

Ejaz sent on judicial remand

LAHORE (PPI): A Lahore Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday sent PTI leader Senator Ejaz Chaudhry to jail on 14-day judicial remand in three cases pertaining to May 9 violence. The PTI leader was presented before ATC Judge Abhar Gul Khan after the expiry of his two-day physical remand in a case registered by Naseer Abad police station against him for setting a container on fire in Kalma Chowk.

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Bushra Bibi gets bail

LAHORE (PPI): The Lahore High Court on Wednesday approved protective bail for Bushra Bibi, wife of former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan, in connection with a case registered at Islamabad's Kohisar Police Station amid fears that she might be arrested before hearing of his plea. LHC's Justice Muhammad Amjad Rafiq took up the bail plea filed by Bushra Bibi earlier in the day on Wednesday.

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# PM: Political stability key to prosperity

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that political stability was highly important to achieve economic strength, attract investment, and ensure development and prosperity in the country.

"Until there is no political stability, there would not be any economic stability as both are inter-linked with each other," he said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the rehabilitated and widened Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed Road (previously known as IJ Principal Road).

Shehbaz Sharif said in a situation where there was political instability in the country, the political opponents were hatching conspiracies everywhere, spreading false propaganda and misleading the nation; nobody would be ready to invest in the country. Putting the responsibility of current economic crisis on the previous government, the prime minister said it breached its own agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) due to which the confidence of the Fund in Pakistan shattered and it was now hesitant to resume its agreement.

However, he said the current government had met all the conditions of the IMF and hoped that the programme would resume anytime very soon. PM Shehbaz resolved that "under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, we all together would bring the country out of all crises and make it a stable and developed Pakistan."

He said the previous government had ignored development projects and the progress on reconstruction of IJP Road was also going on at a snail's pace. However, he said current government made it possible to complete it in the stipulated time. Appreciating the team responsible for the project to complete it on time, the prime minister said the project, previously known as IJ Principal Road, had now been named after Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haidar).

He said those nations remained alive and move forward with pride that remembered their martyrs and respected the armed forces. The May 9 incidents ashamed the whole nation, he said adding the martyrs sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country's security and saved hundreds of thousand children from becoming orphan by making their own children orphans.

He said a patriot citizen could not even think of what happened on May 9. The

people involved in the incidents were in fact enemies of the country, he added. With respect to ongoing projects in the federal capital, the prime minister informed that all the projects facing delays, would be completed by next month and the electric buses would also arrive here by July 15.

He said the metro project was also totally ignored by the previous regime but the current government opened it within days after assuming the charge. He said the facts had proved now that the conspirator just wasted the nation's precious time by making false allegation of removing his government by a cypher from the United States.

He said due to the sincere efforts of current government, the crude oil had been purchased at a price, at least \$15 per barrel less than the international price. "Each dollar is important for us at this critical time, we need to minimize inflation and we need to provide maximum relief to the common man," he said adding despite economic crisis, the government had provided maximum relief to the people.

He also appreciated the finance minister Ishaq Dar for presenting a pro-poor budget. He informed that the government had raised the salaries of government employees by 30% to 35% and pensions by 17.5%. With respect to the false allegation by the PTI Chairman, PM Shehbaz said if there was any corruption, the proof should have been presented. "If there is any proof, we will happily present ourselves for the investigation," he added.

Imran Niazi kept on terming his opponents as thieves but he himself had been proved to be guilty of corruption cases in Tosha Khana and Al-qadir Trust cases, he added. He informed that a Solid Waste Management would be introduced in the federal capital very soon. He deplored that the previous government had damaged the whole Solid Waste Management system in Lahore.

The prime minister said that the government would give 100,000 laptops to the talented youth and the distribution would start next month. He made it clear that the laptops would be given totally on merit and no reference would be accepted. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said the PML-N under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif, had eradicated the menace of terrorism from the country. He said overcoming the electricity load shedding was also hallmark of the PML-N government.

## IHC adjourns Imran's plea against Toshakhana trial

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of a petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan seeking to stop proceedings of the Toshakhana criminal case by the trial court and shifting it to another one, till Thursday.

IHC's Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by the former prime minister. At the outset

of hearing, the petitioner's counsel Khawaja Harris argued that the trial court judge had not recorded the objections raised by the defence, observing that the court would view the same at the time of recording the evidence.

Harris said the complaint in the Toshakhana case was not lodged by the competent authority as the complainant could not show any authority letter of the Election Commission of

Pakistan (ECP) in that regard. The court questioned whether the petitioner wanted the ECP to file the complaint itself through the District Election Commissioner.

The lawyer replied as per the law the District Election Commissioner could file the complaint, but the complainant was Deputy District Election Commissioner at the time of filing the complaint.

## PM arrives in Baku on two-day official visit

BAKU (APP): At the invitation of President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday arrived here on a two-day official visit to Azerbaijan.

Upon his arrival, the prime minister was warmly welcomed by First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Yagub Eyyubov, Deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov and Pakistan's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

It is the maiden visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Azerbaijan after assuming his office. On Thursday (today), the prime minister will visit the tomb of Heydar Aliyev, a national leader of Azerbaijan and lay a wreath. He will also pay a visit to the martyrs monument.

The prime minister will meet President Ilham Aliyev and both the leaders will later talk to the media. A delegation of Azerbaijan ministers will also call on the prime minister to discuss the bilateral cooperation between the two countries in trade and energy sectors.

## Evacuation from Sindh underway

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The evacuation of people from the coastal areas of Sindh is currently underway due to the threat posed by Cyclone Bipar Joy. The government of Sindh has successfully relocated 91 percent of the population to safe locations.

According to a statement by Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, out of the 74,343 individuals residing in the areas expected to be severely affected by the storm, 67,367 people have already been moved to safe places.

Sharjeel Inam Memon further mentioned that 91 percent of the people residing in the coastal areas have been successfully relocated. Specifically, 13,000 individuals from Kati Bandar, 5,000 individuals from Ghorabari, 11,560 individuals from Shaheed Fazil Rahoo, 8,300 individuals from Sajawal, 8,165 individuals from Jati, and 4,872 individuals from Kharo Chan have been shifted to safe locations.



BAKU: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif being received by First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, Yagub Eyyubov at Airport.

## Biparjoy to hit Ketī Bandar 'today'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman has said that cyclone Biparjoy, which has slightly moved away from Karachi, will hit Sindh's Ketī Bandar today (Thursday) at 11am. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, she said as many as 66,000 people have been evacuated to safer places from Sindh's coastal areas thus far.

The federal minister also requested the people to cooperate with authorities and added that all rescue agencies are prepared for relief operations. "The true form of the cyclone will be known tomorrow," she added. The minister said Thatta, Sujawal, Badin and Tharparkar districts will be hit the hardest by the cyclone, adding that the Biparjoy is moving away from Karachi. Rehman has said that cyclone has forced the authorities to suspend small aircraft operations in the country.

The climate minister said the commercial flights operations would be suspended as the cyclone drew closer to the country. In its latest update, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said that cyclone Biparjoy over northeast Arabian Sea has moved nearly northeastward during last six hours and now lies near latitude 22.1°N and longitude 66.9°E at a distance of about 310km south of Karachi, 300km south-southwest Thatta and 240km south-southwest of Ketī Bandar. The cyclone was previously 370km south of Karachi.

"Maximum sustained surface winds are 150-160 Km/hour gusts 180 Km/hour around the system center and sea conditions being phenomenal around the system center with maximum wave height 30 feet," it added. The PDM said favourable environmental conditions (sea surface temperature of 29-30°C, low vertical wind shear and upper-level divergence) are in support to sustain the cyclone strength through the forecast period. Under the existing upper-level steering winds, the cyclone is likely keep tracking Northeastward and cross between Ketī Bandar (southeast Sindh) and Indian Gujarat coast on June 15 (Thursday) evening with packing winds of 100-120km

per hour and gusting 140km per hour. "[The] PMD's cyclone warning centre, Karachi is continuously monitoring the system and will issue update accordingly," it added.

Earlier today, Climate Change Minister Rehman told the National Assembly today that the government is ensuring effective monitoring of tropical cyclone Biparjoy — which is moving steadily toward the Pakistan and Indian coastlines. "All tracking institutions of Pakistan including PMD and Suparco are working round the clock with international satellites, especially of Bangkok, as it is inching towards Pakistan and India's coastline with intensity," Rehman said. The climate minister's remarks came during a briefing to the lower house on the cyclone's movement and the precautionary measures taken by the government.

She further said the cyclone could affect the coastal areas of Karachi with landfalls and gusty winds and was going away from Balochistan. Biparjoy's "intense" landfall is expected to hit Ketī Bandar. "Currently, it is moving at around 140-50km/h. Its centre has much speed and density," she said, adding that the Sindh government had issued advisory timely — following which voluntary and vulnerable areas were being evacuated as per safety measures. The evacuation was almost complete, she said. "It's [cyclone's] focus is in Sindh; however, parts of Balochistan will also be affected by gusty winds and rains," the senator said, highlighting that Badin, Thatta, Sajawal and Malir [Karachi] would face the brunt of the storm.

Sherry Rehman said the Sindh government has set up around 75 relief camps and evacuated more than 62,000 people to safer places where clean drinking water, food and medical facilities were available. The minister urged the people of expected areas where the cyclone was likely to hit to cooperate with the civil administration and follow the "mandatory evacuation" directive. All necessary arrangements were being made to keep the losses at their lowest, along with ensuring the supply of all essential commodities, including electricity, gas and petroleum products.

## US urges Pak to respect democratic principles

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: US State Department Spokesperson, Matthew Miller urged Pakistan to respect the democratic principles and the rule of law as enshrined in its constitution.

While replying to a question by *The Frontier Post*, Matthew Miller stated that the US is aware about the reports regarding trial of May 9th protestors in military courts and the United States regularly discusses on the highest level the respect for human rights and protection of journalists and this remains a priority for the United States.

To another question by *The Frontier Post* with regard to Pakistan paying in Chinese currency to Russia for its recent purchase of crude oil and whether Dollar was becoming weak internationally, Matthew Miller stated that due to United States cap on oil prices, Russia has to sell its oil on discounted price and that due to this strategy of the US, "Russia has been prevented from making an additional 100 Billion Dollars which it could have used in its war machine against Ukraine."

Miller further stated that there are no restrictions on Russian oil being purchased and its a sovereign decision of each country whether they want to buy Russian oil or not.

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PFA discards 1,680 litres of spurious carbonated drinks

LAHORE (APP): An enforcement team of the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has registered a case against the owner of a fake carbonated drinks manufacturing factory on account of forgery, counterfeit and adulteration during a raid in Ferozwala.

PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said that the authority unearthed the factory after tracing the supply of fizzy drinks in the market. He said that the authority discarded 1,680 litres of fake drinks of popular brands; 2,160 empty bottles; 7,000 lids and two litres of artificial flavours. Apart from that, the authority confiscated four water tanks, three gas cylinders, two filling machines, carbonation cooler and a pump during the raid, he added. He said that fake carbonated drinks were being prepared with hazardous chemicals, loose non-food grade colours, artificial sweeteners, unclean tap water and other harmful ingredients. He further said that a consignment of fake beverages was to be supplied to the different local shops and hotels; however, the raiding team ruined their ambitions by taking timely action.

Heavy falls, stormy winds likely in Southeastern Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The meteorological department, on Wednesday, forecast widespread thunderstorm rain with some heavy falls and squally winds in coastal and south-eastern districts of Sindh while weather will remain hot and partly cloudy over most parts of the province. According to Regional Meteorological Centre Karachi, under the influence of cyclone storm 'Biparjoy', southeastern parts of Sindh particularly Thatta, Sujawal, Badin, Tharparker, Mirpurkhas and Umerkot districts may receive widespread wind, dust or thunderstorm rain with some very heavy to extremely heavy falls accompanied with squally winds of 80 to 100Kmh/hour gusting 120km/hour during coming 24 hours.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It Is Published Through This Notice That I Mamoonah Bibi wife of Malik Mazhar Khan Resident of House no. 28 Defence Officers Colony Bannu Road Kohat Cantt permanent r/o House no. 188 Mohalla Janes Khel Behzadi Chaker Kot Kohat is the owner of Plot no. 11 Size 10 Marla Sector C-3 Phase II K.D.A Kohat. He Has Requested That The Transfer Deed of The said Plot Has Been Lost Some Where and Now Issuance of Duplicate Transfer Deed is Desired The Plot is not Mortgaged There Has Been Appointed no Attorney and not Sold To Anybody If Any Bank/ Institution/ Firm or Person has any objections. He / She should contact The Housing Officer KDA Kohat Within 15 Days of Publication of This Notice in Writing With Proof otherwise Duplicate Transfer Deed will be Issued and no objection will be Accepted (Project Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)

‘May 9 rioters being dealt as per country’s constitution and laws’

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Human Rights, Riaz Hussain Pirzada on Wednesday said that no one should teach us a lesson on human rights as Pakistan was effectively dealing with the May 9 attackers in accordance with the country’s constitution and laws.

Speaking here in National Assembly, the minister defended Pakistan’s stance on human rights, stating that no one should deliver lecture to the country on this matter. He emphasized that Pakistan was effectively dealing with the attackers from the May 9 incident in accordance with the country’s constitution and laws.

Furthermore, he highlighted that the National Commission for Human Rights had not received any complaints regarding the mistreatment of women in prisons. He expressed concerns about the defamation of Pakistan by its adversaries through social media. The minister stressed that Pakistan was fully aware of the challenges faced by minority groups.

Federal Minister for Human Rights, Riaz Hussain Pirzada accused the neighboring country of interfering in Pakistan’s internal affairs and fueling religious animosity. The minister noted a decrease in targeted sectarian killings

in Quetta following the arrest of Kulbhushan, indicating a potential connection.

Addressing historical events, Riaz Hussain Pirzada alleged that India had deliberately sparked the fire in Karachi during Pakistan’s creation when the resolution about Kashmir was moved in the United Nations Security Council.

He asserted that the people of Pakistan including the minority community have their high values and traditions that should be respected, including the celebration of Eid, Diwali and Holi.

The minister strongly refuted the accusation of disrespecting women in prisons, categorically stating that such incidents have never occurred. He said that courts should hear the cases of common people instead of adopting the practice of closing doors during court proceedings.

As a commitment to justice, the Ministry of Human Rights will bear the fees associated with minor crimes cases, he said and affirmed that helping the poor was not just a duty but a solemn oath the government has taken. As part of efforts to support the minority community, Minister Pirzada announced that funds would be provided through the Benazir Income Support Program.

Restoration of community ground demanded

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The residents of Civil Quarters Peshawar has a long standing demand for provision of space for community gathering because there is only one community ground in Civil Quarters Peshawar which is also targeted by miscreants.

According to details, the elders, youth and children of Civil Quarters Peshawar have been benefiting for a

long time. Which has already been tried by the miscreant group to disturb the law and order.

The team formed by the present DG Sports reviewed the ground and decided that the ground will be in use for sports activities equally. The splendor of the ground began to be restored. Which was appreciated by the Civil Quarters Community.

Now again the miscreants are trying to use various underhand tactics to

sabotage the activities in Civil Quarters Ground and law & order of the ground.

Residents of Civil Quarters Peshawar appeals to DG Sports to hand over the charge of ground to caretaker of Civil Quarters ground, who is a good-natured person, that will help the people of Civil Quarters to restore keep law and order in Civil Quarters Grounds from these miscreants and selfish people.

Rawal literature festival in full swing

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the second day of the Rawal Literature Festival organized by the Punjab Arts Council (PAC) the first session titled “Literary Organizations and Their Role” Wednesday was held in which Mazhar Shehzad, Khaleeq-ur-Rehman, Sabah Kazmi, Ali Aszar Samar, and Nargis Jahanzeb participated as panel members.

The famous writer Jahangir Imran acted as the host in the session.

The participants said that the promotion of literary organizations played an important role in promoting literature, adding literature was a part of the civilization of any society.

“As civilization changes, so does literature. As civilization advances, so does language. Vocabulary increases and rules become clearer,” they added.

The second session titled “Fiction mai boltay shehar” was hosted by Dr Qasim Yaqub, in which Irfan Ahmed Arfi, Farheen Chaudhry, Dr Arshad Waheed, Mohammad Asim Butt, Akhtar Raza Salimi and Dr. Humira Hamad participated. The participants expressed views that fiction was a bright book of life adding “Books are not life, they are only ether, vibrations, but fiction is a vibration that can shake the whole living being” They

said that it was not just a matter of poetry, philosophy, science or any other bookish movement.

In the session “Literature and Humor” Muhammad Suleman was the host while the panel members included. Yar Muhammad, Anjam Malik, Saeed Anwar, Aslam Mughal, Hameed Babar, Shagfita Khan and Imran Rushdie.

Discussing humour, the participants said that humour does not limit itself to making people laugh. “Humor exposes the imperfections of the individual in such a way that the readers laugh out loud,” they added. The first traces of humour in Urdu prose were found in ancient stories, on the contrary, examples of standard humour and elegance were found in the letters of Mirza Ghalib, they added.

During the fourth session “Film and Culture” there was an interesting discussion between Irfan Ahmad Urfi and writer and director Shoaib Haroon. Shoaib Haroon said that culture was not a static object but a dynamic element. “Culture changes with time and the promotion of culture is subject to the development of film,” he added.

He said that the film was more effective than other mediums or sources in terms of communication power

and the act of making and watching a film was the result of the mobilization of the will.

‘KMC renovates Sakhi Hasan Chowrangi’

KARACHI (APP): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman has said that Sakhi Hasan Chowrangi is the main center of Central District which has been renovated and beautified planting greenery under the flyover is a difficult task but KMC making it possible by hard work.

Greenery in the city is essential to prevent the rise in temperature due to climate change, he said while inaugurating the newly renovated Sakhi Hasan Chowrangi in North Nazimabad on Wednesday, Director General Parks Junaidullah Khan and other officers were also present on this occasion.

Dr. Syed Saifur Rehman said that there was a large amount of debris and structures accumulated on Sakhi Hasan Chowrangi, which has been removed and the ground has been leveled and a large number of Malaysian palm trees and other flowering plants have been planted.



LAHORE: Students of Kinnaird College for Women taking keen interest in Textile Exhibition at Al-Hamra Art Gallery.

Advisory Committee inches closer to finalize syllabus on inclusion of Constitution in Curriculum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf on Wednesday said that the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan reflects resilience and strength of our nation and inclusion of it in the curriculum would benefit students by fostering civic education, legal literacy and constitutional awareness.

He made these remarks while chairing the 7th meeting of the Advisory Committee constituted to oversee preparations of the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution, 1973 at Parliament House

He said the inclusion of Constitution in curriculum would promote democratic values, critical thinking skills and ensure long-term stability in the society.

It would also empower students to understand their rights, participate actively in civic life and contribute to a more inclusive and democratic nation, he added.

Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, while providing an update on the proposed introduction of a syllabus on the inclusion of the

Constitution, shared that the fundamental elements of the curriculum had been developed in consultation with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Federal Education Board and that, following the Committee’s approval would be taken up with other educational bodies for further consideration.

She also suggested revising the current curriculum to better connect it with the nation’s democratic values. She also highlighted that in order to broaden the scope of this effort, the Committee may consult with the provinces. The ideas presented by the Minister were approved by the Committee. The Committee also took stock of the progress on construction of Bagh-e-Dastoor, restoration of old National Assembly Hall and thoroughly examined various designs for Yadgar-e-Dastoor (Constitution Monument).

It is pertinent to mention that National Assembly held various activities in connection with the 50th anniversary of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 like issuance of a special booklet of the Constitution, holding all Pakistan declamation contests,

national and international constitution conventions, issuance of commemorative stamps and coins, launch of Constitution App, Photo Exhibitions etc. Whereas, ongoing activities include construction of Yadgar-e-Dastoor, Bagh-e-Dastoor and restoration of old National Assembly Hall, among others.

The Speaker praised the Committee’s work in his concluding remarks and expressed his hope that all stakeholders involved would keep working with the same zeal to ensure the timely conclusion of all ongoing endeavors. Besides Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf and Convener Mian Raza Rabbani, the meeting was attended by Federal Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb (virtually); Members of National Assembly Engr. Sabir Hussain Kaim Khani, Dr. Nafisa Shah, Ms. Asiya Azeem, Mohsin Dawar, Mehnaz Akber Aziz; Senator Kamran Murtaza Special Invitees Farhatullah Babar, Zafarullah Khan and government officials from CDA, NADRA, NES-PAK and representatives from National College of Arts.

Cash reward for police party for killing suspect in encounter

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police (IGP) Javed Alam Odho on Wednesday announced a cash reward for a police party for killing the accused involved in killing two policemen in Sohrah Goth. On June 10, one of the suspects involved in killing two cops in Sohrah Goth was gunned down by a police party at Sohrah Goth police station in an encounter.

The killed suspect was identified as Shar Abuddin, son of Gul Muhammad. Police Chief felicitated the team of Sohrah Goth police station for their excellent professional performance and also announced certificates of appreciation and cash rewards.

Administrator reviews situation of drains

KARACHI (APP): Administrator DMC East, Syed Shakeel Ahmed visited various areas of Saffora in view of the expected rains and reviewed the condition of drains and also inspected the pre-installed dewatering pumps.

He inspected Chishti Nagar Nullah, Habib University Nullah, Johar Complex Nullah, Songal Goth Nullah, Sikandar Goth Nullah and the installation of de-watering pumps at Federal Urdu University and various places. He further said that maximum measures should be taken to clean the drains by utilizing the available time before the expected rainy season while where there is a need for the winching of sewerage lines, the water and sewerage board should be contacted to ensure the performing the said works.

He expressed satisfaction over the installation of dewatering pumps at Urdu University and other places and said that the installation of dewatering pumps at important places would help in quick drainage in case of heavy rains.

PPP MNAs unhappy with Rana Sanaullah over arms licenses issue

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Some members of the federal cabinet, belonging to the PPP and the party MNAs are not happy with Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, who, they say, has blocked the issuance of arms licenses to them.

Sources said that one of the PPP MNAs namely Syed Gulam Mustafa Shah had even threatened not to support the government in the passage of the money bill.

LAHORE (APP): Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace Fauzia Viqar visited Central Police Office (CPO) here on Wednesday.

She met with Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar and discussed harassment cases and police action on them.

During the meeting, the IGP informed about the various facilities of 1787 complaint system, police protection centers, women safety app for victims of harass-

ment. He told that police Tahaffuz Markaz provided assistance to more than 6,200 people, including women and transgenders, on complaints of harassment, abuse and violence.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that the cases of victim women and transgenders were dealt with by women police officers and victim support officers themselves. He also said that women officers had been included in the anti-harassment inquiry committee established in each district. Immediate action

Resultantly, disgruntled PPP MNAs, led by senior party leader Syed Khurshid Shah, reached the interior ministry building. Senior PML-N leaders, too, reached the building and listened to the grievances of the PPP lawmakers.

Meanwhile, the minister also arrived there and assured the PPP MNAs that their complaints would be addressed within three days.

Fauzia Viqar said that after the amendment of the Workplace Harassment Act 2022, any person could file complaints regarding harassment. He said that police’s actions to prevent gender-based crimes, especially violence against women, harassment and other incidents, were commendable.

Ombudsperson visits CPO, discusses harassment cases with IGP

Dolphin Police arrested 594 hardened suspects during last month

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore police disclosed that during the month of May, the Dolphin Squad/PRU successfully rescued 7,810 individuals through the helpline 15.

According to the Lahore police spokesman, the emergency helpline recorded an impressive average response time of five to seven minutes. The dolphin police apprehended 594 hardened suspects, including 97 proclaimed offenders, and 69 court offenders.

Furthermore, during their patrolling activities, they arrested 1,373 suspects involved in street crimes and serious

offences. Additionally, the force conducted 14 live encounters last month, ensuring that dangerous dacoits faced the consequences of their actions.

The spokesman highlighted the campaign against illegal weapons, resulting in the confiscation of 51 illegal pistols and nine rifles. Furthermore, they successfully arrested 12 offenders engaged in aerial firing and the use of fireworks. Crackdowns targeting kite flying led to the arrest of 46 individuals, who were facing legal proceedings. Regarding the emergency helpline 15,

during response operations, the dolphin squad recovered 39 mobile phones from 78 swindlers and thieves.

Moreover, snap-checking and search operations led to the inspection of 24,452 vehicles, motorcycles, and 30,495 individuals. During May, the dolphin successfully recovered 421 stolen vehicles and motorcycles and apprehended 101 one-wheelers.

The dolphin official Hafiz Nauman sustained injuries on May 27 and later succumbed to his wounds, attaining the status of a martyr, he added.



LAHORE: A vendor busy in making handmade wooden decoration items at his roadside setup in the city.



# Govt resolving journalists community issues: Minister

Advertisement policy going to be revised and will be attached to Wage Board, says Secretary Information

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Minister for Information, Auqaf, Hajj, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil has said that the government will solve the problems and sufferings faced by journalists. They will be provided a conducive environment for carrying out their journalistic activities.

The Information Department is now fully operational and the FIA is conducting an inquiry into the illegal cashing of government advertisement cheques.

The caretaker set-up will carry out its constitutional function till the general elections. The caretaker provincial government will present a budget for 4

months in which Rs. 130 billion is likely to be earmarked for developmental projects.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil expressed these views while talking to media representatives at Peshawar Press Club. On this occasion, Secretary Information Mukhtiar Ahmed, Director General Information and Public Relations Department Basir Ali Rehman, President Peshawar Press club Arshad Aziz Malik and General Secretary PPC were also with him.

On this occasion, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil said that journalists and information department are two wheels of the same cart. Journalists will be provided with a good working environment and the provincial govern-

ment is trying to resolve the problems and sufferings faced by the journalists community.

He said that a total of Rs. 38 million rupees have been released to the Peshawar Press Club, which will be spent on the welfare of journalists. Similarly, to solve the electricity problem faced by the Peshawar Press Club, the PPC will be solarized on priority basis. In response to a question, the caretaker provincial minister said that the mandate of the caretaker government is to conduct free, fair and transparent elections. It is the job of the Governor and the President of Pakistan to give the date of the elections and until the general elections are held, the caretaker setup will continue to carry out its constitutional work.



Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil said that there were misunderstandings regarding the appointment of Director General Information, but now the Information Department is fully functional. He said that after meeting with the officers of the department, he transferred the officers to their desirable position on merit and performance basis.

He furthered that, nine-

teen officers were sent to the station and section of their choice so that these officers can work with their full mental capacity. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil expressed his determination that nothing will be done which will affect the image of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He further said that the FIA is investigating the illegal cashing of government advertisement cheques by the Information Department. The department has to pay huge amount of money to the media houses for advertisement, but there is no record of payment of Rs.1 billion 30 crores which were released earlier through cheques.

He said that in the previous government, advertisements worth crores of rupees were issued to dummy newspapers and dummy channels. The Caretaker Minister said that a committee of press club and information department will be formed in this regard, so as to issue advertisement to those newspapers which are eligible in all respect. He said that the dummy newspapers and dummy channels rob the rights of other genuine journalistic institutions.

Answering a question, the caretaker Information minister said that the Caretaker Chief Minister has written several letters to the federal government for NHP profit revenue and due to his efforts two billion rupees have been received by the province. The caretaker government is working to collect all arrears of NHP profits from the Federation.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil said that the 09th May incident was pre-planned and the young generation was misled for this purpose. He said the Radio Pakistan Peshawar building was completely distorted on 9th May. He said that Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed is the first Nishan Haider holder of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and I personally went to visit his mau-

soleum and apologized to his family for the incident of 09 May. Similarly, I went to Jinnah House in Lahore and was crying tears of blood after seeing the scenes there.” he added”

Regarding the budget, the caretaker provincial minister said that the interim budget of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be for 4 months, in which 876 billion rupees are expected to be received from the federal government. The size of the development budget can be 130 billion while the budget related issues will be completed in one to two days.

He said that the caretaker government is trying its level best that not to borrow more loans. The budget will consider keeping a fund for journalists on the pattern of other provinces. Speaking



PESHAWAR: Delegation of International Committee of Red Cross meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.

## Burning of ANF vehicles by PTI's workers: ATC approves one physical remand

### Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Special Antiterrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Dr. Amir Nazeer has granted one-day physical remand to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) three workers for alleged burning of Anti-Narcotics Force vehicle during 9th May vandalism after arrest of Imran Khan by National Accountability Bureau (NA) over corruption charges, on Wednesday.

According to prosecution, Zarb Ullah, Jaffar Ali and Muhammad Noor has burnt ANF vehicle while agitated PTI's workers for vandalism and attacking national assets.

It worthy to mention that PTI's workers were arrested following rejection of their bail pleas on Tuesday and requested for physical remand to investigate the

offenses.

Although, Special ATC has granted transit bail to three former PTI's Member Provincial Assembly including Iftikhar Mashwani, Abdus Salam and Malak Shaukat belonging to Maradan district allegedly involved in 9th May vandalism.

The court has grant transit bail to former MPA Abus Salam till 16th June while Iftikhar Mashwani and Malak Shaukat has obtained relief till today (Thursday) while ordered to appear before competent court of jurisdiction.

However, Special Antiterrorism court Peshawar has granted bail to PTI's worker named Shahryar for using abusive language against state's institutions during 9th May vandalism.

Moreover, Department of Prosecution Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa has ordered police to ensure scientific methods for investigation regarding 9th& 10th May vandalism for identification of culprits involved for the wreckage national assets.

In this regard prosecution has forwarded summary directed to ensure geofencing, to collect record burnt vehicles and Forensic Science Lab (FSL) report while ordered to submit detail tale on 9th& 10th May vandalism.

Department of prosecution directed Investigation Officers to investigate nominated workers in vandalism properly and added that several culprits had been arrest while others are still absconders as well as recovery of equipment stolen from Radio Pakistan also recovered, so geofencing should ensure transparency in this regard.

## Secretary hand over keys of vehicles

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant stride towards empowering educational institutions, Secretary of the Higher Education Department (HED) Dr. Anela Mehfooz Durrani, recently handed over the keys of HIACEs to Government Postgraduate College Miranshah, GGDC Miranshah, and GDC Mir Ali. The distinguished recipient of these keys, Mr. Rehan Khatkhat, the Deputy Commissioner of North Waziristan, graciously accepted the responsibility of overseeing the distribution and man-

improved access to these colleges, paving the way for a more inclusive and holistic learning environment.

The decision to allocate HIACEs to these colleges reflects a deep commitment to overcoming geographical barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for education. The newfound accessibility will not only attract more students to enroll but will also enable existing students to attend classes regularly, participate in extracurricular activities, and access educational resources more conveniently. This initiative aims to empower stu-



dents with the means to pursue their academic aspirations without the hindrance of transportation challenges.

Furthermore, these vehicles will facilitate faculty mobility, allowing teachers to travel effortlessly between colleges and deliver their expertise effectively. By fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among educators, this initiative aims to enhance the quality of education imparted to students and promote a vibrant academic culture.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister Murtaza Javed Abbasi meeting Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan.

## Establishment of APS University key step towards reformation

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Muhammad Adnan Jalil has said that the establishment of the Shuhada-e-APS University of Technology, Nowshera is an important step towards putting the institutes of engineering technologies and vocational training in the province on the right track and bringing them under one umbrella.

He expressed his views while presiding over a meeting of the university administration and teaching staff on the occasion of visiting APS University of Technology Nowshera on Wednesday.

Talking on the occasion, the provincial minister said that APS University of Technology is a unique

institution of its kind at the provincial level in the whole country.

He said that the majority of students who graduated from the concerned university are getting respectable employment in the public and private sector by its graduates is the ample proof of the success of this institution in a short period of time.

The affiliation of the technical educational institutions of the province with APS University will take forward the functionality and teaching performance of these institutions.

During visit to the university, the provincial minister also inaugurated the Research, Innovation and Commercialization Centre (ORIC) in the university and also inspected the various projects developed

there based on technical expertise.

The caretaker minister described the desire of the university professors to start work on the proposed provincial satellite project as a significant step towards major success and technology development.

He said that discussions with the stakeholders to resolve some financial issues of the university would be held next week and appreciated the concerned professors for initiating work on the proposed project.

The caretaker minister further said that keeping in view the current needs the University of Technology is an important institution for generation of skilled force in the province, saying efforts are being made for the development of the institute on priority basis.

## Fuad Ishaq, Sanaullah elected as members of SCCI executive committee

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Fuad Ishaq and Sanaullah were elected on two vacant seats of Corporate and Associate Group of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry through co-opt. The Executive Committee meeting of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry was held under the chairmanship of acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi at chamber house on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by former FPCCI president and Businessmen Forum senior leader Ghazanfar Bilour, former president Fuad Ishaq, Malik Niaz Ahmad, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Sherbaz

Bilour, former senior vice presidents Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Engr Saad Khan Zahid, Naeem Butt, former vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, Haris Mufti, Abidullah Yousafzai, executive members Imran Khan Mohmand, Javed Akhtar, Haji Ghulam Hussain, Farhad Asfandary, Naeem Qasmi, Kashif Amin, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Laal Badshah, Monawar Khurshid, Abdul Hakim Shinwari, Minhajuddin, Industrialists Association Peshawar president Malik Imran Ishaq and Sohail Javed, Faiz Rasool, Saddar Gul, Sanaullah, Ghulam Bilal Javed, Ishiaq Muhammad Fazal e Wahid and Secretary General Sajjad Aziz.

During the executive committee meeting, one vacant seat of corporate and one vacant seat of associate of the SCCI were filled through co-opt, according to which, for Associate group Fuad Ishaq and for Corporate group Sanaullah were elected on these vacant seats.

Ghazanfar Bilour, senior leader of Businessmen Forum, acting President Ijaz Khan Afridi, former presidents' members of the executive committee and others while speaking on the occasion congratulated Fuad Ishaq and Sanaullah for electing as member of the executive committee on Associate and Corporate seat.

## Meeting discusses ongoing projects

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Abdul Haleem Qasuria here Wednesday chaired a meeting to review development projects of Soil and Water Conservation which are underway in merged and southern districts.

The meeting was attended by Director General Soil and Water Conservation, Yasin Khan Wazir and other concerned officers.

The meeting discussed conservation of water in the rain-fed areas of southern districts, turned these areas in cultivable lands, construction of ground water recharge, cultivation through rainwater in merged districts besides World Bank schemes and other important projects.

It was told that storage of rainwater through check dams in rainy areas could irrigate arable lands that would benefit, farmers and landowners could also be used in households.

Addressing the meeting, caretaker minister said that role of soil and water conservation is very as most of the farmers in these areas depend on rainwater for cultivation adding that we have to play our role to improve agriculture and increase production.

## Commissioner Peshawar chairs anti-dengue outbreak meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair on Wednesday here presided over a high-level meeting held to review steps to contain dengue outbreak.

The meeting beside others was attended by the deputy commissioners, district health officers and officers concerned from all districts of the jurisdiction of Peshawar Division including Nowshera, Charsadda, tribal district Mohmand and Khyber district.

The deputy commissioners of five districts briefed the meeting in detail regarding steps taken to prevent dengue outbreak. The DCs

were directed at the meeting to monitor all the anti-dengue activities by themselves and a report on a daily basis be submitted in this regard.

The DCs were also directed to start anti-dengue fumigation in their respective jurisdictions. The district health officers were directed to provide fumigation supplements and medicines to the teams.

With regard to anti-dengue initiatives in sensitive areas of Peshawar, directives were issued for timely and effective fumigation and maintaining cleanliness to contain possible outbreak of the dengue fever.

The meeting was told that

an awareness campaign regarding dengue impact continued in the five districts of Peshawar Division for the last one year which has yielded very positive results. The meeting expressed satisfaction over the outcome of the anti-dengue campaign.

Addressing the meeting Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair said due to the successful one-year anti-dengue campaign, no such big issue with regard to dengue spread was reported during the months of April and May. He said now we have to make effective planning to avert dengue outbreak in September and October.

# ‘Unleashing the Economic Potential of KPK’ organized by PIDE

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The two-day conference on “Unleashing the Economic Potential of KPK,” organized by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in collaboration with Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE), at University of Malakand (UoM), concluded here on Wednesday.

The conference concludes with a powerful tribute to remarkable women who are catalysts for change, empowering others and fostering hope for future generations. Shattering stereotypes and paving the way for Pashtun women to dream bigger and reach for the stars.

On Wednesday, the second day started with the Session titled: Breaking Barriers: Women's Journey towards Equality and Empowerment; the Session was dedicated to celebrating the courage, resilience, and deter-

mination of these women who have challenged traditional societal roles and made their own mark.

The session aimed to raise awareness and promote dialogue, inspiring individuals and communities to break down all the barriers and create a more inclusive society for women. Women are our pride. They never tire or complain but are always ready to contribute to the community.

The panelists were inspiring women who have become catalysts for change, empowering others and fostering a sense of hope for future generations by amplifying the voices of incredible ladies. They have shattered stereotypes and paved the way for future generations of Pashtun women to dream bigger and reach for the stars. Their relentless efforts have not gone unnoticed and have served as an inspiration to many.

Speaking at the occasion, Ms. Shad Begum, Ms. Kainat Zia, Ms.



Shagufta Malik, a Women Parliamentarian, Dr. Feriha Peracha, and Dr. Noor Jehan, Ex-VC, Swabi said that the KP Women are no exception to this and have repeatedly proven that they are not behind in any count.

In another session titled “Sustainable Tourism is the way for-

ward for a better tomorrow,” panelists said that as the tourism industry continues to grow, it is essential to ensure that it is sustainable and that the impact on the environment and local communities is minimal.

Academia also has a significant role to play in the development of

sustainable tourism. Research and education are crucial to promoting sustainable tourism practices and developing new sustainable tourism models.

Women have traditionally been underrepresented in the tourism industry, particularly leadership roles. However, women's participation in the tourism industry can have significant economic and social benefits. We can create a more sustainable and inclusive tourism industry by empowering women and providing them equal opportunities.

Two thought-provoking sessions, the intense Hardware vs. Soft Skills debate, highlighted the importance of balancing technical expertise with interpersonal abilities. And the discussion on embracing the bio-economy also took place.

Dr. Durre Nayab, a renowned researcher, expert, and advocate for youth empowerment, took center

stage to facilitate an engaging and dynamic session titled “Youth Voices: Unleashing the Potential of the Next Generation.”

Shah commended the courage and intellectual curiosity of the young individuals who graced the stage. Their active participation and thought-provoking questions were a testament to the untapped potential of the next generation. The Session successfully empowered these young minds, amplifying their voices and instilling confidence to effect positive change in their communities.

The “Youth Voices: Unleashing the Potential of the Next Generation” session enriched the conference experience and provided a powerful reminder of the importance of engaging young voices in decision-making. We can pave the way for a brighter and more inclusive future by actively involving youth in discussions and listening to their perspectives.





## In brief

### APCA rejects pension policy F.P. Report

PABBI: All Pakistan Clerk Association (APCA) rejected provision of pension on 2017's Basic Pay and claimed that it is against employees' welfare while imposed only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which is also discrimination, on Wednesday. APCA general president Aurangzeb Kashmiri and Mardan chapter president Inamullah Yousafzai while talking to media personnel while claimed that it will deprive public servant from living normal livelihood. APCA rejected provision of pension on 2017 Basic-pay rules and claimed that it is also discrimination against public servant serving in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The speakers claimed that APCA will uphold the issue at every forum till fulfillment of their demands.

### Construction on Museum kicks-off F.P. Report

HAFAZABAD: Construction work on establishment of Museum has been started with estimated cost of Rs. 46 million. Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warriach visited under construction building of Museum, on Tuesday, ADCR Intiaz Ali Baig, Deputy Director Development Hafizabad Hafiz Tasawar Abbas were also accompanied by him. DC said that new state of the art Museum was being established to preserved national, regional local culture and traditional art as well as to aware the new generation about history and culture. Meanwhile, addressing the meeting of District Peace and Interfaith Harmony Committee, DC said that our religion Islam teach lesson of peace, unity, interfaith harmony and tolerance and role of local Ulama and members of peace committee was remained ideal to maintain peace and promote interfaith harmony, unity, and tolerance among people on religious festivals. He expressed his hope that Ulama, members peace committee, traders and civil society would continue their vital role in maintain ideal atmosphere of peace, unity, tolerance and interfaith harmony on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha in the district. He said that no organisation would be allowed to collect hides of sacrificial animal without prior permission of district administration. DC directed the officers of Municipal Committees and district administration to ensure arrangements for lifting offal of sacrificial animal and cleanliness on Eid Days. He also directed the officers of traffic police to make practical measures to address traffic problems in the city.

### Abducted child rescued F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: The police on Wednesday rescued a six-year-old kidnapped after two months and arrested the abductor. According to details, six-year-old son of Zahid s/o Gul was kidnapped from jurisdiction of City police station in Charsadda on April 20, 2023. DPO Charsadda Muhammad Arif taking the notice directed recovery of the child after which a special team under supervision of SP Investigation Alamzeb Khan and comprising DSP City Jawad Khan, SHO City Behrmand Shah Khan and Investigation Officer Inspector Muneer Khan and others was constituted. The special team after hectic efforts of about two month managed to rescue the abducted child besides arresting the culprit Ashab hailing from Bajaur.

# JI demands ten years extension in tax-exemption

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Terming one year extension in tax-exemption in Malakand region, the Jamaat-i-Islami leadership has demanded the government to declare the region as a tax-free zone at least for the next ten years.

Speaking at a news conference at the Chakdara press club here the other day the JI former parliamentary leader in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly Inayatullah Khan, JI district chief Izazul Mulk, former provincial minister Shah Raz Khan, former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, Batkhela Traders' body president Haji Shakerullah and others said that Malakand division was the worst affected region of the frequent flash floods, militancy, earthquakes and other disasters.

The JI leaders said that the current inflation and unemployment had added to the misery of the people.

They said the government should have declared the region a tax-free at least for ten years so that the people could have taken a sigh of relief.

They said the locals were not paying taxes on the non-custom paid vehicle, land and houses while they regularly paid all other taxes like sales tax, income tax, custom tax etc indirectly in their utility bills and salaries.

The JI leaders said that despite these indirect taxes there had been no relief to locals in the Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Malakand and Chitral districts. They asked the government to provide special facilities to the people of Malakand like other districts of the province. They said that local traders, politicians and masses in Malakand were on the same page regarding the tax issue. The JI leaders said that a joint meeting of all the stakeholders would be held soon

during which the government would be pressured to extend the tax-exemption period. Otherwise, they warned that a complete shutter down and wheel jam strike would be observed in all districts of Malakand.

Mr Inayatullah Khan said that the JI would not hesitate to host an all parties' conference soon on the matter. He said the government recently extended the period for only one year which was a joke with the people. He said the people of Malakand division would never accept the imposition of taxes in the region until the government took concrete measures to bring it at par with other developed areas. He said the Pakistan People Party and the Pakistan Muslim League provincial presidents belonged to Malakand, so they both should play their active role to settle the issue once for all.

## Power breakdowns – become a daily routine

### Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The residents of Jehangira-Toro village have threatened to block main Peshawar-Nowshera-Islamabad road if the uncalled power breakdowns continue in the area.

If the situation remains like this, the people will be forced to block the road and get control over the grid station, said social worker and elders of the Jahangir Toro village during the protest demonstration and PESCO uncalled load-shedding.

They said that prolonged power breakdown has become a daily routine in Jehangira Toro village. People blocked Peshawar-Nowshera-Islamabad Road for all kinds of traffic and threatened to surround the

grid station.

According to social activist Jahangir Toro, representative of public and social circles of the area and local authority, demanded of the provincial government to take immediate action in this connection and the people of Jehangira Toro are facing numerous problems due to daily power breakdowns and uncalled load-shedding.

They said that they have contacted the PESCO authorities but despite all requests, the un-schedule load-shedding and power breakdowns continue. They said that even for a minor fault, the electricity remains off for hours, but no one is asking about the lack of electricity.

Even though the people are sent huge electricity

bills every month, in spite of this, long power breakdown has become a daily routine in extreme heat, the elders of the area said while addressing the gathering. They said that children, old people, women, elderly people, especially patients are facing severe difficulties and due to the long breakdown of electricity, water has disappeared in the masjid and houses, the worshippers are facing severe difficulties.

Local government representative, social activist Jahangir Toro, has demanded immediate action against the concerned authorities from the Chief Executive Pesco Arif Saduzai in this regard, otherwise the public will block the Peshawar-Nowshera-Islamabad road for all kinds of traffic.

## Book fair on promoting local culture held

### F.P. Report

CHITRAL: A book fair held at University of Chitral, organized by the District Youth Office Lower Chitral in collaboration with district administration and university of Chitral.

Main theme of the book fair was Promoting and Celebrating local Literature. Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Anwar Akbar was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony who inaugurated the fair. The guests of honor, Professor Dr Muhammad Zahir Shah Vice Chancellor and Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Dr Muhammad Atif Jalib highly appreciated the organizers and encouraged the students to make the most of the opportunity to promote local literature.

Talking to this scribe, District Youth Officer Lower Chitral Jabbar Ghani said that we have a series of such fruitful events to be

organized on the direction of Directorate youth affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The book fair was a successful event with a wide range of books on various topics available at the stalls. The students of Chitral University showed keen interest in exploring the collection of local books and purchasing the ones they found most intriguing consisting of the information of their interest. This book fair event provided an excellent platform for students to interact with various authors, publishers and book enthusiasts who shared their knowledge and experience with students.

Vice Chancellor University of Chitral Pro Dr Zahir Shah and AC headquarters Dr Atif Jalib while talking to this scribe said the nations which remember their culture and literature never fall. They hailed the efforts of the District Youth office Lower Chitral for conducting such types of beneficial events

which motivate the local youth, especially, students to never ignore local literature.

VC Dr Zahir Shah said that a book is always a best friend but unfortunately our young generation was mostly engaged in social media and have very less interest in book reading. He stressed upon the students and youth to have a good relationship with the books because a good book can guide us in the best way. Additional Deputy Commissioner Anwar Akbar quoting renowned philosopher and researcher who was habitual to book reading and could not read the book only on two nights that were his marriage night and the night he died. Students were stressed to take interest in local literature and encourage the local authors, publishers. A large number of male and female students visited the book fair and expressed enthusiasm in books consisting of local literature.

## World Blood Donor Day observed

### F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: A seminar on World Blood Donor Day and a walk was organized in Dir Lower to raise public awareness, on Wednesday.

Addressing the seminar, Dr. Farmanullah, Dr. Yusuf Khan, President of Al-Khidmat Foundation, Hafizullah Khaksar, Director of Al-Khidmat Hospital, Majeed Allah,

President of Timergara Circle, Fahamuddin, Shad Nawaz Khan, College Principal Waheed Shah and others said that by donating blood, a person can be saved. There are many positive effects on the body and every person should donate blood after three months.

People who donate blood are saved from heart diseases, cancer, blood pressure and other diseases.

The speakers further said that a person's life to save is equivalent to saving the life of the entire humanity. It is the moral and human duty of all of us to donate blood to save the lives of others. We should actively contribute to donating blood. On this occasion, students and citizens donated blood, while a walk was also organized to raise awareness among the people.

## Scholar defends PhD thesis

### F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Scholar Khawaja Faizul Nasir successfully defended his PhD thesis in Education from Cordoba University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar in the presence of Dr. Ashiq Hussain.

The title of his thesis was "Evaluating the Effects

of Social Support of Female Teachers on Their Organizational Commitment and Work Engagement at Secondary Level". He was supervised by Professor Dr. Zafar Saleem from Mohyuddin Islamic University, Naran Sharif, Azad Kashmir. The scholar attributed the success to the special mercy of Allah Almighty, the prayers

of parents, the guidance of his teachers and his own hard work. On this occasion, the faculty members congratulated the supervisor Prof. Dr. Zafar Saleem and the scholar on the successful defense. The scholar expressed his determination that his talents will be used for the welfare of education, teachers and students.



BADIN: A doctor examining Cyclone affected victim at a free medical camp.

## Four persons killed in Bara F.P. Report

BARA: Four locals were shot and dead by unknown armed persons here in Sur Dand, Fort Sloop tehsil Bara district Khyber on Tuesday night.

Locals said that five persons of sub-tribe of Afridi who were guarding a piece of land, had got hold of it a few days back when unknown assailants attacked them last night and killed four of them. One person successfully escaped, they added.

The murderers fled from the scene after committing the crime, they added. On Wednesday morning on the information of locals, a police party under the head of Station House Officer (SHO) Bara police station Akbar Afridi rushed to the spot and shifted the bodies to Dogra Hospital for medico-legal formalities, police said.

The deceased were identified as Hazratullah, Ziyarat Gul, Abdul Malik and Mubeen Afridi. Evidence was collected from the spot and police initiated an investigation to trace the killers, SHO said. The dead persons had a land dispute with another sub-tribe; however, so far First Information Report (FIR) was not filed against any one till filing of the story, affected families said.

## Four die in Sheikhpura mishap

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): At least four people including two women died while another was injured when a fodder laden truck overturned on motorcyclists here on Wednesday.

Rescue sources said that a truck carrying fodder got out of control due to over speeding and turned turtle resultantly two bike riders were trapped under it. Two women among four people died in the incident while another was seriously injured. The bodies and injured were shifted to local hospital. The police impounded the truck and after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

## Jirga bans dowry ritual F.P. Report

BUNER: A tribal Jirga in consensus imposed complete ban the tradition of dowry in district Buner of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday.

A tribal Jirga attended by a large number of tribesmen, religious scholars was organized in village Anzar Mera, tehsil Chagharzai of Buner to discuss the major hurdles in organizing the wedding of youngsters especially girls which often lead to illegal and immoral activities.

The attendants were in consensus that dowry ritual was the major reason in delay or complete halt in organizing the wedding ceremonies of young girls. Speaking on the occasion, the members of the Jirga said that major population of Buner was leading life before poverty line and in this situation dowry postpones the marriages of girls. They said that dowry tradition was against the Quran and Sunnah besides it puts additional burden on the parents.

## Kumar for promoting religious tourism in Swat

### Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Minister of State and Chairman of Prime Minister's Taskforce on Gandhara Tourism Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani on Wednesday called for promoting religious tourism in Swat and other areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promote inter-faith harmony and generate revenue.

During his two-day visit to Buddhist sites, located in Swat valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa along with Ambassador and diplomat of Germany and Nepal, he said that people of Swat were very hospitable and wanted promotion of tourism and development in the area.

He said that there were abundant Buddhist heritage sites in Swat and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and if preserved and developed properly these could attract foreign tourists and

help generate huge revenue. He said that these sites of Buddha in Swat and other areas of KP were believed as holy places by devotees of Buddha religion and they wanted to visit these places.

He said that Swat is known as mini Switzerland due to its natural beauty and foreign tourists wanted to come and invest in the area, adding that there was a great need of improving the existing tourism policy to facilitate the foreign tourists. On the occasion, Head of Communication and Cultural Affairs, German Embassy Dorota Berezicki, expressed her happiness and said that Swat was a peaceful place and there was no security risk for local or foreign tourists.

She said the people of Swat were very hospitable and pay great respect to their guests, adding that foreign tourists should witness the mesmerizing beau-

ty of Swat valley, especially the Buddha heritage. Ambassador of Nepal Tapas Adhikari said that people know little about the importance of this land, adding that proper media projection and promotion of religious tourism could build a strong image of the country besides promoting tourism.

He said that Swat valley had a lot of potential in religious tourism and the government of Pakistan should provide facilities to foreigners especially devotees of Buddha religion. Earlier, Incharge Sub Regional Office Malakand Nawazuddin briefed the delegation about heritage sites of Bazira, Shigardar Stupa, Ghelegay Buddhist monument, museum and other close vicinity sites. During the two-day stay the delegation would also visit Swat museum Butkara Stupa 1 and 2, Saidu Stupa and Malam Jabba hill station.

## Nation pays homage to families of martyrs

### F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The entire nation pays homage to the families of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country alike Sepoy Saeedullah Shah Shaheed and Sepoy Saeedullah Shah Shaheed was a very fearless, compassionate soldier who was determined to die for his country.

It was that patriotism that he embraced martyrdom for the sake of defending Pakistan and it was immortalized forever. Sepoy Saeedullah Shah Shaheed started his military journey in Maynaz Punjab Regiment of Pakistan Army in 2023.

Sepoy Saeedullah Shah Shaheed martyred on May 23, 2023 at Datta Khel area of North Waziristan. I am proud of my son's martyr-

dom that he embraced martyrdom for the sake of this holy country (Father Sepoy Saeedullah Shah Shaheed).

My two sons are serving in different places in Pakistan. I salute the soldiers of the Pakistan Army and send a message to keep their morale high. I am proud of my brother that my brother embraced this green crescent flag and martyrdom for the sake of the country. We are ready at all times for the sake of our country. We will spare no sacrifice." (Brother Sepoy Saeedullah Shah Shaheed).

The heirs of Sepoy Saeedullah Shah Shaheed on May 9 strongly condemned the desecration of the memorials of the martyrs by miscreants and demanded severe punishment. Sepoy Saeedullah Shah sacrificed his youth

for his beloved country and became a torchbearer for future generations.

**Tribesmen regrets over damages due to down-pour:** Deeply regretted the loss of human lives due to heavy rains and strong winds in different areas of the country, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Chairman Malik Syed Asghar Turi of Baghde, leader of PPP Lalmay, Kurram said that he regretted the loss of human lives due to heavy rains and strong winds in different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the past few days and prayed for the loss of lives. May the victims be given patience and may the injured be given full health. The government should take immediate steps to help the victims.

## Residents threatened to besiege power grid-station

### F.P. Report

MARDAN: Residents and elders of Toru area on Wednesday threatened to besiege the local grid-station in protest against unscheduled hours-long load shedding in their locality. They complained that the duration of power load-shedding was increased for hours by each passing day during the last few months.

The residents alleged that electric supplies to several localities in the district

have been suspended. Jehangir Khan Toru, a social worker and union council member told *The Frontier Post* that students, patients, children and elderly people were facing problems due to excessive outages in the area. He said they paid their electricity bills regularly, but even then they were not provided with a smooth power supply.

Another dweller of the area Ikhtesham told that people often got the faults removed from supply lines

on a self-help basis. He alleged that Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) sent them inflated bills without conducting meter reading. A group of locals who talked to this scribe, alleged that the district administration of PESCO had failed to take notice of the prolonged power outages. They warned that they would encircle the grid-station if the power supply was not restored smoothly as well as the matter was not taken as serious.

## Residents blamed JUI

### F.P. Report

KARAK: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) has been ignoring Karak in the supervisory setup and treating it like a mother-in-law, according to sources, Karak is not even included in the funds released by the provincial government to the municipal administration. Equal funds were released while awarding Bannu, DI Khan and Tang continues.

Only 50 50 lakh rupees have been released to

TMA's in Karak and under Nusrati, due to which the salaries of the employees are not being fulfilled, but the TMA's of Karak are facing serious difficulties in running the affairs due to which the employees have a big Eid holiday. On the other hand, according to the sources, another abuse was for the people who died in the rains, instead of 10 lakhs, 5 lakhs has been allocated for relief, while in

Bannu Laki Marwat and DI Khan, this amount is 10 lakhs and checks.

The process of distribution has started while the affected people are still deprived in Karak, it should be noted that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, which is considered strong in Karak, is part of the government in the supervisory setup and the central government, while in this regard, the district leaders of Karak and the expected.





Thursday, June 15, 2023

## 110 million people forcibly displaced, UN says

NEW YORK (AP): Some 110 million people have had to flee their homes because of conflict, persecution, or human rights violations, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees says. The war in Sudan, which has displaced nearly 2 million people since April, is but the latest in a long list of crises that has led to the record-breaking figure. "It's quite an indictment on the state of our world," Filippo Grandi, who leads the UN refugee agency, told reporters in Geneva ahead of the publication of Wednesday's UNHCR's Global Trends Report for 2022.

Last year alone, an additional 19 million people were forcibly displaced including more than 11 million who fled Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in what became the fastest and largest displacement of people since World War II. "We are constantly confronted with emergencies," Grandi said. Last year the agency recorded 35 emergencies, three to four times more than in previous years. "Very few make your headlines," Grandi added, arguing that the war in Sudan fell off most front pages after Western citizens were evacuated. Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia and Myanmar were also respon-

sible for displacing more than 1 million people within each country in 2022.

The majority of the displaced globally have sought refuge within their nation's borders. One-third of them - 35 million - have fled to other countries, making them refugees, according to the UNHCR report. Most refugees are hosted by low to middle-income countries in Asia and Africa, not rich countries in Europe or North America, Grandi said. Turkey currently hosts the most refugees with 3.8 million people, mostly Syrians who fled the civil war, followed by Iran with 3.4 million refugees, mostly Afghans. But there are also 5.7 million Ukrainian refugees scattered across countries in Europe and beyond.

The number of stateless people has also risen in 2022 to 4.4 million, according to UNHCR data, but this is believed to be an underestimate. Regarding asylum claims, the US was the country to receive the most new applications in 2022 with 730,400 claims. It's also the nation with the largest backlog in its asylum system, Grandi said.

"One of the things that needs to be done is reforming that asylum system so that it becomes more rapid, more efficient," he said. The United States, Spain

and Canada recently announced plans to create asylum processing centers in Latin America with the goal of reducing the number of people who trek their way north to the Mexico-US border. As the number of asylum-seekers grows, so have the challenges facing them. "We see push-backs. We see tougher and tougher immigration or refugee admission rules. We see in many countries the criminalization of immigrants and refugees, blaming them for everything that has happened," Grandi said. Last week European leaders renewed financial promises to North African nations in the hopes of stemming migration across the Mediterranean while the British government insists on a so-far failed plan to ship asylum-seekers to Rwanda, something UNHCR is opposed to. But there were also some wins, Grandi said, pointing to what he described as a positive sign in the European Union's negotiations for a new migration and asylum pact, despite criticism from human rights groups. Grandi also celebrated the fact that the number of refugees resettled in 2022 doubled to 114,000 from the previous year. But he admitted this was "still a drop in the ocean."

## Court orders company to compensate blast victims

BEIRUT (AP): A British court has ordered a London-based company that delivered the ammonium nitrate that exploded in 2020 at Beirut's port to pay compensation to some families of the hundreds of victims. Beirut's Bar Association said. The verdict in the High Court of Justice came four months after the court ruled that London-registered chemical trading firm Savaro Ltd. is liable to the victims for the devastating blast.

Hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive material used in fertilizers that had been improperly stored in the port for years, exploded on Aug. 4, 2020 killing nearly 220 people, injuring over 6,000 others and causing damage in the city worth billions of dollars. Savaro Ltd. is suspected of having chartered the shipment of the ammonium nitrate in 2013 that ended up in Beirut. In Lebanon, documents show a handful of senior political, judicial and security officials were aware of the chemicals in the port for years, but did not take decisive action to get rid of it. The case in Britain was put forward by

the Beirut Bar Association because Savaro Ltd. is based there. According to the prosecution office at the Beirut Bar Association, the British court ordered payment of 100,000 British pounds (\$125,900) for each of three plaintiffs whose family members were killed in the blast because of the emotional damage that resulted from their deaths.

The court also ordered the payment of more than 500,000 British pounds (\$629,700) for an injured plaintiff as compensation for emotional and physical damage and to cover medical expenses. The ruling in London is an unusual judicial success for the victims' families, members of whom have advocated for an unimpeded national investigation. Some have opted to file lawsuits abroad. The work of Judge Tarek Bitar, who has been leading the investigation into the blast in Lebanon, has been blocked since December 2021 pending a Court of Cassation ruling after three former Cabinet ministers filed legal challenges against him. The court is the highest in the

land. "After almost three years from the catastrophe, it's the first time that there is a judicial decision regarding both liability and damages," Camille Aboulseiman, one of the lawyers involved in the British case, told The Associated Press. "This also comes at a time when the Lebanese investigation is blocked, perhaps permanently, so it gives a measure of comfort to the victims." "It's a first positive step in a long process for justice and closure for the injured and the relatives of the deceased victims," Aboulseiman said.

The Beirut Bar Association, along with four victims' families, filed a lawsuit against Savaro Ltd. in August 2021 after U.K. authorities blocked the firm's attempts to dissolve the company. It remains unclear who the owner of Savaro Ltd. is. The listed owners are agents from a corporate services firm, investigative journalists from Lebanese and international outlets have reported. The High Court of Justice in June 2022 ordered the company to reveal its true owners, but the firm has not done so.

## Venezuelan asylum seekers tripled in 2022

CARACAS (Reuters): Venezuelans seeking asylum abroad nearly tripled in 2022, according to the United Nations refugee agency, which found that more than two in five new asylum applicants globally last year came from Latin America and the Caribbean. Venezuelan asylum applications surged 186% last year to 264,000 amid an economic crisis which began in 2014, leaving many struggling to afford basic goods and services and prompting the largest refugee exodus recorded in the Americas.

Some 5.45 million Venezuelans were counted as refugees or in need of international protection at the end of 2022, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), representing 16 in every 100 globally. Cuba, also hit by US trade sanctions and fuel shortages, recorded the second highest asylum figure at 194,700, a six-fold increase on 2021. This was followed by Nicaragua at 165,800, Colombia at 90,500, Honduras at 79,700 and Haiti at 73,500. Asylum seekers primarily stayed within the region, particularly in neighboring countries, the UNHCR found, with the United

States, Costa Rica and Mexico receiving the most requests. While 2022 saw countries process asylum requests faster than previous years, the UNHCR said that backlogs keep growing due to "the sheer volume of new applications." Globally, the agency recorded a record 21% annual increase in displaced people last year. People granted refugee status in the Americas reached 800,600 last year, with a further 5.2 million deemed in need of international protection, it added.

The administration of US President Joe Biden has urged migrants to use legal pathways to enter the United States, including using a mobile app called CBP One to schedule appointments to request asylum. After COVID-19 pandemic restrictions known as Title 42 expired in May, the administration also implemented a strict new regulation that could deny asylum to many migrants crossing the border illegally.

**15 killed in Egypt mishap**  
CAIRO (AP): A speeding minibus slammed into a pickup truck parked on the side of a desert road in southern Egypt, killing at least 15 people, authorities said. The fatal crash happened on the eastern bank of the Nile River near the town of al-Saff, roughly 34 miles (55 kilometers) south of the capital, Cairo, Egypt's Interior Ministry said. Two women were also injured in the accident and later taken to hospital, it said.

The minibus was speeding when the crash happened and the pickup truck driver, who survived the accident, was detained for questioning, according to the ministry's statement. An investigation was underway to determine the causes and circumstances around the accident, it added. Fatal traffic accidents are frequent in the North African country. In May, a passenger bus slammed into a slow-moving truck on a highway in southwestern Egypt, killing 17 people. In February, six people were killed when a pickup truck and a minibus collided near Egypt's eastern city of Ismailia. Accidents are often the result of badly maintained roads, poor enforcement of traffic laws and reckless driving and kill thousands of people every year.

## Raisi rails against US sanctions

MEXICO CITY (AP): In his first visit to Latin America, Iran's hardline president met with his Nicaraguan counterpart and railed against a theme both leaders have in common: US sanctions. President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Nicaragua is his second stop, after Venezuela. He is also scheduled to visit Cuba, Iran's other ally in the region.

Raisi spoke at a joint appearance in Managua with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. "The United States wanted to paralyze our people with threats and sanctions, but it hasn't been able to do it," Raisi said. Many top figures in Ortega's government also face US sanctions for crushing dissent and imprisoning or exiling opponents. Raisi visited President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela, which is also under US economic sanctions. His tour of allied nations in Latin America comes amid rising tensions with the administration of President Joe Biden. The US has accused Iran of providing Russia with materials to build a drone manufacturing plant east of Moscow, while the Kremlin seeks to ensure a steady supply of weapons for its invasion of Ukraine. US intelligence officials believe the plant in Russia could start operations early next year, but Iran has said it supplied drones to Russia before the start of the war.

## Mexican gets new foreign minister

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mexico's president named Alicia Bárcena, the country's current ambassador to Chile, as the next foreign relations secretary, replacing Marcelo Ebrard who resigned to pursue the presidential nomination. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador noted the solid background of the Harvard-educated Bárcena, who served for almost 14 years as executive secretary of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. She has been Mexico's ambassador to Chile since September.

López Obrador said it would be at least 10 days before Bárcena takes over the new role. Ebrard resigned his post as the country's top diplomat to join the primary race for the presidential nomination of López Obrador's Morena party in the June 2024 elections. Ebrard is mainly known for leading Mexico's effort to bring gun-trafficking lawsuits against US arms manufacturers and gun stores.

## Trainee shot 3 soldiers at firing range

TOKYO (AP): An 18-year-old army trainee shot three fellow soldiers at a firing range on a Japanese army base Wednesday, killing two of them, officials said. The suspect was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder at the scene in Gifu prefecture in central Japan, police said. The suspect fired a rifle at other soldiers during a shooting exercise at the Hino Kihon firing range, police said. Among the three wounded is a 25-year-old soldier, police said.

The Ground Self Defense Force, Japan's army, confirmed that two of those wounded were later pronounced dead at a hospital. A number of other people were believed to be participating in the training when the shooting occurred, but details are still under investigation, an army official said on condition of anonymity, citing protocol. Japan has been known for its safety, with strict gun control laws, but high-profile violence has occurred in recent years, including shootings and random knifings on subways and arson attacks, and there is growing concern about homemade guns and explosives. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was almost hit by a pipe bomb thrown by a suspect at an election campaign venue in April.

Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated in July 2022 by an attacker using a handmade gun. Last month, a man was arrested after he allegedly shot two police officers to death after killing two women with a knife in Nagano prefecture.

## Saudi announces Sudan aid funding conference

RIYADH (AP): Saudi Arabia announced an international conference next week to gather aid pledges for war-ravaged Sudan, where the United Nations says more than half the population urgently needs assistance and protection. Many of them are in Sudan's Darfur region, where attacks against civilians could amount to crimes against humanity, the UN's head of mission said.

The pledging conference will be held on June 19, the official Saudi Press Agency said. It cited the foreign ministry and added that the kingdom would jointly lead the meeting with Qatar, Egypt, Germany and the European Union, as well as UN agencies. Saudi Arabia and the United States have been mediating in the eight-week war between Sudanese army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, known as Hemedi, who leads the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. A record 25 million people -- more than half the population -- are in need of aid and protection, according to the UN, but as of late May, the world body's needs for \$2.6 million to address the crisis were only 13 percent funded.

Entire districts of Khartoum no longer have running water, electricity is only available for a few hours a week, most hospitals in combat zones are not functioning, and aid facilities have been looted. The country's western Darfur region has also been a centre of the fighting. Darfur governor Mini Minawi, a former rebel leader now close to the army, in early June declared Darfur a "disaster zone" and appealed for help from the international community. In May, the warring sides signed a written agreement for a Saudi and US-brokered week-long ceasefire, later extended by five days, that aimed to provide safe humanitarian corridors. These did not materialise. Sudan's annual rainy



season begins in June, and medics have repeatedly warned that it threatens to make parts of country inaccessible, while raising the risks of malaria, cholera and water-borne diseases.

More than 1,800 people have been killed since battles began, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED). Fighting has forced nearly two million people from their homes, including 476,000 who have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, the UN says. On June 1 the United States imposed sanctions on the two warring groups, but fighting has continued, including in Khartoum where witnesses reported artillery strikes in the north of the capital and its suburbs. The head of the UN mission in Sudan, Volker Perthes, said the situation in Darfur "continues to deteriorate", with "an emerging pattern of large-scale targeted attacks against civilians based on their ethnic identities, allegedly committed by Arab militias and some armed men" in RSF uniform. If these reports are verified they "could amount to crimes against humanity", said Perthes.

Daglo's RSF are descended from the Janjaweed militias which former strongman Omar al-Bashir unleashed in the region after a rebellion began in 2003. The bloodshed led to international charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes against Bashir and others. Also, a government official said Sudan's army chief is not ready to meet Daglo, after a regional bloc proposed a face-to-face encounter between the two. At a summit held in Djibouti, the East African Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) announced it would expand the number of countries tasked with resolving the crisis, with Kenya chairing a quartet including Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan. A draft communique of the IGAD meeting released by the office of Kenyan President William Ruto said the quartet leaders would "arrange (a) face-to-face meeting between (Burhan and Daglo)... in one of the regional capitals." The Sudanese government official, not authorised to speak to the media, told AFP that, "in the current circumstances Burhan will not sit at the same table as Hemedi."

## As conditions for Syrians worsen, aid organizations speed up struggle

BAR ELIAS, Lebanon (AP): Six months after she got the call informing her that her UN assistance would be cut, Najwa al-Jassem is struggling to feed her four children and pay rent for their tent in a Syrian refugee camp in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

She once received food rations and cash that covered most of their modest monthly expenses. The family now only gets the equivalent of \$20 a month, which just covers the rent for their cramped tent. Her husband gets only sporadic day labor and "my kids are too young for me to send them to work the fields," she told The Associated Press in the camp near the town of Bar Elias. "We're eating one meal a day."

Aid agencies will struggle to draw the world's attention back to the plight of Syrians like al-Jassem on Wednesday at an annual donor conference hosted by the European Union in Brussels for humanitarian aid to respond to the Syrian crisis. Funding from the two-day conference will also go toward providing aid to Syrians within the war-torn country and to some 5.7 million Syrian refugees living in neighboring countries, particularly

Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. This year, organizers aim to raise some \$11.2 billion, though humanitarian officials acknowledged that pledges will likely fall short.

A day before the conference, the World Food Program announced that it was faced with an "unprecedented funding crisis" and would cut aid to 2.5 million out of the 5.5 million people in Syria who had been receiving food assistance. The conference comes as Syria's protracted uprising-turned-civil-conflict has entered its 13th year, and after a deadly 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked large swaths of Syria in February, further compounding its misery. The World Bank estimated over \$5 billion in damages, as the quake destroyed homes and hospitals and further crippled Syria's poor power and water infrastructure. It also comes at a politically precarious time for refugees living in neighboring countries. Syrian President Bashar Assad recently received a major political lifeline with the return of Damascus to the Arab League, and Syria's neighbors have, in return, called for a mass repatriation of refugees.

Anti-refugee rhetoric has surged in neighboring Lebanon and Turkey, both dealing with economic and political crises. In Lebanon, where officials have put the blame for the country's economic crisis onto the country's estimated 1.5 million refugees, authorities have imposed curfews on refugees and restricted their ability to rent homes. Rights groups have said the Lebanese military has deported hundreds of Syrian refugees in recent months. In Turkey, where Syrians were once welcomed with compassion, repatriation of the roughly 3.7 million refugees became a top theme in last month's presidential and parliamentary elections, which ended in a new term for incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Erdogan's government for years defended its open-door policy, but has in recent years been building housing developments in areas of northwestern Syria controlled by Ankara-backed Syrian opposition groups, with the stated aim of encouraging refugee returns. Ankara and Damascus have also been holding talks in Moscow to improve strained relations. The government has also carried out sporadic forcible deportations, while

Erdogan's challengers took a harder line, vowing to deport refugees en masse. While some Syrian refugees have voluntarily returned from Turkey and Lebanon, most say the situation is too volatile. At the camp in Lebanon, Fteim Al-Janoud struggled to hold back her tears as she talked about how she and her husband can only afford to send one of her six children to school. But the refugee from Syria's northern Aleppo province said the situation there is even worse, both in terms of security and material concerns.

"If the conditions were good and if our homes were fixed so we could live peacefully and comfortably, we wouldn't have a problem going back to Syria, even with Assad still there," she said. Despite the deteriorating situation for Syrians, aid has dwindled in recent years, as donors rushed to support over 5 million Ukrainian refugees and over 7 million internally displaced in the conflict-hit European country. The war in Ukraine, a global bread basket, also sparked a food inflation surge on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic that rocked the global economy for years.

## Putin mixes threats of new offensive in Ukraine with offers of peace talks

MOSCOW (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin alternated threats of a new Russian offensive to grab more Ukrainian land with statements about the Kremlin's readiness for peace talks. Speaking during a far-ranging meeting with Russian military correspondents and war bloggers, he made some of the most extensive comments about the conflict and his goals since sending the troops into Ukraine more than 15 months ago.

Here is a quick look at some of Putin's key statements: Putin asserted that Ukraine has suffered "catastrophic" losses in its counteroffensive. He said Ukrainian troops amassed reserves to launch the "large-scale" operation on June 4, but he claimed that the effort has failed to score gains and that Ukraine has lost 10 times more soldiers than Russia. His claims could not be verified. Putin declared that Ukraine lost 160 battle tanks and over 300 other armored vehicles, while Russia only lost 54 tanks. He alleged that the Ukrainian armor losses represented 25% to 30% of the number of Western

armored vehicles supplied to Ukraine. He noted with a smirk that German-made Leopard battle tanks and US-made Bradley infantry fighting vehicles "are burning really well," adding that leaders in Kyiv must now realize the disastrous consequences of the counteroffensive. Putin said Moscow could respond to alleged Ukrainian incursions and shelling of Russia's border regions by carving out what he described as a "sanitary zone" to prevent Kyiv from launching such attacks.

The zone would extend "to a depth that would prevent it from striking our territory," he added. Asked how deep into Ukraine Russia could go, Putin responded coyly, saying that "everything will depend on potentials that emerge after the so-called counteroffensive." "We will look at the situation and decide on our next moves," he said. "We have various plans depending on the situation." He mentioned that Russian troops "already were near Kyiv," a reference to a botched attempt by the Kremlin to capture the Ukrainian capital in the opening weeks of the con-

flict. Russian troops retreated from areas around Kyiv and other regions in Ukraine's northeast in March 2022, and in the fall they hastily pulled out from broad swaths of the Kharkiv region under the brunt of a swift Ukrainian counteroffensive. "Should we come back there or not?" Putin said, adding cryptically: "Only I could give an answer."

Putin again blamed Ukraine for the destruction of the Kakhovka dam that caused a catastrophic flooding, saying that Ukrainian forces had repeatedly shelled the dam with HIMARS rockets and then apparently used explosives to destroy it. He argued that Russia had no reason to destroy the dam. "We are certainly not interested in that because it has entailed grave consequences for the territories we control," he said. Putin dismissed the Ukrainian argument that Moscow blew up the dam to thwart Kyiv's counteroffensive, saying that Russia would have been happy to see Ukraine try to launch an attack in that sector because of daunting odds.

The Russian leader said ending the hostilities in Ukraine depends on the United States. He argued that the fighting would end immediately if the US and NATO stop providing Ukraine with weapons. "If they want to see a negotiated solution to the conflict, it's enough for them to stop weapons supplies," he said. Putin said Russian and Ukrainian negotiators drafted a peace agreement in March 2022, but Kyiv spiked the deal under Western pressure. He said Russia is still open to resuming talks. He said the US wants to see Russia defeated and was pinning its hopes on the Ukrainian counteroffensive. At the same time, Putin argued that in the US administration "there are many reasonable people who don't want to take it all the way to World War III in which there will be no winners." Putin, who ordered the mobilization of 300,000 reservists last fall as Russia faced a Ukrainian counteroffensive, would not rule out a new wave of mobilization, saying it will depend on the evolving military situation.



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## Martyrs, bereaved families, and leaders' duplicity

**P**RESIDENT Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday condoned with the bereaved family members of the Pakistan Army soldiers who embraced martyrdom for the country. He paid tribute to the martyrs for sacrificing their lives while protecting their motherland. The President had Tele-conversation with the family members of martyred Sepoy Inayatullah and Hasnain Ishtiaq, who embraced martyrdom in Sangwan, Balochistan on June 1, and expressed sympathies with them. He also hailed the martyrs' patriotism and bravery. According to the details, President Alvi also offered condolences to bereaved families of a few other martyrs who embraced martyrdom during multiple counter-terrorism operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan in recent days. President Alvi thanked the families of the martyrs on behalf of the nation and paid tribute to the services and sacrifices of the martyrs for their country. Dr. Alvi also prayed to Almighty Allah for the elevation of ranks of the departed souls in paradise.

Pakistan was struck by the menace of terrorism in the early 21st century and the nation paid a heavy price in the shape of loss of precious human lives, property, and social polarization. The US-led global War on Terror (WoT) dragged Pakistan's Erstwhile FATA and KP's border region alongside Pak-Afghan at the center stage of the global efforts to combat terrorism because a majority of Al-Qaeda leaders and Afghan Taliban took refuge in Pakistani tribal areas. The Pakistan Army and other LEAs had fought a long and most difficult battle against global terrorists and local banned terror outfits including the Pakistan Tahreek-e-Taliban (TTP) in inaccessible hilly terrains in North Waziristan, Khyber, Swat, and Bajur districts over the past two decades. Thousands of Pakistan Army officers and soldiers along with countless Police officials laid their lives in the line of duty during the war against terrorism. The Pakistani military successfully defeated the menace of terrorism on Pakistan's soil a few years back through the famous operation Zarb-e-Azb, the first-of-its-kind successful counter-terrorism operation in the world so far. However, insane decisions of Political leadership and narrow-sighted Military Strategists reimposed the monster of terrorism to their country last year.

Unfortunately, trading in terrorism and the deadly dance of death recommenced in certain parts of the country over the past months. During their fight against terrorism, our brave young military officers and jawans never hesitate from laying their lives during their service to their nation and the protection of their motherland. Every other day, heart-wrenching newspapers headlines and Television news alerts tell us details of Security Force encounters with terrorist outfits and martyrdoms of our brave soldiers, that snatch away a son from his parents, a father from his kids, a husband from a wife and adds another tragic story of an orphanage and an unending misery of a family for rest of its life.

In fact, it is a bitter truth of life and a tale of each nation in the world. However, the world nations value the sacrifices of their brave men and women and remember them throughout history. The leaders visit the war memorials, meet the families of their heroes, media publishes the stories of their patriotism and bravely pay tribute to the son of the soil who laid their lives while protecting the sanctity of their motherland. It is a tradition of great nations. US President and German Chancellor pay homage and offer respect to their national heroes on their national days. World nations usually name the roads, streets, and buildings in the name of their heroes in recognition of their sacrifice and nationalism. Ironically, Pakistani leaders lack such guts and pro-nation sentiments and often spare no time to offer condolences and express solidarity with martyrs and their families. Previously, the parent political group and mentor of President Alvi violated the sanctity of Pakistani martyrs by attacking war memorials on May 9 and launching an online propaganda campaign against the Pakistan military, now Dr. Alvi called on the bereaved families to share their grief and console verbally. It is a deplorable attitude of Pakistani leaders that clearly exposes their fake nationalism and biased behavior. Realistically, the professionalism of our brave security forces and the nationalism of Pakistani youth don't need artificial sympathy from so-called leaders and Commander-In-Chief, who are all time ready to attend festivals and inauguration ceremonies but lack time to attend the funerals of their valiant heroes. Over the years, repeated massacres, and recurrent perils had created the utmost courage and dispelled an unbeatable national resolve in the Pakistani nation, that elimination of the menace of terrorism from society is the first and foremost duty of every Pakistani and for that national cause, it does not need recognition, reward, and acknowledgment from the authorities.

**D**ESPITE initial denials by both countries, Iran confirmed this week that it engaged in indirect talks with the US in Oman last month over Tehran's nuclear program. Several Western media reports confirmed that US Middle East coordinator Brett McGurk and Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani were in the Omani capital, Muscat, at the same time in early May and that Omani officials acted as intermediaries. Both the US and Iran denied that talks centered on reaching an interim agreement, with Iranian officials insisting on reviving the 2015 nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. That agreement, which the Trump administration pulled out of in 2018, was endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 2231 in July 2015.

According to American reports, the US passed a message to Iran that it would face a severe response if it reached the 90 percent uranium enrichment levels required for use in a nuclear weapon. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran has at least 114 kg of uranium enriched up to 60 percent purity. Israel has also warned that it will never allow Iran to come close to the 90 percent enrichment level.

Following US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Saudi Arabia last week, which must have focused on threats posed by Iran's nuclear program, and the leaking of reports

regarding possible progress in negotiations, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Blinken that Israel would not be bound by any agreement with Iran and that it would take the necessary steps to protect its national security. On the other hand, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said earlier this week that a deal with the West over the nuclear pro-

**And Iran last week unveiled a hypersonic missile it claims can hit Israel in 400 seconds, while outmaneuvering the Iron Dome defense system. The technology to develop such a sophisticated system could only come from Russia or North Korea. Also, the recent China-mediated deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran to normalize ties took the US by surprise. Relations between Riyadh and Washington have gone through some rough periods since President Joe Biden was elected, while the Saudis have adopted an independent foreign policy approach that has seen improved ties with both China and Russia. Feeling its regional influence waning, Washington has made an about-face; seeking to revive ties with Riyadh and sending its top diplomats there. The thaw in Saudi-Iranian ties has been reflected in the Gulf region and beyond.**

gram is possible, but only if Tehran can keep its nuclear infrastructure intact. Since the US pulled out of the 2015 agreement and imposed sanctions, Iran has installed advanced centrifuges and raised its uranium enrichment levels to more than 60 percent. It has also prevented IAEA monitors from inspecting some facilities and is believed to have built new ones and expanded others.

Previous attempts by the Biden administration and Western partners to engage Iran in a bid to reach a new agreement were unsuccessful. Iran insists on reviving

the 2015 agreement, while the West wants to tie the agreement to other issues, such as Tehran's controversial ballistic missiles program, curbing the regional activities of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and allowing the IAEA to carry out a full investigation of Iran's nuclear facilities. For a while, it looked

### Osama Al-Sharif

between Riyadh and Washington have gone through some rough periods since President Joe Biden was elected, while the Saudis have adopted an independent foreign policy approach that has seen improved ties with both China and Russia. Feeling its regional influence waning, Washington has made an about-face; seeking to revive ties with Riyadh and sending its top diplomats there. The thaw in Saudi-Iranian ties has been reflected in the Gulf region and beyond. Earlier this month, the commander of Iran's naval forces, Shahram Irani,

announced that Tehran was looking to form a joint maritime alliance with the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, Pakistan and India. Saudi Arabia was also interested in "heading in this direction," Irani said. The announcement came a few days after the UAE decided to quit the Combined Maritime Forces led by the US. The change in Washington's attitude

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announced that Tehran was looking to form a joint maritime alliance with the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Iraq, Pakistan and India. Saudi Arabia was also interested in "heading in this direction," Irani said. The announcement came a few days after the UAE decided to quit the Combined Maritime Forces led by the US. The change in Washington's attitude

toward talks with Iran underlines its geopolitical concerns, as well as fears that the suspension of the nuclear deal has only played into Tehran's hands in many ways. US threats of resorting to force against Iran are no longer in sync with regional developments. Its key allies in the region, save for Israel, are now actively talking to Iran, with some, like Egypt, on the verge of restoring ties with Tehran.

These allies are now in favor of a diplomatic resolution to the Iran nuclear program issue. This week, the Gulf Cooperation Council issued a statement calling on Iran to commit to working with the IAEA and asking for the involvement of the Gulf states in possible negotiations to meet the bloc's security concerns. Interestingly, the US seems to have allowed Iraq to release about \$3 billion to Iran in overdue payments - a sign that some of Tehran's demands are being met. Also, a prisoner exchange is expected to take place between Iran and the US in the coming days, according to Iranian officials.

A deal, whether interim or not, would be good for the region and for the world. But it might not help Biden and the Democrats in the coming election cycle. Both will get a lot of flak from Republican candidates, as well from the current Israeli government. This week, a bipartisan letter from 35 members of Congress called on the European parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to "snapback" sanctions on Iran for noncompliance. In fact, any agreement reached will almost certainly give former President Donald Trump and other Republican hopefuls the ammunition to tear down the Biden reelection campaign. This is how hard it will be for the White House to decide its next move. Not doing anything carries the risk of Israel and Iran finding themselves in an open war with an unpredictable outcome. Securing a deal would harm Biden's election chances, while the return of Trump or a Republican hard-liner to the White House might make any new agreement a short-lived one anyway.

Arab News

## Southern Iraq's toxic skies are a colonial legacy

**O**N April 21, Ali Hussein Julood, a 21-year-old living in the Iraqi town of Rumaila, on the outskirts of one of the world's largest oil fields, died from leukaemia. He was told by doctors that pollution from gas flared in the nearby field, which is operated by British Petroleum (BP), had likely caused his cancer.

"Gas flaring" is a low-cost procedure used by oil companies to burn off the natural gas expelled during drilling. A waste of valuable natural resources, it also contributes to global warming and causes dangerous air pollution that has been linked to severe health problems in nearby populations. Some of the pollutants released during this process, such as benzene, are known to cause cancers and respiratory diseases. Ali, who had been battling cancer for six years when he died, was only the latest victim of the environmental degradation caused by international oil companies like BP in Iraq. In towns and villages near the country's vast oil fields, thousands of other men, women and children are still living under smoke-filled skies and suffering avoidable health problems because company executives insist on putting profit before lives.

While there is not much publicly available data on the rates of pollution-related illnesses in areas near oil fields in southern Iraq, a

confidential report from the Iraqi health ministry recently obtained by the BBC blamed pollution from gas flaring, among other factors, for a 20 percent rise in cancer in Basra, southern Iraq between 2015 and 2018. A second leaked document, again seen by the BBC, from the local government in Basra showed that cancer cases in the region are three times higher than figures published in the official nationwide cancer registry. Like many other problems and crises that are devastating the lives of ordinary Iraqis today, the chain of events that led to the poisoning of southern Iraq's skies by international oil companies also started during colonial times. In the early 20th century, as its navy transitioned from coal to petrol, Britain found itself in increasing need of oil to run its empire and fuel its numerous war efforts. At the time there was already a growing belief that Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq and parts of Syria) contained substantial reservoirs of oil, so British authorities directed their search for more oil there.

In 1912, Britain formed the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) with the purpose of acquiring concessions from the Ottoman Empire to explore for oil in Mesopotamia. Following World War I, it brought modern-day Iraq under its own mandate and sped up its efforts to claim the region's vast reserves for

### Taif Alkhudary

itself. By 1930, the TPC was renamed the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC) and was put under the control of a consortium made up of BP, Total, Shell and several other American companies. Together, they pushed for a series of "concession agreements" with the newly formed Iraqi government which would give them exclusive control of Iraq's oil resources on pre-defined terms for long periods. By 1938, the IPC and its various subsidiaries had already secured the right to extract and export virtually all the oil in Iraq for 75 years. These concessions were granted to the IPC and its subsidiaries while Iraq was ruled by British-installed monarchs and under de facto British control. Thus the state had almost no negotiating power against the British-led consortium which meant it could not ensure the concessions were drafted in a way that served the interests of the Iraqi people. In the end, the agreements not only failed to benefit Iraq in any way, but they also did not contain any provisions aimed at protecting local communities and the environment from the unwanted consequences of oil extraction.

The first oil export pipeline in Iraq was built in the north, from the oil fields in Kirkuk to British-controlled Palestine, in the early 1930s. The development of the oil industry in

the south, where Ali lived and died, began a few years later. In 1948, large quantities of oil were discovered by international oil companies in Zubair, southern Iraq. Within two years of the discovery, six oil wells were drilled in Zubair and a new pipeline was built to transport the oil from these new fields to the port in al-Faw. Around the same time, oil was found in Nahar Umr, and later, in 1953 one of the world's largest oil fields, Rumaila, was discovered. The development of the oil industry in southern Iraq swiftly introduced to the region environmental hazards associated with the extraction of oil. As early as 1952, gas was being flared in Zubair in such large quantities that the night sky over the oil fields was visibly polluted. In 1955, the Iraqi government started to voice its desire to use the gas being flared in Rumaila and Zubair for electricity generation. In 1960, while negotiating a concession with the IPC, then-Iraqi Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim formally asked the company to let Iraq exploit the gas that it was not using. The same demand came up again and again in the run-up to the nationalisation of the Iraqi oil industry in 1972, but IPC and its subsidiaries repeatedly turned the Iraqi government down. They were reluctant to allow Iraq use the excess natural gas expelled during oil extrac-

tion because flaring allows operators to de-pressurise their equipment and manage unpredictable and large pressure variations without increasing their production costs. Capturing the gas rather than flaring requires them to put in extra safety mechanisms, which would reduce the amount of oil they extract, and with it, their profits.

Iraq nationalised its oil industry in 1972, and by 1990 had built the capacity to capture 95 percent of the natural gas expelled during drilling. However, some of this infrastructure was destroyed as a result of sanctions and subsequent wars, limiting Iraq's ability to store and use the gas, end extensive flaring and reduce pollution. Following the 2003 invasion, the Iraqi oil industry was once again privatised as a result of pressure from the US and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As was the case in the early 20th century, any negotiations on oil extraction rights took place when Iraq was still under foreign occupation and gripped by ethno-sectarian conflict, meaning that the state had little power to protect the rights and interests of the local population. When the process of auctioning off oil fields in southern Iraq began in 2008, the Iraqi government offered foreign oil companies long contracts of up to 25 years, reminiscent of the early concessions agreements with the IPC. These included stabilisation claus-

es, which insulated foreign companies from legal changes that might emerge over the course of their contracts. This meant that the companies were, and continue to be, unaffected by any environmental regulations passed by the Iraqi government to reduce pollution or bring Iraqi laws in line with emerging international environmental protection standards.

Looking back at the development of the oil industry in southern Iraq makes apparent that the kind of pollution that killed Ali has been in the making for some 70 years. His death - like the deaths of many others who succumbed to pollution-related cancers in his country - was not an unavoidable tragedy, but the natural consequence of a long history of colonial violence and extractive capitalism. Predatory colonial practices that began over a century ago caused southern Iraq's vast oil reserves to be left under the sole control of foreign companies today - companies that over and over again put profit before the lives of the Iraqi inhabitants of the lands they exploit. Ali's death is yet more proof that colonial violence is far from over and that it has many different faces. Today, the colonisers are killing the peoples of the Global South not only with drones and bombs, but also with century-old extractive practices that gradually turn their homelands toxic.

## Hezbollah's options more limited today than in 2008

### Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

**A**L-AKHBAR, the pro-Hezbollah media outlet, last week published the following statement: "Foolish is he who does not revise his positions and is under the illusion that he can change the solid existing balance. This is the moment of truth for supporters, electors and candidates alike. For those who want to visit history, the responsibility lies with two people."

The first is Gebran Bassil, who is today in a position similar to Walid Jumblatt in May 2008, where he later admitted that his enthusiasm led him to make a mistake. The second is Jihad Azour, who has become another Fouad Siniora, and accepted to be the detonator fuse of an explosion.

These few lines were seen by almost everyone in Lebanon as a veiled threat by Hezbollah. They spread like wildfire on social media. On May 7, 2008, initiated by Jumblatt, the Lebanese government issued two decisions: One

regarding the firing of the head of security at Beirut airport and the second regarding the communication network of Hezbollah. The group saw the act of exposing its network as an existential threat. If the network was uncovered, this would mean that Israel could hunt down its members one by one. So, Hezbollah used brute force and took to the streets in Beirut. Its members went into Sunni neighborhoods and shouted sectarian slogans. This ignited negative sentiment against the group.

Two years before this incident, the entire country sided with Hezbollah as it was fighting Israel. The act of taking Beirut by force and the show of Shiite power created a huge discontent, which has been increasing ever since. The group has always stated that its arms are intended to protect Lebanon. However, in 2008, the group used its arms against the Lebanese. Though Hezbollah may have been facing an existential threat, its assault on

Beirut provided good evidence for their opponents to say that its arms are a threat to the country. Nevertheless, despite the loss of equity the group faced as a result of the week-long crisis, it made a real gain in power. The clashes led to the Doha conference, which gave Hezbollah a blocking third in the government. This way, Hezbollah became sure that the government would not be able to take any decision that could be deemed to pose an existential threat to it.

However, the more it accumulated power, the more discontent increased. Today, Hezbollah finds itself incapable of pushing for its own candidate for president, Suleiman Frangieh, whose loyalty to the group is uncontested, as the opposition is showing a united front. Long-time Hezbollah ally Bassil, seeing that he may have reached the limit of what he can get from the group, is now allying himself with its

opponents and is instead nominating Azour, the director of the Middle East and Central Asia Department at the International Monetary Fund and a former finance minister in Siniora's government. The speaker of the parliament has called for a session to be held on Wednesday. Hezbollah cannot afford for an antagonistic president to be elected, hence the strong message sent through the pro-Hezbollah newspaper. However, this threat will probably not work, as the conditions today are different from 2008. In 2008, the reason why the crisis was contained was mainly because Siniora, who was in charge, did not want to retaliate. He deemed it better to bite the bullet and lose politically, through what happened in Doha, than to lead the country into the unknown.

Nevertheless, the Hezbollah unit that went to the Druze areas loyal to Jumblatt faced fierce resist-

ance. This was not the case in Beirut. Today, if the same scenario was repeated, one cannot expect a measured response, as in 2008. The tensions are very high for the opposition to restrain itself. Also, Samir Geagea is not Siniora. He has a much bolder approach. Meanwhile, on the regional scene, despite the Saudi-Iranian agreement, Hezbollah is viewed as a threat. Its tentacles have reached Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Although the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers signed an agreement in Beijing in April, we are still far from a full normalization. The region is in labor, waiting for a new arrangement to be born, as suggested by Kassem Kassir, the Lebanese journalist, in his latest article on the situation in the country and its presidential elections.

Any faux pas by Hezbollah will be used by its domestic and regional opponents. It cannot afford a president who might stab them in the back. Though earlier reports of a meeting

between Azour and the group may have signaled that he gave assurances that he would focus on economic issues and not venture into controversial ones, there is still much at stake. Azour, who is a seasoned finance expert, could uncover all of Hezbollah's financial network and help encircle the group. Hezbollah can perhaps see the eventuality of it being strangled financially or killed off without a military confrontation - and this is as dangerous to the group as the prospect of a president who asks them to disarm. Hence, Hezbollah faces the dilemma of either accepting a president who could softly strangle it or entering into a confrontation that would probably not end up being to its advantage, as in 2008. However, the party could opt for a third option by stating that it is ready to abandon its candidate and agree with the opposition on a consensual nominee - a president who would focus on reforms and put partisanship aside.



# Use of water as a weapon of war likely to increase

Kerry Boyd Anderson

**THE collapse of the Nova Kakhovka dam in Ukraine last week highlighted the role of water in warfare. The use of water as a weapon has a history stretching back into ancient times and it continues today. As climate change intensifies water scarcity, the value of water is likely to increase, thus incentivizing its further use in conflict.**

Damage to water infrastructure can be an accidental consequence of war or an intentional act. For example, the Nova Kakhovka dam might have collapsed due to damage sustained during the conflict combined with a lack of regular maintenance since falling under Russian control, or it might have been used as a weapon, intentionally destroyed to cause massive flooding. Russia and Ukraine have blamed each other. While there is a lack of publicly available evidence to be certain, it appears likely that Russian forces destroyed it in order to flood an area where Ukraine might launch a military offensive. When water is deployed as a weapon, it can take several forms. From ancient times to today, destroying or poisoning water sources has been a common tactic. Wells have been poisoned in order to complete a siege, weaken opponents or punish a population. Depriving populations or military forces of water is another tool. From the Assyrians to Daesh, combatants have destroyed wells for military purposes. In other cases, canals, rivers or other water sources are

diverted. In one recent example, after Russia's takeover of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine blocked a canal that carried much of Crimea's water from the Kakhovka reservoir. Russian forces removed the blockage following its 2022 invasion.

Intentionally flooding an area in order to slow a military advance, damage wartime industry or force soldiers or civilians out into the open also has a long history. Last month marked the 80th anniversary of Operation Chastise, also known as the "Dambusters" raid, a British operation during the Second World War intended to destroy three German dams in the Ruhr valley. Using a special type of bomb, the British forces successfully destroyed two of the three dams, causing flooding that killed hundreds of people, while doing less damage to Germany's industrial capacity than expected. In another of many examples throughout history, Belgian forces intentionally flooded part of the Yser river in order to slow a German advance during the First World War. Throughout the war between Ukraine and Russia, Russian forces have repeatedly attacked Ukrainian water infrastructure, while Ukraine intentionally flooded some areas to slow Russia's initial invasion last year. The Nova Kakhovka dam collapse is probably a new addition to the list of such incidents, though on a larger scale than previously seen in this

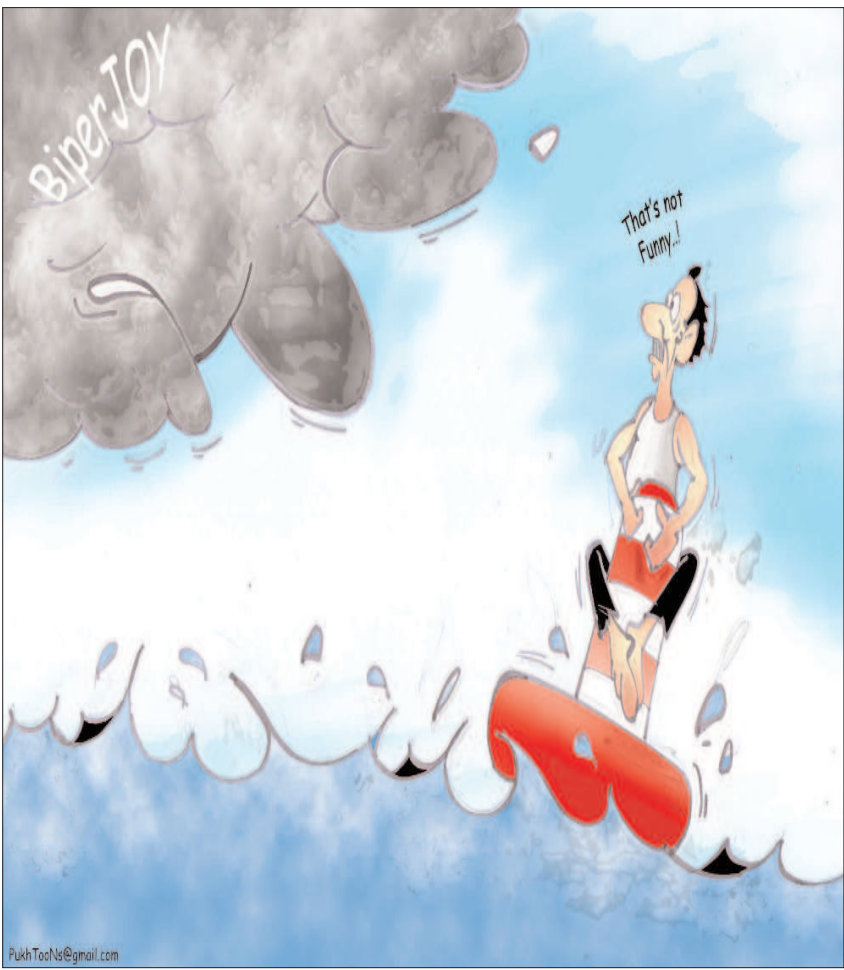
war.

Sometimes, weaponizing water serves both military and political goals. Israel has restricted water resources to Palestinians as part of larger efforts to displace local populations and undermine Palestinian economic development. The Syrian regime repeatedly used water shortages against civilians and combatants during the Syrian civil war. Upstream states can use water - and the implicit threat of cutting or reducing its flow - as leverage when negotiating with downstream states about a wide range of issues. While history is replete with examples of the strategic and tactical use of water in war and politics, it is unclear whether weaponizing water is often very effective. For example, if Russia destroyed the Nova Kakhovka dam, many experts say it is unlikely to significantly undermine Ukraine's counteroffensive, while it affected both Russian and Ukrainian-held territory and, according to reports, killed some Russian soldiers.

The recent anniversary of the so-called Dambusters raid highlighted analysis that suggests the raid was far less effective in countering Germany's war efforts than planned, while coming at a significant cost to British forces and resources. While there are examples of using water to successfully achieve military goals, any force that tries to unleash water against an enemy cannot fully control the

water and often faces the risk of blowback onto its own soldiers or assets and the risk of missing its intended target. Water can be used as a weapon almost anywhere in the world, but some regions are particularly prone to the weaponization of water. The Pacific Institute has a list of incidents involving water in conflict that goes back to ancient times. Drawing on the data from 2018 through March 2022, the Middle East and North Africa stands out with the most incidents, followed by the Russia-Ukraine war and then sub-Saharan Africa. It is unsurprising that the world's most arid region also has the highest number of recent incidents involving water in conflict, and climate change threatens to worsen that record. Efforts to address and adapt to climate change should take the problem of water in conflict seriously.

More broadly, the international community needs to place greater emphasis on addressing the role of water in conflict. Under the additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions, attacks on water infrastructure such as dams can constitute a war crime, particularly if they cause significant harm to civilians. As with all forms of international law, however, much depends on how the international community responds and enforces consequences for such violations. The tragic results of the Nova Kakhovka dam collapse should bring greater attention to the role that weaponizing water is likely to play in the future.



## Putin's fallen generals reveal Russia's fatal flaws

Richard Kemp

**WAR is - by definition - a bloody business. Yet if you had told me an army in the 21st century could lose eight generals in combat, and perhaps as many as 15, a mere 16 months into a campaign, I would have struggled to believe you. The death of Russian Major General Sergei Goryachev - reportedly killed this week in Ukraine by a British-supplied Storm Shadow missile - marks such a milestone. For context, no western army has faced such high fatality rates among its senior officers since 1945.**

The death of Goryachev is a severe blow for Russian President Vladimir Putin's defence against Ukraine's counter-offensive. Goryachev was not just a general, but Chief of Staff of the 35th Combined Arms Army: a critical role responsible for planning, coordinating and controlling operations across a broad front. His death will mean the combat effectiveness of his forces will suffer major disruption. Not only that, but in his command post, Goryachev will have been surrounded by his most important staff officers. The loss of just one of these individuals can be keenly felt at the front. The closest parallel in my own experience was the death in 1994 of the Assistant Chief of Staff in Northern Ireland, along with 24 senior police and military intelligence officers. That was a helicopter crash not enemy action, but the impact on military operations, with the loss of their collective knowledge and experience, was long-last-

ing and profound.

In Ukraine, Russian generals have often been forced to the front through necessity. Last year we learned a combination of inferior secure communications and Ukrainian electronic warfare obliged some commanders to command from the front. But the problem runs deeper. The Russian way of warfare - still operating to a highly inflexible, top-down command doctrine - means that generals are often obliged to take personal command in a fashion alien to most western armies. Ukrainian commanders recently told me how Russians are still frequently paralysed until reports are transmitted upwards and new orders issued downwards: a laborious, time-consuming process. Sometimes forces are obliged to wait until a general arrives. Furthermore, just as their soldiers are sometimes pressed forward with a gun at their back, Russian generals are compelled to the front by the spectre of the menacing figure in the Kremlin.

By contrast, the Ukrainians have adopted a "mission command" style of operations used by the British, American and other Western forces. Here, subordinate commanders down to the lowest levels are given their mission and the freedom to carry it out without the need for detailed instructions from on high. They are trained to adapt to constantly shifting battlefield conditions, with the autonomy to change the plan on their own authority without the

need for superiors to intervene. Russia's weakness has been exploited by Ukraine, assisted by intelligence and surveillance that provides real-time satellite and aerial footage of Russian headquarters and the electronic signatures of senior officers, allowing their locations to be pin-pointed and struck. Last year, General Valery Gerasimov, the Russian Chief of Staff, escaped by the skin of his teeth as Ukraine launched a strike against a position in the east of the country that he had just left. Kyiv's advantage has been multiplied by the recent supply of British Storm Shadow missiles, which allows Russian headquarters well to the rear of the fighting to be targeted at ranges previously unachievable. Command inflexibility will not bring about the defeat of the Russian army. Unlike many commentators, Ukrainian commanders do not underestimate their enemy. Several fresh from the front told me that they face a formidable opponent: tenacious, battle-hardened and willing to throw away huge numbers of soldiers' lives to gain ground. These Ukrainian fighting men are also more aware than anyone of Moscow's advantage in artillery, the greatest battle winner in this conflict. But just as David's precisely-aimed slingshot succeeded in felling the giant, continued Ukrainian precision strikes against logistics bases, supply lines and headquarters such as that of Goryachev's army will, in time, undoubtedly help tip the scales.

The Telegraph

## Even after a bruising week, it's too soon to write off Rishi

David Davis

**BY far the most frequent question put to me by the younger generation of Conservative MPs is whether the next election will be like 1997 or 1992. In 1997 we were obliterated after years of in-fighting, so I normally answer with: "That depends on you." But the truth is a little more complex. In 1992 we won an election which pretty much every political pundit had forecast we would lose, after a long period trailing in the polls.**

The question for the Conservative Party today is whether we can win a similar victory at the next election. The answer is an emphatic yes - so long as the Party shows discipline, and its leadership displays energy, imagination and courage. After all, Margaret Thatcher achieved her most impressive electoral victory in 1983 after at one point trailing by 24 percentage points in the polls, and returned victorious in 1987 just one year after a devastating defeat in the by-election in the supposedly rock-solid Ryedale seat. As the Boris Johnson circus moves out of Westminster, the temptation to fractious division will reduce dramatically. So, given that we

can end the infighting, what does Rishi have to do to win? I voted for Rishi because I believed the country needed a period of quiet competence and that he was best placed to deliver it. That is exactly what has happened. The public recognises that the Prime Minister has taken hold of all the big issues, which is why Labour's poll lead has halved.

We are within striking distance. But to overtake Labour will require more than just competence. The public still needs a vision for Britain that meets their aspirations. Conservatives believe in an open, meritocratic society, a flourishing property-owning democracy, and we must provide it. So by "vision", I do not mean some high-flown conference rhetoric - I mean answers to the very real problems people face in their daily lives. Most elections are decided on economic issues, and the next will be no different. Jobs, wages, standards of living: these require a serious plan. We need a tax structure that encourages investment and rewards hard work. The much touted 2 per cent off income tax would be a start, but is not

enough by itself. There are other low-cost measures that could have dramatic effects. The cancellation of IR35, for instance, would have greater freedom to the self-employed and smaller businesses. Our addition to cheap labour cannot continue at the expense of cultivating home-grown talent. Our housing shortage cannot be ignored. There are a number of ideas around to deal with it, from garden towns to intensive in-town development. Whatever we choose, we cannot delay getting younger voters on the housing ladder. Surprisingly, we may even have an opportunity on the NHS, traditionally a Labour monopoly. The public has grown disaffected with its poor performance, and there are reforms, such as commissioning private-sector scanning centres, that can trim the waiting lists. We should promote these loudly.

In short, there are plenty of options available, despite the belief held by some outside the party that change is simply too difficult. As the noises from the Boris team fade, Rishi will have space to develop a new vision for the future. If he does so, voters will return another Conservative government in 2024.

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## As the ice melts, a perilous Russian threat is emerging in the Arctic

Barry Gardiner

**ASK Britain's foreign secretary which part of the world poses his biggest foreign policy challenge, and the chances are he will say either Russia or China. He probably will not say the Arctic. Yet the implications of what is happening in the Arctic will change patterns of international trade, drive food insecurity, deepen global poverty, increase refugee crises, reorient military alliances, and turbocharge military expenditures and the risk of war.**

The eight Arctic states - Canada, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the US and Russia - have long collaborated on scientific research through the Arctic Council, a non-military body. Until now. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Arctic Council meetings ceased. So did cooperation with Russia. This has hampered progress on climate and environmental research and turbocharged the militarisation of the Arctic. The success of the Arctic Council depended on its geopolitical balance. It is not a security alliance and has always tried to remain independent from politics. Five of the eight countries were part of Nato; the other three were not. That has now changed. Finland joined Nato in April. Sweden is in the process of joining. Soon, Nato will literally be surrounding Russia in the Arctic.

To understand why this matters, we must first understand the climate emergency taking place in the region. Summer sea ice has declined by 30% in the past 30 years; 90% of old ice, which is classified as five years old or

more, has gone. That ice used to act as the great heat shield for the planet, reflecting back the sun's rays. But the loss of ice is producing a vicious spiral of heating. The Arctic is now warming three times faster than the global average. This process is called Arctic amplification. It means that scientists now project an Arctic free from summer ice by 2040-45. As the ice cover is lost, a trans-polar route is opening to connect east Asia to Europe and the eastern coast of North America. And the ice barrier that once protected Russia's northern shore will be exposed as never before. Russia represents 53% of the Arctic coastline and the need to protect its northern border as the ice barrier melts is a key national security concern.

Vladimir Putin already had ambitious plans for the northern sea route, seeking to more than double the cargo traffic. But over the past six years, Russia has also built 475 military sites along its northern border. The port of Severomorsk, on the Kola peninsula, is the base of the country's northern fleet.

In recent years, the Russians have reactivated 50 Soviet outposts in the Arctic and equipped its northern fleet with nuclear and conventional missiles. The challenge of all this has not been purely logistical. As the permafrost thaws, the structural base for roads, buildings and other key infrastructure has collapsed. Russia is trying to deploy huge amounts of infrastructure and military capacity to build structures on land that is disintegrating, across roads that are disappearing. In December 2022, it

passed a new law requiring 90-day notification for any warship transiting the northern sea route. It has also legislated that there be no more than one warship allowed in these waters at any one time and that any submarine be required to surface and show its flag along the internal waters of the route. Recent experience in the Pacific suggests that the US or Nato will seek to assert rights of navigation under the UN convention on the law of the sea. This is inherently risky. Russia could see such attempts to declare freedom of navigation as a provocation. But failure to enforce these freedoms carries an opposite risk: without maintaining a presence in the region, Nato members would be allowing Russia's new law to become normalised. A careful balancing act is essential to maintain presence and not allow Russia to close off this region of the Arctic as its private domain.

Moscow sees Nato borders expanding. It fears encirclement. Its experience of humiliation in Ukraine has increased this tension. Two Arctic brigades have been deployed to Ukraine with disastrous consequences; the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies estimates that more than 1,000 personnel have been lost. As Russia's conventional land forces have been depleted in the Arctic, the Kremlin will turn to its naval and submarine capacity. The potential to inflict damage to undersea cables and pipelines is a lever that Putin could use against his opponents. At the moment, it seems our politicians are not looking

beyond the Ukraine war. They need to. A weakened and resentful Russia does not make for a stable global order. We have already seen Putin pivot to China and use the Arctic as a bargaining chip to strengthen that relationship. It is scarcely a month since the two countries' coastguards signed a memorandum in Murmansk about cooperation in the Arctic. China's price for providing Russia with support over Ukraine could be requesting naval access to Russian bases in the Arctic. On a recent visit to the Ny-Alesund international research station on Svalbard, it was depressing to hear that scientific cooperation with Russia on climate matters has effectively ceased. The Arctic is an environment where cooperation is essential. Arctic science must be done over the long term, and the relationships and trust built up between partners offer predictability and greater stability. In a region that is becoming over-secured, every opportunity to minimise accidental misunderstandings and avoid a military response should be seized.

A militarised Arctic would undermine scientific cooperation and pose an existential threat. Somehow, we need a diplomatic effort to separate the politics of war from the imperatives of climate research. During the cold war, the USSR and the west had cultural and scientific exchanges that kept back-channels of communication open when political temperatures were running high. Now, more than ever, we need similar initiatives to thaw the permafrost between Russian and western research efforts.

## AI must not become a driver of human rights abuses

Eliza Campbell & Michael Kleinman

**ON May 30, the Center for AI Safety released a public warning of the risk artificial intelligence poses to humanity. The one-sentence statement signed by more than 350 scientists, business executives and public figures asserts: "Mitigating the risk of extinction from A.I. should be a global priority alongside other societal scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war."**

It is hard not to sense the brutal double irony in this declaration. First, some of the signatories - including the CEOs of Google DeepMind and OpenAI - warning about the end of civilisation represent companies that are responsible for creating this technology in the first place. Second, it is exactly these same companies that have the power to ensure that AI actually benefits humanity, or at the very least does not do harm.

They should heed the advice of the human rights community and adopt immediately a due diligence framework that helps them identify, prevent, and mitigate the potential negative impacts of their products. While scientists have long warned of the dangers that AI holds, it was not until the recent release of new Generative AI tools, that a larger part of the general public realised the negative consequences it can have.

Generative AI is a broad term, describing "creative" algorithms that can themselves generate new content, including images, text, audio, video and even computer code. These algorithms are

trained on massive datasets, and then use that training to create outputs that are often indistinguishable from "real" data - rendering it difficult, if not impossible, to tell if the content was generated by a person, or by an algorithm. To date, Generative AI products have taken three main forms: tools like ChatGPT which generate text, tools like Dall-E, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion which generate images, and tools like Codex and Copilot which generate computer code. The sudden rise of new Generative AI tools has been unprecedented. The ChatGPT chatbot developed by OpenAI took less than two months to reach 100 million users. This far outpaces the initial growth of popular platforms like TikTok, which took nine months to reach as many people.

Throughout history, technology has helped advance human rights but also created harm, often in unpredictable ways. When internet search tools, social media, and mobile technology were first released, and as they grew in widespread adoption and accessibility, it was nearly impossible to predict many of the distressing ways that these transformative technologies became drivers and multipliers of human rights abuses around the world. Meta's role in the 2017 ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya in Myanmar, for example, or the use of almost undetectable spyware deployed to turn mobile phones

into 24-hour surveillance machines used against journalists and human rights defenders, are both consequences of the introduction of disruptive technologies whose social and political implications had not been given serious consideration. Learning from these developments, the human rights community is calling on companies developing Generative AI products to act immediately to stave off any negative consequences for human rights they may have.

So what might a human rights-based approach to Generative AI look like? There are three steps, based on evidence and examples from the recent past, that we suggest. First, in order to fulfil their responsibility to respect human rights, they must immediately implement a rigorous human rights due diligence framework, as laid out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This includes proactive and ongoing due diligence to identify actual and potential harms, transparency regarding these harms, and mitigation and remediation where appropriate. Second, companies developing these technologies must proactively engage with academics, civil society actors, and community organisations, especially those representing traditionally marginalised communities.

Although we cannot predict all the ways in which this new tech-

nology can cause or contribute to harm, we have extensive evidence that marginalised communities are the most likely to suffer the consequences. The initial versions of ChatGPT engaged in racial and gender bias, suggesting, for instance, that Indigenous women are "worth" less than people of other races and genders. Active engagement with marginalised communities must be part of the product design and policy development processes, to better understand the potential impact of these new tools. This cannot be done after companies have already caused or contributed to harm. Third, the human rights community itself needs to step up. In the absence of regulation to prevent and mitigate the potentially dangerous effects of Generative AI, human rights organisations should take the lead in identifying actual and potential harm. This means that human rights organisations should themselves help to build a body of deep understanding around these tools and develop research, advocacy, and engagement that anticipate the transformative power of Generative AI. Complacency in the face of this revolutionary moment is not an option - but neither, for that matter, is cynicism. We all have a stake in ensuring that this powerful new technology is used to benefit humanity. Implementing a human rights-based approach to identifying and responding to harm is a critical first step in this process.

Arab News





# Indonesia trying to start direct flights from Pakistan: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indonesian Ambassador Adam M. Tugio Tugio on Wednesday said that Pakistan and Indonesia should work together to increase trade links to the D8 market.

He said that Indonesia is trying to start direct flights with Pakistan and negotiations are going with the Civil Aviation Authority in this regard.

"It is expected that by December of this year, direct air connectivity will be established between the two great countries of the Muslim world," he said.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and other officials, said a press release issued here.

By setting up an Indonesian warehouse in Gwadar, it wants to gain access to Pakistan and Central Asia. There are vast opportunities for improvement of trade relations and investment between the two countries, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that ASEAN is a huge market for Pakistan, but despite all its efforts, Pakistan has not been able to get the status of a full dialogue partner from a sectoral partner and we wish that Indonesia,

being a major ASEAN country, plays its role in this regard.

He accepted the ambassador's invitation to participate in the trade exhibition held in Indonesia in October and said that the delegation of Islamabad Chamber will fully participate in this exhibition.

He further said that the business community wishes to have a free trade agreement with the countries of the ASEAN organization so that both countries get benefits from the long-standing relations established with Pakistan and ASEAN.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Vice President Faad Waheed said that the

role of the ambassador is very important in bringing Pakistan and Indonesia closer at the commercial level, and he has performed excellently in this regard by connecting with the business community.

Vice President Engineer Azhar Salam said that Pakistan and Indonesia should increase cooperation in the field of research, the increase in scholarship for Pakistani students is welcome.

In the meeting, former president FPCCI Zubair Malik, former president ICC I Zafar Bakhtawari, Ashfaq Chatta, Muhammad Ali, Khalid Chaudhry, Chaudhry Wasim, Ameer Hamza, Dr. Usman and others also participated.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing meeting of Economic Coordination Committee of Cabinet.

## WCCIS lauds govt for providing people-friendly budget

SIALKOT (APP): Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) President Dr Mariam Nouman has said that the federal government has presented an excellent budget which is people-friendly.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, she said despite the economic difficulties the present government had presented a balanced budget for welfare of the people.

She said the government had given relief to the people in all sectors, including education, health, agriculture, industry and crafts, IT sector, adding that the government had won hearts of the people by presenting a balanced budget.

Dr Mariam Nouman said the government had announced small loans for farmers in the agriculture sector. Similarly, loans should be approved for women to start their own businesses so that they could also play a positive role in development of the country by starting their own work.

## Meeting with IMF to determine future of programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ayesha Ghous Pasha on Wednesday said that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar had a virtual conversation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Chief Nathan Porter, and the IMF Executive Board might meet at any time today.

After technical meeting with the IMF, the things would get clear about future of the programme, she said while talking to media persons after attending the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue here. She said that the government had told the Fund that the purpose of the budget was to bring economic growth.

The minister said in the meeting, the financial team would try to convince the IMF about the government's strategy. She said the IMF had questioned many things and sought clarification on certain items regarding the

budget. She said the fund would also hold talks with Power Division and State Bank officials.

The IMF will also discuss the exchange rate and policy rate with the State Bank, she added.

Earlier, the senate body approved the proposed changes in the finance bill 2023 including parts of solar invertors, lithium batteries, solar cell manufacturing equipment.

The customs department informed the committee that the parts of solar invertors, lithium batteries, solar cell manufacturing equipment were included in the bill for first time with zero percent custom duty.

Senator Saadia Abbasi said that to encourage the solar panel manufacturing, the board must have defined a certain time period of this relief to proper build an industry.

The committee met here under the chairmanship of Senator Saleem Mandviwalla on 3rd consecutive day

to discuss and approve several tax proposals under Finance Bill 2023.

The committee also approved the proposed zero percent custom duty on inputs for pharmaceutical industries for cancer medicine which included Gefitinib and Caspian (casopfungin 50 mg and 70 mg injection).

The body considered and approved zero percent custom duty on the import of paper having specification 60 to 90 gsm for printing of Holy Quran. The committee also approved the zero percent custom duty on import of diapers, sanitary napkins by manufacturers.

The committee also unanimously proposed to withdraw 10 percent Federal Excise Duty (FED) on Juice industry.

The official of juice industry informed the committee that around 45 percent sales was declined due to increase in FED and also no sufficient increase had been witnessed in the tax revenue.

## Federal Minister favours 20 years tax holiday to GSED



### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal has assured Association of Builders and Developers of Pakistan (ABAD) to give status of Special Economic District to Gwadar (GSED) with 10 to 20 years tax holiday.

The minister was talking to a delegation of ABAD here. Delegation was led by Chairman Southern Region ABAD Raheel Rinch. Former Chairman ABAD

Arif Jeewa and ABAD Gwadar Chapter's leading members Affan Qureshi and Humayu Qadir were also present on this occasion.

ABAD delegation highlighted importance of Gwadar and requested the federal Minister to take up issue of granting Special Economic District status to Gwadar with Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif to speed up the process. Balochistan government has already approved status of Special Economic

District for Gwadar and has requested federal government to announce Gwadar Special Economic District as soon as possible for the economic development of the country.

The delegation also requested minister to grant 35 years tax holiday for Gwadar but the minister said that he can try to convince federal government to grant 10 to 20 years tax holiday for Gwadar. He also assured the delegation to take up this matter with

the Prime Minister and all stakeholders immediately as this issue is very important for the economic development of Pakistan. He said that a special meeting will hold the Prime Minister in Gwadar on GSED with delegation of ABAD and other stakeholders.

The meeting also discussed for sharing of TORs and special economic district model of neighbouring countries with the government, especially with the Ministry of Planning and Development as well as the Ministry of Finance. They also discussed to initiate Tourism promotion plans on most urgent basis on coastal belt of Makran, especially coastal areas of Gwadar Range in consultation with Balochistan coastal development authority.

Chairman South Region ABAD Raheel Rinch invited the Planning and Development Minister to visit ABAD House in Karachi, which was accepted by the minister and assured to visit ABAD House sooner.

## PSX loses 24.27 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 24.2 points on Wednesday, a negative change of 0.06 per cent, closing at 41,514.45 points against 41,538.72 points the previous day.

A total of 179,644,403 shares were traded during the day as compared to 144,168,405 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.3.755 billion against Rs. 4.124 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 317 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 129 of them recorded gains and 161 sustained losses while the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were TPL Properties with 45,794,855 shares at Rs.14.26 per

share; Hascol Petrol with 22,653,000 shares at Rs.5.71 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 19,076,892 shares at Rs.1.16 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs. 589.00 per share price, closing at Rs. 22,700.00, whereas the runner-up was Colgate Palm XDXB with an Rs. 73.03 rise in its per share price to Rs. 1047.34.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs. 340.00 per share closing at Rs. 6,550.00; followed by Pak Tobacco with Rs.39.90 decline to close at Rs. 610.10.

**Rupee gains 79 paisas against US Dollar in interbank:** Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday strengthened by 79 paisas against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs

287.18 against the previous day's closing of Rs 287.97.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 292 and Rs 295 respectively.

The price of the Euro went down by Rs1.03 to close at Rs 310.15 against the last day's closing of Rs 311.18, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs 2.05, whereas an increase of Rs 0.89 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 362.72 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 361.83.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal depreciated by 21 paisas each to close at Rs 78.19 and Rs 76.57 respectively.

## Gold prices decline by Rs2,500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,500 and was sold at Rs 219,000 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs 221,500 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 2,143 to Rs 187,757 from Rs 189,900 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 172,111 from Rs 174,075, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs 100 to close at Rs 2550 and tengeram silver also declined by Rs 85.73 to close at Rs 2,186.21.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$ 13 to \$1948 against its sale at \$1961, the association reported.

## IMC takes centre stage in advocating for safer roads

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Indus Motor Company (IMC) joined the world to mark the 7th UN Global Road Safety Week, becoming the first automobile manufacturer in Pakistan's history to undertake such an initiative. The catchphrase, "I am a Road Safety Leader", resonated across the company as it stressed for the need for safer roads across the country during the week-long campaign.

The week aptly kicked-off with IMC's CEO, Ali Asghar Jamali's video message to his entire team of over four thousand employees, that emphasized the need to always fasten seatbelts and remaining cognizant of the fact that road safety is every person's responsibility. He also invited them to become Road Safety Leaders.

As part of the immersive awareness raising campaign, IMC launched a dedicated micro landing page on the company's website where users could test their knowledge on road safety and earn a badge to become a Toyota Road Safety Leader.

Chief Executive, Ali Asghar Jamali, expressing himself said, "Pakistan has one of the highest road traffic accident rates in the world; 75 percent of road crashes in the economical productive age. What we see happening on the roads today is really disappointing; an utter civic responsibility deficit. I strongly feel that what's needed is a 360 degree turn in behavioral change at the individual level. Road safety is a collective responsibility and by working together we can surely make a difference and create safer and more sustainable cities for ourselves and other around us. Campaigning during the

global week gives us exactly this opportunity to reach out to people within and outside the company to become advocates of road safety as Toyota Road Safety Leaders."

IMC's Ambassador for Road Safety, Mr Niaz Malik, has played a pivotal role in driving awareness through various channels. His virtual and interactive meet with the company's employees during the global week, garnered much interest as he advocated road safety consciousness through his own near fatal road accident and life altering experience.

Other activities during the week included sending out powerful text messages to 100,000 customers; dedicated awareness sessions for its van transport staff, ensuring their active involvement in promoting road safety. Adding an even more powerful emotional touch to the campaign, IMC showcased survival stories of IMC employees who have experienced road accidents and triumphed over adversity. These courageous individuals have become passionate advocates of road safety, inspiring others to embrace responsible driving habits to protect the lives of their loved ones and fellow citizens.

Employees, including the top management also had the opportunity to be photographed with road safety pledges which best resonated with them. IMC's pioneering efforts during the 7th UN Global Road Safety Week have set a new benchmark in the automobile industry and beyond. With unwavering determination, IMC continues to lead the change in creating a culture of road safety and reinforcing the belief that every individual has the power to make a positive impact.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, PS-Pelican and Scarabe carrying 27,999 tonnes of Palm oil and 53,000 tonnes of Coal, berthed at Oil Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, oil tanker Demeter and bulk cargo carrier Butinah sailed out to sea on Wednesday (today) morning on Wednesday.

A cargo Volume of 51,679 tonnes, comprising 51,679 tonnes imports Cargo exclusively, was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are six ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a gas carrier 'Kition-M' is expected to take berth at Oil Terminal on Wednesday & another containership, Cosco America is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohamedali R. Habib, Chairman HABIBMETRO Bank commented: 'We are pleased to provide

Mohsin Ali Nathani, President & CEO HABIBMETRO Bank remarked, 'HABIBMETRO aspires to grow its Islamic Banking

## AHDRML enter into arrangement with ITMinds

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Arif Habib Dolmen REIT Management Limited (AHDRML) has entered into an outsourcing arrangement with ITMinds Limited (ITMinds), a wholly owned subsidiary of Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDCPL), whereby ITMinds will provide Back Office Accounting Services to AHDRML. The agreement was signed by Mr. Muhammad Ejaz CEO-AHDRML with Mr. Iqleem-uz-Zaman Khan CEO-ITMinds in the presence of Mr. Badiuddin Akber Director-ITMinds & CEO-CDCPL, Mr. Waqas Ashraf CFO-ITMinds, Mr. Razi CFO-AHDRML and other senior members of both the Companies.

Through this arrangement, ITMinds will facilitate AHDRML in concentrating on their core business activities, i.e. managing a variety of REITs, by relieving them from various non-core back office functions like accounting services, settlement of portfolios, facilitation for compliance/ reporting,

Information Security Management, Business Continuity and IT Arrangements.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Muhammad Ejaz, CEO-AHDRML, said that this arrangement will enable AHDRML to concentrate on its core business of managing various types of REITs while outsourcing the back office functions to a professional Fund Administrator.

Also commenting on the occasion, Mr. Badiuddin Akber, Director ITMinds & CEO-CDCPL, said that the concept of outsourcing non-core critical business activities has proven to be efficient and cost-effective in today's business world. Hence, we have commissioned ITMinds with this aim to enable REIT Management Companies (RMCs) and other organizations to outsource their back office functions to a competent and reliable BPO partner, thus facilitating them to augment the focus of their management on their critical business activities which are integral to their commercial success while achieving efficiency, scalability & transparency of processes.





## In brief

## Two Pak cueists to feature in C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two Pakistani cueists would be departing for Tehran, Iran on Thursday to feature in the Asian Six Reds, team and men's U21 Snooker Championship. According to Pakistan Billiards & Snooker Association (PBSA), the championship was scheduled to be held from June 16 to 25. PBSA has selected two cueists for the championship while an official referee would also accompany the players. The players include Harris Tahir and Ahsan Ramzan while Naveed Kapadia would be the referee. The Pakistan team would depart to Tehran, Iran via Dubai at 4:20 pm.

## KP Junior Age Group Squash

PESHAWAR (APP): Hashim Khan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Junior Squash Championship for boys U11, U13, U15 and U17 while Women Senior Championship will be commencing from June 20-26, 2023 here at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex Peshawar. This was stated by Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association Mansoor Zaman while talking to APP here on Wednesday. He said Squash Legend and KP Squash Association Chairman Qamar Zaman said that we are focusing on the grass-roots level and our effort is to provide more opportunities for junior squash players to come forward so that they can come up to the best of their abilities. He said that these age group players are our future, if attention is given to them now, they can become world champions in the future and can bring back Pakistan's lost place in squash. He said that KP Squash Association took a major step and decided to name all the competitions after the former champions and the first competition in this regard has been named after Hashim Khan with the aim of making the new generation aware of their heroes and also to make these heroes role models for the younger generation.

## 'WADA rules followed with zero tolerance policy'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari has said that strict implementation of World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) rules was being ensured in Pakistan to prevent and discourage the use of prohibited drugs among athletes. He was addressing the 18th Asia/Oceania Region Inter-Governmental Ministerial meeting/conference on Anti-Doping in Sports at Colombo, held in collaboration with WADA here Wednesday. The conference was participated by the representatives of 39 countries in Asia Pacific region including WADA top officials. The main objective of the said conference was to educate sports authorities including sports ministers in the region about the negative effects of the use of banned body stimulants, the menace spreading like an epidemic in sports. During the conference, the implementation of WADA recommendations was reviewed by the member countries. The federal minister said WADA rules have been given legal cover by the government of Pakistan while awareness about doping and anti-drugs is being highlighted among the athletes. He said the National Anti-Doping Agency has also been formed in Pakistan which was actively playing its role.

## Shan Masood's unbeaten 95 ends Yorkshire wait for victory

CHESTERFIELD (Agencies): Yorkshire celebrated a County Championship victory for the first time in 14 months when they beat Derbyshire by three wickets on the final morning of the match at Chesterfield.

Shan Masood played the leading role against his former county with an unbeaten 95 off 112 balls while a run-a-ball 41 not out from Dom Bess helped see the visitors home after Dawid Malan had fallen to the first ball of the day.

Yorkshire needed 65 when Mark Watt removed Malan but Masood and Bess played with composure to share an eighth-wicket stand of 68 from 82 balls to win a gripping contest on 215 for 7.

The odds had shifted in Derbyshire's favour when Watt struck with the first ball of the morning. Malan tried to paddle sweep the left-arm spinner but only succeeded in lobbing a simple catch to Matt Lamb at short leg.



Given the situation, it was a poor shot by a player of Malan's quality and experience and put even more responsibility on the shoulders of Masood.

With balls keeping low, there was little margin for error but Bess eased some of the tension by sweeping Watt behind square for four before Masood stroked Alex Thomson to the cover

boundary. There were more cheers from the Yorkshire dressing room when Bess cut Watt for four and clipped him through midwicket for three but there was an anxious moment for the visitors in the same over.

Masood was on 76 when he missed a sweep at Watt and umpire Chris Watts appeared to uphold the appeal but was only

signalling to the bowler to get off the pitch.

Bess drove Thomson through the covers for another four and when Zak Chappell replaced Watt at the Pavilion end, Masood turned him behind square to the ropes. Watt switched to the Lake end but the target was now under 20 and Masood swept him to the midwicket boundary to move into the nineties.

With 14 required, Thomson replaced Chappell but Bess skipped down the pitch to whip him through midwicket for four and in the next over, he swept Watt for another boundary to take Yorkshire to within touching distance of the finishing line.

With everyone around the bat, Bess turned Watt through midwicket for three and struck the winning blow by pulling a Thomson full toss to the boundary shortly before midday to finally end Yorkshire's 17-game wait for a red-ball victory.

## Babar loses a spot in ICC Test rankings

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan skipper Babar Azam dropped to fifth position in the International Cricket Council's (ICC) rankings after losing a spot in the Test batters category.

As per the latest ICC ranking update, the top three positions are held by Australian batters with top-ranked Marnus Labuschagne joined by Steve Smith on second, and Travis Head on the third position.

Labuschagne has 903 rating points, with Smith on 885. Head has 884 points after their tons in the ICC World Test Championship

Final against India at The Oval.

Meanwhile Babar, who is the only Pakistan player in the top 10, has 862 rating points after New Zealand's Kane Williamson with 883 points.

"Batters from the same side taking the top three places is a rare occurrence. The last time this occurred in the Test batting rankings was in 1984, when West Indies players Gordon Greenidge (810 rating points), Clive Lloyd (787) and Larry Gomes (773) were at the top of the list," the ICC said in a press release.

"There are also some other significant movements for Australia after their 209-run victory over India.

"Alex Carey has progressed 11 places to 36th after scoring 48 and 66 not out while Nathan Lyon (up two places to sixth) and Scott Boland (up five places to 36th) have also moved up after finishing with five wickets each in the match.

"India batter Ajinkya Rahane's scores of 89 and 46 see him return to the rankings in 37th position while Shardul Thakur has moved up six places to 94th after his half-century in the first innings."

## Four-nation cup Pakistan lose second match to Kenya



Pakistan, who are now out of the tournament, will face Djibouti in their last match of the four-nation tournament on June 17.

Kenya are the highest-ranked side in this tournament with 102 ranking. They are followed by Mauritius with 180 ranking. Djibouti stands at 193 and Pakistan are the lowest-ranked side with 195 ranking.

The current Pakistan team is dominated by diaspora players with some having good credentials. It will be a testing time for the foreign-based staff and will be interesting to see how they perform for the country in the upcoming assignments including SAFF Cup scheduled to be held in Bengaluru from June 21 to July 4. Pakistan, if allowed by the state, will then move to India from Mauritius.

MAURITIUS (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan faced another loss in the ongoing four-nation cup in Mauritius as they lost their second match to Kenya by 1-0.

After taking early lead in the first half, Kenya dominated most part of the match. However, Pakistani boys improved their game from previous contest.

Shumah Moses of Kenya, ranked 103rd in

FIFA rankings, took advantage of a throw-in, scoring the first goal of the match in the last part of the 17th minute.

Hassan Bashir got an opportunity to score and level the game in the 39th minute, but unfortunately, he was unable to make it.

In the second half, Pakistan tried their best to score a piece but didn't convert a single goal.

## 2,080 players to feature in Inter-District U19 One-Day Tournament

LAHORE (APP): The Regional Inter-District U19 One-Day Tournament 2023 is set to commence tomorrow, bringing together aspiring young cricket talents from across the nation. The tournament will take place simultaneously in 15 regions, with Hyderabad region hosting the matches from 19 June onwards.

This prestigious tournament serves as a platform for showcasing the immense potential and skill of budding cricketers in the country. A total of 2,080 players have been selected to participate in the tournament, featuring 104 teams, the squads of which have been selected after nationwide trials conducted earlier this year.

The performing players from the trial matches underwent a medical examination after which the top 20 players were chosen to represent their respective sides in the 104-team tournament. To be eligible for participation, players born on or after 1 September 2004 have been selected.

The 16 regions include Abbottabad (seven districts), AJK (five districts), Bahawalpur (seven dis-

tricts), Dera Murad Jamali (five districts), Faisalabad (six districts), FATA (10 districts), Hyderabad (seven districts), Islamabad (four zones and one district), Karachi (seven zones), Lahore (three zones; six teams), Larkana (six districts), Multan (seven districts), Peshawar (five districts), Quetta (10 districts), Rawalpindi (four districts) and Sialkot (seven districts).

The Regional Inter-District U19 One-Day Tournament follows a competitive format where the top team from each region will be declared winners.

Moreover, the tournament serves as a gateway to even greater opportunities. The outstanding performers from the Regional Inter-District U19 One-Day Tournament will earn a chance to play in the Inter-Region U19 Championship (three-day) and Inter-Region U19 Cup (one-day) tournaments, a nationwide event that will be held from August to October 2023.

This championship will provide a stage for the brightest talents to shine and gain recognition on a national level.

## Grandson of legendary Qamar Zaman honored with int'l award

PESHAWAR (APP): The grandson of legendary Qamar Zaman promising Noor Zaman, who recently won Asian Squash title besides excellent performance in the British Open, and US Junior, was awarded with an international award by Asian Squash Federation looking after his excellent performance in the world of squash. Pakistan's Noor Zaman was awarded the Hassan Musa Asian Award for best performance in the field of squash. Noor Zaman, the grandson of legendary Qamar Zaman, has been honored with the Hassan Musa Asian Award for his outstanding performance in the field of squash in Asia.

According to an official of Pakistan Squash Federation, Secretary Federation Zafarab Iqbal received the award at the Annual General meeting of Asian Squash Federation which was held in Hong Kong recently. The Presidents of World Squash Federation and Asian Squash Federation were also present on this occasion. Pakistan's Noor Zaman was given the Hasan Musa Asian Award for the best performance.

## Argentina coach says Messi 'deserves' MLS move

BEIJING (Agencies): Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said Wednesday that Lionel Messi "deserves" his high-profile transfer to Inter Miami, as the world champions prepared for a friendly against Australia in Beijing.

Messi, the Argentina captain, last week announced he would join the MLS side after reaching the end of his two-year deal with French giants Paris Saint-Germain.

"I'm very happy that he has decided to go and play for a club in a city that is going to treat him very well," Scaloni said at a press conference in the Chinese capital.

"Regardless of the

league or the country, the important thing is that he feels good in the city and in the club.

"I believe he'll have the conditions to enjoy himself there -- he deserves it."

Messi said Tuesday that last winter's World Cup was probably his last.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner will turn 39 during the next World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"I have said several times before that I don't think so, that that (2022) was my last World Cup," he said when asked by China's Titan Sports if he might feature at the 2026 tournament.

Scaloni said Wednesday that Messi's "statement

seems to me to be very prudent".

"He is a man who doesn't tell lies, and the reality is that we're going to see how he feels," he said.

"The World Cup is so far away that it makes no sense to think beyond that."

Argentina and Australia will play a friendly on Thursday evening at Beijing's 68,000-capacity Workers' Stadium.

The match will reprise the last-16 clash at the World Cup, where Messi scored and terrorised Australia in a 2-1 win for Argentina in Doha.

The Albiceleste went on to win the World Cup, beating France on penalties in the final.

## England pick paceman Broad for first Ashes Test

EDGBASTON (Agencies): England have favoured Stuart Broad's experience over Mark Wood's raw pace for the first Ashes Test at Edgbaston as they named their team on Wednesday.

With James Anderson and Ollie Robinson fit to return to the XI after resting injury niggles against Ireland at Lord's, there was just one spot left in the seam attack for Friday's series opener.

Captain Ben Stokes has previously spoken of his desire to have a bowler with express pace and, with Jofra Archer and Olly Stone on the sidelines, would have been tempted to pick Wood. But Broad, with 582 Test wickets under his belt, and who led the attack impressively against Ireland, has got the nod.

His selection guarantees another chapter in the 36-year-old's storied rivalry with Australia opener David Warner, who floundered badly against Broad in 2019, when the Englishman dismissed him seven times in 10 innings.

With spinner Moeen Ali slotting straight in at number eight after agreeing to return to Test cricket, the only question that lingers over the England side concerns the fitness of all-rounder Stokes. The skipper's longstanding left knee problems have been a source of constant speculation but he has ramped up his participation in training over the past 48 hours, bowling at close to full speed.

Opener Ben Duckett and fellow batter Harry Brook are the only players in the side who will be making their Ashes debuts in Birmingham.

**England team for first Ashes Test at Edgbaston:** Ben Duckett, Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (capt), Jonny Bairstow, Moeen Ali, Stuart Broad, Ollie Robinson, James Anderson.

## Shahbaz believes more funds for PHF to put hockey back on track

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former skipper Olympian Shahbaz Ahmed Snr on Wednesday lauded Pakistan sports board (PSB) for issuing a special grant to Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) for ensuring Pakistan team's participation in the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy but proposed that more funds should be injected on yearly basis to put the national game back on track.

The PSB on Tuesday issued a check worth Rs 25 million to PHF for making arrangements for the Asian Champions Trophy, scheduled to be held in Chennai, India in August. Shahbaz, who led Pakistan to the 1994 World Cup victory, termed the grant a "welcome sign" but said he believed Pakistan hockey needed more financial backing.

It is heartening that the government has provided

much-needed financial support to hockey, he said and added, hockey is our pride but currently, it needs backing from all quarters. Shahbaz Ahmed said, we were a force to reckon with in the past, but then unfortunately priorities were changed in the last 25 to 30 years. He said the old hockey was replaced with modern hockey but we failed to adapt to the changes.

"Now, we will have to inject more money into the game, I don't believe in an overnight change. I think we will have to adopt a realistic approach and move step by step to once again raise a formidable side.

Our first priority should be to become Asian Champions and break into the top 10 sides of the world. Hoping to win World Cup or clinch a medal at the Olympics in the near future sounds great but that is too ambitious at this

stage", Shahbaz told APP.

He said that a substantial amount should be earmarked in the annual budget to put the national game back on track. "Similarly, I think Pakistan cricket Board should also step out and ask each profit-making Pakistan Super League franchise to contribute at least 20 million rupees after every edition. They generate huge revenues every year. This amount (Rs 20 million) should not be a big problem for them. Revival of hockey is a national cause and they must contribute to that," he added.

According to the former hockey stalwart, Pakistan will have to improve hockey infrastructure, financially support players and arrange foreign tours for junior and senior teams to give them maximum exposure. "A foreign tour consumes around 30 to 40 million rupees.

## Pakistan Basketball team reaches Maldives for International 5-Nation Basketball Championship

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Basketball team reached Maldives on Wednesday in order to participate in the forthcoming International 5-Nation Basketball Championship to be starting from June 15th in Male.

Pakistan along with host Maldives, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal will fight for the top honor in the Championship title in a single league round where top four teams will qualify for semi-finals of the Championship.

The Pakistan team also met with Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso before departure to Maldives. In this meeting, the President of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Brig. (R) Muhammad Ifitikhar Mansoor informed him about the preparations of the national team for the five-nation Championship.

DG PSB Shoaib Khoso is hopeful that the talented Pakistan Basketball Team will perform brilliantly in the International 5-Nation Basketball Championship. He said that Pakistan Sports Board



will provide maximum support to active sports federations.

He also said that it would be a wonderful opportunity for young players to represent the country to display their sports potential in their respective game as the Pakistan Sports Board is working hard for the promotion of sports across the country. DG PSB Shoaib Khoso also assured PBBF officials that PSB will provide maximum sup-

port for future training camps for any upcoming national and international events.

The President of the Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Brig. (Retd) Muhammad Ifitikhar Mansoor and PBBF Associate Secretary Ouj E Zahoor thanked the Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari and Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso for

their support and assistance, which enable PBBF to train the national basketball team in the camp for more than a month. This Championship will be helpful for the Pakistan team to get international exposure after a long period of seven years.

Under the supervision of the coaching staff, young players did extensive training at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad ahead of the event.

The team staff includes former International Malik Muhammad Riaz, who will be the head coach along with Umer Mehmood coach and Ahmed Ali Tipu will be the team manager.

Besides the team, for the first time in decades a Pakistani Basketball Referee Syed Adnan Ali, from Karachi, who is also a FIBA certified referee will also officiate in the five-nation international basketball Championship.

PBBF said that the International 5-Nation Championship will be a door opener for talented basketball players to represent Pakistan, the purpose of participating in the event is to provide opportunities to the players so that they can get experience as PBBF set the target of the Pakistan basketball team to win the medal in upcoming South Asian Games to be held next year.

According to details, Pakistan will play their first match against Nepal on June 15 while green shirts will be in action against host Maldives on June 16. Pakistan will play their third

league match against Bhutan on June 17 and will play his last match against Bangladesh on June 18. The semi-finals will be played on June 20 while the final of the Championship will be held on June 22.

It is also mentioned that after getting the official affiliation with Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) a few months ago, the top management of Pakistan Basketball Federation headed by Brig. (Retd) Muhammad Ifitikhar Mansoor and Secretary General Khalid Bashir took many steps to organize national events as well as to send Pakistan teams to international level.

**Pakistan Squad:** 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.

Officials: Malik Muhammad Riaz (head coach), Umer Mehmood (coach), Ahmed Ali Tipu (manager).





## In brief

### Eight dengue cases reported this year

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as eight dengue-positive cases had been reported in the Rawalpindi district this year, but there was a need to remain vigilant to control the spread of the fatal disease as the prevailing weather was suitable for breeding larvae. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr Sajjad Mehmood told APP, that four patients were admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital, three to the Holy Family Hospital, and one to the Shifa International Hospital. Giving details of the punitive actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had registered 107 FIRs, sealed 62 premises, issued Challans to 134, notices to 752, and a fine of Rs 244,600 imposed on violations of dengue SOPs in 2023. 21 people were also arrested for violating SOPs, he added. Dr Sajjad informed that 1,124 health teams during indoor surveillance checked around 155,313 houses and found larvae at 1,148 sites.

### 2 held, valuables recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against anti-social elements, Rawalpindi Police on Wednesday nabbed two members of a robbers gang involved in street crimes besides recovering Rs 67,000, four mobile phones, weapons, and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Bani Police arrested two accused namely Faisal, the ringleader, and Hassan, who were allegedly involved in various robbery and street crime cases. He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO) Bani Police Station on the directives of Superintendent of Police (SP) Rawal, Faisal Saleem conducted a raid and managed to net the criminals who recorded holders. The accused had been sent to jail for an identification parade, he added.

### AIOU releases spring 2023 schedule

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has released the semester schedule for the second phase of semester Spring 2023 for new and ongoing students as per the direction of the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. According to the academic calendar, the study period will begin on June 16 and will continue till October 10, a press release on Wednesday said. The students of BA/associate degree will submit their assignments by post to their respective tutors according to the schedule. Information on tutors is available in the students' CMS portal. In case of any issue, students can contact their concerned regional office or university helpline. Students of B.Ed, B.S, and Post Graduate programs will upload their assignments on the LMS portal and also participate in online workshops through LMS during the study period. Books of all the programs are available on the university website [www.aiou.edu.pk](http://www.aiou.edu.pk), students can download the required course books. Books are also being dispatched to the addresses of students enrolled in BA/AD programs. For more information, students can contact the AIOU helpline number 051-111-112-468.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervaz Ashraf addressing to the National Conference on Empowered Local Governments Moving Forward to Accelerate the Implementation of Agenda 2030.

## Wafaqi Mohtasib opens Webinar on IRD

F.P Report

ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat organized a Webinar on Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD): Pakistan's Experience from the platform of Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) yesterday.

Inaugurating the Webinar, Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi highlighted the main features of the IRD system in administering free and expeditious justice to the general public through mediation and conciliation without the necessity of docketing any complaint or issuing any official notice.

He stated that the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution being a Poorman's court, was addressing complaints of maladministration by Federal Agencies in large numbers. Mr. Qureshi added that the IRD initiative adds value to the services of this institution in addressing issues of maladministration and promoting thereby good governance, the rule of law and the fundamental freedoms.

Addressing the participants, Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi added that the IRD mechanism involves resolution of disputes through mediation and persuasion rather than a decision arrived at through following a strict process or procedure. He emphasized



that the IRD system responds to the dire needs of the general public for resolution of dispute at grass roots level without hiring the services of an advocate or waiting for lengthy legal processes. Mr. Qureshi stated that from April 2022 till today, 1911 complaints were received under IRD out of which 1837 have been resolved while 74 are under process.

The Webinar was attended by over 70 participants representing member institutions of the Asian Ombudsman Association including Azerbaijan, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and other countries.

It was also attended by the representatives of Ombudsmen institutions functioning in the country including Provincial Ombudsman Sindh, Banking Mohtasib, Federal Tax Ombudsman and the Regional Offices of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat. The Webinar

was addressed by Mr. Shahzad Iqbal, Associate Director of ADR Centre for Arbitration and Dispute Resolution in Pakistan.

Mr. Justice M. Raza Khan, formerly Chief Justice KPK High Court and the Federal Secretary, Law and Justice Division spoke about the practices and procedures of IRD in the context of Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution.

Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi who is the current President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), further stated that the Webinar was part of the series of activities planned for promoting professionalism, cooperation and ombudsmanship in Asia and beyond. He offered that Pakistan remained ready to share its expertise and best practices on subjects of professional interest with members of other regional and international ombudsman associations.

### ANF seizes over 161 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in six operations conducted across the country managed to net four accused and recovered over 161 kg drugs, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that in an operation near Gujranwala Toll Plaza, ANF recovered 93.6 kg charras concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle and arrested two drug smugglers, residents of Khyber.

In another operation near Kuchlak bypass Quetta, ANF seized 50 kg heroin concealed in a dry rainy nullah.

In third operation conducted near 'Jarhoi Zakha Khail' area, eight kg charras concealed in plastic bags was seized. The spokesman informed that in fourth operation in Mianwali, ANF managed to recover 1.2 kg opium and 40 grams charras from the possession of a motorcyclist resident of Bhakkar.

In the fifth operation conducted at Pakistan International Container Terminal, Karachi, ANF recovered five kg Ice drug concealed in decoration pieces. The container was booked for Australia by a Peshawar-based private company. In the sixth operation conducted at Pak-Afghan Border area in Chaman, ANF recovered four kg suspicious material from the possession of an accused.

### Bandit killed

RAWALPINDI (APP): A robber was killed during an exchange of fire with police in the Morgah area here on Wednesday.

According to a police spokesman, the armed robbers opened indiscriminate firing on the Dolphin police party in the jurisdiction of Morgah police station, a robber was killed during the exchange of fire, who was identified as Basit. Later, the body was shifted to the hospital for autopsy.

However, the police conducting search operations to arrest the robbers escaped from the scene.

Soon after the incident, SSP Operations Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi along with SP Potohar Muhammad Waqas Khan reached the spot.

City Police Officer CPO Khalid Hamdani praised the timely response of the Dolphin Force and said that those who attack the police and citizens cannot escape from the grip of the law.

## Benazir Kafaalat programme to cover 9.3m families

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 9.3 million families will be provided quarterly assistance of Rs. 8,750 under the Benazir Kafaalat Programme during the Fiscal Year 2023-24.

The Benazir Kafaalat scheme is being executed by the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) which is a flagship programme of the present government.

According to an official source, the quarterly stipend of the Benazir Kafalat programme has been increased from Rs. 7000 to Rs. 8750. While the amount will be increased further considering the inflation rate.

Similarly, the number of beneficiaries has increased from 7.6 million in the past year to 9.3 million families in the coming year. A total of Rs. 364 billion has been allocated for the Kafaalat programme which is aimed at financially empowering

women by providing them with financial assistance. The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) programme also known as the "Benazir Kafaalat Programme" is the core programme of BISP and was initiated in the year 2008.

Since its inception, the Kafaalat initiative has grown to the extent that it is now the largest single cash transfer programme in Pakistan's history.

The short-term objective of the programme was to cushion against the negative effects of slow economic growth, food crisis and inflation on the poor, particularly women, through the provision of cash assistance to eligible families.

The long-term objectives of the programme were to eradicate extreme and chronic poverty, along with women empowerment, as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## House hiring facility for teaching & nonteaching staff restored

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training has reinstated the fresh house hiring facility for teachers and employees of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) which was suspended in May 2022 due to budgetary constraints. This move comes as a relief to the teachers and employees of the educational institutions who had been burdened with the responsibility of paying rent from their own pockets, leading to severe financial difficulties.

The house hiring facility allows government servants to rent houses for their families, with the government covering the rental expenses. However, a shortage of allocated funds in the hiring budget of educational institutions led to the suspension of this facility for the teachers, while employ-

ees of ministries, divisions, and other attached departments continued to benefit from it. This disparity sparked concerns of discrimination among teachers and employees of educational institutions.

The lifting of the ban on fresh hiring has been met with enthusiasm and relief by teachers, who have long been grappling with the financial burden of renting accommodations.

Dr Rahima Rehman, the president of the Federal Government College Teachers Association (FGCTA) while talking to APP, warmly welcomed the decision of allowing fresh house hiring.

She expressed her support, stating that it is the right decision to alleviate the financial hardships faced by teachers. After enduring a year-long struggle, teachers will now have the oppor-

tunity to secure a hired house for their families. The Ministry of Federal Education's decision to restore the house hiring facility to FDE employees reflects recognition of the financial challenges faced by teachers and a commitment to rectify the discrimination in the allocation of housing benefits. This positive step is poised to improve the overall well-being of educators and contribute to the enhancement of the education system in the capital city.

Dr Nazir Ahmed Bhutta, the general secretary of the association, demanded increased budgetary allocation for federal government colleges to address the significant backlog of pending rent owed by teachers. He highlighted that these colleges had been allocated insufficient funds in the previous year's rental ceiling.

## Water inflow in major rivers jump to 295,700 cusecs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Water inflow in all major rivers has significantly increased due to the surge in temperature and Wednesday it stood at 295,700 cusecs against the outflow of 226,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by the Indus River System Authority (IRSA), water inflow in the River Indus at Tarbela has jumped to 129,200 cusecs against the outflow of 85,000 cusecs.

The water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1441.82 feet and was 43.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet.

Similarly, water inflow in River Jhelum at Mangla dam was recorded as 57,900 cusecs against the outflow of 33,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1140.70 feet, which was 90.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

Water inflow in the River Kabul touched 66,000 cusecs at Nowshera and 23,600 cusecs in River Chenab at Marala.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 101,000, 99,300, 58,700 and 22,600 cusecs, respectively.

## Govt to complete its tenure: Sharmila Faruqi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party Senior Leader Sharmila Faruqi Wednesday said that the current government would complete its tenure and elections would be held on schedule.

Talking to PTV news channel, she said that the former PTI government destroyed the country's economy and we were now suffering what it sowed in four years. She said that economic stability was not possible in a country without political stability.

The aim of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership was to stay in government only by violating the constitution and attacking state institutions.

She also hailed that the budget 2023-24 presented by the incumbent government can be considered a balanced one.

The government has set some long-term plans for the economic revival, she said, adding, the need of the hour was to improve trade relations with neighbour countries where Bilawal

Bhutto plays an important role. She claimed that Khan had ruined the country's economy and the PDM-led government had been working hard to steer the country out of the quagmire. In response to a question, he said that the incidents of May 9 should be investigated and the culprits should be brought to justice. The civil and military leadership has taken a timely and wise decision to deal with the miscreants of these violent incidents with iron hands, she said.

## Islamabad police to further strengthen traffic enforcement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Wing) would ensure traffic discipline in the city and implement effective measures for a safer road environment, besides further activating the squad formed for the collection of fines from violators of traffic rules.

It was decided in a meeting presided over by the Chief Traffic Officer Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer, which was aimed at evaluating the monthly performance of all zones and implementing effective measures to enhance traffic rule enforcement.

The meeting, held at Traffic Headquarters Islamabad, brought together key officials including SP Traffic, DSPs, and Zone In-charges, who discussed strategies to address various road safety concerns. With a focus on eliminating accidents and ensuring compliance with traffic laws, the meeting emphasized the need for strict implementation and effective disciplinary actions against those neglecting their duties.

During the meeting, Islamabad's traffic officials assessed the monthly performance of all zones. The primary objective was to reinforce the effectiveness of the existing squads responsible for enforcing

traffic rules while addressing prevalent issues that compromise road safety. The meeting instructed to further activate the squad formed for the collection of fines from traffic violators.

Measures were devised to tackle violations related to designated routes and timings, especially by heavy vehicles, as well as infractions such as mobile phone usage while driving, seat belt negligence, one-way violations, helmet-less riding, and parking problems outside major markets and shopping plazas.

The meeting also focused on enhancing the traffic flow system to ensure smoother movement within the city. To ensure the successful implementation of these measures, the Zone In-charges were assigned the responsibility of their respective areas. Any negligence or dereliction of duty would be met with strict disciplinary actions to maintain accountability among the traffic personnel. The chief traffic officer highlighted the importance of taking every possible measure to effectively implement traffic laws and enhance transportation facilities for the citizens. The goal is to improve traffic flow and minimize accidents in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani visits PIMS Hospital OPD.



### Minister visits Takhar

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Interior Minister Affairs Sirajuddin Haqqani, in his trip to the northern provinces of the country, attended in a gathering of scholars and elders of Takhar province. The Governor of Takhar province Shaikh Zia-ur-Rahman Madani welcoming Minister Haqqani said: "Takhar has always been the center of science and Jihad, as lots of Muhadditheen, Qarian, writers, poets and lawyers were born in the province, a statement said.

## The Frontier Post

Zil-Qadah 25, 1444 — Thursday, June 15, 2023

### 630 types of drug produced

KABUL (Agencies): The General Director of Afghanistan Food and Drug Authority, Dr. Abdul Bari Omar, in the opening ceremony of the first domestic drug products exhibition, asked domestic and foreign investors to invest in the drug production sector in Afghanistan. In the opening ceremony, Dr. Omar reminded saying that all the drugs and medical equipment in this exhibition are domestic products of the country.

## MoU signed to print new afghani banknotes

KABUL (Agencies): An agreement has been signed with foreign companies to print new afghani banknotes, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said Wednesday.

According to a statement issued by the acting prime minister's office, the General Director of Da Afghanistan Bank Hedayatullah Badri met with Mawlawi Kabir to discuss central bank matters.

Badri also shared details on steps taken to maintain the value of the afghani and discussed the issue of old banknotes in circulation.

He said a new agreement has been signed with international companies to print banknotes that will meet international standards.

Afghanistan has had limited access to fresh bank-

notes over the past two years and banknotes in circulation are deteriorating.

Being a largely cash-based economy, a large percentage of notes are torn or held together with cello tape.

In November, a Polish firm delivered Afghani banknotes to Kabul. The contract was for notes valued at 10 billion Afghanis, mostly in small denominations.

### 400 killed in traffic incidents: Officials

KABUL (TOLOnews): The general directorate of police traffic said that since the beginning of 1402 (solar year), nearly 400 people have died and over 900 others have been injured in more than six hundred traffic incidents throughout the country.

According to the figures of the directorate, 13 children and 57 women died in these events.

"About 615 traffic accidents have occurred throughout Afghanistan, including 280 traffic accidents that have resulted in deaths and about 318 traffic accidents that have injured people," said Abdul Wodod Khaikhwah, manager of planning and policy of the directorate.

However, some drivers believe that the cause of traffic incidents is the destruction of highways and they asked the current government to pay attention to the construction of highways.

"On the west route, there are no longer any signs of the road -- some of the roads have been flooded and others have been destroyed by mines," said Shireen, a driver.

"The roads are terrible, and a lot of drivers disobey the law," said Marouf, another driver.

The incidence of traffic incidents, according to some passengers, has grown as a result of drivers' negligence and disregard for the law.

"I came here from Nimroz in 20 hours, the road is very bad, drivers are also careless," said Suhrah, a passenger.

Nearly 2,000 traffic incidents happened nationwide in the solar year 1401, according to information from the general directorate of police traffic.

## Floods caused clean water shortage in country



KABUL (Agencies): In a meeting with the Acting Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the Acting Minister of Energy and Water reminded saying that the last floods caused drought and a shortage of clean drinkable water in the country.

The Ministry of Energy and Water was able to preserve a large amount of water covering the areas affected by the floods during past years, said Minister Mansoor.

For his part, Acting

Prime Minister Mawlawi Kabir said that Afghanistan has suffered years of severe drought, farmers are facing water shortage, and underground waters reached its deepest level in some cities and regions, according to a statement quoting Kabir.

"We need to provide clean water to Kabul and in many other regions to fight drought," said Mawlawi Kabir to Minister Mansoor, quoting the statement.

In the end, to address the challenge, Acting Prime Minister, Mawlawi Kabir gave necessary instructions to the Acting Minister of Energy and Water in mandate to overcome the issues of water shortages and drought in the country.

## 180 Afghan prisoners transferred from Iran



KABUL (Khaama Press): Iran handed over 180 Afghan prisoners to the de facto authorities in the Islamic-Qala port of Herat province on Wednesday, according to a statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan.

"Based on the agreement between IEA and I.R. Iran, 180 Afghan nationals sentenced to imprisonment were handed over to the Islamic Emirate in the presence of senior officials of the two countries in the

Islam-Qala port of Herat province on June 14, 2023," said Hafiz Zia Ahmad, deputy spokesperson for Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He further mentioned that 1131 Afghan nationals from various prisons in Iran have been transferred to Afghanistan.

According to officials, 15 Afghanistan nationals have been released from the Al Ghadir prison in Zahidan, Iran.

The convicts who had been released were given to Afghanistan's diplomatic

representative in Nimroz. These freed prisoners were detained in the past because they lacked proper documentation.

Earlier, over 101 Afghan prisoners were handed over to Afghanistan who was serving prison sentences in Iran.

According to the Iranian Justice Ministry, close to 800 Afghan prisoners were given to members of Afghanistan's interim Taliban government last year per the terms of the two countries prisoner transfer agreement.

## Chinese investors keen on investing in different sectors



KABUL (Khaama Press): Recently, several Chinese investors have traveled to Maidan Wardak to assess potential business opportunities in the central Afghan provinces, official sources said.

During the visit, Chinese investors met with the governor of Maidan

Wardak province Qari Bakhtyar Mouaz and stated they are interested to build production plants of kitchen utensils, wire nets, and diapers, according to reports.

The report added, these foreign investors would like to invest an estimated amount of \$250,000 for a

starter and will increase their investment in a gradual manner.

For his part, Governor Qari Bakhtyar Mouaz said that they are ready to provide all the necessary facilities for the construction of these factories in the industrial town of the province.

Additionally, Mr. Mouaz stressed that security-wise, every corner of Afghanistan is ready for investment, and he called on national and international entrepreneurs to consider Maidan Wardak a promising and potential destination for small and medium-sized businesses.

Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, foreign investment has declined to almost zero according to economic experts, as the country is currently plagued with dire economic and humanitarian situations.

Hundreds of national investors and business people fled the country fearing death threats and persecution from the Taliban regime, and thousands of development projects throughout the country have been left incomplete following the late regime change.

be damaged more," said Salih Mohammad Khaleq, a poet and writer.

Visitors called on Islamic Emirate to pay attention to historical monuments in the country and to restore them.

"Nobody has paid attention to these historical monuments and rain destroyed part of them," said Mubarak Shah, a visitor.

"It is a historical place. We request the government restart the work on this project and complete it," said Shahabuddin, a Logar resident.

"We have proposed to the Ministry of the Information and Culture to begin work restoring this place," said Zabihiullah Aryaye, an official in the culture and information department of Balkh.

The building is located in Khwaja Bahauddin village and annually thousands of visitors, both domestic and foreign, come to visit the site.

### 2 Afghan miners killed in Samangan

DARA-E-SUF BALA, Samangan (Khaama Press): The provincial officials said two mine workers died, and 35 others were poisoned due to gas suffocation in Samangan province of Afghanistan.

Mohammad Nasim Khybershekan, the district governor of Dara-e-Suf Bala, Samangan province, has confirmed that the incident occurred in the Merak Dahane mine in Dara-e-Suf Bala district.

He pointed out that the main reason for the death and suffocation of mine workers was non-professional mining in the area.

Meanwhile, the provincial health officials said that the suffocated people were transferred to a medical hospital for treatment.

Earlier on Saturday, a coalminer lost his life, and another went unconscious due to gas suffocation in a coal mine in the Baghlan province of Afghanistan.

A toxic gas leaked as workers worked in a coal mine in the Tala-o-Barfak district. As a result, one miner was killed, and another fainted.

According to officials, unsafe mining practices, poor equipment, and unskilled workers are the factors for mining casualties.

### Exhibition held in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies): An exhibition titled "Afghanistan-produced Medicine" was held in Kabul.

The head of the Afghanistan Food and Drug Authority, Abdul Bari Omar, said that Afghanistan is producing 15 types of medicine. According to Omar, medicine worth \$1 billion is being sold in Afghanistan.

"In a country of 40 million, we spent \$1 billion on medicine. The main reason is its quality and smuggling of medicine," he said.

The deputy Minister of Economy, Abdul Latif Nazari, said that imports of low-quality medicine is being prevented in Afghanistan.

"The issue of the quality of medicine and food should be considered," he said.

A member of the Afghanistan National Pharmacy Union, Sayed Noor Pacha, called on the Islamic Emirate to seriously consider the smuggling of medicines.

"You can purchase the medicine for the government hospitals from us, at least you can do this," he said.

The exhibition was held for a period of four days and many medicine-producing companies participated in it.

## Kabir: IEA strive to bring solidarity among all Afghan ethnic groups

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan works for solidarity among all Afghan ethnic groups in the country said Acting Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with the Minister and Governor of Faryab.

Acting Prime Minister of the IEA, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, met with the Acting Agriculture Minister, the Governor of Faryab and a number of elders and ethnic influential of that

province, said a statement released by Arg.

Elders of Faryab shared their challenges and proposals with the acting Prime Minister in the meeting and asked for the attention of the Islamic Emirate to address their problems the statement added.

The Islamic Emirate is the home of the entire nation of Afghanistan and has opened its doors to all citizens without any discrimination, said Acting

Prime Minister.

Mawlawi Kabir termed the strength and stability of Afghanistan in the unity of all Afghan ethnic groups, adding that the Islamic Emirate strives to bring solidarity among all Afghan ethnic groups.

In the end, the Acting Prime Minister of the IEA assured the elders of Faryab Northern Province that their problems will be addressed by the relevant organs timely.

## Afghan Post, Education Ministry sign agreement



KABUL (Agencies): A cooperation agreement was signed between state-run Afghan Post and the Ministry of Education at a meeting in Kabul.

Based on the agreement, Afghan Post will ensure high school students around the country receive their graduation certificates.

"The two parties have reached an understanding

for this reason to create ease, the ease is that after this, Afghan Post will distribute Grade 12 certificates in each province," said Rahmatullah Maki, head of Afghan Post.

Abdul Khaliq Sadiq, Deputy Minister of Education, has also said that the Department of Certificates at the ministry and the Afghan Post must be com-

mitted to the implementation of this memorandum.

At the meeting, Sadiq also mentioned the efforts being made to create more facilities for school students. Since the Islamic Emirate's takeover, 200,000 certificates have been distributed and another one million have been printed, based on data of the education ministry.

## Norway invites Taliban delegation to Oslo Forum

OSLO (Khaama Press): Despite opposition from Afghan civil activists and politicians, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

once more invited a Taliban delegation to Oslo Forum taking place from June 13-15 in Norway, aimed at discussing and finding solutions to Afghanistan issues.

According to official sources, Norway has invited second-level Taliban leaders instead of Amir Khan Muttaqi and Anas Haqqani to this meeting.

Taliban officials are participating in the Oslo conference on resolving Afghanistan issues and establishing peace through dialogue.

Meanwhile, representa-

tives and civil activists of different countries, including prominent Afghan figures and a delegation of Taliban are in Norway.

Participants will discuss, freedom, democracy, digital security, artificial intelligence, Bitcoin, and other acute world issues.

Following a protest at the previous meeting in Oslo in 2022, Norway did not invite senior Taliban leaders to this meeting. Instead, they invited Abdul Qahar Balkhi, the spokesperson of the Taliban's Ministry of Foreign Affairs some other officials from the Taliban's Ministry of Interior and Foreign Affairs.

The participation of the Taliban delegation in the

Oslo Forum once more sparked widespread criticism from ordinary Afghans, diaspora groups and activists.

On Tuesday, Afghan Women's Political Association opposed Norway's move to have invited the Taliban delegation to the Oslo meeting. In a statement, the association said, Norway has laid the red carpet for human rights violators, who have deprived women of their basic rights to education, employment and other social engagements.

Furthermore, the association accused Norway of supporting a de facto regime who are not the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan.

## Historic house of Maulana Balkhi's father needs restoration

BALKH (TOLOnews): Cultural activists and residents of Balkh said that the remains of the building of Maulana Jalaluddin Muhammad Balkhi's father, Khanqah of Bahauddin Walad, are col-

lapsing.

According to the residents, the Khanqah of Bahauddin Walad building is visited by many tourists every year and it is an important historical monument and it should be

restored.

"This historical monument is made of raw clay, which means that it is very vulnerable, and from this point of view it is at serious risk of snow and rain and natural disasters, and it will





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Pakistan's largest life and health insurer, protecting more than **175 Million** Pakistanis

### State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan: A Beacon of Stability and Reliability in Challenging Times

In the face of economic turmoil and challenging times, State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan shines as a beacon of success and resilience in the insurance industry. Led by the dynamic Mr. Shoaib Javed Hussain, the corporation has achieved remarkable growth in 2022, surpassing all previous

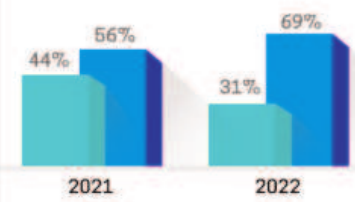
business records. With a focus on building a differentiated and profitable organization that exceeds stakeholder expectations, State Life not only drives its own growth but also propels the entire insurance landscape in the country. State Life's unparalleled performance and strategic

growth can be attributed to its highly competent leadership, diversified management, and professional team. Despite a slight decline in the cumulative results of the insurance industry in 2022 (excluding State Life's Gross Written Premium), State Life has achieved close to 67% growth compared to the previous year, resulting in an all-time high revenue. Its Gross Written Premium (GWP) of PKR 286 billion plus surpasses the combined GWP of all other

insurance companies in Pakistan, which stands at approximately PKR 127.87 billion. State Life's growth has played a significant role in driving the industry's overall progress, contributing to a nearly 43% growth in the industry in 2022. State Life Insurance Corporation's market share in 2022 has increased close to 70%, compared to 55% plus in the previous year, which is close to 24% growth in the market share as well.

This outstanding performance is the result of various strategic initiatives implemented by State Life. The corporation has introduced individual and corporate health insurance, established window takaful operations, and formed strategic partnerships which have not only reduced disparities and financial barriers but have also positioned State Life as an industry leader in innovation.

Market Share - Gross Written Premium Wise  
2021 vs 2022



Market Share Gross Written Premium Wise - Other Insurers  
Market Share Gross Written Premium Wise - State Life

### Putting Policyholders First. Redefining the Insurance Landscape with Innovation and Growth

State Life is not content with maintaining the status quo; it is committed to constant product innovation and reducing obstacles for its customers. Recognizing the evolving needs of different segments, the corporation has developed tailored products for Gen Z, youth, and tech freelancers, demonstrating its commitment to meeting the diverse financial needs of its customers and corporate clients.

State Life demonstrated its commitment to policyholders by fulfilling a substantial portion of insurance claims. In fact, State Life accounted

for an impressive 73% of the total claims paid by the entire industry, amounting to over PKR 175 billion out of a cumulative payout of approximately PKR 242 billion. This exemplifies State Life's robust financial standing and its unwavering dedication to meeting the needs and obligations of its valued customers.

Digital enhancements have been at the forefront of State Life's strategic initiatives. The Life and Health Mobile App provides customers with convenient access to insurance services at their fingertips. The implementation

of e-payments, e-claims, and e-processes has streamlined operations and improved the customer experience.

State Life's dedication to customer service is evident through its largest face-to-face distribution channel: the direct salesforce. With over 140,000 salesforce members spread across rural and urban areas of Pakistan and 11,000 agency offices, State Life ensures that its services reach every corner of the nation. Moreover, through agreements with banks and innovative distributors, the corporation fully leverages alternative distribution channels, ranging from agency and bancassurance to corporate agencies, direct

channels, digitalization, and group collaborations.

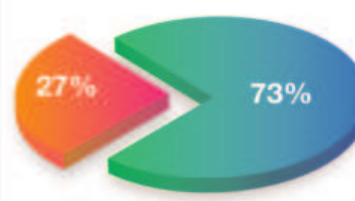
As the only AAA-rated insurance company in Pakistan, State Life's product offerings are carefully tailored to provide excellent value for money. The corporation offers the highest payouts in terms of claims and survival benefits, ensuring that policyholders are not subjected to market volatility. State Life enables access to the nation's best-selling insurance products, where policies come with sovereign guarantees.

State Life announces bonuses annually based on actuarial valuation, distributing 97.5% of surplus as bonuses to all with-profit policies. This guarantees policyholders a

return on their basic premiums paid during the saving term. These bonus rates, announced as a result of actuarial valuation, provide policyholders with the confidence that their State Life products serve their diverse financial needs at an extremely affordable cost.

State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan, under the leadership of Mr. Shoaib Javed Hussain, has emerged as a trailblazer in the insurance industry. With a clear focus on bolstering the industry's contribution to the nation's GDP, State Life plays a pivotal role in fortifying the economy's backbone through the strategic alignment of technology, data, and a human-centric approach.

Claims Payout - SLIC Market Share In Claim Disbursement Vs All Life Insurers



SLIC  
Other Companies

Written by Nabeel Akhtar:

A passionate InsurTech enthusiast, with a desire to change the future of Insurance in Pakistan and bring real change in customers' experiences. He has been at the forefront of digital disruption and innovation for almost a decade, identifying and lobbying for solutions to address market trends.

**STATE LIFE**  
INSURANCE CORPORATION OF PAKISTAN

## 2022 - Truly A Golden Year

Pakistan's largest life and health insurer, protecting more than **175 Million** Pakistanis



#### Total Assets

Dec 2022

**Rs. 1.6 Trillion**

Dec 2021

**Rs. 1.36 Trillion**

GROWTH

**17%**

#### Total Premium Sales

Dec 2022

**Rs. 286.3 Billion**

Dec 2021

**Rs. 170.9 Billion**

GROWTH

**67%**

#### New Business Sales

Dec 2022

**Rs. 174.5 Billion**

Dec 2021

**Rs. 72 Billion**

GROWTH

**143%**

#### Total Policyholders' Claims

Dec 2022

**Rs. 175.5 Billion**

Dec 2021

**Rs. 98.3 Billion**

GROWTH

**78%**

#### Policyholder Bonus

Dec 2022

**Rs. 97.5 Billion**

Dec 2021

**Rs. 85.6 Billion**

GROWTH

**14%**

#### Shareholders' surplus

Dec 2022

**Rs. 13.73 Billion**

Dec 2021

**Rs. 6.62 Billion**

GROWTH

**107%**

P.O. No. 3652-D/22

