the National Assembly on Friday that the power production capacity has risen to 41,000 megawatts out of which 25 per cent is generated through hydropower. The minister stressed the use of renewable energy to reduce national imports and reduce the cost of production. He said improvement in distribution system, renewable energy and the use of water resources have been given special emphasis in PSDP. He said the government will provide Rs12 billion for the completion of the Jamshoro coal power plant in the next fiscal year which will produce 1,200 megawatts of electricity.

Regulatory duty 10% on import of used clothes repealed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday said the government had decided to repeal the regulatory duty of 10 % on import of second-hand clothing to facilitate lower-income segment of the society.

Delivering the budget 2023-24 speech, he said usually the lower-income class buys secondhand clothing, hoping that the proposed repeal would facilitate them. Dar also announced launching of micro deposit scheme for low income people under the National Savings on 1st July. This scheme would offer relatively higher profit ratio and the leverage to open an account digitally, he added. Informing about another initiative to be taken to facilitate people with lower income, the minister said only 1% sales tax would be imposed on Unani (homeopathic) medicine so that the rural and lower income population might not be affected.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Friday unveiled the Rs14.46 trillion relief-oriented Federal Budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 with real GDP growth target of 3.5 percent

Presenting the Federal Budget 2023-24 in the National Assembly, the finance minister said although the government had set the direction of the economy on right path, it was still facing challenges. However, keeping in view the economic scenario, it had set the modest growth target and despite being the election year, presented a responsible and balanced budget and not a popular one. The total expenses' estimate, he said, was set at Rs 14.46 trillion, out of which Rs 7.3 trillion would be spent on interest payment. The budget deficit was expected to remain 6.54 percent and the primary balance would be a surplus of 0.4 percent to the gross domestic product (GDP).

The minister said the tax collection target of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for the next fiscal year had been fixed at Rs 9.2 trillion, including provincial share of Rs 5.276 trillion. The federal non-tax

revenues, he added, would be Rs 2.963 trillion while total income of the Federal Government would be Rs 6.887 billion.

Ishaq Dar said an amount of Rs 950 billion was being allocated for the development projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2023-24. Moreover, an additional amount of Rs 200 billion would also be part of the development budget that would be managed through public-private partnership, he added. He said for the country's defence and civil administration, Rs 1.8 trillion and Rs 714 billion would be provided respectively whereas Rs 761 billion had been allocated for the payments of employees' pensions. Ishaq Dar said the government had estimated an expenditure of Rs 1.074 trillion for the provision of subsidies in electricity, gas and other sectors.

The finance minister said a grant of Rs 1.464 trillion had been earmarked for Azad Jammu & Kashmir, merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Higher Education Commission, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Railways and other sectors. To boost

the agriculture production in the country, he said the agriculture credit for the upcoming fiscal year was being increased from Rs 1.8 trillion to Rs 2.25 trillion, besides earmarking Rs 30 billion to switch 50,000 tube-wells to solar energy. The other measures for the agriculture included exemption of all taxes and duties on import of quality seeds and saplings, combined harvesters, rice planters, seeders and dryers; allocation of Rs 5 billion to provide concessional loans to agro industry; and five years tax exemption for agro-based industrial units with annual turnover of Rs 800 million, he added. Similarly, Ishaq Dar said, under the PM's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme the government would provide Rs 10 billion as subsidy.

In a bid to boost IT (information technology) exports, the minister said 0.25% concessional rate of income tax would remain intact until June 30, 2026. Moreover, the freelancers earning up to \$24,000 per year would also be exempted from sales tax registration and filing tax returns while a single page income tax return would be introduced for them, he added. He said the IT and IT enabled service providers

would be allowed to import duty free software and hardware valuing one percent of their total export proceeds. The upper limit of the exports had been set at \$50,000 per year.

He said the IT sector was being given the status of industry which would help it availing concessional income tax rates. Likewise, he said, the government was establishing a venture capital fund with seed money of Rs 5 billion to provide business resources to the IT entrepreneurs. The government had also reduced the sales tax rate from 15% to 5% for IT services in the Islamabad Capital Territory, he added. The minister said during the upcoming financial year, the government would provide professional training to 50,000 IT graduates.

Highlighting the relief measures proposed for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) sector, the finance minister said the turnover threshold under the tax facilitation system for the SMEs was being expanded from Rs 250 million to Rs 800 million while under the PM's Youth Loan Programme, the government had earmarked Rs 10 billion to provide concessional loans for small

businesses. For the industry and export sector, he said the government would establish Export Council of Pakistan under the chairmanship of the prime minister which would meet every quarter to make decisions about the sector. Other relief measures for the sector included reduction of minimum tax for all the listed companies from 1.25% to 1%, withdrawal of 5% regulatory duty on synthetic filament yarn which was not manufactured locally, reduction of customs duty on pet scrap from 20% to 11%, and exemption of customs duty for manufacturers of rice mill machinery and machine tools, he added. Ishaq Dar also announced relief measures for the overseas Pakistanis, which included withdrawal of 2% final tax on purchase of immovable property through foreign remittances.

Similarly, he also announced the issuance of Diamond Cards to the overseas Pakistanis sending remittances of over \$50,000 per year. The Diamond Card holders would avail various facilities including non-prohibited bore licenses, gratis passports, preferential aces to Pakistani embassies and consulates, fast track immigration facility at Pakistani air-

ports, and provision of handsome prize money through lucky draws. Highlighting the measures taken for the education sector, Ishaq Dar said the government had earmarked Rs 65 billion for current expenditure and Rs 70 billion for development expenditure.

The government, he said, was also establishing the Pakistan Endowment Fund under which an amount of Rs 5 billion had been earmarked in the budget to provide merit scholarships to the high school and college students. He said the Federal Government would distribute 100,000 laptops among deserving and the most talented students for which an amount of Rs 10 billion was being set aside. Similarly, he said, the government was also allocating Rs 5 billion to promote sport activities in schools and colleges. He said the government had earmarked Rs 5 billion for women empowerment under which concessional loans for businesses would be provided, besides projects of skill development and training for running business would be initiated.

(Continued on Back Page)



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commending Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for tabling the Finance Bill 2023-24 in National Assembly.

Next budget encompasses economic programme for national progress

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said the Federal Government had unveiled the next fiscal year budget which encompassed a complete economic programme and road-map for national progress and prosperity.

Talking to media persons, she said that incentives had been given to Information Technology sector to create job opportunities for youth and empower them for economic growth. A comprehensive relief package had also been announced for the agriculture sector including farmers, she added. The Minister said substantive allocations had been made for promotion of the education by improving its overall standard and quality.

For the first time, the health insurance scheme had been announced for working journalists and artists, she remarked. The Minister said the previous government also presented budgets in four-year tenure that lacked any vision for the progress and development of the country.

It seemed that sole purpose of previous PTI government was to shatter the social cohesion in the country and the economic stabilisation was not part of its agenda. Marriyum said the previous government was fully exposed when they suspended the IMF programme after its flagrant vio-

lations.

A mega relief package was being given for agriculture, IT sector and youth in the budget, she said while reiterating that there was a "good news" for the government servants. To a query, she said four years of pervasive incompetence, widespread corruption, and severe economic deterioration had deeply disappointed the nation.

Meanwhile, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the 5E's framework formulated by the Ministry of Planning and Development & Initiatives (MoPD&SI) will prove a game changer for economic development in Pakistan.

In a series of tweets, she said that 'Exports', 'E-Pakistan', Environment & Climate Change, Energy & Infrastructure, and Equity & Empowerment were the pillars of the turnaround of Pakistan. Through this framework, she added, new businesses and employment opportunities will be encouraged to increase exports. She stated that the promotion of education and health and population control will pave the way for the development of Pakistan.

Affordable and uninterrupted energy supply will give a new boost to the economy and business, she said adding environment will be improved through water reservoirs and food security. Through e-Pakistan, youth will be given development opportuni-

ties and they will be empowered, she said. She opined that the reduction of fiscal deficit to 4.6 percent of GDP from 4.9 percent was a major achievement which was a positive outcome of the correct economic policy of the government.

She said that a 76 percent reduction in the current account deficit was also a sign of sound economic policy. About 40.4 percent reduction in trade deficit showed the positive impact of economic measures. The minister remarked that the trade deficit has been reduced to \$25.8 billion from \$43.4 billion, which was a sign of improvement. She said that imports decreased by 29.2 percent, which had a positive impact on the economic situation. Import bill has fallen to 51.2 billion dollars against 72.3 billion dollars last year which was a step towards economic improvement, she added. Compared to Rs 5,348.2 billion during the previous financial year, Rs 6,210 billion in tax revenue was collected during the current fiscal.

In the first 9 months of the current financial year, about 912,000 new taxpayers have been registered against the FBR target of 700,000 taxpayers which she said was a manifestation of an increase in the tax net. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that with the allocation of the federal development budget worth Rs1.15 trillion, the economic activities in the country will accelerate and employment opportunities will increase.

Nawaz to return home before polls

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has clarified that Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) supreme leader and former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif return back to country before general elections.

"No political engineering is taking place in the country and PTI chief's claims in this regard are baseless. Why Imran has concerns if today something happening at the pattern of what took place in 2018," Talking to media person in the Parliament House on Friday, Rana Sanaullah said that Nawaz Sharif himself give the date of his return to country and no other can announce the schedule of his return.

He said that Nawaz Sharif has accepted the request to lead the party in general election and he will arrive back in country 60 to 90 days before the date of general election.

The interior minister said that if PML-N wins the general election, the person nominated by the supreme leader will become prime minister of the country. He said that the PML-N not taken any decision regarding political affiliation or seat adjustment with any party. I am personally not in favour of affiliation with any party but seat adjustment can took place and we should keep the option open, he added.

SBP to announce monetary policy on 12th

E.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will announce monetary policy on Monday, June 12, 2023.

According to a statement issued here Friday, the central bank has announced to convene meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on June 12 that would review the overall financial position of the country, economic indicators as well as performance of different internal and external sectors and decide about the Monetary Policy. The central bank would issue the Monetary Policy Statement on the same day following the MPC meeting.

PM links economy with political stability

— federal cabinet okays budget proposals

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said a country's sound economic growth was linked with its political stability.

"Without political stability, even billions of budget could not make a difference in improving the economic situation," he said at the cabinet meeting, which approved the budgetary proposals of the fiscal year 2023-24. The prime minister said the common man was bearing the brunt of inflation, however, the government was taking steps to provide them relief in the budget.

The government, he said, accepted all the requirements of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and hoped that a staff-level agreement would be reached in near future. Since assumption of power 14 months ago, he added, it had to deal with the challenge of IMF, post-flood situation and global inflation, he added.

He expressed satisfaction that the current deficit in 10 months was reduced to \$3.3 billion and hoped that the agriculture sector would boost. The prime minister appointed Rohail Sheikh as his adviser and expressed the hope that he would fulfill his responsibilities with diligence.

The cabinet also accorded approval to the Finance

Bill 2023. Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar will present the budgetary proposals with an estimated outlay of Rs 14 trillion in the National Assembly in the evening. This is the second budget in 14 months being presented by the coalition government under the banner of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

The government in its Economic Survey unveiled on Thursday highlighted its significant economic gains in terms of improved external and fiscal indicators. Even with a significant increase in debt servicing, the fiscal deficit reduced to 4.6 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in July-April FY 2022-23 against 4.9 percent for the same period last year, while the primary balance reverted from deficit to surplus.

During the first 11 months of the outgoing fiscal year, the trade deficit was narrowed down by 40 percent and the current account deficit by 76 percent during July 2022-April 2023.

**PM forms committee to remove BAP's concerns:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif constituted a committee on Friday to remove the concerns of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) regarding the development projects and issues faced by the province.

The committee was formed after a BAP delega-

tion headed by Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani called on prime minister and apprised him about their reservations regarding development projects of the province. Members of the committee included Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, Khalid Hussain Magsi, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari, Agha Hassan Baloch, Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, Dr Musaddiq Malik, Azam Nazeer Tarar and Manzoor Kakar.

Premier Shehbaz Sharif assigned the committee with task to hold a detailed consultation and present him a report within a week. In the meeting, the BAP decided to take part in the budget session and extend its full support to the government.

The prime minister said that being an important coalition partner, the BAP played a key role in every decision making of the government. He said the Balochistan's development could not be carried out without BAP's input and that the country's progress was linked with that of Balochistan province. The Senate chairman appreciated the prime minister for his keen interest and special measures for the uplift of Balochistan. Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, BAP Parliamentary Leader Khalid Hussain Magsi and Senator Naseebullah Bazai also attended the meeting.

Caretaker CM chairs budget preparation meeting

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting regarding preparation of budget for new fiscal year was held here on Friday with the caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair.

Besides provincial cabinet members Hamid Shah, Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel and Himayatullah, Chief Secretary Nadim Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Zubair Asghar Qureshi,

secretary finance Muhammad Ayaz and other relevant higher authorities attended the meeting.

The forum discussed and reviewed the preliminary outlines of financial budget and annual development program for the fiscal year 2023-24. The participants were briefed in details about the budget estimates, annual development program and other important aspects of the proposed fiscal budget.

It was decided in the

meeting that authorization for the budget of only first four months of the new financial year will be obtained from the provincial cabinet. The forum also discussed matters regarding the possible increase in the salaries and pension of the government employees. It was decided in the meeting that budget session of the caretaker provincial cabinet will be called after the presentation of new fiscal budgets by the federal and Punjab governments.



## CTD arrests target killer

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Karachi on Friday arrested a former policeman involved in target killing, from near Metro Shopping Mall, University Road.

According to the CTD spokesman, the arrested accused was identified as Ghulam Hussain. The accused during interrogation told the authorities that he was recruited by police in 1990 as a constable. During his posting at a police station in Sukkur in 1994, he spotted one of his opponents Anwar and shot killed him. He was arrested on the spot but escaped after getting bail. Later on, the District and Session Court Sukkur announced death penalty for Ghulam Hussain after being proven guilty.

The arrested accused has been handed over to the police concerned for further legal proceedings.

## Eight dead, 1,320 injured in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least eight persons were killed and 1,320 others injured in 1,231 road traffic crashes (RTCs) in all Punjab districts during the last 24 hours. As many as 710 seriously injured people were shifted to different hospitals, while 610 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by rescue medical teams.

The analysis showed that 661 drivers, 44 under-age drivers, 163 pedestrians, and 504 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. The statistics show that 285 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 308 people, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 88 in Faisalabad with 92 victims and at third Multan with 85 accidents and 91 victims. According to the data, 1,035 motorbikes, 85 auto-rickshaws, 121 motorcars, 27 vans, 14 passenger buses, 42 trucks and 107 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road traffic accidents.

## IGP directs for inspection of police buildings

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Friday directed the officers concerned to carry out inspections of the buildings under the use of the police department including police lines and police quarters so that the expenses for their renovation could be estimated.

Addressing a meeting of Sindh Police's Estate Management and Development Department, he asked to compile and submit a report in this regard so that the budget could be allocated for buildings in the financial year 2023-2024. He said all the buildings, residential quarters and others under the use of the police department should be renovated and brought up to standard level and special attention should be paid to those which were in dilapidated condition.

## LDA demolishes illegal constructions

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) launched a grand operation against encroachment and illegal constructions on parking areas in the vicinity of Faisal Town (Akbar Chowk to Kotha Pind) Abu-ul-Hasan Isfahani Road, here on Friday.

On the directions of Commissioner Lahore and LDA Director General Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the department's teams conducted the comprehensive anti-encroachment operation in the area. During the operation, encroachments constructed on tire shops, pharmacy, restaurants, bakeries and other shops were demolished. LDA teams demolished sheds, boards and encroached area on illegal constructions from more than 20 shops and sealed more than 25 shops. Famous restaurants located on Faisal Town Road were also sealed on violations. Despite repeated notices, encroachments, sheds, floors and illegal constructions were not removed from the parking space.

# Governor hosts Turkish academics at Governor's House

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman on Friday hosted Dr Mustafa Ayden of the Eurasian University Union from Turkey at the Governor's House.

Rectors and academics of private sector universities were also present.

The governor said the government was paying special attention to promote higher education in the country and bring it on a par with the international standards. He said as the chancellor, he had taken various measures for improvement of universities in the public and private sector in Punjab.

The governor said he had formed consortia on the seven most important areas and the universities are working together on these consortia. He said that he was focusing on promoting synergy between the universities, adding that the public and private sector universities could benefit better from

each other's experiences.

Balighur Rehman said Pakistan and Turkiye had unprecedented historical and fraternal relations, adding that the two countries are bound in a strong relationship in terms of religion, culture and history.

Dr Mustafa Ayden of the Western University Union, speaking on the occasion, said there is great potential in higher education in Pakistan. Dr. Mustafa Aiden said that the meetings with university authorities in Lahore remained very useful. He said that thousands of Pakistani students are studying in Turkish universities. He said that the private sector was playing important role in promotion of higher education.

Dr. Mustafa Ayden said that Lahore is a historical city and there is great learning opportunity by seeing the historical places here. He said that Pakistan was the first to help the earthquake victims in Turkey.

## Voters awareness session arranged by CDPI Pakistan in collaboration with FNFP Pakistan

### F.P. Report


PESHAWAR: Director Local Govt. Elections Mr Zulfikar Ahmad attended

and addressed to voters awareness session arranged by CDPI Pakistan in collaboration with FNFP Pakistan. The session was held in


Political Science Department, University Peshawar. The students and faculty members were briefed about the electoral process, importance of vote, composition of ECP, constitutional and legal frame work and steps being taken for inclusive and credible Elections.

A demo regarding conduct of poll was also presented in order to educate students about process of polling. Students took keen interest in the session and asked many relevant questions which were addressed by the team of ECP.





**PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT (PMU)**  
**KP-HUMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECT**  
**(KP-HCIP) E&SE DEPARTMENT**  
**GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA**  
(Email address: pd.hcip@outlook.com)



**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**  
(Consultancy Services for Community Engagement Firm)

Country: Pakistan  
Name of Project: Human Capital Investment Project (Education)  
Loan No. Grant No.: IDA67140-PK/D680-PK  
Assignment Title: Hiring of Firm for Community Engagement Including Gender Mainstreaming Activities.  
Reference No.: PK-EDUPMU-349432-CS-QCBS

The Human Capital Investment Project, Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Human Capital Investment Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

**The consulting services ("the Services") include:-**

- Designing/finalizing community engagement strategy and action plan and Implementation of Community Engagement Plan.
- Community Sensitization (awareness in civil rights, in school/education governance, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and gender mainstreaming, awareness/ capacity building (in original four (4) project districts) and on in Disaster Risk Reduction/Resilience (DRR) and prevention of disease out-breaks and its management (in flood affected districts).
- Parent Teacher Councils (PTCs) Level (Strengthening (sensitization) of PTCs in knowledge on civil rights, school/education governance & state accountability and awareness/ orientation sessions on GBV and sexual harassment) and training of PTCs on DRR/DRM & Development of School Safety Plan (SSP).
- Local Government Representatives (Sensitization/ awareness of LG representatives (civil rights, girls educations, school/ education governance).
- Officials of Education Department (Sensitization/ awareness trainings for the officials of education department in understanding of civic rights, accountability & role of community in school education governance to recognize the community/ PTCs' role).

The above activities will be carried out in the following Four Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (1) Peshawar, (2) Nowshera, (3) Swabi and (4) Haripur.

- The DRR/DRM and Development of schools' safety plan activity will be carried out in Thirteen Districts which are (10 Peshawar, (2) Nowshera, (3) Swabi (4) Haripur (5) Dir Payan (6) Charsadda, (7) Abbottabad (8) Lakki Marwat, (9) D.I.Khan, (10) Upper Chitral, (11) Dir Bala, (12) Swat, (13) Tank.

**The Human Capital Investment Project Elementary & Secondary Education Department now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:**

- The firm must be registered with government entity such as Security & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Societies Registration Act 1860 (SRA) and Social Welfare Department-KP. In addition to this, the competent consultancy services firm should have a valid MoU with Economic Affairs Division (EAD) to have legal authorization of work.
- Overall, the firm have collectively 7-10 years' professional experience in designing and implementation of community level projects, well experienced in successful implementation of 3-5 similar nature of community engagement programs/ projects in different societies with different organizations and at least one project(s)/ interventions specifically in the Education Programs/ projects.
- Ability to undertake technical policy-focused approach related to Enhancing Community Engagement and Accountability in the Education Sector.
- Experience of working with a range of organizations including local communities, civil society, and government organizations.
- Strong analytical capacity and experience in community mobilization, sensitization, assessments/ profiling, data analysis, FGDs, socio-economic analysis, needs assessment. PTCs training and program design.
- The firm having a team of professionals with excellent report writing, communication and interpersonal skills and having work experience in the Project area of influence.
- Should have adequate professional staff both women and men. (CVs not required at shortlisting stage) Firm should have adequate logistical capacity and should either have its local presence in the proposed districts or commit to establish its presence here for smooth functioning by signing of contract Firms are encouraged to provide only materials that are specific to the proposed services, and to avoid submitting generic promotional material. Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost based Selection (QCBS) method out in the Consultant Guidelines of World Bank.

Procurement should be completed as per Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method in accordance with Section II of Consultant Guidelines. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [i.e. 0900 to 1700 hours]. Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by **26 June 2023 by 16:00 hours.**

**Address:**  
**Project Director**  
**Human Capital Investment Project,**  
**H.No. 1-2A, Park Avenue, University Town**  
**Peshawar, Pakistan**  
**Attention: Tel: 091-9224270 Fax: 091-9224270,**  
**Email: pmukphcip@gmail.com**

INF(P) 1228/23

# 'Sindh gov't will work to include the subject of archaeology in curriculum'



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon visited the ongoing exhibition by the Archaeology department at the Archives Complex in Clifton, Karachi. During the visit, Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon reviewed the collection of ancient publications, rare newspapers, and journals preserved in the archives. He congratulated Special

Assistant to the Chief Minister for Archaeology, Tariq Hasan, for organizing an outstanding exhibition.

Addressing the gathering, Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized the importance of such exhibitions

for the younger generation. He stressed the need for the youth to comprehend the endeavors of their ancestors.

Sharjeel Inam Memon included archaeology in the curriculum, with the aim of promoting the new generation ensuring the participation of students from schools, colleges, and universities in these exhibitions. He further stated that the Sindh government will work to include the subject of

archaeology in the curriculum, with the aim of promoting the new generation ensuring the participation of students from schools, colleges, and universities in these exhibitions. He further stated that the Sindh government will work to include the subject of



**DIRECTORATE GENERAL**  
**MINES & MINERALS, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA**  
ATTACHED DEPARTMENT NEAR JUDICIAL COMPLEX,  
KHYBER ROAD, PESHAWAR CANTT.  
Phone: 091-9210275 - 9211140 Fax: 091-9210236

**CORRIGENDUM**

Reference to the advertisement published in various newspapers vide INF(P) No. 1121/23, dated: 04-06-2023. It is to inform for the general public that Sr. No. 21 may be added as "The area shall be auctioned inclusive of Royalty, however the successful bidder / lessee shall pay annual rent, excise duty, Professional tax, taxes and other Government dues as determined by the Government from time to time"

All other terms and conditions shall remain the same.

**Assistant Director (Coord)**  
H/Q Office Peshawar  
Secretary Mineral Auction Committee  
Directorate General Mines & Minerals  
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

INF(P) 1237/23

## TENDER

ذریعہ: کمرہ سپرنٹنڈنٹ سروس سبز ہسپتال پشاور کیلئے فرمز کو ایک ٹینڈر پیشکش کے ساتھ رجسٹرڈ ہوں سے مندرجہ ذیل اشیاء کیلئے برائے سال 2023-24 ہر ایک کال ڈیپازٹ باہم میڈیکل سپرنٹنڈنٹ سروس ہسپتال پشاور کو دیوڑیل ٹرانزاک کے مطابق پیشکش مطلوب ہیں، ہر طرح سے مکمل پیشکش مورخہ 22-06-2023 دن 10 بجے بذریعہ رجسٹرڈ ڈاک یا کوئیرر مورخہ 22 بجے چائیں جو کہ اس دن 11:00 بجے تک پیشکش کیلئے کے سامنے رکھنے کے لئے، دینی ٹینڈر ہرگز وصول نہیں کئے جائیں گے۔

نمبر شمار	اشیاء	کال ڈیپازٹ
1	Local Purchase (LP) of Medicine / Surgical Disposable / Non drug Items	700,000
2	لیبارٹری اینڈ ریجینٹس	100,000
3	بڈجیٹ کٹنگ	10,000
4	میڈیکل جیسٹ	10,000
5	اوٹی اشیاء	10,000
6	متفرق اشیاء	100,000
7	سٹیشنری اشیاء/کمپیوٹر اشیاء	100,000
8	Dental Filing Material / Other Surgical Items	100,000
9	ECG-Rolls and Ultrasound Jelly ECG Machine Cables. Chest Electrodes.	10,000
10	X-Rays Films all sizes C-T Scan, Dental Films and Developer / Fixer (Liquied)	50,000
11	Laundry Items	20,000

**تشریح:** (1) میڈیسن/سرجیکل ڈسپوزیبل/نان ڈرگ/آسٹم کیلئے فارمیسی/میڈیکل ڈرگز اور میڈیکل/سرجیکل اشیاء کیلئے برائے سال 2023-24 ہر ایک کال ڈیپازٹ ہر طرح سے مکمل ہونے چاہئے، ہائل ٹینڈر قابل قبول ہیں جو گنگے (3) ٹینڈر ریکیورمنٹ اور داغ الفاظ میں ہونے چاہئے (4) کال ڈیپازٹ اوپر دیئے گئے اشیاء کے مطابق ہونے چاہئے، جن کی تعداد میں متعلقہ بینک سے کی جائیں گے (5) ٹینڈر والے الفاظ سے پر داغ ذکر کردہ الفاظ میں اشیاء کا نام درج ہونے چاہئے (6) آن لائن کے قوانین و ضوابط اور قواعد کار کے دوران میڈیکل سپرنٹنڈنٹ کے دفتر سے حاصل کی جاسکتی ہے (7) ڈیپازٹ شدہ ریٹ 30 جون 2024 تک کارآمد ہوئے، بصورت ایمر پشی ڈیپازٹ شدہ ٹنڈر کیلئے یہ ضابطی جاسکتی ہے۔

INF(P) 1053 / 23

میڈیکل سپرنٹنڈنٹ سروس سبز ہسپتال پشاور

**نوٹس**  
**مشتري هوشيار باش**

بذريعه نوٹس پښتو اشتري کيا جاتا ښه ډکډان نمبر 1058، سروے نمبر 542/1226/800(مرغل فټ) اور ډکډان نمبر 1059 سروے نمبر 542/1227/600(مرغل فټ) داغ صدر روډ، پشاور کيټ جو که کنټرولمنټ پروژے کے ریکارڈ میں نمبر 1: حالي محمد فضل (1/2 حصہ) 2- محمد شاکت (1/4 حصہ) اور 3- محمد عامر (1/4 حصہ) کے ناموں پر موجود ہے۔ پريکھه محمد فضل ولد محمد فضل نے مسلمان: حالي محمد فضل وغيره مختلف ايک عدد کوټ ډکري جاري کرده محمد بنتر سول ج مورخه 08-10-2022 حاصل کی اب محمد عامر فضل دلجهه فضل نے مذکور بالا ډکډان کو ايسه نام پر منتقل کرنے ليکله ايک عدد درخواست بمحکومت ډکري دفتر پښان سرگړی په اگر کسی شخص، بينک يا ادارے کو مذکور بالا ډکډان کی منتقلی پر کوټي اعتراض بودو اشتري پښان کی اشاعت کے پندر 15 دن کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض بمحکومت چيټل کرښ بعد از ان منتقلی کی کارروایي مندرجه بالا درخواست ډکړه کرکه نام پر عمل میں لائی جائیگی اور کوټي مدد قابل قبول نه هوگا۔

**المشتري: کنټرولمنټ ايگريکيشيو آفيسر پشاور**

**ايليټ فورس خيبر پختونخواه پشاور**

**منسوخی ټينډر**

بحواله ټينډر نمبر (INF(P)968/23) مورخه 21-04-2023 کو ډير دستخطي کا ټينډر جو که برائے (Special/Petty Repair) ايليټ فورس پوښس کے ليے مختلف اخبارات میں شائع نه هوا تھا۔ جس کو کچه نام ډکړه بودو جوبات کی بناء پر منسوخ کيا جاتا ہے۔

**(عرفان طارق) پي ايس پي**

ډيټي کمانڊنټ/ايليټ فورس خيبر پختونخوا، پشاور

**GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA - COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT**  
**HIGHWAY DIVISION NOWSHERA**  
**NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING**  
(SINGLE STAGE-TWO ENVELOPE E-BIDDING SYSTEM)

On lifting of ban from the tendering duly approved vide Election Commission of Pakistan letter No.F 101(1)2023-Elec-II dated 11-03-2023, the C&W Department Highway Division Nowshera Invites Electronic Bids from the eligible firms/bidders in accordance with KPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage two envelop procedure for the following Works.

S.#	Name of Work	Required Category of PEC & Codes	2% E/Money I/C Stamp duty	Bidding entry fee	Period of Completion	Last date & Time of Submission E-Bids	Date & Time of opening of Technical Bids	Date & Time of opening of Financial Bids
1	Construction & Rehabilitation of Road in District Nowshera ADP No.1516/220760 (2022-23) SH- Construction of Internal Road's in UC's of Kheshgi Bala, Kheshgi Payan, Gandhari, Bara Banda, Kandari, Rashaka, Rinsabaq, Zara Maina & Misri Banda District Nowshera	C-3 & Above	2% of E/Cost	@0.03%	As per Work order	03-07-2023 At 12:00 PM	03-07-2023 At 1:00 PM	After approval of Technical Bid
2	Construction & Rehabilitation of Road in District Nowshera ADP No.1516/220760 (2022-23) SH- Construction of BT Road from main Nizampur Road to Tar Khel Payan village & BT Road of Main Khauray Road to Yar Muhammad Korona Jehangira District Nowshera	C-4 & Above	-do-	@0.03%	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
3	Construction & Rehabilitation of Road in District Nowshera ADP No.1516/220760 (2022-23) SH- Construction of PCC Roads/ Pavement in Different UC's of Badrahi, Amangarh, Nowshera City, Nawa Kili, Kabul River, Chowki Town & Risalpur Cantt. District Nowshera	C-4 & Above	-do-	@0.03%	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
4	Construction & Rehabilitation of Road in District Nowshera ADP No.1516/220760 (2022-23) SH- Construction of PCC Roads/Pavement of UC's Manki Sharif, Pahari Katti Khel, ZKKS, Azakhel Payan Khwar, Dagai, Amankot & Akbarpura District Nowshera	C-4 & Above	-do-	@0.03%	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
5	Construction & Rehabilitation of Road in District Nowshera ADP No.1516/220760 (2022-23) SH- Construction of Internal Roads / Rigid Pavement in UC's of Pabbi, Jalozai & Dak Ismail Khel District Nowshera	C-5 & Above	-do-	@0.03%	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
6	Restoration of C&W Roads & Bridges Infrastructure Damaged Due to Flood 2022 SH- Restoration of Roads / Rigid Pavement during flood 2022 in District Nowshera	C-6 & Above	-do-	@0.03%	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-

- Instruction to Bidders can be obtained from this office on any working day or can be downloaded from C & W website [www.cwd.gkp.pk](http://www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date / time.
- The bidder should submit their E-bids as per KPRA Notification No.S.R.O(14)/Vol: 1-24/2021-22 dated 10-05-2022.
- A copy of the technical proposal in the required format is mandatory and to be uploaded as a part of E-bid before submitting Financial Bid.
- Original copies of Call Deposit for bid security and bidding entry fee 0.03% should be enclosed in the Technical Proposal and shall reach to this office before closing time.
- Legible scanned copy of bid security shall be submitted electronically along with the bid on E-bidding system.
- All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 Act No. XXI of 2013.
- The financial bid will be opened after the approval of technical bids from competent authority.
- Venue of Bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W Highway Division Nowshera.

**Executive Engineer**  
**Highway Division Nowshera**  
**Cell# 0333-9162909**

INF(P) 1252/23





**PESHAWAR:** KP Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting regarding preparations of upcoming budget.

## KP establish facilitation centers for GBV victims

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is establishing facilities to help survivors of gender-based violence learn skills that will help them become more self-reliant. This was stated by Deputy Secretary, Social Welfare & Women's Empowerment, Ms. Warda Latif at the consultation on "Protection and Response Mechanism for Gender-Based Violence Survivors" organised by Aawaz II programme on 8 June 2023 in Peshawar.

The event brought together more than sixty women, persons with disabilities, transgender persons, and religious minorities from across the province, including the districts of Peshawar, Nowshahra, Buner, Lower Dir, Abbottabad, Mardan, Malakand and Kohat. The Deputy Secretary explained that 125 industrial training centres have been upgraded to provide advanced skills for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors, linking them directly to the market, which is a substantial step towards reintegrating violence survivors in society. The Deputy Secretary also gave details of efforts to expand and improve Dar-ul-Aman and extend the outreach of the Bolo Helpline.

"Aawaz II has its presence in 14 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with a focus on addressing issues related to gender-based violence, child marriages and social cohesion. The programme has established volunteer forums at village, district and provincial levels which link serv-

ice providers with the community to respond to their needs directly" shared by Ms Rafat Yasmin, Gender and Inclusion Advisor, Aawaz II.

"District Committees on the Status of Women (DCSW) have been nominated in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), but their official notification is pending due to the need for amending the KPCSW (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women) law to align the DCSW with KP's local government law," stated Ms. Amna Durrani, Director Programmes, KP Commission on the Status of Women.

Zikriya, Programme Analyst Gender/GBV from UNFPA Peshawar Office said that government departments like Police, Health and Social Welfare must have strong coordination at multiple levels to ensure effective delivery of services for protection and response to gender-based violence. UNFPA is supporting the Social Welfare Department in developing a database for Dar-ul-Aman and Bolo Helpline.

Participants from 14 districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) shared their challenges in accessing government facilities and put forward the following recommendations to enhance services:

Ensure that women and transgender persons facing violence are facilitated in registering

First Information Reports (FIRs) by setting up dedicated desks or assigning trained personnel at police stations to handle gender-based vio-

lence (GBV) cases sensitively and efficiently. Improve accessibility of Dar-ul-Aman (shelters) for Women with Disabilities and provide training and sensitization to the staff working with women with disabilities to address their needs effectively.

Establish specialized safe homes designed specifically for transgender persons to provide them with protection, support, and opportunities for skill development.

Speaking about the importance of consultation, Ms. Rashida Dohad, Executive Director of Omar Asghar Khan Foundation that is Aawaz II's lead partner in KP, shared that this consultation is of utmost importance to gain insights from their experiences in accessing these services present at the district level. "The struggle for women's empowerment and the enactment of laws addressing domestic violence have been long-standing battles. However, it is essential to recognise that these bodies and laws hold little significance if we fail to establish the necessary structures at the district level that effectively respond to the needs of women experiencing violence," she said.

Aawaz II Programme works with local communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab to promote the rights of women, youth, religious minorities, and other vulnerable groups, to work towards a more inclusive, tolerant and peaceful Pakistan. Aawaz II is a programme managed by the British Council.

## Edu dept to inspect childhood rooms

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Department of Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to conduct inspection of early childhood education rooms 2021-22 in government schools of 19 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The inspection is being launched following complaints of scams and alleged irregularities related to early childhood education in various districts, a letter issued by the Education Department said. The Department of Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has requested records from all the districts through the letter.

It is worth mentioning here that the Department of Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has established special classrooms under Early Childhood Education (UCE) in primary schools of 22 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. Complaints were received in this regard in which irregularities were revealed and in this regard, the complaint cell of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Department also inspected the rooms of these schools, the letter said.

## Excise recovers hashish

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Excise and Narcotics Control Department Mardan Region on Friday recovered a large quantity of hashish from a car near Rashakai Bypass during snap checking.

The action was taken under the supervision of Excise and Taxation Officer Narcotics Control, Daud Shah and Circle Officer Sayyed Naveed Jamal. SHO Muhammad Riaz police station Excise Mardan and Sub Inspectors Muhammad Farooq and Muhammad Fayyaz after receiving information about narcotics smuggling attempt, signalled a car (IDM 1957) to stop for checking; however, the driver accelerated the car in an attempt to escape.

The car was chased however the driver and another man managed to escape while a third man sitting on the back seat was overpowered by the Excise officials and taken into custody. During inspection of the car, 12000 grams (12 kg) hashish was recovered from the secret components of the car. The arrested man named Ahmad Hassan, resident of Umar Gul Road Peshawar, identified the driver as Nahid Ullah and the other man as Kashif.

The Excise official said that a search operation has been initiated in the area to arrest the escaped smugglers. The accused was shifted to Excise police station, Mardan for further interrogation and legal action.

## ESP endorses govt success in different sectors

PESHAWAR (APP): Economics and financial experts here Friday said that Economic Survey of Pakistan (ESP) 2022-23 has endorsed the government's success in different sectors during current fiscal year and said that a strong foundation was laid to turnaround the national economy and increase exports in days to come.

Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem of the Swabi University told APP on Friday that ESP has signified that the present elected government despite inherited economic and financial challenges, achieved significant progress and growth in various sectors including Information Technology, Tax, Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture sectors during fiscal year 2022-23.

He said it means that the national economy has started moving towards the right direction and continuity of economic and fiscal policies of the present Govt was imperative for repayment of all foreign loans and decrease dependencies on the international monetary institutions. Citing ESP report, he said the IT sector has posted a trade surplus of \$1.72 billion in July-March FY 2023, which showed an increase of 16.7 percent compared to the last year.

Dr Naeem said the collection of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) grew by 16.1 percent to Rs. 6,210 billion as compared to Rs5,348.2 billion last year, which was a positive sign for the economy. He said the current account deficit during July-April FY2023 narrowed down by 76 percent to \$3.3 billion as compared to \$13.7 billion last year that showed better policies of the government.

Dr Naeem commended the government's financial team that managed to contain the trade deficit during July-May FY2023 by 40.4 percent to \$25.8 billion as compared to \$43.4 billion last year. He said the

Govt's tight economic and fiscal policies helped it to repay international commercial loans to the tune of \$5,541 million, out of which \$4,541 million were bank loans and \$1,000 million was international Sukuk maturity.

Yousaf Sarwar, former president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said the ESP reflected the resilience and strength of the government to bring the national economy back on track in the face of unprecedented challenges posed by the Russia-Ukraine war, climate change and political-economic challenges. He said the fiscal and external imbalances, high inflation and heavy loans burdens due to the past government's poor economic policies, floods damage to agricultural land, livestock, roads, communication, energy and other infrastructure, affecting the output of crops and livestock have made an adverse effects on the national economy.

Dr Naeem said the government in order to maintain the foreign exchange reserves, have restricted imports during July-May FY2023 to \$51.2 billion as compared to \$72.3 billion last year, which reflected a decline of 29.2 percent. The Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment registered 8,29,549 workers for overseas employment in CY2022 as compared to 2,86,648 in CY2021 showing an increase of 542,901 workers.

The country's agriculture sector witnessed overall 1.55 percent growth as wheat production increased by 27.63 million tons (MT) by 5.4 percentage, maize production stood at 10.18 MT with 6.9 percent surge, sugarcane production reached 91.1 MT with 2.8 percent increase, cotton production clocked at 4.91 MT with 41.0 percent increase, rice production remained at 7.32 MT with 21.5 per-

cent increase and livestock sector grew by 3.78 percent increase during the said period. Gulzar Rehman, former Conservator KP Forest Department praised Govt policies towards promotion of green sector, adding forestry sector having a share of 2.23% in agriculture value addition and 0.51% in GDP grew at 3.93% due to increase in Timber production compared to 4.07% last year.

He said the Federal Govt continued to provide funds to the billion trees afforestation project that helped the department to continue the plantations to plant additional one billion plants in KP. He said the fishing sector, having a share of 1.39% in agriculture value addition and 0.32% in GDP, achieved growth at 1.44 percent compared to 0.35% last year.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has plenty of natural sites for electricity hydel power generation and if properly tapped the country could achieve economic, industrial and agricultural prosperity. According to the survey report, the total installed capacity of electricity in the country is 41,000 megawatt, out of which hydel contributes about 25.8% whereas installed capacity of thermal, nuclear and renewables energy is about 58.8%, 8.6% and 6.8%, respectively.

During July-March FY2023, total electricity generation remains 94,121 GWh whereas hydel, thermal, nuclear and renewables generated 28.6%, 46.2%, 21% and 4.2%, respectively while total electricity consumption remains 84,034 GWh during Jul-Mar FY2023 whereas household sector consumes 46.6% of total electricity. The experts underlined the need for expediting work on under construction Mohmand, Kurram-Tangi dam and Dasu Kohistan dams projects to cater people's growing energy demands and achieve self sufficiency in food and agriculture productivity.

## SIDB's capacity building atop priority list: Adnan

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister of Industry, Commerce and Technical Education, Mohammad Adnan Jalil has said that capacity building of the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) Peshawar to provide best services for the promotion of small industries atop his priorities.

Talking to a delegation of the employees of SIDB (MD) on the vacant post as soon as possible and in this regard assured their full support.

The provincial minister said that SIDB is an important organization of the province for the promotion

support to solve the genuine problems of SIDB employees.

The delegation was comprised of Employees Association, Adnan Gul, Senior Vice President Haji Intiaz and other officials.

The delegation presented various proposals including resolving the cases of promotions, rehabilitating the closed centers of the board and taking possible steps to appoint Managing Director (MD) on the vacant post as soon as possible and in this regard assured their full support.

The provincial minister said that SIDB is an important organization of the province for the promotion

of small industries, which is his first priority to provide quality and improve services. He said that woodworking centres and Pak-German are state of the art subsidiaries of the board for manufacturing quality furniture. However, he stressed the need for further capacity building of these subsidiaries of the board. The provincial minister assured that he in the capacity of the minister will leave no stone unturned in the resolution of the problems of employees. However, he also urged the employees to perform their duties with honesty for salvation and stability of the organization.

## Three PEDO senior officers retired

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Three officers of grades 19 and 18 who served in Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), a subsidiary of Energy and Power department KP, retired on completion of their 60 years' service tenure.

According to a notification issued, among those who retired are two officers of BPS grade 19, director Engineer Qayum Zaman and Engineer Nasir Khan Gandapur, and Haji Muhammad Tariq Khan of grade 18. In honor of these retired officers, a special ceremony was organized by the PEDO's Officers Association (POA) in a local hotel at Peshawar, in which all the officers of the organization including the union officials president association Engr. Muhammad Aziz Khan, vice president Engr. Habib Khan Marwat, general secretary Fazal Rahim Khan and the head of the organization chief executive officer Engr. Naeem Khan made a special appearance.

Speaking at the event, CEO Engr. Naeem Khan said that experienced and competent civil servants are the valuable asset of any institution, whose services are necessary for the development of the institution. He paid tribute to the three retired officers of PEDO for their excellent services and expressed the hope that the organization continues to benefit from their advice in the future. Engr. Muhammad Aziz Khan, President of POA also addressed the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, director administration PEDO Idrees Khattak and CEO Naeem Khan awarded the three officers with honorary shields and gifts.

## Power suspension notified

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Friday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar Cantt Grid Station on 11th, 14th, 18th 21st, 25th and 28th June from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. subsequently consumers of 11KV Tehkal, KTH, Islamia College, Commercial, Jahngira Abad, University Town, NCR, Airport Road, PAF Base, Saddar Road, Mall Road, MES 2, Old MES, Babu Ghari, Marble Industrial, CAA, Palosi 1, Bahria Colony, Tehkal Payan, Bank of Khyber, Scarp 1 feeders will face inconvenience.

## Arrangements for Shandur festival: CS chairs meeting

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on Friday directed concerned authorities to finalize arrangements for Shandur Polo Festival and ensure steps for successful holding of this signature event of the province.

The Chief Secretary gave the instruction in a high-level meeting held here at Civil Secretariat, to review preparations for Shandur Polo Festival. The meeting was attended by administrative secretaries of home, tourism, information, communication & works departments and Director General KP Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) while Commissioner Malakand, Regional Police Officer, Deputy Commissioners of Upper and Lower Chitral participated through video link.

Secretary tourism informed the meeting that this year also the historical and world highest altitude

polo festival at Shandur, District Chitral would be commencing from 07 July to 09 July, 2023. The event held at the world highest polo ground at a height of 12,264 feet, he said, is a signature festival of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, for which elaborate arrangements are being finalized. Referring to arrangements, he explained that a tent village and prefabricated washrooms would be set up, wherein boarding and lodging facilities would be provided to both foreign and domestic tourists. He said that apart from polo matches, local music and performing art would be displayed besides setting up stalls.

The chief secretary asked secretary finance to provide funds required for the festival and directed him to ensure that the resources are utilised in a transparent manner. He also directed that the National Highways Authority should review the road leading to Shandur Polo Ground to make it usable for traffic and ensure availability of

heavy machinery at places where there is a risk of road closure due to flooding in streams. Similarly, travel advisories should also be issued for the convenience and safe travel of tourists so that they do not face any inconvenience.

## Doctors continue strike

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The staff of three major medical teaching institutes of Swabi continued their strike for the third day due to non-payment of salaries.

Doctors, paramedics and allied staff of three medical teaching institutes including Bacha Khan Medical Complex, Tehsil Hospitals of Lahor and Topi continued their strikes. Patients needing immediate medical service were treated in emergency departments of these hospitals.



**PESHAWAR:** KP Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry chairing a meeting regarding Shandour festival.





## In brief

### Modern school opened F.P. Report

JAMRUD: A modern school for orphans was inaugurated here in Al-Jamia Islamia Al-Farooqia, a renowned religious seminary in Jamrud last day. In this connection a simple but impressive gathering was organized in the Madrassa that was attended by Provincial Minister for welfare and rehabilitation Taj Muhammad Afridi as chief guest beside a number of religious scholars, students, elders and general masses. Addressing on the occasion Taj Muhammad Afridi said that one of main causes of downfall of the Muslim was ignoring modern education. An establishment of a modern system of school in the seminary set up a role model for other Madrassa, he added and said contemporary subjects would be taught to the orphans in the modern school system. He urged the religious scholars to adopt all necessary steps to decorate the learners of seminaries with modern subjects beside religious knowledge. Earlier, Director Harward and The Dawn schooling systems Dr Syed Muhammad Hafeez highlighting aims and purpose of the institution said that in the first phase two hundred students had been enrolled in the school and besides education free course books and uniform had been provided to them. He maintained that the private school system would impart knowledge like Europe's education structure and would discourage traditional ratta method (learning by heart).

### Barbers fined in Lower Dir F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Tehsildar Khal Humayun Khan checked the barber shops in Rabat Bazaar in the light of the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Dir Payin Iftikhar Ahmed. Several barbers were prosecuted for poor cleaning, non-compliance with hygiene rules and charging more than the official rate list and were warned to take special care of cleanliness and prevent the spread of hepatitis and other diseases. Ensure single use of blade to prevent and do not exceed the official price list otherwise strict legal action will be taken against you.

### Man killed

JACOBABAD (INP): One person was killed and three others injured in armed clash between two rival groups in tehsil Garhi Khairu, police said on Friday. According to details, armed members of two groups which were in old dispute traded fire in Dodapara area. In cross firing one person was killed while three sustained bullet wounds. The body and injured were shifted to hospital for medico-legal formalities. Police the dispute between Banglani, Dahani and Katohar community has claimed 12 lives so far. A case was registered into the incident and police started raids to arrest the culprits involved in firing.

### Two die

MULTAN (INP): At least two people died and two others injured in collision between an over speeding car and tractor trolley here on Friday, police said. The accident took place near Chowk Sarwar Shaheed at Multan-Mianwali road where a speeding in attempt to overtake rammed into a tractor trolley. Two people died on the spot in the accident while two others sustained critical wounds. The bodies and injured were shifted to hospital for medico-legal formalities.



HYDERABAD: Students busy in solving question papers during Higher Secondary School examination.

## KUST distributes 31 cheques among recipients

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST) witnessed a momentous occasion last day as it hosted the grand ceremony for the cheques' distribution among the 31 selected recipients of the Scotland Pakistan Scholarship for Young Women and Girls for the year 2022-23.

The event aimed to empower women in pursuing higher education. The Deans of various faculties, Head of Teaching Departments, faculty members, Staff, students, and their families gathered to honor the scholarship recipients.

Nadar Sarfaraz, Director Planning & Development KUST and the Focal Person for the Scotland Pakistan Scholarship for Young Women and Girls, in his inaugural speech briefed the participants about the scholarship. He highlighted the importance of providing opportunities for young women to excel academically and contribute to society.



Each recipient was presented with a cheque by Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor KUST, representing their scholarship award. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and pride as the beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to the KUST, Scottish Government and the British Council, Islamabad and shared their aspirations for the future.

In the speech by the Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor of Kohat University of Science & Technology, expressed his gratitude to the Scottish government and the British Council Islamabad for their unwavering support in promoting education and gender equality. He also expressed that financial assistance provided through such schemes will leave a lasting impact on the lives of the scholarship recipients. With their dreams now within reach, these empowered young female students will undoubtedly become agents of change, contributing to the progress and development of Pakistan and beyond.

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## Protest for restoration peace in Waziristan held

F.P. Report

WANA: All political parties held protest demonstration in Wana bazaar for the restoration of peace lower in Waziristan, on Friday. Local political leaders of PPP, ANP, Jamat i Islami, PTI were present in the gathering to show unity about matters of peace in their area.

The speakers said that it was the prime responsibility of the sitting government to strengthen police force for maintaining durable peace in the merged districts. All common people of the merged districts were greatly pleased during merger of Fata into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They categorically said that some elements were behind the disturbance in merged areas to protect their vested interests in the garb of the outdated system of black laws imposed by the British to muzzle the voice of people in the present era of social media.

The participants demanded government to start construction of new check posts for police to avoid the re-organizing of terrorism in the already war-torn area of erstwhile Fata? they pledged to continue their efforts till complete restoration of peace in the area.

**DPO held meeting with journalists:** According to the details, senior journalists extended warm congratulations to District Police Officer (DPO) Niaz Muhammad Yousafzai and expressed hope that the challenges faced by the South Waziristan Police would be promptly addressed under his leadership.

During the meeting, DPO Niaz Muhammad Yousafzai emphasized the vital role of journalists in society as the eyes and ears of the community. He welcomed constructive criticism from journalists, acknowledging their dedication and sacrifices made for peace in the region, including martyrdoms and imprisonments that set them apart from their peers.

DPO Niaz Muhammad Yousafzai underscored that his topmost priority is community policing, aiming to foster trust and understanding between the police and the public. He pledged to prevent any misunderstandings from arising and assured journalists that their inputs for police reform would be valued.

# Governor KP visits Abbottabad, meets leading politicians



F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Governor Haji Ghulam Ali Friday inaugurated a luxury home interior showroom based on modern furniture at Mansehra Road Abbottabad besides meeting leading politicians and former members of the provincial as well national assembly from Hazara Region.

The Governor was given a warm welcome by Faisal Habib, owner of Lux Home Interior Showroom and renowned businessman, Syed Safdar Zaman Shah and the business community of Abbottabad, Mansehra, Bitgram.

Former Member of National Assembly Babar Nawaz Awan, Fayyaz Tanuli, Haji Tariq Sultan, Qaiser Khan Daudzai, Munir Shinwari, Safdar Zaman Shah and other business community, chamber presidents and media representatives were present in the opening ceremony.

The Governor inspected the furniture and other interior items made according to modern Turkish designs, local and international designs. Establishing the best of its kind home decor showroom is a great convenience for the local population, Haji Ghulam Ali said. The modern show-

room will also provide employment opportunities to the local population, Haji Ghulam Ali, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said. The furniture made by wood carving in Pakistan is also very popular in foreign countries, Haji Ghulam Ali added.

"My doors are open wherever the business community needs my support," Haji Ghulam Ali said. Haji Ghulam Ali welcomes business activities in all the cities of the province according to the requirements of the modern era. Promotion of business will end unemployment and stabilize the country's economy, Haji Ghulam Ali said.

# Evictions of outsiders from hospital's hostel demanded

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The employees of the District Headquarter Hospital (DHQ) Abbottabad have demanded eviction of outsiders occupying the rooms in the paramedical hostels here.

As per details, the paramedics at District Headquarter Hospital (DHQ) in Abbottabad are facing issues of non-allotment of rooms. According to a paramedic who wished not to be named, the situation is highly unfair, with a majority of the paramedics being denied rooms while individuals with strong political connections and those willing to pay bribes are allocated rooms in the hostels.

This revelation came to light when the paramedics spoke to this correspondent on Sunday, shedding light on the discrepancies in room allotment. The paramedics, who tirelessly serve the hospital and its patients, expressed their frustration and disappointment over the unfair treatment they have been enduring.

The paramedics revealed that several rooms in the hostel had been rented out to individuals from various offices who already had their own residences in Abbottabad. This alarming situation had not gone unnoticed by the Medical Superintendent (MS) of DHQ, but unfortunately, no action had been taken against these illegal occupiers due to the influence of certain corrupt individuals within the hospital.

Whispered in hushed tones, the employees who had been denied accommodation in the hostel but had witnessed officials from another government department illegally occupying

the rooms, expressed their grievances under the cloak of anonymity. They shared that when they had mustered the courage to demand the residences that were rightfully allocated to them, they had been met with retaliation and victimization.

These employees alleged that the occupants had managed to acquire their rooms through a conniving partnership with influential figures within the health department. It seemed that these high-ranking individuals, blinded by personal gain, had turned a blind eye to the plight of the employees serving in the hospital as it is blatant violation of rules.

Naveed Akram Abbasi, a senior journalist while commenting on the matter said the District Headquarters Hospital in Abbottabad serves as a vital healthcare institution, and it is crucial that the well-being and welfare of its dedicated staff are prioritized. He said the non-allotment of rooms to deserving paramedics and the preferential treatment shown to outsiders with political influence is an alarming issue that needs to be addressed urgently. It not only undermines the morale and dedication of the hard-working medical staff but also raises concerns about fairness and corruption within the system. Despite repeated attempts, Doctor Amir Israr, MS DHQ Abbottabad, was unavailable for comment on the issue. Meanwhile, when approached by this correspondent, Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad, Khalid Mehmood, stated that he did not have a clear picture of the situation. However, he assured that appropriate action would be taken in accordance with

## Rescue 1122 held mock fire drills

F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: Mock fire drills were conducted by Rescue 1122 and other rehabilitation agencies at Takhtbhai Recreational, Historical and Archaeological site, on Friday.

On the special recommendation of Secretary Relief Abdul Basit and Director General Rescue 1122 Dr. Khateer Ahmed, District Emergency Officer Imran Khan Yousafzai organized mock fire drills at Takhtbhai's recreational, historical and archaeological site for Rescue 1122 personnel, Tehsil Municipal Administration, Civil Defense and Forest dept.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief and Human Rights Lubna Shah Zaman, Senior Emergency Officer Syed Inayat Shah and officers and officials of other institutions also participated on this occasion.

District Emergency Officer (DEO) briefed the participants on upcoming weather preparedness and simulated fire response drills in the event of a fire on the archaeological mountain range. The officers expressed their satisfaction while evaluating the skills of the youths and appealed to the public that all the tourists who come for sightseeing should take care of the historical heritage and archeology site. DEO said in his briefing that people and tourists should avoid setting unnecessary fires.

# PTI's leaders released on bails in May 9 vandalism

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) arrested lawmakers from Lower Dir Malik Shafullah Khan, Malik Liaqat Ali and Azam Khan along with dozens of party workers were released from the district jail Timergara after an anti-terrorism court accepted their bail application.

Talking to local media men outside the Timergara jail the former lawmakers vowed that they would neither leave the party nor its chief Imran Khan. "I was with Imran Khan and I will be with him again", Malik Shafullah, the former special assistant to the chief minister on prisons told journalists. The lawmakers said they were feeling proud of their workers who gave them respect and honour.

About 111 PTI workers and local leaders out of 121 have been released from the jail so far in the Lower Dir district while some key activists have gone underground. The released party leaders and workers were taken into custody after the May 9 violent protests and

vandalism.

**Exam's staff suspended for linking paper:** Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Malakand suspended the entire supervisory staff along with the superintendent at a female examination hall of the ongoing intermediate examination in Kumbhar Maidan on leaking the paper 15 minutes before its due time.

The board also appointed fresh staff for conduction of the remaining examination in a new hall. Taking notice of a tip off the controller of examination Muhammad Naseem Khan sent a team of female officers and monitoring unit to the hall set up at a private college in Kumbhar Maidan. The team noticed that the paper had been leaked some 15 minutes before due time. The board authorities suspended the entire supervisory staff and appointed fresh superintendent and invigilators for the remaining examination.

Talking to local journalists the board controller Muhammad Naseem said that a separate investigation

committee would probe into the matter and the staff concerned would be dealt with according to the rules if found guilty. The controller said the board had taken practical measures to curb cheating in the examination and no one would be allowed to challenge it.

**JUIF argues lawyers play role in delivery of justice:** Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUIF) district chief Ameer Sirajud Din asked the legal fraternity to play its role in providing speedy and easy justice to the applicants. He was addressing a party dinner hosted in the honour of the Jamiat Lawyers' forum (JLF) at Balambat as chief guest.

JUI-F Balambat chapter arranged the dinner which was also addressed by the general secretary, district bar Timergara advocate Ajman Nawab, JLF district president Sajid Mehmood, Haji Shakerullah and others. The speakers said the JUI-F affiliated lawyers should provide relief to poor petitioners in getting easy justice in the courts.

# Local govt to establish 100 public libraries in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: City Mayor Mardan Himayat Ullah Mayar said that knowledge is obtained from books and experiences, nowadays it is the age of digital and social media, so we must update the books as well. He said further that City Local Government will establish one hundred libraries in Mardan Mosques and Houses so that people can take benefit from them.

This he said while addressing participants of Book Fair organized by Divisional and District Administration Mardan with the support of National Book Foundation at Pakhtunkhwa House. He added that these libraries will be further expanded in near future.

Secretary Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Anila Mahfooz Durrani has said that books are like a good friend and teacher, they guide us best and through it we learn. She said that in the Holy Qur'an, Allah says that acquiring knowledge is a duty

for every Muslim man and woman. Anila said further that Knowledge can be acquired only through books, due to modern technology students have abandoned the habit of reading non-textbooks apart from textbooks due to which their mental capacity is weakening.

Commissioner Mardan Division Yusuf Rahim, City Mayor Mardan Himayat Ullah Mayar, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Captain (R) Abdul Rehman, Director Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Iqbal Khan also addressed the ceremony. Deputy Commissioner Swabi Furqan Ashraf, Additional Commissioner Mardan Naeem Akhtar, DPO Swabi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mardan Finance, ACS, Additional Assistant Commissioners, President Zahir Shah of Mardan Traders Association, students and a large number of people participated in the ceremony.

In his address, Commissioner

Mardan Division Yusuf Rahim said that due to the use of electronic and digital devices, we are moving away from books and activities like book fairs should be welcomed to return us to the books. Public libraries in Mardan Division will be developed and the number of books will be increased in them, apart from this the book fairs will also be organized to overcome the lack of tendency to read books to encourage the people especially the youth to reading the books.

In this regard weekly book reviews will be organized in schools and colleges, and writing and quiz competitions will also be organized, said Yusuf Rahim. Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdul Rahman said in his address at the event that the aim of the book fair is to restore the book culture, no nation can develop without knowledge. Due to the use of media and gadgets, this habit is becoming less due to which the ability to analyze and think has been greatly damaged and the intelli-

gence has become weak, said DC Mardan. He said that there is a great need to promote the culture of book reading and practical steps will be taken in this regard soon.

At the end of the event, Secretary Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Anila Mahfooz Durrani, Commissioner Mardan Division Yousuf Rahim, City Mayor Mardan Himayat Ullah Mayar and Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdul Rahman officially inaugurated the Mardan Book Fair by cutting the ribbon and Inspected the book stalls set up by the organizers.

**Child critically injured by transmission line:** A 13-year-old boy was seriously injured after hitting a power transmission line near Jhande Tablighi Center while he climbed up on electric pole in chasing of his pigeon.

Rescue 1122 officials confirmed that 13-year-old Luqman fell down after electric shock near Jhande bazar. They said the

boy was chasing his pigeon and climbed up to electric pole for catching his pigeon but suddenly electric transmission line shocked him and fell down unconscious to the ground. The Rescue 1122 ambulance and medical team rushed up to reached the spot and rescued.

**MCCI terms power saving plan a failure:** President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) Zahir Shah, terming the energy saving plan as a failed saving plan, said that he would have strongly rejected the government's proposal to close the markets at 8pm under the energy saving plan. There is no shopping during the day during summer season, shopping is only after 8 pm. They have demanded the government to withdraw the decision to close the shops at 8 pm. The business community is the most expensive in the country buys electricity.

Where is the wisdom, the economic wheel is being stopped to save energy, the

Minister of Energy should sit and talk with business representatives instead of providing facilities to businessmen and people, the government is following the policy of burying them alive. The proposal to close the markets at night 8 is not acceptable to the business community across the country. Irrational plans to save energy have also met with failure in the recent past; Zahir Shah added further that the business community strongly demanded the government to reconsider the announcement of closing shops at 8 pm in the country.

In the face of inflation and unemployment, there should be announcements of businessmen and people-friendly decisions. If the government wants to ensure the implementation of the closure of shops at 8 o'clock, then the businessmen community must trust and implement their advice, otherwise the businessmen community will have to implement its plan of action and will be forced to react.





Saturday, June 10, 2023

## Hundreds plucked from flooded homes

Ukraine dismisses counteroffensive reports



KHERSON, Ukraine (Reuters): Hundreds of Ukrainians were rescued from rooftops, two days after waters from a huge breached dam submerged villages, fields and roads in the southern region of Kherson, as Kyiv dismissed reports its counteroffensive had begun. Drone video showed areas where often only the roofs were visible above the flooding. The region's governor said some 600 square kilometres, or 230 square miles, were under water.

The collapse of the Nova Kakhovka dam came as Ukraine prepared a counteroffensive, likely the next major phase in the war in which tens of thousands of people have been killed, millions uprooted and entire cities reduced to ruins since Russia's "special military operation" began on Feb. 24 last year. NBC news, citing a senior officer and a soldier near the front lines, said the offensive had begun. The Washington Post cited "four individuals" in the armed forces saying the same thing.

Asked about the reports, a spokesperson for the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces told Reuters: "We have no such information." In its daily Ukraine briefing, Britain's defence ministry reported heavy fighting along "multiple sectors of the front", adding that Kyiv held the initiative in most areas. Ukraine's military said the flooding in Kherson had forced Russian troops to retreat by five to 15 km and had "practically halved" Russian shelling.

A senior Russian commander briefed President Vladimir Putin on how his forces had repelled a large-scale Ukrainian attack in the southern Zaporizhzhia region, the TASS news agency reported. Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said that Russian forces had withstood fierce overnight attempts by Ukrainian troops to break through the frontline in Zaporizhzhia and had inflicted heavy losses on them. Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for the bursting of the Soviet-era Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which sent waters cascading across the war zone of southern Ukraine, forcing tens of thousands to flee. Moscow and Kyiv also accused each other of shelling the area as rescue workers in rubber dinghies tried to save people and animals from the still rising flood waters. Russian shelling wounded at least nine people in Kherson as residents were being evacuated, Ukraine's interior ministry said. The Prosecutor General's office initially said one person had been killed by the shelling but later said no deaths had been reported. A Reuters reporter in Kherson said he could hear what appeared to be artillery fire.

The Kremlin similarly accused Ukraine of shelling Russian rescue workers in the area. Friends and family of stranded residents posted appeals online with names,

photos and GPS locations of residents. The coordinator of a volunteer group on the Telegram messaging app said the appeals were getting more urgent because people were running out of drinking water. One man, Sergei, told Reuters the last time he spoke with his 83-year-old father-in-law in the Oleshky region was several days before the dam collapse. "The latest information is that there was a lot of water in the street, as high as a person," he said. "Houses collapsed and went under water." Ukraine said the floods would leave hundreds of thousands of people without access to drinking water, swamp tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land and turn at least 500,000 hectares deprived of irrigation into "deserts". Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has appealed for a "clear and rapid" international effort to help flood victims, held emergency talks with officials in Kherson, one of five Ukrainian regions which Moscow claims to have annexed but only partially controls. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said aid agencies had delivered bottles of drinking water, water purification tablets, hygiene kits and jerrycans. "Drinking water remains the most pressing need," it said. The Kremlin said Putin had no plans to visit the region but was monitoring the situation.

Putin, without providing evidence, has accused Ukraine of destroying the Russian-controlled dam at the suggestion of its Western allies. Kyiv said several months ago the dam had been mined by Russian forces who captured it early in their invasion, and has suggested Moscow blew it up to try to prevent Ukrainian forces crossing the Dnipro river in their counteroffensive. It is not known how many people may have died as a result of the flooding. The Russian-installed mayor of Nova Kakhovka, near the dam site, said at least five people had died but the total death toll is sure to be much higher. Kherson's Ukrainian governor, Oleksandr Prokudin, said 68% of the flooded territory was on the Russian-occupied left bank of the Dnipro River. The "average level of flooding" in the Kherson region was 5.61 meters (18.41 ft), he said. The water level at the Kakhovka reservoir was approaching a dangerous low, the state company overseeing the facility said, saying this could affect the nearby Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station and water supply to other regions. The UN atomic watchdog said the plant, Europe's largest, has enough water to cool its reactors for "several months" from a pond located above the reservoir. Ukrainian and Russian officials have also warned of the danger posed by mines planted during the war and now scattered by the floods.

## Children fight for their lives after French Alps knife attack

PARIS (Agencies): Four preschool-aged children have been seriously wounded in a knife attack at a park in the French Alps. A suspect, identified by police as a 31-year-old Syrian, was detained in connection with the attack. French authorities said he had recently been refused asylum in France, because Sweden had already granted him permanent residency and refugee status a decade ago. Witnesses reported scenes of terror as the man roamed the park, ambushing victims with his blade.

"I said to the police, 'Shoot him, kill him! He's stabbing everyone,'" said Anthony Le Tallec, a former professional football player who was jogging when he came across the attacker. Lead prosecutor Line Bonnet-Mathis said the man's motives were unknown but did not appear to be related to "terrorism". He was armed with a folding knife, she said. She said all four children suffered life-threatening knife wounds. The youngest is 22 months old, two of the children are two years old, and the oldest is age three, she said. Two of them are French, the other two were tourists - one British, the other Dutch, she said. Two adults also suffered knife wounds - life-threatening for one of them, the prosecutor said. One of the adults was hurt both with the attacker's knife and later by a shot fired by police as they were making the arrest, Bonnet-Mathis said. Prime

Minister Elisabeth Borne said the country was in a state of "shock".

A chilling video of several policemen overpowering the suspect has been widely shared on social media. "He clearly targeted the babies," a witness named Ferdinand told BFM TV. "Mothers were crying, everybody was running," said George, owner of a nearby restaurant. Several people described Le Paquier park as an usually tranquil place popular with tourists because of its stunning views of Lake Annecy and the mountains. "It's a place where babysitters and parents take young children to play. I often see around 15 toddlers there in the morning, and the atmosphere is fantastic," said Yohan, who works at an ice-cream parlour just opposite the park. Le Tallec, who played football for Liverpool FC, said he was jogging around the waters of Lake Annecy in the foothills of the Alps when a wave of panicked bystanders rushed past in the opposite direction. One mother urged him to turn and run. Confused, Le Tallec said he kept jogging through the park but soon saw a man heading his way with police officers in pursuit but struggling to catch up. "I see that he's heading straight for a group of elderly men and women. He attacks one grandpa, stabs him once. The cops can't catch him, so I tell the cops, 'Shoot him,'" Le Tallec continued. National Assembly

Speaker Yael Braun-Pivet said there was "nothing more abominable than to attack children" while the French Parliament observed a minute of silence. Al Jazeera's Natacha Butler, reporting from Paris, said the attack, which took place about 9:45am (07:45 GMT), was "every parent's nightmare". "One witness said that she saw the man lunging at children in a pram, so people are incredibly shocked here," she added. Annecy is a quiet city of 135,000 people that lies south of Geneva, Switzerland. Dominique Griziaux said he was at a nearby beach when the air of sirens filled the air. The attack has left him feeling sick inside, he said. "You put yourself in the place of parents and grandparents put through this drama," Griziaux, an Annecy resident, said, adding that an attack on such young children was "just unthinkable". "You'd never think this could be possible in such a peaceful, bucolic environment as Annecy," France has been shocked by a number of violent incidents over the past few months, including the fatal stabbing in May of a nurse in the northern town of Reims. Also last month, a drunk driver accidentally killed three policemen. Macron has denounced what he calls a "de-civilisation process" in the country, while opposition lawmakers say his government has been too lax on law and order.

## Russian man killed in shark attack

CAIRO (Agencies): A Russian man has died after being attacked by a shark off the coast of Egypt's Red Sea resort city of Hurghada, officials have said. The Environment Ministry said that the man was killed after being mauled by a tiger shark in the waters near Hurghada. The authorities closed off a 74-kilometre (46-mile) stretch of the coastline, and announced that it will remain off limits with a ban on swimming, snorkelling and other water sports activities.

"An attack by a tiger shark on a beachgoer... led to his death," the ministry posted on Facebook, without providing further details. A video circulating online, purportedly of the attack, shows a man thrashing about in the water before being repeatedly attacked by a shark circling around him, and then being dragged under. The ministry later said it had caught the shark and was examining it in a laboratory to try and determine the reasons for the rare attack. The Russian Consulate in Hurghada identified the man as a Russian citizen but did not give his name. Russian Consul-General Viktor Voropayev told state-owned TASS news agency that the Egyptian authorities had confirmed to him the death of the Russian national who was born in 1999.

"The victim was not a tourist, but a permanent resident of Egypt," Voropayev told the news agency. A diver who arrived on the scene just after the attack said people had rushed to help the victim after a lifeguard from a nearby hotel raised the alarm, but were not able to reach him in time. Egypt's Red Sea resorts, including Hurghada and Sharm el-Sheikh, boast some of the country's most renowned beach destinations and are popular with European tourists. Divers are attracted by the steep drop-offs of coral reefs just offshore, which offer a rich and colorful sea life. Shark attacks are rare in the Red Sea coastal regions. However, in 2022, there were two fatal attacks in Hurghada within days, killing an Austrian and a Romanian tourist. In 2018, a Czech tourist was killed by a shark off a Red Sea beach. A German tourist was similarly killed in 2015. In 2010, a spate of five attacks in five days unusually close to the shore of tourist hot spot Sharm el-Sheikh killed one German and injured four other foreign tourists.

## 5 dead, dozens believed missing

TUNIS (AP): At least five Africans are dead and dozens believed missing after three boats attempting to carry migrants across the Mediterranean Sea sank in recent days off the coast of the Tunisian city of Sfax, the Tunisian coast guard said. Bodies of five people, including one child, were recovered in the area in recent days, Sfax Prosecutor Faouzi Masmoudi said.

Masmoudi told The Associated Press that navy units had rescued 73 migrants after the three shipwrecks, but survivors' accounts indicated as many as 47 others were missing. Six of the missing were reported to be children. Masmoudi said the boats were made of iron and took on water as soon as they reached the open sea. Most of the growing number of attempts to migrate to Italy by boat from Tunisia leave from the area around Sfax, a port on Tunisia's central coast. Masmoudi said the number of victims buried in Sfax's cemeteries since January has reached almost 500, a significant increase from the previous two years. In 2022, 355 burials were recorded and 226 in 2021, he said. Migrants, mainly from sub-Saharan Africa, are undertaking the perilous journey from Tunisia in unprecedented numbers. Tunisian authorities say they stopped 13,000 migrants from making the crossing from Sfax in the first three months of this year alone. Tunisia has seen growing numbers of migrants arriving via neighboring Libya and is facing a financial and political crisis of its own that is driving growing numbers of young Tunisians to seek a better life in Europe.

## Malaysia will 'not survive' if it does not change: Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR (Agencies): Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has reaffirmed the need for reforms, saying Malaysia must change or it will not survive. "When it comes to governance, I think it is my duty to undertake and effect change because the country is somewhat destroyed. Unless there is a clear political commitment and resolve to change, I do not believe Malaysia will survive," he said in an in-depth interview with Al Jazeera's 101 East programme, stressing he was committed to transitioning Malaysia from race-based to needs-based affirmative action policies.

Anwar, now 75, became prime minister after elections in November 2022, capping a turbulent rise to the top of Malaysian politics. A firebrand youth leader, he rapidly climbed the political ladder to become second-in-command to then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in the 1990s. Sacked and accused of sodomy and corruption in the midst of the Asian Financial Crisis, Anwar was eventually jailed twice on charges widely considered to be politically motivated, fuelling a campaign for reform that has lasted more than 20 years. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country, but affirmative action policies that benefit the majority made up of Muslim Malays and Indigenous peoples have been in place since the 1970s. Such policies give preferential treatment to these ethnic groups in areas from jobs to education and housing and were introduced as part of a social engineering programme following racial riots between the Malays and ethnic Chinese in May 1969. While the policies were supposed to be temporary, they have remained in place ever since, creating deepening

resentment among the country's minority Chinese and Indian communities and leading many to leave the country in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

And with relatively high income inequality in Malaysia, it has also attracted questions about whether the policies have reached those who need them most. For Anwar, a needs-based approach "would help the Malays more than the race-based policies, because the race-based policies have been proven to be used by the few elites and their cronies to benefit themselves". But whether he can push through such reforms is another question. Anwar is breaking new ground as Malaysia's first prime minister from a multiracial party, in a country that has traditionally been ruled by Malay and other race-based parties. Malays make up just over half the population and are Muslim by law. It is also fragile ground because his Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope) coalition did not win enough seats to form a government on its own. His rise to power was only made possible through an alliance with smaller parties, including Malaysia's former ruling coalition Barisan Nasional (National Front), which is led by the Malay-only United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). Barisan Nasional was the architect of Malaysia's race-based affirmative action policies and perpetuated them during its decades-long rule, while UMNO has long cast itself as the nation's defender of Malay rights. Anwar, however, brushes off concerns about differing goals within his alliance. "What is important is the coalition is based on certain core principles: good governance, a strong stance against corruption

[and] abuse of power, and economic policies that could cater [to] the common man and woman," he said.

Issues of race and religion are chronic fault lines in Malaysia. Anwar's main opponent is Perikatan Nasional (National Alliance), a coalition of conservative Malay-Muslim parties. It has already attacked Anwar over issues such as his government's recent decision to withdraw its appeal against a court ruling allowing non-Muslims to use the word Allah, the Malay and Arabic word for God, with opposition leader Hamzah Zainudin criticising Anwar as "reckless". With six state elections scheduled to take place by August, the debate around race and religion is expected to become even more heated. "God willing, I think we will win big in the coming election[s]. The people are still with us, and they don't believe that this current government can manage ... Maybe they are just waiting for us to take over," Hamzah, the opposition leader, told 101 East. Anwar is unperturbed. He says his government is "very stable". "What else do you expect the opposition to do? Some are very jittery because of my strong stance against corruption and abuse of power. There is always this rumour about people swinging sides, changing sides.

It doesn't bother me. I think they misread it if they think that I'm a bit rattled. No." The prime minister claimed some of the most corrupt forces comprising the political elites in the country are "ganging up with the billions at their disposal" to unseat him. "But now that I'm in power, I'm not sitting idle. I will fight them if they want to solicit support by buying people, by bribing people and to protect their turf," he said.

## A secret Chinese spy base?

WASHINGTON (Agencies): A report in the Wall Street Journal saying Beijing planned to set up a spy base in Cuba has been dismissed by multiple government sources in the Caribbean and the United States. The denials began with an "exclusive" in the New York-based newspaper, describing "a secret agreement for China to establish an electronic eavesdropping facility on the island".

Quoting unnamed US officials familiar with "highly classified intelligence", the article said the proposed base would allow China to conduct "signals intelligence", a kind of espionage that would allow it to intercept emails, phone calls and other data from the US. The Journal said agreement had been reached in principle with Beijing agreeing to pay Cuba "several billion dollars" to set up the facility. "We have seen the report. It's not accurate," John Kirby, spokesperson for the White House National Security Council, told the Reuters news agency without elaborating on which aspect of the report was incorrect. Brigadier General Patrick Ryder, a spokesperson for the US defence department, said: "We are not aware of China and

Cuba developing a new type of spy station." In Havana, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernandez de Cossio dismissed the Journal article as "totally mendacious and unfounded", calling it a US fabrication meant to justify Washington's decades-old economic embargo against the island.

He said the island rejected all foreign military presence in Latin America and the Caribbean. A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington said: "We are not aware of the case and as a result, we can't give a comment right now." With Cuba roughly 150 kilometres (93 miles) from the Florida coast, the report sent ripples through the US political sphere, particularly on the right. "This month alone, China has harassed and threatened a US fighter jet and naval ship. Now, it's putting a spy base in Cuba," Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley posted on Twitter. Ohio Representative Jim Jordan echoed her outrage, blaming US President Joe Biden and tying the news to the aircraft earlier this year that US intelligence identified as a Chinese spy balloon traversing its airspace. "First, it was a Chinese spy

balloon. Now, it's a Chinese spy base. Didn't happen under President Trump. But happening now under President Biden," he wrote. The Journal reported the facility would allow Beijing to gather electronic communications from the southeastern US, which houses many US military bases, as well as monitor ship traffic. The US Central Command headquarters is based in Tampa. Fort Liberty, formerly Fort Bragg, the largest US military base, is in North Carolina.

The reported deal comes as Washington and Beijing appear to be taking tentative steps towards easing tensions that have spiked over issues from Taiwan to the South China Sea, human rights and the suspected spy balloon. February's furore over the balloon promoted Secretary of State Antony Blinken to cancel a planned visit to Beijing and there had been suggestions it could now take place in the coming weeks. "We have had real concerns about China's relationship with Cuba, and we have been concerned since day one of the administration about China's activities in our hemisphere and around the world," the White House's Kirby said.

## Siberia swelters in record temperatures

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Dozens of heat records have fallen in Siberia, as temperatures climbed above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 Celsius). Despite only being early June, records are tumbling across parts of Siberia as extreme heat pushes into unusually high latitudes.

Last Saturday, temperatures reached 37.9 degrees Celsius (100.2 Fahrenheit) in Jalturovsk, its hottest day in history, according to the climatologist Maximiliano Herrera, who tracks extreme temperatures across the globe. A slew of temperature records have fallen in Siberia since then. Several all-time heat records were broken, including in Baevoy, which reached 39.6 degrees Celsius (103.3 Fahrenheit), and Barnaul, which hit 38.5 degrees Celsius (101.3 Fahrenheit). Some of these stations have between five and seven decades of temperature recordings, Herrera told CNN. "So we can say it's really exceptional." It's the region's "worst heat wave in history," he posted on Twitter. And it looks set to get even worse. "Records keep falling today with again temperatures around 40 degrees Celsius," Herrera told CNN.

A scientific analysis may be done to assess how much influence climate change is having on this event, but we know that global warming is causing more extreme temperatures, especially in the higher latitudes. A particularly intense and prolonged heat wave in 2020, which saw the Arctic Siberian town of Verkhoyansk hit 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 Celsius), would have been "almost impossible" without human-caused climate change, an analysis by a team of international scientists found. Siberia tends to see large monthly and yearly temperature fluctuations, but the last few decades have seen a strong warming trend. "Siberia is one of the fastest warming regions on the planet with hot extremes increasing in intensity," Omar Baddour, chief of climate monitoring and policy services at the World Meteorological Organization, told CNN. The region "has seen some very intense heat waves," said Samantha Burgess, deputy director of the the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service. "These heat waves have major implications for people and nature and will continue to happen more frequently unless we rapidly cut emissions of greenhouse gases," she told CNN. As wildfire season takes hold in the Northern Hemisphere, Siberia - along with Canada - has also been grappling with significant and intense wildfires.

## Int'l help rolls in to fight persistent Canadian wildfires

OTTAWA (Reuters): Allies around the world have promised to increase their help to Canada in its fight against hundreds of blazes that have swept through the country in its worst-ever start to wildfire season. Forest fires that have gathered strength over the last month have forced tens of thousands of people from their homes and sent a smoky haze billowing over a large swath of the United States.

About 4.3 million hectares (10.6 million acres) have already burned, roughly 15 times the annual average of the past decade. Warm, dry conditions are expected to persist in the months ahead. The fires have impacted mining operations in Canada and disrupted flights in the United States. The Toronto District School Board, Canada's largest, rescheduled or moved indoors all outside activities, including field trips and local school events. Although wildfires are common in Canada, it is unusual for blazes to be burning simultaneously in the east and west, stretching firefighting resources, forcing the government to send in the military to help, and fueling concerns about the worsening con-

sequences of climate change. The US has sent hundreds of firefighters to Canada over the past few weeks and has said more help is on its way. President Joe Biden, in a statement, said he has directed his administration to respond promptly to requests for additional firefighters and fire suppression assets. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who thanked Biden for US help in a call, has blamed climate change for the unprecedented early season wildfires. Trudeau and Biden discussed the need to "work together to address the devastating impacts of climate change," according to a statement from the prime minister's office.

Democratic US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer echoed the concerns about the effects of climate change and called for the doubling of US help for Canada. "The climate crisis is real and it is here to stay. We must take action against the climate crisis, both short-term and long-term," Schumer said in a speech on the Senate floor. Help has also come in from South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said

that France, Portugal and Spain were also sending more than 280 firefighters to Canada. Some of the worst fires have sprung up in the eastern province of Quebec, where some 12,600 people have had to evacuate their homes, provincial Public Safety Minister Francois Bonnardel told a briefing. "We're not happy about the situation; though some fires are under control, some (are) not," Bonnardel told reporters. About 132 fires are currently active in the province, down from nearly 150.

Wildfire season started unseasonably early in Alberta last month and burned a record area, and Nova Scotia continues to battle its largest-ever blaze. Flames have eased in Alberta, the center of Canada's oil and gas industry, but more than 3,000 people remain under evacuation orders and heat warnings are in effect in the south of the province. In parts of the Pacific province of British Columbia, which is battling the second-biggest wildfire on record, temperatures were forecast to hit 33 Celsius (91 Fahrenheit), before thunderstorms and heavy rains arrived.



The Frontier Post

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# Berated politicians and Istihkam-e-Pakistan

THE seasoned politician and former PTI leader Jahangir Tareen along with the top political figures officially launched the Istihkam-e-Pakistan party in the overwhelming presence of the media. Several political leaders and Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) deserters including former governor Sindh Imran Ismail, Amir Kiani, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, Aleem Khan, Mahmood Molvi, Firdous Ashiq Awan, Ali Zaidi, Fayyaz-ul-Hasan Chauhan, Fawad Chaudhary and Nauman Langrhial flanked with Janahgir Tareen during the launching ceremony of the newly formed political group. Tareen told the media that they all have a purpose to work for the development of Pakistan. They worked hard in PTI for reforms in Pakistan but unfortunately, they failed to deliver their manifesto and people got disappointed with the cabal. While demanding accountability for the preparators of the May 9 violence, Tareen reiterated the need for leadership that can resolve economic and political crises, bring unity and end social polarization in the country. The founder of the Istihkam-e-Pakistan party claimed that more people will join their group in the coming days and the party will try its best to meet the expectations of the people of the country. Jahangir Tareen, who has been active in the formation of his new party following the May 9 events, held meetings with senior politicians to chalk out future strategies to prepare their group for a crucial election in the days ahead.

After a long disagreement with his parent civic group, the longstanding social worker, prominent businessman, landlord, and seasoned politician finally took a solo flight by forming a new political party, the Istihkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP). Dozens of deserter PTI leaders and self-proclaimed reformers boarded the plane of Jahangir Tareen's IPP, apparently to accomplish their unfinished agenda of nation-building and public welfare. The emergence of a new political group is a great addition to the country's democracy amid an ongoing political crisis and is a positive development that has reenergized the public belief in national politics which was previously shattered by the aggressive attitude of top politicians in the country. The Pakistani nation had witnessed the tearoom of PML-Q, PPP Patriots, PTM, Pak Sarzameen Party, and their haphazard politics over the past years. So far, Tareen must be praised for his work/role in national politics, earlier he played a crucial role in strengthening PTI and bringing it to the victory stand. Now he must be given credit for introducing a new political legacy in a fragile and highly polarized political landscape in the country. The party would be a great addition to national politics and could play an important role in future politics if steer in a measured and balanced manner.

Interestingly, Jahangir Tareen, the founding father of the Istihkam-e Pakistan Party is legally not qualified to contest an election and hold any public office because the Supreme Court disqualified him for being dishonest on a petition filed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hanif Abbasi date back in 2017. Thus he joined the fate of PML-N Supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif, whose review petition is still pending before the Supreme Court and both Tareen and Sharif are the aspirants so they can enter the political arena again. Historically, multiple innovations had been added to Pakistan's national politics over the past decades, several new political groups appeared, and new strategies and charters were announced to implement reforms and bring diversity to the country, but what has not changed is the concept that politics is not a business, but a pious profession to serve the county and the public. A majority of politicians are habitual in trading their loyalties for financial benefit and several faces have been recurrent beneficial of every political setup in the country. Ironically, the politicians who were once part of the PPP joined hands with Pervaiz Musharraf's King Party, then boarded the PTI bus and termed IK's their red line. After waging war against the state and national institutions on May 9, now they all became part of the Istihkam-e-Pakistan party for their self-benefit and monetary motives. Realistically, those who were involved in May 9 riots and currently migrated from the PTI must not be pardoned at any cost, and the corrupt must not get relief from their accountability in a new guise.

Presently, the newly formed junta of berated leaders has vowed to bring social, political, and economic stability to the country, which is a mere joke with the poor nation that was repeatedly betrayed by these politicians in the past. The nation has no hope of any betterment from this clot, however, their tact and legacy would be evident in the future.

# US-China arms control talks would be a heartening development

Dr. Amal Mudallali

THE Americans and the Chinese faced off last weekend at the Shangri-La Dialogue security conference in Singapore. They accused each other of "bullying" and of having a "Cold War mentality," letting the growing tension in the Chinese-American relationship spill over from the waters of the Taiwan Strait to the halls of the conference.

These are not two ships passing in the night, they are ships crossing each other's path in an attempt to establish each their own red lines. As the defense officials of both countries were exchanging rhetorical volleys, there were reports of an "unsafe" Chinese naval maneuver, according to the American military. It stated that a Chinese ship had cut across the path of an American destroyer as it passed through the international waters of the Taiwan Straits, forcing it to slow down to avoid a collision.

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu shook hands at the conference but did not have a meeting, as the Chinese side turned down a White House request, according to the American side. This was not the first time the Chinese had refused an American request for a meeting or a chance to communicate. Austin stressed in the meeting the "necessity" of dialogue with China, saying it is not a "reward." He also expressed his concern that Beijing "has been unwilling to engage more seriously on better mechanisms for crisis management between our two militaries." While Austin touted expanded military partnerships in the region, the Chinese defense minister, who is under US sanctions, called the formation of new security partnerships in the region "small cliques."

Li said Western "free-

dom of navigation" patrols in the Taiwan Straits are a "provocation," differentiating between what he called "innocent passage" in the straits and attempts "to try to use those freedoms of navigation to exercise hegemony of navigation." Despite reports of a secret visit by CIA Director Bill Burns to China last week, the lack of communication between the two powers is hampering efforts to reduce the risks to global security

While Austin touted expanded military partnerships in the region, the Chinese defense minister, who is under US sanctions, called the formation of new security partnerships in the region "small cliques." Li said Western "freedom of navigation" patrols in the Taiwan Straits are a "provocation," differentiating between what he called "innocent passage" in the straits and attempts "to try to use those freedoms of navigation to exercise hegemony of navigation." Despite reports of a secret visit by CIA Director Bill Burns to China last week, the lack of communication between the two powers is hampering efforts to reduce the risks to global security and stability, including a potential nuclear conflict.

and stability, including a potential nuclear conflict. In a speech to the Arms Control Association annual meeting last week, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, who was fresh from a meeting with Chinese diplomat Wang Yi in Vienna, outlined the US strategy to deal with the post-Cold War world order, especially the nuclear and arms control challenges. The US is eager to bring China to the table to engage on the future of nuclear stability and arms control because it says it is not interested in a new cold war or an arms race.

Sullivan said there were "deep" and "substantial" cracks in the post-Cold War nuclear foundation and that the US was trying to fashion a new strategy to "prevent an arms race" and "reduce the risk of misperception and escalation."

US believes, has to include China to be effective. But China, which has always been outside the arms control process of the Cold War era, does not see eye to eye with the US on this subject, or on any aspect of new American-Chinese engagement, including what the agenda of any potential dialogue with the US should include.

The US wants to decouple the arms control agenda from the wider Chinese-American relationship, as it did with the Russians during the Cold War. Sullivan lamented the erosion of "an era where nations could compartmentalize the issues of strategic stability" and "leaders chose transparency even during times of tension." This was the "foundation of nuclear stability and security that we've depended on for decades." But this founda-

tion is eroding at a time when new strategies are needed to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict, the US national security adviser added. While he pointed to Russia as the source of "major cracks" in this foundation, it is China that seems to be more frustrating to the US, as Sullivan noted that Washington has seen "a change in approach" from Beijing. "Unlike Russia," he said, China has "thus far opted not to come to the table for substantive dialogue on arms control. It has declined to share the size and scope of its nuclear forces, or to provide launch notifications. And it has not shown much interest in discussions regarding the changes it is making to its nuclear forces." Sullivan added: "Simply put, we have not yet seen a willingness from (China) to compartmentalize strategic stability from broader issues in the relationship. And that compartmentalization, as I noted before, has been the bedrock of nuclear security - indeed strategic stability - for decades." Even when proposing to negotiate with Russia on the future of New Start ahead of its expiration in 2026, Sullivan warned that any

limits the US agrees to with the Russians "will of course be impacted by the size and scale of China's nuclear buildup." The US is "ready to engage China without preconditions, helping ensure that competition is managed and that competition does not veer into conflict," he added. While Washington hoped that China would be willing to engage on "strategic nuclear issues," Chinese experts pointed to a lack of

understanding on the US side, of both China and the Chinese decision-making process, leading to more tension in the relationship. At the Arms Control Association conference, Tong Zhao, a senior fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said that there has been a change in the country's nuclear policy that reflects the changing China. He identified two factors that are driving China's policy, "fear and ambition." These are "two sides of the same coin," he explained, adding that the US is "not understanding the fear part." The American experts at the conference remarked that this fear factor is a mirror image of the fear in Washington, which makes a conversation between the two powers all the more

critical. While the Federation of American Scientists puts the number of nuclear warheads that China possesses at more than 400, Sullivan said that, by 2035, China is "on track to have as many as 1,500 nuclear warheads, one of the largest peacetime nuclear buildups in history." The New Start treaty limits America and Russia to the deployment of 1,550 nuclear warheads each. The New York Times observed that, "if Beijing hits that number, America's two biggest nuclear adversaries would have a combined force of over 3,000 strategic weapons, which can reach the United States." This must be what keeps American officials awake at night.

The problem between the US and China is also that of approach. Tong said China prefers a multilateral approach, which has more chance of succeeding, adding that China "is holding the dialogue on arms control hostage to progress on the political dialogue and the relationship (with Washington)." The meeting with Wang in Vienna must have had an impact, because Sullivan gave a nod to multilateralism when he announced that the US was "willing to engage in new multilateral arms control efforts, including through the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the P5." He said the US was under "no illusions" that it would be easy to agree the necessary risk reduction and arms control measures, but it does "believe it is possible." There would be nothing more heartening to the world than seeing the P5 working together to reduce nuclear risk and reach a robust new arms control regime. If they do it at the UN, it would be even better because multilateralism matters.

Arab News

# Labour won't be able to instantly fix every Tory failure. But social care would be a good place to start

Polly Toynbee

INDIGNATION fatigue makes it hard to keep track of the many public service failures, so social care has fallen from the public eye since Covid - though it goes on getting worse. Its failings block more hospital beds with elderly patients who can't be released because there's nowhere for them to go. More people needing care find rising barriers of ever-higher criteria, leaving them with none. Quality is so appalling in some places that councils in England have spent £7.5bn since 2019 paying for care rated as "inadequate" by the regulator. All this is laid out graphically in a report, Support Guaranteed, published today by the Fabian Society.

Labour's shadow health secretary Wes Streeting and the trade union Unison commissioned the report to lay out a roadmap to a new National Care Service. This is the right time for Labour to explore radical policies,

planning how to implement them, as centre-left think-tanks did in the run-up to 1997. It doesn't commit the party to a policy, but it does the research and the thinking, ensuring it is ready for power. The report shows what good care should look like, the order and priorities for improvement and how to do it - when funding permits.

The first, most urgent step is the one Keir Starmer recommitted to in his speech this week to the GMB conference, promising care workers would be the first to get a fair pay agreement, which Labour will roll out across all sectors: this will "set a new floor, a higher floor" for wages. The failure to recruit and retain care workers is so acute there are 165,000 vacancies, a number that is growing by the month. The report's co-author Andrew Harrop told me that many leave for higher pay as healthcare assistants in the NHS, with a chance for an upward career path - so this report

recommends a gradual alignment of employment terms between the two services. But consider this: the Health Foundation says it will cost an extra £6bn by 2030 to keep social care in its present sorry state, just to stand still without improvement.

Beyond a fair pay agreement, for which councils need to be funded, Labour has yet to commit to spending on care, or any other desperately needed service. It has said it will double the number of people trained as doctors and nurses, using money from abolishing non-dom tax breaks, but no commitments have been made yet about everyday NHS funds, nor about schools (beyond the bonus from charging VAT on private schools), or councils or further education colleges or early years teaching and childcare - let alone prisons, probation, courts, or everything else in a state of dire decrepitude and decline.

Labour is right to resist the pressure to effectively produce a budget for an election that is perhaps 18 months away. It will wait to make most of its spending commitments until it has seen figures in the Tories' March budget. There will be an avalanche of attacks, such as this week's accusing Labour's spending "plans" of requiring a 3p income tax rise.

The attack is absurd as the items listed were not policy, but it was enough to prompt Starmer and his shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves to "read the riot act" at a Commons meeting this week, with a letter to the shadow cabinet warning "there will be no unfunded spending commitments - if something is not signed off, it is not policy". The next election will be fought on Labour's idea of fiscal responsibility: "It is important that everyone appreciates the high level of scrutiny we are under. The test of being trusted with the pub-

lic finances is not optional - it is essential." Time and again Labour will be accused of profligacy, the shades of Jeremy Corbyn's last-minute free broadband for all at the last election acting as a flashing warning of how easily a pleasing promise turns into a signal of wild spending. After Liz Truss, the test got harder, unfairly, as she borrowed to splurge on tax cuts for the well-off, while Labour has pledged to borrow only for green growth investment.

The Fabian report's 10-year plan is inspiring, but until we see what money gets allocated in the manifesto, it's just a roadmap on a drawing board. It gives the recommendation from the Dilnot commission for capping costs at £86,000 quite a low priority, as improving care for those who get little or none is more pressing than spending money on easing the means test for the better off. (You could relax the means test and instead tax old people more, with pensioners paying national insurance

on their income.) The serious crisis is not just about elderly people, but a lack of support for the fast-rising numbers of disabled adults aged 18 to 64 needing support, due to more babies surviving with disabilities.

The choices that Labour faces will be almost unbearable, the expectations near-impossible - Starmer and Reeves will need to be ruthless. Great questions must be confronted, such as how you share out spending on old people and young people. Political pressure and power is always with older voters, with most clamour for the needs of the NHS and social care, largely for elderly people. Children are the silent voices, which is why spending on them, their early years, schooling, benefits, care and mental wellbeing has fallen back severely in the past decade. As the cliché goes, they are the future, and so we wait to see who will be the winners in the great shadow cabinet spending tug of war.

The Guardian

# Trump and those classified documents: An indictment unlike any other

Ruth Marcus

WITH Donald Trump's announcement that he has been indicted by a federal grand jury, the country has crossed into daunting new territory. But here we are, and at a perilous moment: the country divided over the prospect of prosecuting Trump, the front-runner for the GOP nomination for president in 2024.

We've been close to the brink before. Richard M. Nixon escaped prosecution thanks to a pardon from his successor, Gerald Ford. Bill Clinton, in the final hours of his presidency, agreed to a deal with the independent counsel in which he acknowledged giving false testimony under oath, agreed to pay \$25,000 in fines and accepted a symbolic five-year suspension of his law license in return for avoiding prosecution. But both Nixon and Clinton were, by and large, exiting the public stage. With the Trump case in the hands of special counsel Jack Smith, we confront the uncomfortable reality of Trump

simultaneously under federal prosecution and the leading candidate for the GOP presidential nomination. Yes, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg has secured an indictment accusing Trump of violating New York law on falsifying corporate records when he sought to buy the silence of adult-film star Stormy Daniels. And, yes, another indictment, from Fulton County (Ga.) District Attorney Fani Willis, going to the heart of Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, appears in the offing. But there is something far more serious about an indictment by the government Trump led, and wants to lead again, asserting that the former president is a felon. This has been long coming - it was probably inevitable from the moment that FBI agents arrived at Trump's Mar-a-Lago home last August to execute a search warrant - and yet this step feels staggering.

For me, a seven-count indictment - though we haven't seen all the specific

charges and accompanying details - is an amply justified demonstration of the rule of law in action and the principle that no person, not even a former president, is above the law. At the time of the Mar-a-Lago search, there was a lot of talk, and not just from Trump allies, about whether Attorney General Merrick Garland had overstepped - whether he was transforming a matter of sloppy housekeeping into a federal case. I was not among those doubters, and the evidence that has since emerged only strengthened my conviction that Trump's behavior was egregious and that his efforts to obstruct justice elevate this episode into the realm of criminality. Among the evidence: reports that Trump aide Walt Nauta told federal agents that he moved boxes of documents at Mar-a-Lago at Trump's direction. "Investigators now suspect, based on witness statements, security camera footage, and other docu-

mentary evidence, that boxes including classified material were moved from a Mar-a-Lago storage area after the subpoena was served, and that Trump personally examined at least some of those boxes." The Post's Devlin Barrett, Josh Dawsey and Perry Stein reported in April. And in a sealed opinion, US District Judge Beryl A. Howell found that the crime-fraud exception to attorney-client privilege justified prosecutors' decision to require Trump lawyer Evan Corcoran to answer questions and turn over notes about the documents search. All this convincingly distinguishes the Trump case from the seemingly parallel situations of former vice president Mike Pence and, more to the point, President Biden, both of whom came forward, in the wake of the Mar-a-Lago revelations, to volunteer that they had found classified documents among their private possessions. The Justice Department has

since closed its Pence investigation, and while a separate special counsel, Robert K. Hur, is still probing Biden, there is no reason to think that the Trump and Biden situations are analogous. Biden sought to cooperate with authorities, Trump to thwart them.

The rule-of-law principle that "like cases should be treated alike" means that one official should not be prosecuted for conduct while another goes scot-free - if their conduct is comparable. But it also means that prosecutors should not be deterred from pursuing charges against someone whose conduct they believe was significantly more egregious, even if they will be deluged with unwarranted complaints of unequal and unfair treatment. Which are inevitable - and, indeed, have already erupted, notwithstanding Garland's decision to place the probe largely in the hands of a career prosecutor serving as special counsel. House Republican conference chairwoman Elise Stefanik

(R-N.Y.), who once knew better, called the indictment "the epitome of the illegal and unprecedented weaponization of the federal government" against Trump. The former president protested his innocence in what he referred to as the "Boxes Hoax." Speaking on CNN the day before the indictment, Pence said that indicting Trump "would be terribly divisive to the country," adding, "I think it would also send a terrible message to the wider world." Pence has things half right. Divisive? That goes without saying in these polarized times. The broader message, though, is that the rule of law prevails in the United States, no matter who is accused of wrongdoing. And that underscores why I view an indictment with a mixture of relief and apprehension - relief that Trump has not once again managed to place himself above the law and apprehension about the deeper discord that this development will bring in its wake.

The Washington Post



# Franco-German angst leaves Europe's power balance in flux

Andrew Hammond

FOR much of the post-Second World War era, the close partnership between Germany and France has been the engine of ever closer European integration. However, that calculus is changing, potentially significantly so. Cooperation between these two powers has ebbed and flowed in the past, quite often depending on the personalities of the officeholders in Berlin and Paris. But there may now also be key structural forces in play as well.

The case for the latter is that Europe is, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, experiencing significant geostrategic changes that may transform the face of the continent. Part of this is the possible post-Ukraine war reawakening of Germany in a new European security landscape. This is injecting uncertainty into Berlin's relationship with Paris. France has, in recent decades, sought to align closely with Germany to shape the EU policies of its more powerful neighbor to help project a French vision of European unity. At the time of writing, it is too early to assert conclusively what the impact of such a seismic shift might be, but it is already clear that bilateral ties have suffered because of the coolness of relations between President Emmanuel Macron and Chancellor Olaf Scholz. For instance, a joint Franco-German Cabinet meeting, scheduled for last autumn, was postponed at short notice amid big differences on energy and defense. Moreover, a meeting between

Macron and Scholz that same month was overshadowed by tensions. What is also significant is the way in which, in the face of less cordial bilateral relations, both sides have sought to counterbalance this with other European allies. The latest example of this came on Thursday, with Scholz's visit to Italy to engage with Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni. While the left-of-center Scholz and right-of-center Meloni may be strange political bedfellows, they have generally been successful in smoothing over their disagreements - on issues ranging from the EU's green investments to migration - to develop a constructive partnership. At their previous meeting, Scholz said the two were working "very intensively" together.

Seen through the prism of Europe's balance of power, this is a blow for Macron, who invested much time in cultivating France as the key interlocutor with Italy under Meloni's predecessor, Mario Draghi. In late 2021, the two nations even signed the so-called Quirinal Treaty, under which they committed to greater coordination in security, defense, migration, strategic sectors including AI, and macroeconomics. There was also greater coordination before EU leadership summits to try to agree on common positions - a process that has long taken place between France and Germany. However, the intent of Quirinal has withered under Macron and Meloni, whose relationship has sometimes been tempestuous. Last

November, the Italian prime minister even accused the French government of betrayal as the two battled over who should take migrant boats. Another example of French-Italian tension came in February, when Meloni highlighted Macron's "inappropriate" diplomatic snub to her after she was not invited to a dinner with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during the latter's visit to France. The Italian prime minister asserted that this move by Macron undermined the EU's solidarity with Ukraine and was driven by the French leader's attempt to distract his public from the country's domestic issues, particularly the protests caused by his pending pension age increase.

Yet, amid this flux, the core fact remains that France and Germany are today the most influential states in the EU and they are the largest economies in the eurozone. In the longer term, it therefore remains possible that, even if Scholz and Macron do not patch up their relationship, future incumbents will see a compelling need to do so. There is also an outside possibility of a stronger Macron-Scholz relationship in due course. It should be remembered that, from time to time, Angela Merkel and Macron had a patchy rapport. However, despite not seeing eye to eye on multiple issues, they ultimately became a generally formidable duo plotting the future of Europe and its role in the wider world. So, some six decades after the Elysee Treaty, which established a new foundation for bilateral

relations and brought to an end centuries of Franco-German enmity and wars, what is clear is that the ties between Berlin and Paris still have a significant bearing on EU relations. Both Macron and Scholz know that the remainder of their terms could therefore have an outsized impact on defining the bloc's long-term future.

If they come together, there is still a window of opportunity to help steer the EU toward a pathway of deepening cooperation in the coming years. This covers issues from energy to defense, with member states sharing more power and decisions being agreed faster and enforced more quickly.

However, this is by no means assured, especially without the close, long-standing French-German motor of integration, given the key challenges, including growing euroskepticism across the continent. This unfolding situation comes in a context where there remains a multitude of views across Europe on the future of the Brussels-based club. Alternative scenarios in the next decade include the EU retreating, post-Brexit, to no more than the current economic single market, which seeks to guarantee the freedom of movement of goods, capital, services and people. While the direction of the EU is therefore still uncertain, Germany and France will have a huge bearing on its evolution. Despite their cool relationship, Macron and Scholz can still play a big role in defining the economic and political character of the bloc throughout the 2020s and beyond.



## Caroline Lucas was the best PM Britain never had

Neal Lawson

WITH our forlorn sense that politics isn't working and that democracy is broken, as we feel the impacts of both climate change and the decision to leave the European Union in real time, the symbolic answer to our political crisis was always staring us in the face. It was Caroline Lucas, the best prime minister we never had - and, now that she is standing down from her Brighton Pavilion seat, we will never get.

In her bold but gentle way, Lucas embodied the fact that politicians and politics could be better. Not perfect, but good enough. Good enough to know that meaningful change needs a vision of a good society to compel it, alongside bold enough policies and strong enough alliances to get us there. As the lone Green MP, Lucas embodied those traits and more. Necessity is the mother of invention. She had no choice but to forge alliances with other MPs, to work cooperatively on bills and campaigns on everything from stopping fracking to reversing the ludicrous privatisation of our water companies.

Tony Benn famously said that politics wasn't about personalities but issues. He was both right and wrong. Politics is about ideas, movement and moments. But it is always about people - about political leaders. We need charismatic, inspiring and purposeful leadership. Not demagogues, but full-time professionals who know their job is to help us build a good society and lead good lives. The energy and ambition Lucas brought to this pursuit was incredible. Great works are performed, as Samuel Johnson told us,

not by strength but by perseverance. Lucas persevered. But she is human. And political humans, as we saw with Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's former prime minister, tire and burn out. The system is so broken that no single person can hope to fix it.

Lucas has signalled that she will continue to work tirelessly on climate change, again echoing Benn, who said on leaving Westminster that he was stepping down to spend more time with his politics. But Westminster, Whitehall and formal politics do matter. They are the sites that set the rules that determine how we regulate society, the economy and our democracy, and how we invest public money. While power has clearly slipped through the fingers of the formal political classes over the past few decades, away from the green benches to blue-chip corporations, big tech companies and, thankfully, to civil society campaigns, the role of formal politics in facing perma-crisis, while insufficient, is still necessary.

We need a political class that can spend and regulate in the right way, that knows its job isn't to usher in a better world for us, but to create the conditions in which we can build it ourselves. Lucas knew that, but our political and democratic system is so broken it fails to people like her; it wears them down and spits them out. It hoards power at the centre, while opening itself up to the rich and powerful as it turns its back on the rest of us. It lets small factions win control of parties and ruthlessly exploit their position with impunity. It produces identikit MPs

who meekly follow the whip in a system that puts party before country. So, it is bewildering that just when we need more politicians like Lucas, we lose those few we have. But big change was never going to come from within the system. It's too cosy and too keen to protect its interests over ours. So her leaving isn't a sign that all is lost, but that change can and must come to a broken edifice. It's as if the ravens are leaving the Tower of London. Some, such as Lucas and the compelling Labour MP Jon Cruddas, are jumping, others, such as Jamie Driscoll, the serving Labour mayor for North of Tyne, and Beth Winter, a south Wales Labour MP, are being pushed out. But it's a sign that change is coming.

Everywhere beyond the desiccated walls of parliament, people are picking up the torch: the overwhelming majority of Labour members and unions who know we need proportional representation to create a fairer electoral system that brings in other voices; the thousands of activists and millions of voters who campaigned and voted tactically in the May local elections; the political experiments such as the primary being trialled in south Devon; the huge number of people on the streets for Extinction Rebellion, the companies queuing up for B Corp status to build an economy more in tune with our planet and its people. Everywhere, except Westminster, change is in the air. The brittle walls of the old politics will tumble. A better politics of collaboration and putting issues before parties looks like Lucas. We know what to do. She has shown us.

## Marcos gets mixed analyst reviews

Dave Grunebaum

NEARLY a year since being sworn in as president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is getting mixed reviews from political analysts. "We have really yet to see any major achievements, especially for the lives of the ordinary people," said Cleve Arguelles, chief executive of WR Numero Research, a polling firm in the Philippines.

"Although much has been said about bringing down the prices of rice and other agricultural products, we really have yet to see significant improvements in these areas. So, I would say that in terms of the expectation to make Filipino families food-secure - especially access to rice - he wasn't really able to gain some ground on that." Despite this, Marcos remains popular in public opinion polls, including a Pulse Asia survey released in April that reported 78% of Filipinos approved of his performance.

"One explanation for this is that traditionally, Filipinos do give their presidents a honeymoon period during the first year in power," Arguelles said. When it comes to foreign policy and national defense, the Philippines is caught in the middle of a geopolitical rivalry between the United States and China. Marcos has been strengthening ties with the US after they were strained by his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, who for most of his six-year term leaned significantly closer to China. "Under Duterte, billions [of dollars in investment was] promised, [but] nothing came from the Chinese, as far as

I'm concerned," said political analyst Richard Heydarian, a senior lecturer at the Asian Center of the University of the Philippines. "Philippines never had debt trap. We had pledge trap."

During the final year of Duterte's term, he added, the administration started mending ties with the US. "What Marcos did was just continue the late-Duterte reversion and push it to its logical conclusion, which is a new era of a revitalized alliance," said Heydarian, author of the book "The Indo-Pacific: Trump, China and the New Struggle for Global Mastery."

This comes as tensions rise between the Philippines and China due to overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea. In February, the Philippine Coast Guard accused the China Coast Guard of directing a military-grade laser at one of its ships, temporarily blinding some of its crew. In an April maritime incident witnessed by several journalists, a Chinese Coast Guard ship cut off a Philippines Coast Guard boat in the Philippines exclusive economic zone. Last year, the Philippines filed almost 200 diplomatic protest notes with Beijing over its tactics in the South China Sea. Earlier this year, the Philippines agreed to give the US access to more military bases, but Marcos has said these sites are not intended to be used as staging grounds for "offensive action" against any country. Critics of the agreement have said the Philippines could become a military target if the US responds to a Chinese invasion of Taiwan by using

these bases to launch attacks against China. Taiwan lies some 190 kilometers from Luzon, the largest and most populous Philippine island. Heydarian said Marcos is faced with the difficult task of trying to stand up to China's military when it comes to their competing claims in the South China Sea without unduly antagonizing Beijing. Allowing the US greater access to military bases, he said, is being done to prevent war.

"If allies have integrated deterrence - collective deterrence capability - China will not even think of invading Taiwan," he said. "All bets are off if a war happens. Japan is going to be involved. Philippines is going to be involved. Australia is going to be involved." However, Marcos' first state visit to China in January generated \$22.8 billion worth of investment pledges. Manila had billed the visit as an attempt to strengthen ties with Beijing and establish direct communication over South China Sea issues. Marcos' office said the financial commitments secured from Chinese investors include \$13.76 billion in renewable energy, \$7.32 billion for electric vehicles and mineral processing, and \$1.72 billion for agriculture, according to Nikkei Asia. "What [Marcos] wants ... is to have the cake of stronger cooperation with America but also eat more investment and trade relations with China," said Heydarian. "Let's not forget, Marcos Jr. is still saying very nice things about China."

VOA

## The Ukraine dam disaster demands accountability

Frida Ghitis

IN the dead of night on Tuesday, shortly before 3 am, residents near Ukraine's Nova Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant heard a loud blast followed by the roaring sounds of rushing water. The dam, which held back a section of the Dnipro River, had collapsed and the broken reservoir started disgorging torrents of water.

Millions of gallons of water cascaded downstream from the breach, inundating residential settlements and agricultural areas, threatening lives and livelihoods. Ukraine launched a desperate effort to evacuate those at risk of perishing as experts tried to assess the long and short term dangers from the flooding. Meanwhile, Kyiv and Moscow engaged in an intense round of finger pointing over responsibility for the unfolding environmental disaster.

Those responsible for the calamity should be held accountable. The dam's collapse is not just devastating for those who reside in the immediate environs - it is a nationwide disaster for Ukraine that could reverberate across the globe. The huge reservoir the dam contained - some 150 miles long and about 100 feet tall - provided drinking water for millions of Ukrainians and irrigated millions of acres of agricultural land in a country that supplies 10% of the world's wheat. Grain prices for the entire world rose on news of the calamity. The dam's thick walls restrained the waters of the Dnipro River which - perhaps not coincidentally - marks a dividing line between Russian-occupied and Ukraine-held territories.

The idea of blowing up a dam as a military stratagem is not new.

This week's calamity felt like a reprise of the 1941 decision by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin to destroy a hydroelectric dam that spanned a different segment of the Dnipro River. Stalin's goal in the midst of World War II was to prevent Nazi armies from sweeping across Ukraine, which at the time was part of the Soviet Union. The destruction of a key section of the dam did succeed in temporarily blocking the German invaders. But it also inundated Ukrainian villages, killing thousands of civilians. Both Ukrainian and Russians say the dam collapsed in an explosion - but carried out by whom? Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called it an act of "sabotage" by Kyiv. Ukraine is adamant, however, that Moscow is the culprit: As long ago as last October, President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that Russia was mining the dam and said the world should warn the Kremlin that blowing it up would be tantamount to "the use of weapons of mass destruction." On Tuesday, Zelensky's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak said he "does not understand" how anyone could doubt Moscow's culpability. Russia, after all, had control of the facility and had the most to gain from its destruction. The disaster creates tactical complications for Ukraine's counteroffensive and forces it to divert scarce resources.

The European Union seems to have come to a similar conclusion. It condemned the incident as "a new dimension of Russian atrocities." EU Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen wrote, "Russia will have to pay for the war crimes committed in

Ukraine." Blowing up a dam is a war crime, as it violates the Geneva Conventions and its protocols. There is another possibility - that the dam collapsed from structural failure. Satellite images showed damage to the bridge atop the dam last week. But even if the dam fell on its own, Russia bears responsibility, because it controlled it and was responsible for maintaining it. As UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, the disaster is "another devastating consequence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine." The full scope of the disaster will only become known after the waters recede. South of the facility, we will see villages destroyed and agricultural lands potentially ruined by sediment and flood. For those living in the 80 or so settlements downstream and in the path of the rising waters, the disaster adds to 15 months of unremitting suffering and growing anger because of the war. Images that circulated online and on television showed distraught, elderly and infirm people, some clutching their pets, staggering to safety while thousands fled submerged towns with whatever belongings they could salvage. Worryingly, water from the reservoir is used to cool the reactors from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, also occupied by Russia's military. Five of the six reactors had already been shut down. For now, the plant's cooling pond has enough water, but experts are watching closely. The dam collapsed as Ukraine stepped up operations in anticipation of a much-awaited counter-offensive. The dam itself, under Russian control

since March 2022, acted as one of the bridges across the Dnipro, which Ukrainian forces might have planned to cross in their push to regain territory.

What should happen now? First, since Russia insists it is not at fault, it should agree to a technical investigation to determine the cause. Russia has veto power at the UN Security Council, but the United Nations General Assembly, even the frequently hapless UN Human Rights Council, can go into special session. They should condemn the incident and demand a probe. If Russia blocks it, it will amount to an admission of guilt. For concrete consequences, we should look to NATO. In July, the alliance will hold a summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. The location is symbolically powerful. Lithuania is one of the Baltic nations that Moscow invaded and annexed during World War II and, like other Russian neighbors, it has been warning about the Kremlin's expansionist intentions. At the summit, Western leaders should formally commit to maintaining their support for Ukraine even if the counter-offensive falters. Some have suggested that if Kyiv fails to make significant gains, Western support would weaken. We have seen the magnitude of the damage already caused by Russia's aggression. It has abducted Ukrainian children; bombed Ukrainian infrastructure; tried to use winter's cold and darkness as a weapon of war. The broken walls of the Nova Kakhovka dam, and its destructive rushing waters, should strengthen the resolve of Ukraine's backers.

CNN

## ROK must avoid US trap to improve ties with China

Xie Guijuan

THE relationship between China and the Republic of Korea turned turbulent when ROK President Yoon Suk-yeol criticized China's domestic policies during his visit to the United States in late April. What made matters worse is the White House statement that Washington is committed to enhancing the deployment of US strategic assets in and around the Korean Peninsula, in particular US nuclear-capable platforms.

Further, during US President Joe Biden's visit to the ROK in May, the two sides agreed to upgrade their bilateral ties to a "global comprehensive strategic alliance" not only to counter the growing threat posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but perhaps also to contain China. Friendly ties and cooperation have marked China-ROK relations over the past 30 years, with the most important lesson for the two countries being respecting each other's core interests and concerns, and maintaining regular communication to promote economic cooperation.

True, China-ROK relations have not been wholly smooth when seen in the context of the deadlock between the DPRK and the ROK. But the US, as a backstage influencer in the Asia-Pacific region, has been trying to muddy the historical issues China and the ROK have with Japan. The US is also responsible for the deteriorating Sino-US ties. It seems the ROK

has now adopted a tactic to maximize benefits by maintaining a delicate balance between strong economic ties with China and security dependence on the US.

Since taking office one year ago, Yoon has been trying to "upgrade the US-ROK alliance", which the two sides ultimately agreed to during Biden's visit to the ROK. This has not only impacted China-ROK relations but also increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. Disputes between China and the ROK that were confined to the political domain have now extended to economic and cultural fields, raising worries about China-ROK ties spiraling downward. But in the national interests of the two sides and for long-term regional security, Beijing and Seoul should take measures to halt the deterioration in bilateral relations.

First, China and the ROK should keep making efforts to promote mutual respect and trust, maintain peace in the region, and pursue win-win cooperation, the important factors they highlighted when establishing diplomatic ties in 1992. The two neighbors have common interests in facilitating regional development and contributing to regional peace and security. Second, the ROK has the right to deepen relations with other countries but not at the expense of

harming the interests of any third party or disturbing regional peace and stability. Yoon tried so hard to please Washington during his visit to the US that he said the Taiwan question "is not simply an issue of China but a global issue", which is a direct interference in China's internal affairs and a breach of the one-China principle, the political foundation of China-ROK ties. In addition, the Yoon administration arranged for active interactions with Japan despite their deep-rooted historical problems, which many ROK nationals criticized as giving in to Japan's ploy to avoid facing its militarist past and surrendering to the wishes of the US. This US-centric diplomacy of the ROK has disturbed the traditional balance among China, the US, Japan and Russia in the region, shrinking the space for diplomatic maneuverings.

Third, sacrificing its win-win economic relations with China for the faux security guaranteed by the US is not in the interest of the ROK. Economic cooperation outweighs competition between China and the ROK, and that's why the US is desperately trying to prevent the ROK and Japan from strengthening their cooperation with China. If the ROK wants to enhance its international status, it should seek to resolve contentious issues with the help of other parties, instead of taking sides.

The China Daily

### Important Notice

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**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal addressing Inauguration session of International EdTech Conference.

The camber president said that funds worth Rs 107 billion would be helpful in improving the power generation and transmission and distribution system, adding that the funds for science, technology, energy sector, women empowerment and facilities for construction sector were welcome steps.

**notice:**  
**INCHARGE SFU, NADRA**  
**ABBOTABAD-SFU**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration Succession Certificate by Mr. Shah Faisal with regards to moveable & immovable assets of late Mr. Shah Faisal citizen number 1710220311345 has been received following are declared as legal heirs:  
(Daughter)3 Feroz Khan (Son) 4 Nauraz Khan (Son)5 Aaf Khan (Son)6 Saad Khan (Son)7 Saad Khan (Son)8 Shehzad Khan (Son)9 Shehzad Khan (Son)

On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.

**PID/1674222**  
**INCHARGE SFU, NADRA**  
**CHARRADA-SFU,**





## In brief

## Ticket sales top 1m for Women's World Cup

SYDNEY (AP): More than 1 million tickets have been sold for the Women's World Cup kicking off in Australia and New Zealand next month, with soccer's international governing body saying the tournament is on track to be the most attended standalone women's sporting event in history. FIFA President Gianni Infantino issued a statement saying 1,032,884 tickets had been sold up to Friday morning local time in Sydney, surpassing the pre-tournament sales for the 2019 edition in France. Co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand, the 2023 edition features an expanded field of 32 teams, up from 24 in France. There are 64 total matches during the tournament. "Delighted to share with the world that FIFA has passed one million tickets sold," Infantino said. "This means that with over one month to go before kick-off ... 2023 is on track to become the most attended FIFA Women's World Cup in history. The future is women — and thanks to the fans for supporting what will be the greatest FIFA Women's World Cup ever!" Total stadium attendance exceeded 1.35 million at the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada, when the number of participating teams had increased to 24 from 16 at the previous edition. The tournament kicks off with New Zealand against 1995 champion Norway in Group A at Auckland's Eden Park, followed by the Group B opener between Sam Kerr's Australia lineup and Ireland at Stadium Australia, the main venue for the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

## Advisory for spin bowling camp

LAHORE (PPI): The specialised camp for spinners will commence at the National Cricket Academy from tomorrow, Saturday. In this specifically designed camp, the players will undergo extensive sessions that will enhance their skills and test fitness in challenging conditions ahead of two-Test series against Sri Lanka next month. Abid Ali and Fakhar Zaman have been included in the camp, while Usama Mir and Iftikhar Ahmed have been granted exemption from the camp. All-rounder Faheem Ashraf has also been exempted from the fast bowlers camp, which runs from 16 to 21 June. The following is the schedule for the media and training activities. Ahsan Iftikhar Nagi (0304 055 7586) is the contact person for camp-related queries and Shakeel Khan (0301 844 0284) will look after media operations. 10 June – The players will train at the LCCA ground from 10am till 12pm (morning session) and 2:30pm till 4:30pm (afternoon session). The media is invited to cover the morning session. Grant Bradburn, the head coach of the Pakistan men's side, will hold a media talk at the conclusion of the morning session. 11 and 12 June – The players will train at the LCCA ground from 2:30pm till 4:30pm. 13 June – The players will train at the LCCA ground from 2:30pm till 4:30pm. Before the session, a player will be available for a media talk. 14 and 15 June – The players will train at the LCCA ground in the morning and afternoon sessions. The media is invited to cover the afternoon sessions. Players for the spin bowling camp: Spinners – Abrar Ahmed, Ali Asfand, Arafat Minhas, Faisal Akram, Mohammad Junaid, Mehran Mumtaz, Mubasir Khan, Noman Ali, Qasim Akram, Sajid Khan, Sufiyan Muqem and Zahid Mehmood.



PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a shot against Spain's Carlos Alcaraz during their semifinal match of the French Open tennis tournament of the French Open tennis tournament.

## Alcaraz injury helps Djokovic into French Open final

PARIS (Agencies): Novak Djokovic reached his seventh French Open final in dramatic and controversial circumstances on Friday when world number one Carlos Alcaraz suffered serious cramping which torpedoed his challenge.

Djokovic, 36, triumphed 6-3, 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 to become the oldest man in 93 years to reach the championship match where he will be bidding for a third Roland Garros title and record-setting 23rd men's Grand Slam crown.

The drama on Friday unfolded just as Djokovic had levelled the third set at 1-1 with the first two sets split but with Alcaraz seemingly in the ascendancy in the sweltering 33-degree Paris heat.

Alcaraz, 16 years Djokovic's junior, pulled up clutching his right calf.

He conceded his next service game because he sought treatment courtside before a scheduled change of ends and could not

receive a medical timeout for cramping.

As boos and jeers rained down, Djokovic, playing in his 45th Grand Slam semifinal, swept the next five games to open a two sets to one lead.

Alcaraz left the court for a five-minute bathroom break but his physical limitations easily opened the door for Djokovic to coast into his 34th Grand Slam final, having wrapped up 10 of the last 11 games of the semi-final.

"Tough luck for Carlos, the last thing you want is cramping. I feel for him and hope he recovers and comes back very soon," said Djokovic. "Respect for him in fighting until the end. I told him at the net that he is very young and he will win this many times."

He added: "He was the better player in the second set. I knew I had to be more aggressive and then match and better his intensity."

Djokovic will face either 2022 runner-up Casper

Ruud or Alexander Zverev for a place in Sunday's championship match where he will have the opportunity to become the first man to win all four Slam titles at least three times.

In just their second career meeting, and first at a Grand Slam, Djokovic made light of the age gap by breaking for a 3-1 lead, drawing Alcaraz out of position before topping off a rally with a cool backhand. Alcaraz let slip three break points in the seventh game as his flamboyant all-court game collided head-on with Djokovic's storied defensive wall.

- Wrist treatment -

In a see-saw conclusion to the first set, Alcaraz saved a set point in the eighth game, Djokovic thwarted another break point in the ninth before he pocketed the opener when the Spaniard pushed a service return wide.

Djokovic required a medical timeout on his right wrist at 3-4 down in

the second set and Alcaraz pounced, finally converting a break point at the sixth attempt for a 5-3 lead.

Djokovic hit back immediately as the 20-year-old Spaniard chose the wrong time to serve up his worst game of the match and a driving backhand down the line retrieved the break.

Two-time champion Djokovic saved three set points in the 10th game but undid the hard work in the 12th game as a wild forehand sailed long and Alcaraz levelled up the semi-final. From that point, Alcaraz's afternoon unravelled. The clash between Djokovic and Alcaraz overshadowed Friday's other semi-final between Ruud, runner-up to Rafael Nadal in 2022, and Olympic champion Zverev who is in the last four for a third successive year.

Twelve months ago, Zverev suffered season-ending ankle ligament damage in his semi-final against Nadal.

## Sri Lanka drop Angelo Mathews from World Cup Qualifier squad

COLOMBO (Agencies): Veteran all-rounder Angelo Mathews has been left out of Sri Lanka's squad for the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifiers in Zimbabwe in June.

Angelo Mathews returned to the 50-over format after a two-year hiatus ahead of Sri Lanka's away ODI series against New Zealand earlier this year. The return had glimmered a ray of hope for the 36-year-old of a World Cup swansong.

However, the second ODI against Afghanistan last week saw him removed from the Playing XI due to a spate of poor performances; after his comeback, he had scores of 18, 0, and 12. Sadeera Samarawickrama, who filled in for Angelo Mathews in the aforementioned match, hit a brisk 44,

which allowed him to be retained in the lineup for the third ODI.

His comeback, along with Dimuth Karunaratne's, was considered a shift in the selectors' strategy to prioritise experience during a World Cup year prior to the Afghanistan series.

However, Angelo Mathews's series of dismal performances forced the selectors to reconsider their strategy for the World Cup preparations.

The rest of the Sri Lankan squad has little to no changes from their squad for the Afghanistan ODIs with captain Dasun Shanaka leading the likes of Kusal Mendis, Pathum Nissanka, Charith Asalanka, Dhananjaya de Silva and Samarawickrama. Chamika Karunaratne, Shanaka and Wanindu

Hasaranga fill the allrounders' slots, while Hasaranga also leads a spin department that also includes Maheesh Theekshana and legspinner Dushan Hemantha.

The former champions Sri Lanka will start their Cricket World Cup Qualifier campaign on June 19 against UAE in Bulawayo before playing three warm-up matches.

**Sri Lanka squad:** Dasun Shanaka (capt), Kusal Mendis (wk), Pathum Nissanka, Dimuth Karunaratne, Dhananjaya de Silva, Charith Asalanka, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Chamika Karunaratne, Dushan Hemantha, Wanindu Hasaranga, Lahiru Kumara, Dushmantha Chameera, Kasun Rajitha, Matheesha Pathirana, Maheesh Theekshana.



THE OVAL: David Warner and Alex Carey not going for a catch gave Ajinkya Rahane a life, Australia vs India, ICC World Test Championship.

## Pakistan women's football team rises in FIFA Rankings

ZURICH (Agencies): Pakistan women's football team on Friday, made a big leap in the latest FIFA World Rankings following their participation in the AFC Olympic Qualifiers.

As per the latest updates, the green shirts jumped four places to claim the 157th position in the FIFA Women's rankings.

Pakistan edged Tajikistan in the AFC Olympic Qualifiers 1-0. The victory earned them valuable points which propelled them to 944.58 points.

The victory also powered Pakistan to finish third in Group E of round one of the qualifiers for the Paris Olympics 2024. Pakistan women's foot-

ball team had an unwanted start to their Olympic Qualifier campaign as they succumbed to two back-to-back defeats – against the Philippines and Hong Kong – before finally tasting triumph against Tajikistan.

Earlier, Pakistan women's team participated in the four-nation cup in

Saudi Arabia.

The green shirts put on a dominant show in the tournament and finished second behind hosts Saudi Arabia.

Pakistan and Saudi Arabia locked horns in an enthralling final and fought rigorously. The final, however, failed to conclude any result and

ended in a goalless stalemate.

Saudi Arabia, consequently, topped the standings with seven points while Pakistan finished second in the tournament with four points.

It is worth mentioning that FIFA reinstated Pakistan's women's team to the FIFA rankings table

in October 2022 after a six-year absence.

The development came after Pakistan women's football team participated in the SAFF Women's Championship 2022 and claimed a historic 7-0 victory over Maldives.

Following their reinstatement in the rankings table, the green shirts occupied

the 160th rank with a total of 928.4 points.

It is worth mentioning here that the SAFF Women's Championship 2022 marked the first tournament in which Pakistan was taking part after FIFA lifted the ban on the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) on June 29 2022.

## Fatima confident of good show in Asia Cup

KARACHI (PPI): Fatima Sana-led Pakistan team will depart later tonight from Karachi for Hong Kong via Dubai to feature in the eight-team ACC Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup. The T20 tournament will be played from 12 to 21 June at the Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground in Hong Kong.

Pakistan are slotted in Group A with Hong Kong, India A and Nepal. Pakistan will open their campaign on 13 June with the match against Nepal, after which they play Hong Kong and India A on 15 and 17 June, respectively. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals which will be played on 19 June. The final of the tournament will be held on 21 June.

Before team's departure, the 14-member squad along with four reserves players took part in the 15-day camp, which was held at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre in Karachi. The players under the supervision of coaching staff worked on various aspects of T20 cricket including improvised drills, nets sessions and scenario-based matches.

Before the camp, the players also featured for Strikers in the first phase of Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament held in Karachi last month.

Six players apart from captain Fatima Sana have already represented Pakistan women's team in international cricket. These include Gull Feroza (2 T20Is), Natalia Parvaiz (3 ODIs, 11 T20Is), Sadaf Shamas (4 ODIs, 2 T20Is), Syeda Aroob Shah (2 ODIs, 5 T20Is), Tuba Hassan (1 ODI, 21 T20Is) and Umm-e-Hani (1 ODI).

Other than Aroob, three players – Anoosha Nasir, Eyman Fatima and Shawaal Zulfiqar have represented Pakistan U19 in the inaugural edition of ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup in January this year in South Africa.

Fatima Sana said: "Our training camp in Karachi has laid a strong foundation for our journey in the ACC Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup. I expect each player to carry the learnings from the camp and showcase their skills with confidence in the tournament."

"In Group A, we have formidable opponents in Nepal,

hosts Hong Kong, and India A. I expect our players to approach each match with determination, resilience, and a never-give-up attitude."

Squad: Fatima Sana (c), Anoosha Nasir, Eyman Fatima, Gull Feroza, Gulrukh, Lubna Behram, Najiba Alvi (wk), Natalia Parvaiz, Sadaf Shamas, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Yusra Amir. Reserves: Amber Kainat, Dua Majid, Fatima Khan and Rameen Shamim. Player support personnel: Aisha Jalil (manager), Mohsin Kamal (head coach), Muhammad Kamran Hussain (assistant coach), Muhammad Usman Shahid (analyst) and Rabia Siddiqi (physiotherapist).

ACC Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup Pakistan fixtures

13 June v Nepal at Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground, Hong Kong, 0600 PKT

15 June v Hong Kong at Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground, Hong Kong, 0600 PKT

17 June v India A at Tin Kwong Road Recreation Ground, Hong Kong, 1030 PKT.

## Hamza Khan named in men's draw of WSF World Junior Championship

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan's Hamza Khan was named in the men's draw of the 2023 WSF World Junior Championship when World Squash Federation announced players competing in the individual and team events of the extravaganza.

This year's World Junior Championship, to be played in Melbourne Sports Centres (MSAC) from July 18 to 29 July, would feature 245 entries across the men's individual championship, the women's individual championship and the women's team championship, said a press release.

In individual championships, Egypt's Amina Orfi and Netherlands' Rowan Damming return to defend their titles. Damming, 18, made history last year in France as the 5/8 seed upset English 3/4 seed Finlay Whittington to become Netherlands' first ever world junior champion and has since impressed on the PSA World Tour, qualifying

for this year's PSA World Championship in Chicago.

Orfi, 15, showed incredible tenacity as she fought back from two games down in both the semifinal and final to lift the title and has since enjoyed a breakout year on the professional circuit, reaching the final of the Squash On Fire Open and the last 16 of the PSA World Championship.

Joining Orfi and Damming were three of last year's semifinalists. In the men's draw, Egypt's Mohamed Zakaria and Pakistan's Hamza Khan return, with Egypt's Fayrouz Aboelkheir – now ranked World No.33 and playing in the Squash World Cup next week – hoping to end a successful season with a major title in the women's draw.

For the hosts, twelve players would be hoping to deliver a title on home soil, including U19 Oceania champion Oscar Curtis and siblings Dylan and Erin Classen.

Elsewhere, Asian U19 women's champion Aira

Azman of Malaysia, European U19 men's and women's champions Jonah Bryant and Asia Harris of England, Oceania U19 women's champion Ella Lash of New Zealand, and Pan American Junior men's champion Juan Jose Torres Lara of Colombia will be eager to make their mark on the world stage.

In the women's team event, which returns after a four-year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 14 teams would battle it out for the title.

Egypt has named a strong team of Amina Orfi, Fayrouz Aboelkheir, Nour Megahed and Zeina Zein. Hong Kong, China, the last non-Egyptian team to win the title, send Ena Kwong, Ka Huen Leung, Sze Wing Wai and Tse Yee Lam Toby.

Scotland, competing for the first time since 2005, will be hoping Anna Halliday, Louisa Kaven, Robyn McAlpine and Rowan Niven can make an impact.

## Pak Basketball team named for 5-Nation C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Basketball Federation (PVF) on Friday announced national team for participation in Five Nation International Basketball Championship to be held from June 15 at the Maldives.

After getting the official affiliation with Pakistan sports board (PSB) this year, the top management of Pakistan Basketball Federation headed by Brig (R) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor and Secretary General Khalid Bashir took many steps to organise national events as well as to send Pakistan teams to international level.

"The five nation international basketball championship to feature Pakistan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal will conclude on June 22", Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Secretary General Khalid Bashir told this scribe.

He said the event would be helpful for Pakistan

team to get good exposure after a long seven years gap in any international competition. "The championship will provide an opportunity to talented basketball players to represent Pakistan at international level.

The purpose of participating in the event is to provide opportunities to the players so that they can get experience as PBBF has set the target of the Pakistan basketball team to win a medal in upcoming South Asian Games to be held next year," he said.

Khalid Bashir lauded the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari and Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso for their full support and assistance to train the national team in the camp for more than a month as well as Pakistan team's participation at international level.

He also praised PBBF associate secretary Ouj E

Zahoor for his efforts in organizing the camp and coordination between all relevant departments.

The basketball team would be led by the country's premier professional shooting guard Muhammad Shahbaz Ali while Former International Malik Muhammad Riaz will be the head coach.

Umer Mehmood would be the team coach while Ahmed Ali Teepu will act as the team manager.

The national team was picked after evaluating the skills of players by the selection committee comprising Col. (R) Shujaat Ali Rana, M. Riaz Malik, Modood Jafri and Khalid Bashir during the training camp.

Pakistan squad includes Muhammad Shahbaz Ali (captain), Abdul Wahab, Muhammad Umair Jan, Zain ul Hassan Khan, Muhammad Shahid, Imad Ahmed, Zia Ur Rehman, Saqib Ullah Mahsood, Mahtab Akram and Sheraz Aslam.





## In brief

### Three arrested for resisting police

RAWALPINDI (APP): Saddar Baroni Police have arrested three accused when they allegedly tried to stop the police from checking a vehicle. According to a police spokesman, Saddar Baroni Police stopped a suspicious vehicle and tried to conduct its search but, the accused namely Danial, Bilal and Abdul Wahid resisted police checking. Police during a search of the vehicle recovered a Kalashnikov, 16mm rifle, two pistols, magazines, ammunition and a fake number plate. Police also impounded a Fortuner vehicle, he added. Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar appreciated the police action and directed them to take strict action against the lawbreakers.

### IRSA releases 173,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 173,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 199,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.93 feet and was 28.93 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 73,300 cusecs and 64,800 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1135.75 feet, which was 85.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 57,600 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 84,100, 81,600, 61,500 and 22,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 38,800 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 10,400 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### 7 centres to facilitate tourists

RAWALPINDI (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Capt (R) Qasim Ijaz on Friday directed the officials to make Murree a wast free city free before Eid Ul Azha and prepare a contingency plan for the convenience of tourists. Presiding over a meeting to review the arrangements being made for the eid at the hill station, he said that seven facilitation centres besides a central control room would be set up to help the tourists while pamphlets would also be distributed with relevant official's contact numbers in case of emergency. Qasim said facilitation centres would be set up at GPO Chowk, Kashmir Point, Jhika Gali, Barian, Lower Topa, Kaldana and Satra Mile. He said that Murree was the hub of tourism and it was the responsibility of the administration to provide best kind of facilities to the visitors efficiently. The ADCR added the tourists would also be informed about Murree weather and arrangements made by the administration through FM radio, print, electronics and social media. Qasim said that the representatives of administrative bodies including the Murree Administration, Police, Rescue 1122, Tourism, Health Department, Civil Defense and others would be present at the facility centres to provide awareness to the tourists. To save the tourists from rushing, a comprehensive traffic plan would also be in place to monitor the traffic flow with the help of CTV cameras.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Shazia Marri Federal Minister PA & SS and Chairperson Benazir Income Support (BISP) Programme witness the Contract Signing Ceremony Between KfW (German Development Bank) and BISP.

## PPP's victory in by-election reflect AJK people's confidence over PPP: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Central Information Secretary of PPP Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday said Pakistan People's Party's success in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) by-election reflected the AJK's people's confidence and support for the party.

Addressing a news conference here, Faisal Kundi congratulated the office bearers and workers of PPP for their hard work and sincerity that led to success in AJK by-election. "Support of AJK people were with PPP yesterday, today and will remain in future", he said. Faisal Kundi while criticizing Imran Khan said that he who claimed that anyone given a ticket by him in the election will succeed can see how people of AJK supported PPP despite his video address.

"This is a clear message for those who were saying that PPP is only limited to Sindh province that political leaders from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Gilgit-Baltistan are also joining PPP in a great number", he said.

About the newly formed political party, Faisal Kundi

said that PPP always welcomed democratic political parties. The SAPM also said that PPP has always advocated the stance of the people of Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K) for their demand of holding a plebiscite. Regarding Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto's recent visit to Iraq, the SAPM said that the joint statement between Pakistan and Iraq was a historic act and added that during his highly successful visit, he discussed with the high official important issues including visa exemption, provision of legal assistance to the prisoners, facilitation for the Zaireen and legalization of Pakistani workers.

Minister Kundi said fruitful discussions were also held regarding strengthening cooperation between the two countries in the trade, tourism, and health sectors. The SAPM said that Bilawal Bhutto also laid the foundation stone for Pakistan's new embassy building in Iraq which he termed as a significant step for fostering the diplomatic ties between the two countries. The foundation stone

will be laid for Pakistan's Consulate in Najaf soon, he added. During the visit, the plan of starting a Ferry service from Karachi and Gwadar to Iraq also came under consideration to facilitate the visitors, Faisal Kundi conveyed.

The interior minister of Iraq will be coming to Pakistan to finalize the commitments made during the visit in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the official level, Faisal Kundi said. Referring to President Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari's recent address, the SAPM said that Asif Zardari's address about economy was appreciated by the people, especially the business community.

PPP will hold meetings with the Chambers of Commerce of different provinces to brief the business community about its plans and get their valuable feedback. About the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Faisal Kundi said that the dynamic survey continued across the country successfully. So far, around 1.9 million have registered in the dynamic National Socio-Economic Registry.

## Musadik Malik terms budget 2023-24 as pro-poor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Petroleum, Dr. Musadik Malik on Friday termed the budget 2023-24 as pro poor, said several initiatives have been proposed for the uplift of marginalized segments of the society. Talking to media outside the parliament house, the minister said that this is a responsible budget, which was proposed keeping in view the problems of poor people of the country.

He said that the government is fully aware of the problems of common man and assured that various projects which were proposed in this budget will resolve the economic problems of the poor people and ensure ways of earning for them.

The minister said that the government has suggested several plans for uplift of low and middle income class people. He added the main focus is on empowerment of country's youth. He said that small and medium loans on easy installments will be provided to the youth of the country under PM's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan scheme and for the purpose an amount of Rs 10 billion will be issued in next fiscal year as mark-up subsidy.

Dr. Musadik said that the professional training will be provided to 50,000 IT graduates in the next

fiscal year while they will be encouraged to get loans from banks to start their own business.

He said that an amount of Rs 10 billion will be allocated for next financial year for the laptop scheme for deserving students on merit basis. He added the federal government has already provided 100,000 laptops to the deserving brilliant students during current fiscal year. The minister said that the government has proposed to establish Pakistan Endowment Fund and for the purpose an amount of Rs 5 billion will be allocated to provide financial support to the shining students of schools and colleges.

During the operation, the mini truck was intercepted, which led to the recovery of a huge cache of narcotics tactfully concealed in the seized vehicle. The driver and two second-seaters, residents of Peshawar, were arrested on the spot. Based on the initial investigation another raid was carried out near Sabzi Mandi, Lahore, he said and informed that during the raid, a Rickshaw was intercepted which further led to the recovery of narcotics concealed in the back of the Rickshaw. Four accused persons were arrested, two vehicles impounded and 153,400 kgs narcotics were seized, which included 130,800 kgs hashish, 21,600 kgs opium and one kg heroin, he said.

The seized narcotics were being smuggled for distribution in major cities of Punjab including Lahore, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Jaranwala and Narowal.

The arrested accused persons, along with recovered narcotics and seized vehicles have been shifted to ANF Police Station Lahore, where an FIR has been registered, he added.

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while carrying out a comprehensive counter-narcotics campaign with the resolve to make Pakistan a drug-free country managed to recover nearly 6.2 MT of narcotics from urban areas during the last five months.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, counter-narcotics operations were conducted in different parts of the country with a special focus on urban centre sanitization. Special combing and intelligence-based operations resulted in substantial seizures in major cities like Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Quetta, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, he added.

He informed that to effectively contain the threat, inter-provincial interdiction rings had been established and major inter-provincial communication arteries were being kept under surveillance.

This effort is bearing fruits, wherein an estimated 7.26 MT of narcotics have been seized along motorways and highways, which was destined for major metropolises of the country for local consumption.

In continuation of the countrywide

counter-narcotics campaign, ANF carried out an intelligence-based operation near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza on GT Road.

During the operation, the mini truck was intercepted, which led to the recovery of a huge cache of narcotics tactfully concealed in the seized vehicle. The driver and two second-seaters, residents of Peshawar, were arrested on the spot.

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## CTO visits Taxila Facilitation Center to check licensing facilities

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Tamoor Khan here on Friday visited Taxila Facilitation Center and inspected the arrangements being finalized to provide 24/7 driving licensing facilities to the citizens.

In charge of Licensing gave a briefing about the driving test track and 24/7 licensing services.

The CTO on the occasion said that after successful 24/7 driving licensing facilities at Traffic Headquarters Rawalpindi, soon the same would be provided at Taxila.

He said that City Traffic Police (CTP) was taking all possible steps to facilitate the citizens according to the vision of Deputy Inspector General Traffic, Punjab Mirza Faran Baig.

The CTP was providing the licensing facilities 24/7 to the residents of Rawalpindi district, Tamoor Khan said.

The citizens having original ID cards could avail of the licensing facilities from the nearest facilitation centre. All the facilities related to licensing were being provided to the residents of Taxila and its surroundings at their doorstep, he said, adding, soon a 24/7 licensing facility would be provided to them.

## PTA conducts successful raids

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) in coordination with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), carried out two successful raids in Etihad Park Chungi Amer Sidhu, Lahore, and Tehsil Chowk Sarwar Shaheed, District Kot Addu, against illegal internet service providers, operating without a valid license from PTA.

During the raids, operational internet setups and allied equipment were confiscated, said a news release. Three persons were arrested by FIA (one in Lahore and two in Kot Addu). The culprits have been taken into custody for further investigation. The successful efforts against illegal internet service providers can be attributed to PTA's unwavering commitment, continuous monitoring, and persistent efforts to curb illegal internet services.

# BISP-KfW ink MoU worth 27m to enhance poverty alleviation efforts

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and KfW, a German Development Bank, have forged a partnership aimed at strengthening their joint efforts to combat poverty and provide aid to flood victims in Pakistan.

A significant milestone was achieved as both parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) valued at 27 million Euro. The MoU signing ceremony took place in Islamabad on Friday, witnessed by Ms. Shazia Marri, the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety (PA&SS) and Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), along with Secretary PA&SS division and other officials from the Benazir Income Support Programme. The MoU signifies the commitment of the German Bank to contribute a generous sum of 27 million euros, dedicated to supporting the rehabilitation and providing cash assistance to individuals affected by the floods in Pakistan.

Federal Minister Shazia Marri emphasized the government's unwavering commitment to social protection programs and announced a new partnership with the German development bank. The minister praised the government's efforts in increasing allocations for social safety nets and addressing the challenges faced by vulnerable communities in Pakistan.

She said that over the past year, the government has demonstrated a clear priority for social protection by significantly increasing budget allocations by more than seventy percent. Despite facing various challenges, including a devastating flood situation, the government swiftly provided relief to affected individuals. Prime Minister of Pakistan authorized the immediate disbursement of Pakistani Rupees 70 billion to support flood-

affected people, with each family receiving 25,000 rupees.

Minister Marri highlighted the government's proactive approach in extending assistance to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children through the ongoing conditional cash transfer program of the Benazir Nashonuma Program. An additional allocation of 1 billion Pakistani rupees was made to support the affected population in flood-stricken areas, aligning with the ground reality and reports on the dire conditions faced by pregnant women and children.

The Federal Minister expressed gratitude towards KfW for their interest in the nutrition and health of the Pakistani people. She welcomed their support and acknowledged the long-standing partnership between Pakistan and various development partners, including GIZ. Minister Marri viewed this collaboration as a further strengthening of ties with the German government and people, presenting a new avenue for exploration through KfW.

The minister stressed the global issue of malnutrition and stunted growth, attributing it, in part, to climate shocks and their impact on food production and soil quality. She acknowledged the significance of international support from development partners and expressed the government's unwavering commitment to address these challenges. Minister Marri reiterated that Pakistan considers such opportunities as fortunate and appreciates the interest shown by organizations and countries in helping the society and its people develop both mentally and physically. Furthermore, Minister Marri announced an upcoming partnership focused on the health of adolescent girls, emphasizing the government's enthusiasm for this new initiative. The program is viewed as a fresh approach to tackling health-related issues and malnutrition.

## Sherry Rehman exhorts fishermen to avoid venturing in open sea amid Biparjoy cyclone

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday advised the fishermen in the coastal areas of the country to avoid venturing into the open sea due to prevailing tropical cyclone BIPARJOY formed over Southeast Arabian Sea.

In her message regarding the cyclone, the federal minister said as per the weather advisory issued by Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Cyclone Biparjoy was moving towards north and northeast after changing its direction. Senator Rehman said the cyclone might move further towards Pakistan's Makran coast as it continued to change and it may intensify further.

She added that the fishermen were

advised not to venture out into the open sea from Monday, June 12 until the system passes over the Arabian Sea.

"Coastal areas may be affected due to high tides.

All concerned authorities especially PDMA Sindh and Balochistan are advised to review the preparations. Ensure public safety for people living in coastal areas and create awareness among people," Sherry Rehman said.

She also underlined that there was a possibility of rain, thunder and strong winds from the night of June 13 to the morning of June 14 in the coastal area of Sindh and Makran. "We are vigilant and continuously monitoring the storm and also collecting information from 6 international sources," Sherry Rehman added.

## Patel takes notice of negligence by doctors at Independent University Hospital Faisalabad

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Mr. Abdul Qadir Patel take notice on news floating on social media regarding Negligence of Doctors at Independent University Hospital Faisalabad and directed PM&DC to probe into the matter immediately. Following the directions from the Federal Minister of Health Pakistan Medical & Dental Council has launched an investigation into an alleged case of negligence by doctors in the Independent University Hospital Faisalabad.

Upon receiving the complaint, President PM&DC promptly initiated an inquiry to investigate the reported incident thoroughly. The

objective of the investigation is to ascertain the facts surrounding the incidence, evaluate the extent of negligence involved, and take appropriate action in accordance with the law and regulations. President directed the Acting Registrar to write letter to the concerned MS of the hospital.

Acting Registrar PM&DC emphasized the gravity of the situation and wrote to the Independent University Hospital Faisalabad to furnish a comprehensive report within 3 days regarding the wrong conduct of surgery of a patient suffering from gall bladder illness along with another patient due for surgery for her knee. PM&DC intends to conduct an impartial investigation, considering all available evidence and testimony from involved parties.

PM&DC is deeply concerned about the reported incident and is committed to upholding the highest standards of patient care and safety. PM&DC assures that appropriate action will be taken based on the findings, with the aim of safeguarding patient welfare and upholding the principles of professionalism and accountability within the medical field.

PM&DC is a statutory body responsible for regulating and overseeing the medical profession to ensure the delivery of safe, ethical, and high-quality healthcare services. PM&DC's primary objective is to protect the interests of patients and maintain the standards of medical practice through effective regulation, supervision, and disciplinary actions.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a press conference at PPP Office.



Mine Blast Kills 1 in Ghazni

GHAZNI (Agenices): At least one person was killed after a mine from a past war exploded in Afghanistan's eastern Ghazni province, officials said. An explosive device left over from previous conflicts exploded on Wednesday afternoon as a farmer was working in his farmland in Asghar Khil village of Moqar district, killing on the spot, the provincial official said. In a similar incident in Wardak province of Afghanistan, three children were killed and another injured on Monday.

Three women arrested

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Agenices): Local security officials have arrested three women accused of stealing jewelry worth \$45,000 from a house in northern Balkh province. Deputy police chief Abdul Hai Abid said security forces arrested the female thieves along with two kids who had stolen gold from a house in the 10th security district of Mazar-i-Sharif. The group, in coordination with a man, stole some of a woman's gold from a makeup salon located in Karte Ariana, 10th security district of the province.

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

US, Saudi Arabia reiterate ‘safe haven’ concerns about Afghanistan



KABUL (TOLOnews): Speaking at a press conference, the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and the US stressed the need to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for terrorist groups. The Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud reiterated that “we need to focus our work more in Afghanistan so that Afghanistan cannot be a safe haven again for terrorist groups.”

“We need to work together on common challenges and provide the right environment for the – the repatriation of IDPs to Iraq and Syria, and to also recover the citizens or the diaspora in other countries,” he said.

Speaking at the same press conference, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, said that Washington has demonstrated since ending America’s longest war that it would continue to be “focused on our core national security interest in preventing the resurgence of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, and if necessary, taking action to deal with it.”

Department of State. This comes as the Islamic Emirate’s spokesman, Zabullah Mujahid, said that the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh should not overplay the issue of Daesh in Afghanistan. “Daesh is not a threat for anyone, and it is being eliminated. Of course, our operations over the past two years have been against their sanctuaries and more than 100 of them have been eliminated,” Mujahid said. Political analysts gave various opinions on the matter: “Many of them originated from Pakistan and they are being exported to other countries. I think Daesh is hidden in Afghanistan-Pakistan and border areas with Central Asia. But their activities have significantly dropped compared to before,” said Sarwar Niazi, political analyst. “The fight that the Islamic Emirate has waged against Daesh, the world countries also acknowledged that they have succeeded in these areas,” said Sayed Akbar Sial, a political analyst. Earlier, the Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov claimed that the US provides strong support to Daesh and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, TASS reported.

Halt to education-focused intl organizations would Be ‘step back’: UN

KABUL (TOLOnews): The UN secretary-general’s spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said the reported decision of the interim Afghan government to halt operations of organizations aiding Afghan education would be “horrendous”. Asked about UNICEF’s concerns regarding the possible halt to operations of international organizations aiding the Afghan educational sector, the UN secretary-general’s spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric, said: “If this would come to pass this would be another horrendous step backwards for the people of Afghanistan.” “We’ve not gotten anything official, anything in writing,” he said, adding “every person has a right to an education.” “The closing of the girls’ schools and closing of the private organizations in the field of education, these are the issues that have slowed down the educational growth in Afghanistan,” said Suraya Paikan, a women’s rights activist. The Islamic Emirate’s spokesman, Zabullah Mujahid, neither denied nor confirmed the issue but said that the people of



Afghanistan need assistance in various areas including education. “The people of Afghanistan need to be supported in various areas, particularly in education, but the independence of the people of Afghanistan should be considered. The Islamic values and national interest should be considered. The assistance should be coordinated with the government,” Mujahid said. Political analysts said that the ban on the activities of the international organizations in the educational sector will harm the future of Afghanistan. “This will have a negative impact on the education of children and the quality of education in Afghanistan,” said Aziz Maarij, political analyst. Earlier, UNICEF said in a statement that “as the lead agency for the education cluster in Afghanistan,

UNICEF is deeply concerned by reports that over 500,000 children, including over 300,000 girls, could lose out on quality learning through Community Based Education within a month if international non-governmental organizations working in the field of education are no longer allowed to operate and if handovers to national NGOs are done without comprehensive assessment and capacity building.”

Religious scholars call for good behaviour from security forces

HERAT (TOLOnews): The Herat Provincial Council of Religious Scholars, in a joint meeting with the security officials of Herat, asked that security forces behave well with the public and take care of their administrative work on time. These religious scholars asked for more security in Herat province. “You are the people who can keep your country and can provide security and make people happy, you can also destroy their rights, harass them, and make people avoid the system, because people come to you first,” said Mohammad Basir Halimi, head of the Herat Provincial Council of Religious Scholars. According to these religious scholars, the misbehavior of government employees with people causes people to move away from the system. “Be humble with our nation, and show good



behavior with our people,” said Gulam Mohammad Mohammadi, a Herat resident. “We told our employees to behave well with people and take care of their work,” said Mohammad Nasim Shahid Zada, head of Police

District 11 in Herat city. Residents of Herat called for better performance of security institutions in providing security and with proper treatment of the people. “Neither the government can rule without the people, nor the people without the

government, all the officials should follow good practices that they have studied in the books,” said Humayon, a Herat resident. “Because the system is an Islamic system, they have to behave how Islam has told them,” said Abdul Salam Mohammadi.

West meets with head of Afghan business council in UAE

KABUL (TOLOnews): Haji Obaidullah Sader Khail, head of the Afghan business council in the UAE, said that he met with the US special representative for Afghanistan, Thomas West and “spoke about the Afghan business community and Afghan people’s problems.” Sader Khail said that the two sides agreed they should work together to solve the problems Afghans are facing. “We talked about these issues and assured him that

we will work on it to find a solution for them so that the problems ahead of the Afghan traders can be solved and continue their business,” he said. Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate’s spokesman Zabullah Mujahid said that US officials should not neglect the realities in Afghanistan at their meetings. “The visits that Thomas West began were different from his other visits. I meant it should be beneficial and bring a prop-

er and clear result for Afghanistan and also for the US,” Mujahid said. This comes as the acting head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) said that the challenges ahead of the traders inside Afghanistan should also be addressed. “The international community should help in construction, industry and economic fields of Afghanistan,” said Mohammad Younsu

Momand, acting head of the ACCI. Earlier, US special envoy for Afghanistan Thomas West said on Twitter that he met in Dubai with Presidential Advisor Anwar Gargash to discuss shared interests in Afghanistan. “Appreciate the principled leadership UAE has shown in prioritizing the rights of Afghan women and girls in its engagement. Look forward to continued UAE-US collaboration in support of Afghan people,” he said.

5,000 companies officially managed by women in Afghanistan: Azizi

KABUL (TOLOnews): Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi said that 5,000 companies are officially managed by women in Afghanistan. Speaking at a gathering of Afghan traders in Helmand, Azizi said that the women entrepreneurs can participate in the exhibitions and even travel to other countries while being accompanied by a male guardian. “There is no problem from our side for businesses being run by women in the country. There are 5,000 official companies,” Azizi said.



According to Azizi, 50,000 companies are being managed unofficially by women in Afghanistan. “Afghanistan is safe for regional transit, and we are trying for it,” said Mohammad Younsu Momand, acting head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment. Some of the traders said that they will invest in Afghanistan in case further opportunities are made for business in the country. “The traders that have

gone outside the country and are working in China and Pakistan, they also said that once the national industrial parks are opened inside the country, they will come,” said Rohullah Barak, a trader.

“Based on the statistics of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, a group of Afghan women entrepreneurs will participate in an exhibition which is due to be held in Russian in the near future.

Acting Ministry of Mines and Petroleum meets China’s Ambassador in Kabul



KABUL (Agenices): Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum of Afghanistan, Shahabuddin Delawar, met Chinese Ambassador Wang Yu in Kabul to discuss Chinese projects and investments. According to a statement from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, during the meeting, the officials discussed investment potential, the extraction process in the Kashgari oil reservoirs, and the start of construction on the Mes Aynak copper. The Chinese ambassador expressed his satisfaction with his visit to the northern

regions, which included the visit to the Kashgari oil field, and he offered details about the project’s financial, administrative, and technical plans. Meanwhile, the Ministry called for speeding up the implementation phase of the project and social services included in the contract. According to the report, several countries, including China, are interested in investing in Afghanistan’s ore deposits, including Lithium. “Several countries and investors have expressed interest in the lithium deposits in addition to the

Chinese. The Chinese even said they are prepared to invest \$10 billion,” Ministry said. “We have large reserves of Lithium worldwide. Our country is on the global list of countries rich in Lithium, and our lithium reserves are largely in Kunar, Nuristan and Helmand provinces,” according to the Ministry. Earlier in April, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said that a Chinese company, Gochin expressed its interest in investing \$10 billion in Afghanistan’s lithium

resources. The statement said the investment would create 120,000 direct and a million indirect job opportunities in the country. China has influenced Afghanistan through relations with the present government on an economic and investment level ever since the Taliban took over the country. According to several media reports, Chinese corporations have long desired access to Afghanistan’s extensive and productive lithium mines, estimated to be worth more than \$3 trillion.

Haqqani in Jawzjan: We are building trust, inclusivity will come automatically

KABUL (Agenices): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) is building public trust and inclusivity will come automatically, Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani said during his visit to northern Jawzjan province. Addressing a gathering, Haqqani said that the “enemies” sought to divide Afghanistan under different names in the past, but now IEA will not allow this to happen. “The enemies wanted Afghanistan to fall in a conflict, where the North, South, West and East would be divided into different islands, but Alhamdulillah, this is a Muslim nation and a patriotic nation. Alhamdulillah,



all the evil circles fled the country. The then rulers had created a misunderstanding and we are removing this misunderstanding. Henceforth, the enemies’ plots will be neutralized and love and trust will increase,” Haqqani said.

Haqqani also emphasized that the Islamic Emirate is committed to the implementation of the general amnesty decree, and no one will be allowed to arbitrarily violate this decree. “The most important thing is to build trust and

bridge the gap. After building trust, inclusivity will come automatically, because the government is a trust, it is not someone’s property. Sometimes it is mine and sometimes it is one of the other brothers. The more proper the keeping, the more will be survival,” Haqqani said. Meanwhile, Jawzjan Governor Gul Haider Shafaq said that people want an Islamic system in the country, not government posts. On the other hand, a number of residents of Jawzjan province reiterated their support for the IEA and asked the government to address the people’s problems.





UPPER DIR: Local people gathered around the damaged vehicle after mishap, at least 8 people killed as passenger vehicle falls into ravine.

## Sindh to present budget on 10th

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who also holds the portfolio of Provincial Finance Minister, will present the Sindh budget for the next financial year 2023-24 on June 10. A post-budget press conference is also planned for June 11.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar will present the federal budget for the next fiscal year today with a total outlay of Rs 13,800 billion. Sources indicated that the budget size will exceed Rs 13,800 billion, while the budget deficit is expected to be more than Rs 6,000 billion, with expenses of Rs 7,300 billion allocated to pay debt.

Sources regarding the budget's framework revealed that an estimated Rs 9,200 billion may be generated from tax revenue, while non-tax revenue may reach Rs 2,800 billion, while the Rs 1,300 billion could be allocated for subsidies. The sources maintained that the developmental budget for the upcoming fiscal year is estimated at Rs 1,150 billion. Furthermore, the provinces are expected to receive Rs 5,244 billion from the national divisible pool, while defense expenses are estimated to exceed Rs 1,800 billion.

There is a possibility of a 20-30 per cent increase in salaries for government employees in the upcoming federal budget, along with a 20 per cent increase in pensions. Moreover, the govt likely to allocation over Rs 700 billion for pensions.

## Earthquake of magnitude 4.4 jolts Swat

F.P. Report

MINGORA: An earthquake of magnitude 4.4 jolted district Swat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its surroundings on Friday.

According to the Seismological Centre, tremors of mild intensity were felt in different area of Swat district and its surrounds. People rushed out of their homes in panic reciting verses from Holy Quran but no causality or property damages were reported from anywhere. The epicenter of quake was in the border region of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan at the depth of 124 km underground.

## Ali Muhammad arrested for fifth time after release

MARDAN (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Muhammad Khan was re-arrested on Friday right after being released on the orders of the Peshawar High Court (PHC). The PTI leader's counsel apprised journalists that the current arrest was made under corruption charges and he was subsequently transferred to the Toru police station.

On Thursday the PHC had ordered Khan's release after hearing a petition against his arrest under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) after nationwide protests broke out on May 09 following the PTI chief's arrest. On Friday relief came in a case related to terrorism charges. However, the court had observed that Khan may be arrested again if he was wanted in any other cases.

The former minister of

state was arrested again as soon as he left the court premises. Khan has so far been arrested five times in different cases. Earlier, as Khan appeared before the court he told reporters that his party's chief "has always subscribed to a peaceful political struggle and stood by the rule of law". Expressing his commitment to face all charges, Khan expressed hope that in the end "the law will win". "Whoever participated in the May 9 incidents should be brought to justice," he said, "but issuing a charge sheet against the entire PTI is unfair."

"The PTI is a central party with a vote bank in all four provinces," he added, stressing that his party "does not stand by the May 9 miscreants". "The country suffered on May 9," he admitted, but regretted that the incidents "are being used to sideline the PTI"

which he held was "inappropriate". Khan also remained determined that the PTI will once again succeed in forming a government, stressing that "this party is the outcome of a two-year long struggle".

A number of PTI legislators had parted ways with the party after the government held the PTI chief responsible for the riots that broke out across the country following his arrest in a graft case on May 09. Protesters had attacked the government infrastructure as well as the military installations and also vandalised the GHQ and Lahore corps commander's residence. Notably, as many as 100 former PTI members of the national and provincial assemblies have joined the new party, the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, joining forces with senior politician Jahangir Khan Tareen.

## Court returns graft references against Zardari, others to NAB

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): An accountability court in the federal capital on Friday sent four references, including money laundering case, against former president Asif Ali Zardari and others, back to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in response to incumbent government's legislation that barred the court jurisdiction in the matter.

Accountability Judge Muhammad Bashir announced the verdict after hearing the arguments from Zardari's counsel Farooq Naek and the NAB prosecutors. Advocate Naek argued that after the amendment to the National Accountability Ordinance, the NAB court had no jurisdiction to proceed in such matters.

Following the arguments, the judge returned the money laundering references against Asif Zardari, Faryal Talpur, Hussain Lawai and others to the anti-graft watchdog. The plot allotment reference against Manzoor Qadir and others was also sent back to the NAB. The Sindh Bank reference against Bilal Sheikh and other suspects was also returned.

## Pervez Khattak likely to join Tareen's IPP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Pervez Khattak, who recently resigned from the president of the party's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter, is mulling over joining Jahangir Tareen's Istehkam-e-Pakistan party, sources said on Friday.

Sources privy to the development told that Khattak was in contact with Jahangir Tareen and can join him along with his companions in the coming days. "Pervez Khattak will likely become general secretary of Istehkam-e-Pakistan party," say sources.

Earlier, it emerged that Khattak will launch his own political party and PTI deserters are expected to join the new political setup. Yesterday, seasoned politician Jahangir Tareen officially launched the "Istihkam-e-Pakistan" party. Several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) deserters including former governor Sindh Imran Ismail, Amir Kiani, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, Mahmood Molvi, Firdous Ashiq Awan, Ali Zaidi, Fayyaz ul Hasan Chauhan, Fawad Chaudhary and Nauman Langrathi attended the press conference.

While announcing the new political party "Istihkam-e-Pakistan", Jahangir Tareen said: "We all have one purpose which is to work for the development of Pakistan". Jahangir Tareen had said that they worked hard in PTI for reforms in Pakistan but unfortunately, they did not work on their manifesto and people got disappointed from PTI.

The May 9 violence the politics across the country and if the preparators and mastermind of the May 9 riots are not punished it will be damaging for the country, he added. Jahangir Tareen reiterated the need for leadership that can bring unity and end the divide in society amid the economic and political crisis.

# SC questions Panama papers case admissibility

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Expressing concern over admissibility of a case relating to the Panama Papers scandal under the Article 184(3), the top court Friday observed that presently there is a different opinion on matters relating to original jurisdiction.

A two-member bench led by Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and comprising Justice Aminuddin Khan was hearing the plea of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Amir Sirajul Haq, seeking an investigation against 436 Pakistanis named in Panama Papers leaks. The court held that the question of maintainability of the petition under Article 184(3) would have been relevant, but the issue was decided on November 3, 2016 with the consent of the petitioners and respondents at that time. "In 2016, even the government had praised Article 184(3)," Justice Sardar Tariq Masood observed.

At the outset of the hearing, the JI chief requested the formation of a judicial commission to probe into the matter but was quickly intercepted by Justice Masood who wondered why it had taken the petitioner so long to raise these concerns. "It took you seven years to realise this issue is of public interest?" questioned the judge, "was the point [during the 2016 proceedings] only to run the Panama case against one specific family?"

Referring to the Panama Papers proceedings in which then prime minister Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from holding public office, the SC judge remarked "that concerned Panama and so does this. Why did you not say before the court at that time that the case for named parties should be heard together?" "Were the cases de-

linked then on your request?" asked Justice Masood before "hesitating to say that it appears as though something else is cooking here".

He continued, "The bench had granted you [JI] such a major relief at that time. Why didn't you ask the bench to club these petitions? For what reason were these petitions de-linked from the five-member bench hearing the other case?" However, he asked "in the past seven years, have you requested any of the concerned institutions to investigate the matter? Does this case not fall under the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)? Did you approach the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) or the FBR?"

"If in the presence of statutory bodies, a commission was constituted, how will these bodies work? Can an order even be passed without hearing the 436 persons?" the judge asked. "There must be business personalities among the 436 individuals, do you want to drive them away? Creating an offshore company is not a crime, it is seen how the company was created that is to be the point of concern. Issuing such orders against 436 persons would be injustice," remarked Justice Masood.

The JI's counsel pleaded that the petitioners sought an investigation into the accused, but Justice Masood in response wondered why they wished to "bypass the law". "Should we shut down all other institutions?" he asked, "do you want the SC to decide all matters?" "How

the off-shore companies were formed is to be investigated by the concerned institutions," the judge stressed. The JI lawyer said that the petitioners "do not intend to target anyone". "But they did target someone back then," retorted Justice Mansoor. "When the SC sits above all and passes judgments, what are all the other institutions supposed to do?"

Justice Khan seconded his views by saying that "we will not take any suo motu notices here". "One wishes to say a lot more but we will show restraint," he added. Justice Mansoor also said that in other judgments, "the SC even did things that were not even written. It even went ahead with the disqualification."

## ATC adjourns Yasmin bail plea hearing

LAHORE (Agencies): Anti-Terrorism Court Lahore on Friday adjourned hearing of bail application that PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid and a total of 34 others have filed in the Shadman police station attack case till June 12 (Monday).

As ATC Judge Ejaz Ahmed Buttari resumed hearing, the prosecution team told him that the investigation officer, who has the case record, was in the federal capital and pleaded with him to adjourn the case. The court summoned the record of the case and adjourned the case till June 12. It is recalled that Ms Rashid's lawyer has submitted arguments in the bail petition. The case was registered against her and others for setting ablaze the Shadman police station.

# Dar unveils Budget

(Continued from Page 1)

Under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme for Small Loans, he said the government had allocated Rs 10 billion to provide loans on concessional rates for opening new businesses. The minister said to promote the construction sector and facilitate common man for building new houses, a tax exemption of 10% or Rs 5 million (whichever is lower) would be given on business income of the construction enterprises and the people intended to build new houses would be given concession of Rs 1 million or 10% tax credit (whichever is lower) for next three years.

He said the government had increased the budget of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to Rs 360 billion which was being enhanced by another Rs 40 billion for the upcoming fiscal year. In the fiscal year 2023-24, as many as 9.3 million families would receive Rs 8,750 each per quarter for which an amount of Rs 346 billion had been earmarked, he added. With respect to the PSDP 2023-24, the minister said 80% projects were near completion and expected to be completed by the end of 2024. "In order to attract Foreign Direct Investment and to provide state of the art infrastructure the govern-

ment has allocated 52% share of the total PSDP outlay," he added.

The minister said the government had planned to issue the Working Journalist Health Insurance Card and Artist Health Insurance Card during the year 2023-24. Announcing relief measures for the salaried class, Ishaq Dar said the government had proposed 30-35 percent increase in the salaries on ad-hoc basis and 17.5 percent enhancement in the pensions of the Federal Government employees, realizing their financial hardships due to the increased inflation. The minister said the government had decided to give 35 percent ad-hoc relief in the salaries of employees from Grade-16 and 30 percent to Grade-17-22 employees aimed at increasing their purchase power.

He also announced increasing the minimum pension fixing it at Rs 12,000 and minimum monthly wage from Rs 25,000 to Rs 32,000 within the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The minister said there was a proposal to enhance the pension of Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) from Rs 8,500 to Rs10,000. Ishaq Dar said the government was going to introduce a scheme under which it would itself

pay up to Rs 1 million loans of the Housing Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) owned by the widows of government employees. The minister said the deposit limit of CDNS (Central Directorate of National Savings) Shuhada Account and Behood Saving Certificates would be increased from Rs 5 million to Rs 7.5 million.

He said out of a total Rs 1,150 billion Federal PSDP, the government allocated Rs 652,949 billion for federal ministries, Rs 212,050 billion for corporations, including National Highway Authority (Rs 157,500 billion) and PEPCO (Rs54,440 billion), and Rs 200 billion for VGF for Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects. The government, he said, also proposed an allocation of Rs 107,500 billion for the Water Resources Division, Rs 5,450 billion for the Aviation Division, Rs 1,114 million for the Board of Investment, Rs 90,120 billion for the Cabinet Division, Rs 4,050 billion for Climate Change Division, Rs1,100 billion for the Commerce Division, Rs 360,390 million for the Communication Division (other than NHA), Rs 3,400 billion for the Defence Division, and Rs 2 billion for the Defence Production Division.

# Trump faces US criminal charges for mishandling documents, obstruction

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Donald Trump has been indicted by a federal grand jury for retaining classified government documents and obstruction of justice, according to a lawyer for the former US president and another source familiar with the matter. The criminal case, brought by the US Department of Justice, amounts to another legal setback for Trump as he seeks to regain the US presidency next year. He already faces a criminal case in New York that is due to go to trial in March.

Trump said on social media that he had been summoned to appear at the federal courthouse in Miami. "I am an innocent man!" he wrote on his Truth Social platform. A spokesperson for Special Counsel Jack Smith, the Justice Department official who is handling the investigation, declined to comment. It is illegal for the government to comment publicly on any sealed grand jury matter. Trump faces seven criminal counts in the federal case, said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The indictment remains under seal, and even Trump himself has not yet seen what it says. His legal team was notified about the seven charges as part of a summons ordering Trump to appear

in court, the source said.

Speaking on CNN, Trump lawyer Jim Trusty said those charges include conspiracy, false statements, obstruction of justice, and illegally retaining classified documents under the Espionage Act. He said he expects to see the indictment between now. Reuters could not independently confirm what specific charges Trump is facing. In a sworn statement to a federal court last year, an FBI agent said there was probable cause to believe several crimes were committed, including obstruction and the illegal retention of sensitive defense records. The Justice Department has been investigating whether Trump mishandled classified documents he retained after leaving the White House in 2021. Investigators seized roughly 13,000 documents from Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, nearly a year ago. One hundred were marked as classified, even though one of Trump's lawyers had previously said all records with classified markings had been returned to the government. Trump has previously defended his retention of documents, suggesting he declassified them while president. However, Trump has not provided evidence of

this and his attorneys have declined to make that argument in court filings. It marks the second time that Trump, the first former president in US history to face criminal charges, has been indicted. In April, he pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records relating to hush money paid to a porn star before the 2016 election. President from 2017 to 2021, Trump is the front-runner in the race for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination. Through the years Trump has shown an uncanny ability to weather controversies that might torpedo other politicians. He describes himself as the victim of a politically motivated witch hunt and accuses the Justice Department of partisan bias. Trump's lead has grown over his rivals in the Republican nominating contest since he was indicted in the New York case, Reuters/Ipsos polling shows.

Special Counsel Smith, appointed last year by Attorney General Merrick Garland, is also leading a second criminal investigation into efforts by Trump and his allies to overturn his 2020 election loss to President Joe Biden, a Democrat. Although Garland is a Biden appointee, special counsels appointed

to investigate politically sensitive cases do their jobs with a degree of independence from Justice Department leadership. Smith convened grand juries in both Washington and Miami to hear evidence, but appears to have decided to bring the case in the politically competitive state of Florida, rather than the US capital, where any jury would likely be heavily Democratic. Legal experts say that could head off a drawn-out legal challenge from Trump's team over the proper venue. Under federal law, defendants have a right to be charged where the activity in question took place. "The center of gravity is clearly Florida," said Robert Luskin, a Washington lawyer who has represented senior government figures. In the current case, the Justice Department examined whether Trump unlawfully removed classified documents when he left office in January 2021. Part of the investigation has also looked into whether Trump or others sought to obstruct the government's investigation. The classified documents investigation was first referred to prosecutors in 2022 after the US National Archives and Records Administration tried for more than a year to retrieve

presidential records from Trump. Trump handed over 15 boxes of records in January 2022, a year after leaving office, but federal officials came to believe he had not returned all the government documents he had taken.

The Justice Department issued Trump a grand jury subpoena in May 2022 asking him to return any other records bearing classified markings, and top officials traveled to Mar-a-Lago to retrieve the materials. Trump's attorneys turned over 38 pages marked as classified to FBI and Justice Department officials and showed them a storage room at Mar-a-Lago, but they did not permit the agents to open any of the boxes. One of the Trump attorneys involved in searching Mar-a-Lago - Evan Corcoran - has since become a witness in the case. Corcoran drafted a document signed by another Trump lawyer attesting that all records with classified markings had been returned to the government - a claim later proven false after the FBI searched Trump's home. FBI agents in August 2022 searched Mar-a-Lago and recovered roughly 13,000 documents, 100 of which were marked as classified. Trump's lawyers tried to block the

Justice Department from accessing some of the records, claiming they were covered by the legal doctrine of executive privilege, which shields some White House communications from disclosure. A federal appeals court rejected that argument in December. Trump is not the only top government official to draw scrutiny for retaining classified documents. Attorneys for Biden and for Trump's then-vice president, Mike Pence, this year disclosed they were cooperating with the Justice Department after the discovery that both men had retained classified records after leaving office. Biden's documents dated back to his tenure in the US Senate and as vice president. The Justice Department in June closed its investigation into Pence without filing any charges. Trump's legal woes are growing.

In May, a jury in federal court in Manhattan decided in a civil lawsuit that he must pay \$5 million in damages for sexually abusing former Elle magazine columnist E. Jean Carroll and then defaming her by branding her a liar. Trump also faces a criminal investigation by a county prosecutor in Georgia relating to his efforts to undo his 2020 election loss in that state.