

Shehryar sent on physical remand

RAWALPINDI (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Rawalpindi has sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former minister Shehryar Afridi to jail on five-day physical remand. The PTI leader was produced before the court in GHQ attack case. Earlier on Monday, Afridi was sent to Rawalpindi's Adiala jail by a district and sessions court in a case related to May 9 riots.

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Khadijah Shah sent to jail

LAHORE (PPI): In connection with the Gulberg plaza arson case, fashion designer Khadijah Shah on Monday was sent to jail on judicial remand by the Anti-Terrorism Court of Lahore. Gulberg police station had registered a case in arson and vandalism on a plaza in Gulberg, Lahore. The PTI's incarcerated women activists, including Shah, Sanam Javed, and Aliya Hamza, had filed bail pleas in the court in the Jinnah House attack case on June 10.

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PM directs for ensuring complete prevention of human trafficking

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah to supervise the investigation and formulate necessary legislative proposals regarding complete prevention of human trafficking. He also directed the investigation committee regarding the Greece shipwreck incident to finalize its proceedings and present its report as soon as possible.

A highly level meeting with respect to the Greece boat incident was held here under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Expressing anger over the incident, the prime minister questioned why the criminal activities of human smuggling could not be timely stopped. He asked why concrete preventive measures were not taken despite repeatedly happenings of such kind of incidents.

The prime minister directed the relevant authorities to bring all those responsible for human smuggling to justice as soon as possible. Federal Ministers Rana Sanaullah, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatimi, DG FIA, Chief Secretary Azad Jammu and Kashmir and other relevant high officials were present in the meeting. On June 14, a boat sank in the Mediterranean Sea near Greece, in which 104 people have been rescued alive, out of which 12

are from Pakistan.

So far, a total of 79 bodies have been recovered from the sea. The meeting was told that the coordination cell established in the Ministry of Interior was working 24 hours, where families of the missing persons can contact anytime. The meeting was informed that after the incident, a total of 10 FIRs had been registered while 15 people had been arrested, including the main accused of the incident. It was told that an organized network from different countries is involved in human trafficking.

The Prime Minister directed the FIA to promptly complete the detailed investigation of the matter and to take effective measures to prevent it. The Prime Minister also directed the Commissioner Gujranwala to identify the agents involved in the heinous act of human trafficking in Gujranwala district and bring them to justice immediately. The prime minister directed the relevant institutions to remain in constant contact with the families of the victims. He also directed the Pakistani embassy in Greece to stay in touch with the Greek authorities regarding the incident.

PM for increasing FDI to \$5b through SIFC: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said with the help of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the imme-

diated task was to increase the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the country up to \$5 billion. He said he had fervently advocated a unified approach to steer the country out of the economic challenges on a path to sustainable growth.

"Employing a whole-of-the-government approach, the coalition government has decided to set up a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) with a mandate to frame economic policies that ensure policy predictability, continuity and effective implementation to revive the economy", the prime minister said in a tweet. He said by virtue of its composition, the SIFC will serve as a top decision-making forum to push through fundamental reforms in the structure of the economy. To begin with, he said the forum will focus on leveraging key sectors such as IT, agriculture, energy, minerals and mining, and defence production.

"Attracting investment from friendly countries remains one of the key goals of the SIFC," he added. Shehbaz Sharif said the need for a representative forum like the SIFC has long been felt, given the scale of the economic challenges caused by internal and external factors. He said the textbook approach to deal with a unique set of problems is not workable anymore. Hence all the more reason to leverage

collective wisdom to kick-start the economy to make it self-reliant, export-driven, and robust, capable of withstanding external shocks and upheavals. "Creative ideas offer the solution to our economic problems," he added.

PM leaves for France to participate in New Global Financing Pact Summit: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday left for a two-day official visit to France at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron.

During his visit, he will participate in the New Global Financing Pact Summit being held in Paris. The Summit will prove to be an opportunity for the leaders to discuss the contours of a new global architecture capable of meeting the challenges of financing sustainable development, environment, energy transition and climate change agenda. The Prime Minister will address the Summit as leading stakeholder of G-77 and head of the one of the largest developing countries most affected by climate change. He will present Pakistan's perspective and proposals for reform of International Financial Institutions, climate finance, green infrastructure, attainment of the SDGs and solutions related to debt. He will also hold bilateral meetings with other world leaders on the sidelines of the Summit.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting regarding human smuggling and the recent capsizing of a boat in the Mediterranean near Greece.

President appoints Justice Qazi Faiz Isa as next CJP

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): President Dr Arif Alvi has approved the appointment of Justice Qazi Faiz Isa as the next Chief Justice of Pakistan and he will take charge of his office after the retirement of the incumbent CJP. In a couple of tweets uploaded on Wednesday on Presidency's official Twitter handle, President Alvi said the appointment will be effective from September 17, 2023 with the retirement of Justice Umar Ata Bandial.

The current Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, will attain the age of retirement on September 16, 2023 under Article 179 of the Constitution. The President appointed the new Chief Justice of Pakistan under Article 175A-3 of the Constitution. The President will take the oath of office from Justice Qazi Faiz Isa on September 17, 2023.

Born on October 26,

1959 in Quetta, Justice Qazi Faez Isa is the son of the late Qazi Mohammad Isa of Pishin and the grandson of Qazi Jalaluddin, the Prime Minister of Kalat State. Justice Isa was called to the Bar of England and Wales (Middle Temple, 1982) and enrolled as an advocate of the Balochistan High Court and as an advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. He practised law for over 27 years before all the High Courts of Pakistan, the Federal Shariat Court and the Supreme Court of Pakistan. He became a member of the Balochistan High Court Bar Association, Sindh High Court Bar Association and Life Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan. Before Justice Isa's elevation to the High Court he was a senior partner and head of litigation in one of Pakistan's leading law

firms. He rendered his services as amicus curiae when called upon by the High Courts and Supreme Court of Pakistan and had also conducted international arbitrations.

He also served on the boards of the largest bank of Pakistan, the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan and of the Quid-e-Azam Mazaar Management Board. After the proclamation of emergency of November 3, 2007, he elected not to appear before judges who had violated their oath. Subsequently, after the Supreme Court declared the action of November 3, 2007 constitutional, all the then judges of the High Court of Balochistan tendered their resignation, and on August 5, 2009 Justice Isa was directly elevated to the position of Chief Justice of the High Court of Balochistan.

Nawaz to announce schedule of his return after consultation with party

LONDON (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo, Nawaz Sharif will announce schedule of his return after consultation with party leadership. The PML-N has suggested of activating over a million people for historical welcome of Nawaz Sharif from London. Majority of the PML-N leaders want the party supremo to land at Lahore Airport. The PML-N workers from across the country would be given task to reach Lahore for welcoming their leader. Consultation in this connection was underway with party leadership and Nawaz Sharif has sought the details regarding the candidates.

Greece boat tragedy Count of missing Pakistanis rises

GUJRANWALA (INP): A heartbreaking incident unfolded as the number of missing individuals in the Greece boat accident surged to 111, sources said quoting Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) reports. As per the FIA reports, the number of missing persons in the region has been increased to 111, the majority of the missing persons are based from Gujrat and Gujranwala. To facilitate the identification process, the efforts are now underway to collect DNA samples from the affected families.

The FIA, along with other relevant authorities, is actively involved in coordinating the efforts to bring closure to the grieving families. The number of registered cases in the missing persons in boat accident has increased to 31, where a total of 23 cases were registered in Gujranwala and eight in Gujrat. Meanwhile, the law enforcers apprehended thirteen human smugglers, believed to be connected to the tragic incident in which seven were arrested from Gujranwala, while the remaining six were arrested from Gujrat.

May 9 Vandalism Ghulam Sarwar held with son, nephew

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former federal minister Ghulam Sarwar was arrested on Wednesday along with son and a nephew.

Police said that Ghulam Sarwar was detained from house of his friend in Islamabad along with son former MNA Mansoor Hayat and former Ammar Siddique. All three PTI leaders were wanted in damaging the public and private institutions and property in Taxila on May 9, in reaction of detention of PTI chief.

FIA arrests Elahi in money laundering case

LAHORE (PPI): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Wednesday arrested former Punjab chief minister Pervaiz Elahi in a money laundering case.

The FIA team produced Pervaiz Elahi before a court in Lahore and demanded his 14-day physical remand. The FIA had registered a new first information report (FIR) against Pervaiz Elahi on the charge of money laundering through five companies. The FIA also nominated Pervaiz Elahi's son Moonis Elahi, Jibran and others in this case. However, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi approached the Lahore High Court (LHC) for protective bail and the details of the cases against him. The FIA, police and others were made respondents in the petition filed by Elahi.

"Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is a former Punjab chief minister. Cases were being registered against him on political grounds," it was stated in the petition. The court was requested to provide the details of the cases against Pervaiz Elahi

and grant him protective bail in the money laundering case. It is to be noted here that Pervaiz Elahi had not been released despite bail from a special anti-terrorism court in Lahore on Tuesday.

On Tuesday last, a special anti-terrorism court in Lahore had approved the post-arrest bail of PTI Central President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in a case pertaining to making illegal appointments. The court had accepted the bail application of the former Punjab chief minister and former Punjab Assembly secretary coordination Rai Mumtaz in illegal recruitments case in lieu of surety bonds of Rs1 million each.

Special Judge Anti-Corruption Ali Raza Awan read out the verdict he had reserved earlier. Lahore Bar President Rana Intezar represented Pervaiz Elahi in the case. While giving his arguments, Special Prosecutor Abdus Sammad from Anti-Corruption Establishment said that the former chief minister and others had given

grade-17 jobs to 12 candidates in the Punjab Assembly despite the fact that they had failed to pass the written test.

"There are clear proofs that the record and the documents had been tampered with," he said, and added, "The candidate securing just eight marks was accommodated while the one getting 58 marks was overlooked." On June 4, a Lahore district court had sent Pervaiz Elahi on 14-day judicial remand while rejecting the Anti-Corruption Establishment's (ACE) request for his physical remand. An ACE spokesperson then told the media that Pervaiz Elahi allegedly recruited 12 Grade-17 officers in the Punjab Assembly against merit. Pervaiz Elahi was first arrested on June 1 after police raided his Lahore residence twice after an anti-corruption court dismissed his pre-arrest bail in a case pertaining to irregularities in development projects launched during his term as the Punjab chief minister.

Pakistan, China vow to forge deeper strategic ties

F.P. Report

RAWALPIND: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), is on an official visit to China from 18-22 June 2023 as head of delegation for Pakistan-China Defence and Security Talks.

During the visit, CJCS met Chinese Chief of Joint Staff Department, General Liu Zhenli.

During the meeting both sides reviewed ongoing bilateral defence cooperation between China and Pakistan. CJCS reiterated that Pakistan-China friendship is highly valued and deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of Pakistani people. He also said that not only have the military relations of the two countries withstood test of time, but also high-level cooperation in defense and training has progressed well.

CJCS also held wide-ranging bilateral meetings with high ranking civil and military dignitaries including Mr Qin Gang, Chinese State Councilor, Foreign Minister, Mr. Chen Wenqing and other key military & government officials. Both sides re-affirmed commitment; that being "Iron Brothers" and "All Weather Friends", Pakistan and China would continue to forge deeper strategic ties.

PPP marks 70th birth anniversary of Benazir Bhutto

KARACHI (NNI): The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has observed the 70th birth anniversary of former prime minister Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on Wednesday.

Ceremonies have been held in various parts of the country where cakes were cut to mark the day. A ceremony was held at the Sindh Adabi Board in Jamshoro district. PPP's senior leader and board chairman Makhdoom Saeeduz Zaman and Board of Governors member Sarfaraz Raja cut the birthday cake.

Born in Karachi on June 21, 1953, into a wealthy landlord Sindh family, who was politically influential

also, Benazir was assassinated on Dec 27, 2007, in Rawalpindi.

Her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was elected prime minister in 1973, her grandfather Sir Shahnawaz was deewan (prime minister) of erstwhile state of Junagarh and great grandfather Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto was a big landlord of Larkana. Benazir studied at Harvard University and the University of Oxford where she was president of the Oxford Union.

She served as the 11th and 13th prime minister from 1988 to 1990 and from 1993 to 1996. She was the first woman elected to head a

democratic government in a Muslim-majority country.

In his message, her son Bilawal pledged to follow her philosophy for the supremacy of the constitution and parliament.

According to a statement, the PPP chairman paid tribute to the first elected woman prime minister of the Islamic world on her 70th birth anniversary and said that Dukhtar-e-Mashriq (Daughter of the East) was a ray of light for the nation trapped in darkness. "I assure the nation that if the people give the mandate to our party in the upcoming general elections, the PPP government will also create

ample employment opportunities in the country, just like it was done during the governments of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto," he said.

Bilawal said Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was truly a history-making personality and a movement, adding that if the plant of democracy is growing in the country today, it is the fruit of the long and tireless struggle and sacrifices of Benazir Bhutto. He pointed out that Shaheed Mohtarma played a key role in strengthening democratic institutions in the country and the promotion of equality in society.

IHC instructs Qureshi, Umar to appear in bail cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday instructed PTI's leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Asad Umar to appear in personal capacity on Thursday in their bail petitions.

The court said that it couldn't hear the bail petitions of the accused without their appearances as their bail cases already had been dismissed by the lower court.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the interim bail petitions of Asad Umar and Shah Mehmood Qureshi in a case registered by Tarnol Police

Station with regard to the incidents of May 9. The petitioners had stated that the police had registered cases to pressurize and humiliate them, adding that they were ready to join the investigation into the matter. Petitioners' lawyer Ali Bokhari Advocate said that Qureshi and Umar had reached outside the court premises, adding that there was a risk of their arrest if they came out from the vehicle. The court questioned that whether there was any precedent when an accused was given interim bail without appearance. The lawyer prayed the court to grant protective bail to his

clients so that they could appear.

Justice Tahir said that the lower court had already dismissed pre-arrest bails of the two petitioners and in such circumstances they couldn't be given bails without attendance. The law was very clear about it, he said.

The court adjourned hearing of the case till tomorrow and said that it would hear the bail case if the accused appeared in person. It may be mentioned here that a lower court had terminated the bail petitions of PTI's leaders on June 20, after which both the accused escaped from the court premises.



Collective efforts to be made to provide quality civic services to people: Mayor

Eidul-Azha operation to be co-operated with WSSP



PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali Wednesday said that collective efforts would be made to provide quality civic services to the people, cooperation with Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) in the Eid-ul-Azha operation, while staff protective equipment and bags will be provided to the people to safely dispose of their furniture and animal remains.

This was stated by Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali while addressing a meeting of the chairmen and WSSP management in the City Council hall dis-

cussed issues related to Eid-ul-Adha operation, water purification and civic services.

Chief Executive Officer WSSP Dr. Hasan Nasir, WSSP General Manager Operation Tarab Shah and Zonal Managers also attended the meeting. Haji Zubair Ali said that the cleanliness situation on the main roads of the city is satisfactory, but many areas.

"I have the problem of sanitation and iron pipes which have to be addressed, the problem of ownership of 35 tube wells will be solved, the issue of arrears of water bills will be

taken up with the provincial government so that it can be solved on a permanent basis.

He also appealed to the chairmen to play their role in keeping the city clean by cooperating with the staff in the Eid operation, so that the WSSP officials could dispose of it in time. He said that recruitment has started on the quota of retired and deceased employees, which will further improve the services, and recruitment on the quota of retired and deceased employees from 1992 to 2008.

Addressing the meeting,

Chief Executive Officer Dr. Hassan Nasir said that a comprehensive plan has been drawn up for the timely removal of garbage and animal remains on Eid-ul-Azha. Links with them will be increased so that Eid and normal operations can be run smoothly.

He said that under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project, Upper Water Tanks (OHRs) and tube wells are being restored to provide clean water to the people. Three hundred kilometers of pipeline has been replaced for the gradual replacement of the damaged pipeline.

He said that 61 percent of the funds received by WSSP came from the salaries of the employees who came on deputation from TMA, 26 percent. Electricity bills of tube wells, 6% is being spent on vehicle repairs, 2% is being spent on management salaries.

Earlier, the Chairmen gave suggestions for improvement in Eid and regular operations and informed about problems related to sanitation and water.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Irshad Qaiser presiding over Board of Governors Meeting of Edwards College Peshawar.

AEO Female murder case: Committee commits to file case in stipulated time

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the directives of Director General (DG) Prosecution Khyber Pakhtunkhwa District Public Prosecutor (DPP) Sultan Mahmood chaired meeting regarding killing of Assistant Education Officer Female Rizwana Shaheen allegedly by her husband, on Wednesday.

The committee was constituted on directives of DG Prosecution to complete challan while Deputy Public Prosecutor Zulfiqar Ali, Assistant Public Prosecutor Muhammad Zubair and Investigation Officer Muhammad Sultan were present in the meeting and reviewed progress in the case.

The committee agreed to produce culprit before Magistrate for confession and forwarding of evidences to Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) including finger prints for examination while directed police to recover weapon used in the murder.

The committee assured that collection of evidences, motive behind the offense and recording of witness's statement to submitted within stipulated timeframe at DPP office to ensure proceedings at the court.

Caretaker minister presided over meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Higher Education Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser presided over the Board of Governors meeting of Edwards College Peshawar on Wednesday. The Board of Governors approved the surplus budget of Edwards College Peshawar for the year 2023-2024 of 1.024 billion.

Edwards College Peshawar informed Board Of Governors about its financial and administrative affairs. Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser appreciated

the initiatives of Edwards College Peshawar and the 8.8 million Surplus budget. Edwards College Peshawar informed BOG that we are launching programs which are based on new emerging subjects in the world such as Environmental Sciences, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science etc. More such programs will also be launched in the future. As a result of which the number of students will increase which will bring financial benefit to the college. Edwards College Peshawar told the Board of Governors that they have

also kept 1.4 billion in various banks for investment, which brings them profit. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Higher Education Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser appreciated the budget of Edwards College Peshawar and termed it as a balanced budget.

Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser said that the quality of educational institutions has to be further improved to provide quality education to the students. The first priority of educational institutions should be to provide better education to students.

Commissioner, Imamia Jirga discuss arrangements

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of Imamia Jirga on Wednesday here met with Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair at his office to discuss matters pertaining to the arrangements and security for the mourning processions and gatherings during Muharram ul Haram.

The meeting besides others was attended by Commissioner Nowshera, District Police Officer and officers of the relevant departments. The representative Imamia Jirga was headed by Akhunzada Muzaffar Ali, Secretary

Muharram Committee. The meeting discussed in detail arrangements and security plan for the mourning processions and maintaining cohesion and harmony among people from different sects during the Muharram ul Haram observance. It was decided that all available resources would be utilized for the peaceful observance of Muharram. Commissioner Peshawar Division on the occasion issued necessary directives to the relevant officers for ensuring peace during Muharram.

The police high-ups

were also directed at the meeting to provide fool-proof security to the people from Shia and other sects. The meeting agreed upon that complete assistance and cooperation would be provided to the district administration to ensure a peaceful and conducive atmosphere for Muharram.

The Commissioner told the meeting that deputy commissioners and police officers of Peshawar and Nowshera will remain in close contact with the representatives of the Imamia Jirga for the maintenance of peace during Muharram.

PHC adjourns hearing against Parliamentary Committee refusal

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has ordered Federal Secretary Law and PHC's Registrar to submit record for tomorrow (on Friday) regarding refusal of Parliamentary Committee for extension of services for six months of three judges, on Wednesday.

The counsel Barrister Adnan argued that Judicial

Commission of Pakistan (JCP) has granted extension of 6 months services to three of PHC named Justice Khurshed Iqbal, Justice Shahid Khan and Justice Fazal Subhan but it was refused by the Parliamentary Committee.

PHC's judges were appointed on order of High Court because the parliamentary committee has raised objections on their appointment while latterly they are appointed as Ad hoc judges, the counsel argued.

Barrister Adnan argued

that Parliamentary Committee has no jurisdiction to refuse JCP recommended judges from appointment and added that second refusal precedents the earlier narrative of the committee.

The counsel requested to declare the parliamentary committee decision null and void, however, the court ordered PHC's registrar to regarding minute of the meeting. PHC Registrar informed that the office didn't received Parliamentary Committee Minutes.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice SM Attique Shah directed Deputy Attorney General (DAG) to submit reply on behalf of Federal Secretary Law while adjourned further hearing for tomorrow (Friday).

GM SNGPL assures no load shedding for 5 Eid days

PESHAWAR (APP): General Manager, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), Rahmat Ullah on Wednesday said that no gas load-shedding would be carried out during Eid ul Adha.

He assured this in a meeting with Advisor to the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Labor, Malik Meher Elahi.

Malik Meher Elahi told the GM Sui Gas that acute shortage of gas for the consumers has become a challenge and rectifying this situation was the need of the hour. He said that on the occasion of Eid ul Adha, uninterrupted supply of gas was necessary so that people could observe the Eid days with ease and happiness.

Rahmat Ullah assured the Advisor that uninterrupted gas supply would be ensured to the people in Peshawar during Eid for five consecutive days.

Malik Meher Elahi asked the GM that the issue of shortage of Sui Gas in Peshawar should be addressed on a permanent basis.

Prices hike of vegetables, fruits worries citizens

PESHAWAR (APP): The sudden increase in the prices of vegetables and fruits in Peshawar worried the citizens and they demanded of the district government to ensure the availability of foot items on the rates given by the district administration.

During a visit to the vegetable and fruits markets, the price of ginger increased to Rs. 860 per kg, garlic Rs. 320 and lemon 160 per kg. Onion 50, tomato 30, green pepper 100, okra 90 and peas 230 rupees sold per kg while potato 100, kachalu 150, cauliflower 120, tenda 90 rupees per kg are being sold.

Among fruits, apples reached Rs 450, mango Rs 220 and litchi Rs 360 per kg while the Cherry 360, Khurmani 340 and banana 210 rupees per dozen sold. The price of live chicken in the market has also decreased by Rs.5 per kg as the price of live chicken in the market will reach 455 rupees per kg.

Operation against adulteration mafia

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority is active against adulteration mafia across the province with more than 2500 liters of non-standard and mislabeled juices and packing materials were seized from the factory.

According to a spokesman, the KP (FSHFA) launched an operation to people involved in using substandard materials in the food items. He said that operations of food safety teams in Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan were conducted.

He said, on receiving a tip-off, Peshawar team conducted a surprise raid on a juice factory and warehouse in Charganoo Khalay area of Sub-Division 2 and more than 2500 liters of non-standard and mislabeled juices and packing materials were seized from the factory.

The Food Authority official said that the factory was producing substandard and mislabeled beverages with heavy fines imposed on the owners, and a warehouse was also sealed. The Food Safety team in Dera Ismail Khan also inspected a "Dahi bhale" shop in the market on the complaint of citizens and imposed fine on the owners by using sub-standard materials.

In another raid on samosa shops the people have been fined for violating health norms with strict disciplinary action should be taken against the adulteration mafia, Director General Food Authority Shahrulh Ali Khan directed the concerned authorities.

Those who play with the health of citizens do not deserve any concession, Shah Rukh Ali Khan was quoted by the spokesman of the Food Authority as saying.

3-day workshop started in PFI to increase bamboo production

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A three-day training workshop "Mobile-App Base Bamboo Resource Assessment training for Pakistan" has been started here on Monday at Pakistan Forest Institute Peshawar to increase the production of bamboo crop and to know their number and types through mobile-app launched throughout the country.

Organized by International Bamboo and Rattan organization in collaboration with ministry of climate change & environmental coordination government of Pakistan and Pakistan forest Institute Peshawar, the workshop was inaugurated by Director General PFI Peshawar Khalid Ilyas while Additional Director General PFI Safdar Ali Shah, Assistant Inspector General Forest Parveen Ijaz, INBAR Consultant Hoang Viet Anh, consultant Muhammad Khurshid and experts from all provinces of the country participated in the workshop. Addressing the workshop, experts said that



Bamboo is one of the fastest growing species and is distributed widely across some of the most bio-diverse and carbon-rich areas of the tropics and sub-tropics in Africa, Asia and South America.

They said that Bamboos is a proven pro-poor resource that has enormous potential for income and employment generation. In particular activities related to the bamboo growing, management of bamboo forests, harvesting, pre-processing and processing create employment and a source of income for communities. They were of the view that Bamboo can play a significant role for ecosystem restoration, climate change adaptation and mitigation. Bamboo has proved to be a potential crop for restoring degraded land,

conserving soil and water and can play an important role for climate change adaptation especially in bamboo based smart agricultural systems. With modern technology, bamboo products can be made very durable, they can last for 30 years or more and can be a sustainable substitute for other materials such as wood, aluminum, PVC, concrete and metal etc.

The speakers said that Pakistan recently become a member country of INBAR in 2021 and intensified its bamboo sectorial development for green economy development. They further said that in Pakistan bamboo located in more than 85 areas including Sargoda, Jhang, Kasur, Lahore and Dera Ghazi Khan. Proper protection and care of bam-

boo will increase its areas and export to foreign countries as well as it will help fulfill our needs. Pakistan has limited natural bamboo forests. Since 1970, with government efforts, bamboo plantation has steadily increased reaching an area of 9000 ha by 1990 and 20000 ha by 2005 (country report 2005). Experts said that Bamboo plantation have mostly been established in small blocks ranging from 0.2 to 4 ha in private farms. Bamboo has been used extensively for construction and woven products. Especially bamboo was successfully used for building transitional and permanent shelters in response to natural calamities such as earthquakes and floods during the period from 2005 to 2016.

KPITB organizes Demo Day and Job Fair for youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Code for Pakistan, in collaboration with KP IT Board (KPITB) hosted a Demo Day and Job Fair for the youth of KP. The event marks a significant milestone for the KP Women Civic Digital Internship Program, a joint initiative aimed at empowering women from remote regions of KP who struggled to leave their homes in pursuit of careers and their passion within the tech industry, due to cultural barriers and responsibilities

at home. The Demo Day and Job Fair will be graced by the presence of the esteemed IT minister, along with other dignitaries, who will commemorate this momentous occasion and recognize the achievements of the interns.

This year's KP Women Civic Digital Internship Program has enrolled 50 interns from various remote regions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Demo Day will provide an opportunity for these interns to showcase the innovative tech projects they have

been working on over the past six months. Through this program, KPITB and Code for Pakistan have nurtured talent, and provided remote internship opportunities, enabling women to contribute to the digital transformation of their communities.

Fatima Jauhar, a graphics design intern from last year's batch, shares her experience, stating, "I had a chance to work as a graphic designer alongside a team of experts that developed a Case Management System for the Advocate General's

office. The entire experience not only gave me valuable experience working on a meaningful project but also provided me the opportunity to explore a career path that I had been passionate about for so long."

In addition to project presentations, the Demo Day will also feature a Job Fair- for the first time ever, where the KP women interns will have the chance to connect with esteemed tech recruiters from leading organizations. This unique platform will enable them to transition to the next stage of their careers and pave the way for a brighter future.

"This program has not only empowered women from remote regions but has also showcased the immense potential of our talented workforce. We are committed to supporting initiatives that foster inclusivity and provide equal

opportunities for all. The Demo Day and Job Fair will serve as a platform for these interns to shine and contribute to the digital growth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, we aim to increase the number of woman interns in the upcoming batch of our flagship project Digital Internship Program," said Dr. Ali Mahmud, Managing Director of KPITB.

Shaji Ahmed, CEO of Code for Pakistan, also shared his thoughts, stating, "The Demo Day and Job Fair exemplify our commitment to fostering an inclusive and diverse civic tech ecosystem in Pakistan. Through this program, we are not only empowering women but also strengthening the digital infrastructure of the country. We look forward to witnessing the interns' success and the transformative impact they will have on their communities."

4 persons of mixing mafia arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration is active against the mixing mafia by arresting four persons by Assistant Commissioner Rao Hashim and sealing the frozen chicken company while taking action on Ring Road.

Four people were arrested for the presence of unhealthy frozen chicken, including the poor sanitary condition, district administration said.

The district administration has taken the dangerous frozen chicken and label packing machinery into official custody, the official of the district administration said.

Strict action has been ordered against those who violate the rules of hygiene, the official of the district administration said.

Beggars again throng in city

PESHAWAR (APP): With the advent of Eid ul Adha, the numbers of beggars were mounting with each passing day as groups of such people including women and children were seen begging alms at almost every busy place of the city.

A brief survey of the city on Wednesday revealed that scores of beggars were reaching Peshawar from different parts of the country, especially from Punjab to cash in on the busy days of Eid ul Adha.

The beggars including children, women and scores of elderly people have spread into various markets, bus stops and crossings of the city with some beggar women having new born babies in their laps were among the top earners.

Earlier, in Peshawar a mass campaign was carried out which helped reduce the numbers of beggars to a great extent in the city however, with favorable situation now these beggars have once again established their strong footing in the city by grabbing the prominent places of earning.

These beggars have occupied their favorite spots for begging at various busy roads, crossings, bazaars and even streets and were reluctant to leave due to their hefty earnings. These beggars have adopted various tactics to fool the people as some were pretending to be in great agony by making false cuts on their bodies and wrapping fake bandages around their artificial wounds.



In brief

PSTs observes Black Day F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Primary School Teacher (PST) has observed Black Day while wearing black ribbon on their hands in the schools to record their protests in favor of their demand of upgradation, on Wednesday. PST claimed that provincial has failed to fulfilled her decision regarding upgradation which was agreed during negotiation held in this regard. Upgradation of the right of PSTs because they are serving the nation, the teachers argued. Various teacher's associations claimed that PST has protested in favor of their demands which was accepted by previous government and promised upgradation but they are neglected. They claimed that teacher's associations should uphold their voice at every forum till redressal of grievances.

FBR froze Dist Council accounts F.P. Report

LARKANA: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has frozen accounts of District Council Larkana for non-payment of taxes of for the year 2017 and 2018. According to details, All the accounts have been frozen due to which the employees have lost their Eid salaries on Eid-ul-Azha while the accounts of Sindh Bank have been frozen by FBR for non-payment of tax amounting to one crore three lakh rupees due to which District Council Larkana 400 employees have lost their Eid salaries. In this regard, the employees while talking to the media said that if they do not get their salaries, then the FBR. They will protest in front of the office.

Framers hold protest F.P. Report

SHAHADAD KOT: The irrigators of Warh and Nasirabad held protest against the shortage of water in the agricultural land in Qamber Shahdad Kot district of Sindh, which turned into a rally at Arthar branch after passing through different routes of the city. Officials water Struggle Committee, Convener Sengar Nunari Abdul Jabbar Mangi Mansoor Soomro and others said that in the current situation, thousands of acres of agricultural land are becoming barren due to lack of water in Warah and Nasirabad talukas. There is fear of loss of rupees because sand is flying due to lack of water in Arthar Branch, Chanjani Mines, Mangyu Branch, Khawar Branch, Sanharu Cheil and other mines. We have the right to increase the protest.

WHO opens water plant F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Representative of World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Palitha Mahipala Inaugurated Nutrition Stabilization Center (NSC) and a clean drinking water plant. Dr. Mahipala reiterated WHO commitment to the principle of "Health for All" and highlighted the efforts made to enhance the healthcare system in remote areas.

JI rejects private member bill to benefit Senate's chairman

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) chief Sirajul Haq has said the passage of a private member bill granting extensive privileges to chairmen Senate shows the government has no sympathy for the nation.

He was addressing a reception and workers' convention hosted by the Jamiat Tulba Arabia (JTA) Maidan chapter, a seminary students' wing of the JI, at Kumbhar in Maidan as chief guest here the other day. The function was also addressed by the JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari, former MPA Saeed Gul, JI tehsil chief Haji Fazal Wahab, district president Al-Khidmat Foundation Hafeezullah Khaksar and others.

Sirajul Haq said the Senate of Pakistan recently passed unanimously a bill known as 'the chairman Senate (Salaries, Allowance and Privileges) Act, 2023' for granting extra perks and privileges to current and former chairmen Senate and other members. The JI chief regretted that the PDM allied parties supported the bill which was ironic owing to the current economic situation of the country.

"It clearly shows the rulers have nothing to do with the masses", he said, adding the implementation of the Act would provide lifelong financial benefits to chairmen Senate. He alleged the taxpayers' money and foreign loans were being spent on luxury of rulers. He demanded the government to review the bill and provide relief to the general masses. The JI chief said the nation had tested both the PDM and the PTL, so now it should vote for his party. He said the JI had an honest, pious and devoted team and it had the ability to steer the country out of turmoil.

Siraj said the country faced lawlessness, unemployment, inflation and corruption while the leaders of all major political parties were playing blame games. He expressed grief and anger over the Greece incident wherein 280 Pakistanis got martyred in a boat crash. He said the rulers and the elite class both were equally responsible for that tragic incident. He

said the youth suffered from depression due to unemployment and they burnt their degrees across the country.

About the Karachi mayor election, the JI chief alleged that a majority was turned into a minority and vice versa. "What kind of democracy is it?" he asked, adding the nation had no more trust in such a democracy. JI chief said that international monetary institutions did not trust the rulers to sanction further loans. He said the government should instead cut its non-developmental expenditure if it was sincere about overcoming the current financial crisis.

The JI chief also participated in the party's 'Dastak' campaign in Lal Qila Maidan and asked the workers to speed up their election drive in the area.

Contractors announced strike in favor of their demands: The government contractors' association Malakand division have announced to launch a protest campaign against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and move the court as well if their outstanding dues were not cleared soon.

The announcement was made during an emergency meeting of the association held at Timergara here the other day with its divisional president engineer Ikramullah in the chair. Speaking on the occasion Ikram, general secretary Imran Takur and other office bearers said that several government departments had to pay them in billions for their work done. He said the provincial government was unable to pay their outstanding amount while on the other hand it was tendering fresh projects like the Timergara city beautification through the rural development department which was beyond understanding.

They said the government contractors had no option other than to stop work on the ongoing development projects in the district. They said the contractors' community would never accept the government bidding process if it had no funds. The speakers announced that writ petition against the government failure and its delaying tactics would soon be filed in the Mingora bench of the Peshawar High Court.

Int'l consultants associates visits Radio FM 92.4 Kohat

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Director Shahid Iqbal Khattak Chartered Accountant, Consultant Professor Naseer Khattak, Manager Abdul Bais and Engineer Aamir Gul of Power 99 made a detailed visit to Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 92.4 on Wednesday and met Station Manager Irshad Afridi, Transmission Engineer Athar Suri and other staff and discussed with them issues relating to the subject.

The members of the consultancy team "International Consultants Associates" formed by the provincial government for transformation and revival of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Radios and sustainable operations of its Stations, Director Shahid Iqbal

Khattak Accountant, Consultant Professor Naseer Khattak, Manager Abdul Bais and Engineer Aamir Gul of Power 99 made a detailed visit to Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 92.4 on Wednesday and met Station Manager Irshad Afridi, Transmission Engineer Athar Suri and other staff and discussed with them issues relating to the subject.

The team also ascertain their opinion in this regard. The members of the consultancy team also held a special meeting with Deputy Director Regional Information Office Kohat

Sarwar Khattak in this respect.

They said, even today, the importance of radio is established and is still the most important and effective mean of communication in developed countries. The role of radio in creating a better society and molding the public opinion cannot be ignored any way. That is why the provincial government has hired a consultancy to strengthen and transform the Pakhtunkhwa radio network and its broadcast. This team will submit its recommendations to this effect to the Provincial Government at the earliest.

Three-day workshop concludes at SMC Swat

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) of Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar has organized a three days workshop on "Self-Assessment Report Writing" at Saidu Medical College (SMC), Swat. The workshop aimed at assisting faculty members in effectively writing their self-assessment reports.

The workshop provided valuable guidance and resources to facilitate the creation of comprehensive and impactful self-assessment reports. The objective of this workshop was to equip the faculty to understand the purpose and importance of self-assessment reports in evaluating faculty performance and achievements, to learn the key components and structure of a self-assessment report, to identify effective strategies for data collection and analysis to support the report, to develop skills in writing clear, concise, and compelling narratives



to showcase accomplishments to explore best practices in self-reflection and self-evaluation, to address common challenges and pitfalls in self-assessment report writing and to provide access to templates, samples, and resources for reference and guidance.

In the inaugural ceremony, Prof. Dr. Israr ul Haq Dean of SMC Swat welcomed all the participants and shared his inaugural remarks, and encourage the participants to learn and apply these practices in their colleges. He also appreciated the efforts of KMU by providing facilities for these activities at the doorstep of the affiliated colleges and institutes of KMU.

Dr. Syeda Asiyah

Bukhari and irector of KMU-QEC while talking to the workshop said that the QEC is committed in supporting faculty members of all affiliated medical, dental, and allied health sciences collegesinstitutes of KMU, in their professional development and ensuring the effective documentation of their accomplishments through self-assessment reports.

She elaborated that the main purpose of this workshop was to empower faculty members with the skills and knowledge necessary to produce high-quality self-assessment reports that accurately reflect their contributions. At the end certificates were awarded to all participants by the dean of SMC, Swat.

Anti-dengue awareness, prevention directed

F.P. Report

BANNU: Deputy Commissioner Bannu, Mansoor Ahmed Afridi, chaired an anti-dengue meeting where officers from all relevant departments were present. On this occasion, the District Health Officer of Bannu informed that daily indoor and outdoor vector surveillance activities are being conducted in all hotspots of Bannu.

Field teams are actively involved in this process. The Deputy Commissioner instructed all departments to ensure that no standing water is present anywhere, as stagnant clean water can contribute to

the spread of dengue.

DC further stated that it is essential for the prevention of dengue that all government departments take necessary actions in accordance with practical wisdom, raise public awareness, and maintain cleanliness in their offices, schools, government residential areas, as well as streets and alleys.

People should also be encouraged to keep their homes clean and informed that stagnant water in water coolers, containers, and rooftops can become a breeding ground for dengue mosquitoes. After the meeting, a dengue awareness walk was also organized in the

Secretariat by the Deputy Commissioner.

Meanwhile, under the National Action Plan by the police in Bannu, a major crackdown has been launched against criminal elements. 54 search and search operations were conducted, resulting in the arrest of 149 suspects and 637 individuals with suspicious activities. A significant amount of weapons was also seized during these operations. According to the details, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akhtar Hayat and D.I.G Bannu Region Qasim Khan's directives have shed light on establishing peace in society.



HYDERABAD: Sewerage and gutter water accumulated on Pathan Colony main road, needs attention of authorities concerned.

Traffic awareness seminar held F.P. Report

BARA: One day awareness seminar aimed to sensitize the tribal youth of traffic rules was held here in subdivision Bara. The activity was jointly organized by the youth assembly, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, administration and district affairs while tehsil mayor Mufti Kafeel was the chief guest on the occasion.

Head of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa traffic learning school Shazia Shahid supervised the session and large numbers of youths and representatives of various organizations were among the participants. The chief guest appreciated the organizers for initiating fruitful session for the people especially for the youth community to inform them of the law of traffic.

Suck kinds of moot not only sensitize the masses to follow the traffic regulation but if practically imposed can decrease traffic mishaps also, he added. Earlier, the trainers' traffic warden Asif Raza and Faisal delivered useful speeches and imparted knowledge while highlighting different aspects of the traffic system. They shed light on demerits of over speeding, underaged driving, one wheeling and driving without license etc.

Increase BISP centers sought Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The distribution of Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) has created menace across Nowshera as one man dead due to cardiac arrest while ambulance didn't paved way for hospital due to rush in front of BISP distribution center at Risalpur, on Wednesday.

According to details, several women become unconscious due to heat and dehydration due to hot weather. As women effected by heatstroke at Government Primary School Dhoabi Ghat Nowshera Cant while waiting in que for her turn to BISP cash assistance.

However, Noor-ul-Basar has dead due to rush in front of BISP distribution which has created delay in first aid for cardiac arrest. The residents demanded to increase of BISP distribution centers to ease the provision of financial assistance to marginalized women segment.

Shaheed Mohtarma BB - the fearless

Mustajab Nazir Dhoki

'I must be strong. I must have fire in my eyes when I face them, not tears.' A Storm of Swords

THERE are some passionate leaders who change the world in their own way. Mohtarma Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was born on 21st June, 1953. She is the great daughter of the great leader Shaheed ZA Bhutto. From early age she was capable of getting everything quickly.

She finished her O' levels at the very young age of 15. She got her degree from the number one university of the world the Oxford University. After completing her graduation, she came back to homeland, Pakistan. She was a young girl age 18 when she visited India with her father and she attracted the media with her charm and personality.

In 1977 her father was arrested. At that time she was just 24, she didn't lose hope. She stood strong along with her mother Begum Bhutto and these two strong ladies stood strong against the brutality of dictator Zia. In history we find few people who are fearless. One can not even imagine how this strong lady lived her life, losing her father at the age of 24, losing a young brother who is just 27 and murdered in a worst way, witnessing the dead body of another brother who is bloodsoaked, and

her mother who was strong but the death of another son made her weak that she became the witness of Alzheimer's.

Haters thought she'll lose her power and she'll fall weak. But all those great losses in her life, made her strong. As Shaheed Bibi said, "Bhutto represents everything the fundamentalists hate - a powerful, highly-educated woman operating in a man's world, seemingly unafraid to voice her independent views and, indeed, seemingly unafraid of anything, including the very real possibility that one day someone might succeed in killing her because of who she is".

She got married to President Asif Ali Zardari, the well known personality of Pakistan. After getting married she didn't left her party, her people, her country. Being a woman made her strong but being a married woman made her stronger. She was no longer alone, fighting for peace and democracy. Her husband, President Asif Ali Zardari was always by her side and even after her murder, he is still struggling to what she fought for until her last breath. Throughout her life she did her best for this country.

Shaheed Bibi never believed in revenge. She never joined politics to get revenge of her father's murder, she didn't come back to Pakistan to get revenge of injustice that was done to

her. She didn't want to rule this country to show opposition, 'yeah, I got this.' All she wanted was to give everyone basic human rights. She never discriminated anyone based on gender, caste, religion, or class. Her lifestyle is the proof that she belonged to everyone. Her speeches are the proof that she doesn't belong to Sindh people only but everyone. She struggled for Pakistan not for Sindh. She wanted to make Pakistan a democratic and independent state.

She once said "The people who resent me do so because I'm a woman, I'm young, and I'm Bhutto. Well, the simple answer is, it doesn't matter that I'm a woman, it doesn't matter that I'm young, and it's a matter of pride that I'm a Bhutto." Yes, it is a matter of pride to be a Bhutto. Because Bhutto is not just a name it's a struggle for this country from birth till death, struggle for basic human rights, struggle for peace, struggle for democracy and sacrifices of a one family to save many other families of Pakistan. Who will die for someone else? Who will sacrifice a whole damn family for a country? Who will give up on their youth to join politics and continue the mission of their parents? Its none other than Bhutto. I always say that Bhutto is a legacy. Because they sacrificed more for this country than others.

'Inflation caused by hoarders-admn nexus'

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Due to the alleged nexus of the District Price Control Committee and the illegal hoarders, the poor people started being humiliated and humiliated, while the district administration completely failed to provide relief to the people, any shopkeeper is not ready to implement the fixed prices of daily food items but they are engaged in robbing the poor people with both hands through illegal profiteering. There is no one to ask.

The administration has left the poor people of Mardan helpless at the mercy of Allah. According to the details, the monthly meeting of the District Price Control Committee is held regularly, in which the prices of food items are fixed, but they are limited to paper work only. A clear example of this is that the District Price Control Committee has fixed the price of bread at rupees twenty.

Although recently the government has reduced the prices of wheat and flour substantially, tandoor owners are selling low weight bread at high prices are doing while the Bakers Association has voluntarily adopted another cruel attitude household are charging ten rupees for baking bread in public, which is a complete injustice to the poor people. Similarly, the price of yogurt is fixed at one hundred and fifty rupees per kg, but the shopkeepers are selling it at one hundred eighty and two hundred rupees per kg.

Like small and big meat,

butchers are selling at arbitrary rates, butchers across the city are charging double rates from the fixed rates from the poor people, while the official price list is nowhere to be seen. Secretary Food,

Commissioner Mardan, Deputy Commissioner and other officers have been demanded to correct the Qibla of the Price Control Committee so that the poor people can breathe a sigh of relief in this era of inflation.

WSSCM finalizes Eid plan: Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) has finalized three-day Eid ul Azha sanitation operation plan for 39Neighborhood councils in the premises. On the first day of Eid ul Azha, the Eid Gahs will be cleaned and swift before Eid prayers while the cleanliness operation will be started from 12:00 pm and will be continued till the entire city is cleaned of waste and animal remains.

He said that a comprehensive Eid ul Azha Plan has been devised according to which Mardan city has been divided into four zones and collection points have been set up at New Adda, Par Hoti, Shamsi Road and Kaskorona Road to collect the remains of the slaughtered animals and will be picked through large vehicles from those collection points. He said that high-tech modern machinery would be used in the cleanliness operation and animal remains would be shifted to a safe place for safe disposal.

GM further added that 600 employees will be deployed and 70 different

types of sanitation vehicle will take part in the Eid operations.

General Manager, Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar, cancelled the holidays of all the staff, and stated that no negligence would be tolerated on the occasion of Eid as well as strict action will be taken against any official found absent. He said that Biodegradable bags would also be distributed among the citizens and other stake holder to manage animal remains.

During the Eid operation, the complaint cell will be remained open till late night and in case of any inconvenience, the citizens are requested to record their complaints on helpline 1334, 0314-4228999, 0937-840892. For the efficient and effective execution of the Eid ul Adha monitoring teams have been constituted comprised of Managers and Assistant Managers in the supervision of General Manager and chief executive officer. Citizen Liaison Cell of the company has already launched an awareness campaign in all union councils for public awareness to dump waste at designated points.

Awareness brochures distributions has been started in various parts of the city with slogans regarding cleanliness and complaints cell numbers of the company for recording complaints. Ulema, teachers, elders and people from all walks of life are being engaged to make the sanitation operation a success. "Masses' role is vital in keeping the city clean," said Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar.



Migrant crisis: Tunisian fisherman finds dead bodies in his net

TUNIS (BBC): As the number of migrants trying to reach Europe grows so does the number of deaths in the Mediterranean. While European Union officials struggle to contain the exodus, the plight of those fleeing poverty and persecution is leaving its tragic mark on the shores of Tunisia.

As the sun creeps above the horizon off the shores of its eastern coast, fisherman Oussama Dabbebi begins hauling in his nets. His face fixes anxiously on its contents, because sometimes fish are not all he finds. "Instead of getting fish, I sometimes get dead bodies. The first time I was afraid, then step by step I got used to it. After a while getting a dead body out of my net is like getting a fish." The 30-year-old fisherman, clad in a dark, hooded sweatshirt and shorts, says he recently found the bodies of 15 migrants in his nets over a three-day period.

"Once I found a baby's body. How is a baby responsible for anything? I was crying. For adults it's different because they have lived. But you know, for the baby, it didn't see anything." Mr Dabbebi has fished these waters near Tunisia's second city of Sfax since he was 10 years old. In those days he was one of many casting their nets, but now he says most fishermen have sold their boats for vast sums to people smugglers.

"Many times smugglers have offered me unbelievable amounts to sell my boat. I have always refused because if they used my boat and someone drowned, I would never forgive myself." A short distance away a

group of migrants from South Sudan - which has been hit by conflict, climate shocks and food insecurity since its independence in 2011 - are walking slowly away from the port. All ultimately hope to reach the UK. One explains that they have reluctantly abandoned a second attempt to cross to Italy because of an overcrowded boat and worsening weather. "There were so many people and the boat was very small. We were still going to go, but when we pushed away from the shore it was really windy. There was too much wind."

According to Tunisia's National Guard, 13,000 migrants were forced from their often overcrowded boats near Sfax and returned to shore in the first three months of this year. Between January and April this year some 24,000 people left the Tunisian coast in makeshift boats and made it to Italy, according to the UN refugee agency. The country has now become the biggest departure point for migrants trying to reach Europe. Libya previously held this dubious accolade, but violence against migrants and abductions by criminal gangs have led to many travelling to Tunisia instead, before heading on to Europe. Though the boat involved in last week's disaster off the Greek coast, which has left at least 78 people dead and an estimated 500 missing, had sailed from Libya.

Many of their rusting and rotting vessels lie either half-submerged in water or stacked in huge piles next to Sfax's port. Forlorn reminders of the dangers of the world's deadliest known migration route. Another stark

reminder can be found at the cemetery on the outskirts of the city. Rows of freshly dug graves lie empty in an extended part of the graveyard, waiting for the next loss sea disaster. But they will not be enough. A new cemetery entirely dedicated to migrants is now being planned.

In just one two-week period earlier this year, the bodies of more than 200 migrants were retrieved from the sea here. Across the whole Mediterranean, more than 27,000 people are known to have died trying to reach Europe since 2014. This accelerating tragedy is causing great difficulties for the city. The director of the regional health authority, Dr Hatem Cherif, says there simply are not the facilities to deal with so many deaths. "The capacity of the hospital mortuary is a maximum of 35 to 40. This is usually sufficient, but with all this influx of bodies, which is getting worse, it's way past the numbers we can take."

As many as 250 bodies were brought to the mortuary recently. Most had to be placed in a chilled adjoining room, grimly named the "catastrophe chamber", one on top of each other. Though Dr Cherif was keen to point out that all will be buried in separate, numbered graves. Many of those who die are unidentified, so DNA tests are being organised and the results carefully stored. The idea is to enable relatives searching for loved ones to see if they are buried here, by checking for matches with their own DNA.

Three hours' drive north-west of Sfax, several hundred members of

Tunisia's black minority, many of them women and children, are camped in small tents outside the offices of the International Organization for Migration in central Tunis. All were evicted from their homes and sacked from their jobs in the city after an incendiary, racist speech in February by the country's President Kais Saied. He claimed "hordes" of illegal migrants were entering the country as part of a "criminal" plan to change its demography. These comments were widely viewed as an attempt to find scapegoats for the country's economic crisis, which has led many desperate Tunisians to become migrants themselves.

Pointing to a recent stab wound on his arm, a young man originally from Sierra Leone - which still recovering from a brutal civil war that ended in 2002 - says that since the president's speech, knife-wielding local youths have assaulted many people here. "Some Arab boys came here to attacks us. The police said they would keep us secure if we stay here. But if we go outside of this area, we are not safe." This worrying situation and the continued jailing of opponents and erosion of civil rights by the country's president appear to be less of a priority for EU officials than curbing the flow of migrants.

So far this year more than 47,000 migrants have arrived in Italy, a three-fold increase on the same period of last year and demands have grown for something to be done. During a brief visit here earlier this month a visiting delegation led by the



head of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen promised a possible financial support package of nearly 1bn euros (\$1bn; £850m). If approved, around a tenth of this sum would be spent on measures to tackle human trafficking. Last week's tragedy off the Greek coast has heightened demands for something to be done.

Yet with many migrants so desperate and people smuggling so profitable for traffickers, stopping the flow of small boats will not be easy. Crowds of migrants from all over Africa and parts of the Middle East gather in groups in shaded spots of the streets of Sfax. Some have funds to pay for a place on a trafficker's boat, others live in limbo, unable to

even pay for their food and shelter. Many have either lost their passports or had them stolen, while some never had one having left their countries illegally.

All have heard of the deaths of so many who tried to reach Europe, but it seems desperation continues to trump danger, as a young man from Guinea made clear. "We cannot go back to our country because we don't have money or passports. I'm not afraid. I'm starving, there is so much poverty [at home] and my parents have nothing. I don't want my children to live like that. I need to go." The tragedy is that this basic human aspiration for a better life so often comes at such a very high price.

UN expert urges resolution of Myanmar crisis

JAKARTA (AP): An independent expert working with the United Nations on the issue of human rights in Myanmar urged the international community on Wednesday to find a different approach to resolve the crisis in the Southeast Asian country, saying the current course of action is not working.

Tom Andrews, a special rapporteur working with the UN human rights office, told a news conference in Jakarta the world is looking to Indonesia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for leadership on the situation in Myanmar. "I came to Indonesia because the human rights situation in Myanmar is dire and getting worse, and because I believe that Indonesia is positioned to play a critical role in the resolution of this crisis," Andrews said after meeting with Indonesian and ASEAN officials.

Myanmar's crisis began after its military in February 2021 seized

power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The takeover prompted widespread public protests, whose violent suppression by security forces triggered an armed resistance that now spans much of the country. Andrews, a former US congressman, said the situation in Myanmar is also losing visibility outside of the country.

He said the Myanmar military has killed more than 3,600 civilians since the crisis began, while more than 19,000 people have been jailed as political prisoners. ASEAN, of which Myanmar is a member, two years ago agreed on a five-point plan that includes a call for an immediate stop to killings and other violence and the start of a national dialogue. The military rulers in Myanmar initially accepting the plan, but have made little effort to implement it.

Andrews said the 10-member regional bloc should not invite the junta

to any of its meetings and should not allow Myanmar military personnel to participate in defense meetings. "I cannot help but have the impression that there are two different time zones when it comes to ASEAN and the crisis in Myanmar: one being the reality of the people of Myanmar who face daily attacks by junta forces and rapidly deteriorating conditions. The other is the world of ASEAN officials who caution that progress could take years, even decades," he said.

"The people of Myanmar do not have decades. They need a strong international response to the crisis that is carried out in the same 'time zone' as the brutal attacks that they are suffering," he said. Special rapporteurs work with the UN human rights office in Geneva based on mandates handed out by the UN-backed Human Rights Council, a 47-member body that currently counts both China and Russia as members.

Nearly 40 countries at UN back LGBTQ families

NEW YORK (AFP): Nearly 40 countries at the United Nations backed LGBTQ families, at a time when some Muslim and African nations are contesting sexual orientation and gender identity language in UN forums.

"Families play a fundamental role in society. Supporting families is an important element in promoting and protecting human rights," 37 countries said in a statement at the UN Human Rights Council. "This support must be inclusive of all family compositions, including multigenerational and extended families, single parent households, LGBTQ+ families and Indigenous kinship groups," Australia's representative said on behalf of several countries. They were mainly from Europe and the Americas, plus Israel, New Zealand and East Timor.

They called on countries and UN bodies "to continue to apply an inclusive lens to families, and to ensure that equality, non-discrimination, and the universality of human rights remain at the centre of engagement in supporting families". Argentina, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Spain and the United States were among the signatories.

The statement comes as several other countries, notably from the Middle East, are mounting a defence of the traditional family in UN forums. Sexual orientation and gender identity issues will be at the heart of the 53rd Human Rights Council session, which started and runs until mid-July. Such issues have become a contentious in several branches of the UN. Countries in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and many African nations, plus Russia and China, are trying to roll back concepts and language which have been embedded in UN documents for at least a decade.

Earlier this month, OIC and African countries were blocking the adoption of the UN labour agency's budget, before agreeing to a last-minute compromise over references to discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. "Promoting a framework around discrimination that does not have international consensus and reflects priorities of the few risks undermining the spirit of cooperation," said Pakistan's Khalil Hashmi, on behalf of the OIC group, before the vote was finally passed.

The World Health Organization has since last year seen attempts to remove such references from its strategy on infection prevention, while the Human Rights Council faces growing opposition to long-standing efforts to monitor for discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gang behind slaughter of 41 women at Honduran prison

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP): Inmates had complained for weeks they were being threatened by gang members at a women's prison in Honduras. The gang fulfilled those threats, slaughtering 41 women, many of them burned, shot or stabbed to death.

President Xiomara Castro said riot at the prison in the town of Tamara, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) northwest of Honduras' capital, was "planned by maras (street gangs) with the knowledge and acquiescence of security authorities." Castro pledged to take "drastic measures," but did not explain how inmates identified as members of the Barrio 18 gang were able to get guns and machetes into the prison, or move freely into an adjoining cell block and slaughter all the prisoners there.

Video clips presented by the government from inside the prison showed several pistols and a heap of machetes and other bladed weapons that were found after the riot. Sandra Rodríguez Vargas, the assistant commissioner for Honduras' prison system, said the attackers "removed" guards at the facility — none appeared to have been injured — and then opened the gates to an adjoining cell block and began massacring women there. They started a fire

that left cell walls blacked and bunks reduced to twisted heaps of metal.

Twenty-six of the victims were burned to death and the remainder shot or stabbed, said Yuri Mora, the spokesman for Honduras' national police investigation agency. At least seven inmates were being treated at a Tegucigalpa hospital. The riot appears to be the deadliest at a female detention center in Central America since 2017, when girls at a shelter for troubled youths in Guatemala set fire to mattresses to protest rapes and other mistreatment at the overcrowded institution. The smoke and fire killed 41 girls.

The worst prison disaster in a century also occurred in Honduras, in 2012 at the Comayagua penitentiary, where 361 inmates died in a fire possibly caused by a match, cigarette or some other open flame. There were ample warnings ahead of tragedy, according to Johanna Paola Soriano Euceda, who was waiting outside the morgue in Tegucigalpa for news about her mother, Maribel Euceda, and sister, Karla Soriano. Both were on trial for drug trafficking but were held in the same area as convicted prisoners.

Soriano Euceda said they had told her Sunday that "they (Barrio 18 members) were out of control, they were fighting with

them all the time. That was the last time we talked." Another woman, who did not want to give her name for fear of reprisals, said she was waiting for news about a friend, Alejandra Martínez, 26, who was been held in the ill-fated Cell Block One on robbery charges.

"She told me the last time I saw her on Sunday that the (Barrio) 18 people had threatened them, that they were going to kill them if they didn't turn over a relative," she said. Gangs sometimes demand victims "turn over" a friend or relative by giving the gang their name, address and description, so that enforcers can later find and kidnap, rob or kill them.

Officials described the killings as a "terrorist act," but also acknowledged that gangs essentially had ruled some parts of the prison. Julissa Villanueva, head of the prison system, suggested the riot started because of recent attempts by authorities to crack down on illicit activity inside prison walls and called violence a reaction to moves "we are taking against organized crime." "We will not back down," Villanueva said in a televised address after the riot.

Gangs wield broad control inside the country's prisons, where inmates often set their own rules and sell prohibited goods. They were also apparently

able to smuggle in guns and other weapons, a recurring problem in Honduran prisons. "The issue is to prevent people from smuggling in drugs, grenades and firearms," said Honduran human rights expert Joaquín Mejía. "Today's events show that they have not been able to do that."

Meanwhile, the grim task continued of trying to identify the bodies, some terribly burned. "The forensic teams that are removing bodies confirm they have counted 41," said Mora. The wait for news was torture for many families of inmates. Dozens of anxious, angry relatives gathered outside the rural prison. "We are here dying of anguish, of pain ... we don't have any information," said Salomón García, whose daughter is an inmate at the facility.

Azucena Martínez, whose daughter was also being held at the prison, said "there are a lot of dead, 41 already. We don't know if our relatives are also in there, dead." Riot may increase the pressure on Honduras to emulate the drastic zero-tolerance, no-privileges prisons set in up in neighboring El Salvador by President Nayib Bukele. While El Salvador's crack-down on gangs has given rise to rights violations, it has also proved immensely popular in a country long terrorized by street gangs.

China slams Biden for equating Xi to 'dictators'

BEIJING (AFP): China's foreign ministry on Wednesday slammed comments by US President Joe Biden equating Chinese leader Xi Jinping with "dictators" as an "open political provocation". Speaking at a fundraiser in California, Biden said Xi had been angered over an incident in February when a Chinese balloon which Washington says was used for spying — flew over the United States before being shot down by American military jets.

His comments come just days after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken concluded a visit to Beijing aimed at re-establishing lines of communication in order to avoid conflict between the two global powers. "The reason why Xi Jinping got very upset in terms of when I shot that balloon down with two box cars full of spy equipment is he didn't know it was there," Biden said. "I'm serious. That was the great embarrassment for dictators, when they didn't know what happened."

Beijing's foreign ministry termed Biden's comments as "ridiculous". "The relevant remarks by the US side are extremely ridiculous and irresponsible, they seriously violate basic facts, diplomatic protocol and China's political dignity," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a Wednesday briefing. "China is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposed to this," she added. The multi-faceted rivalry between China and the United States turned into a full-blown diplomatic crisis with February's balloon incident.

Beijing on Wednesday reiterated its protest against Washington's decision to shoot it down. "The United States should have dealt with it calmly, rationally and professionally, but its distortion of facts, abuse of force, and escalation of hype have fully exposed its hegemonic and bullying nature," Mao said. Russia also criticised Biden's comments, with the Kremlin on Wednesday saying the comment reflected Washington's "unpredictable" foreign policy. "This is a very contradictory manifestation of US foreign policy, which points to a significant element of unpredictability," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Biden, who at 80 is running for re-election, told donors that "we're in a situation now where (Xi) wants to have a relationship again." Blinken "did a good job" on his Beijing trip, but "it's going to take time," Biden added. The US president also brought up another prickly point regarding China: a recent summit in which leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the United States known as the Quad group sought to boost peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific maritime region. The four countries are "working hand in glove in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean," Biden said.

"What he (Xi) was really upset about was that I insisted that we unite the... so-called Quad," Biden said. This was not the first time Biden has made significant, even provocative, statements at fund-raising receptions -- usually small-scale events at which cameras and recordings are forbidden but where journalists may listen to and transcribe the president's opening remarks. At one such event last October Biden spoke of the threat of nuclear "Armageddon" from Russia.

lion in aid to Sudan, which has been stricken by a grave humanitarian crisis that has driven some 2.2 million people from their homes. Prior to the conference, a UN appeal for \$2.57 billion for humanitarian support within Sudan this year was about 17% funded, and an appeal for nearly \$500 million for refugees fleeing the country was just 15% funded.

UN chief deplores 'chronic underfunding' of humanitarian aid

GENEVA (Reuters): United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres criticised on Wednesday what he called chronic underfunding of aid across the globe despite growing humanitarian needs. "Chronic underfunding and record levels of humanitarian need are stretching the system to the breaking point," he told the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the UN

Economic and Social Council.

Only 20% of funds needed under the UN Global Humanitarian Appeal have been received halfway through 2023, he said. "This is causing a crisis within a crisis," Guterres added. "Without a solution to the funding crisis, further cuts are inevitable." International donors pledged close to \$1.5 bil-

lion in aid to Sudan, which has been stricken by a grave humanitarian crisis that has driven some 2.2 million people from their homes. Prior to the conference, a UN appeal for \$2.57 billion for humanitarian support within Sudan this year was about 17% funded, and an appeal for nearly \$500 million for refugees fleeing the country was just 15% funded.

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Pak-IMF divorce and Dar's fake dogma

THE ongoing talks between Pakistan and the IMF have failed, and the cash-strapped country would no more get any financial support from the world's top lender as the current program expires on the 30th of this month. Although the finance ministry tried to convince the IMF about Pakistan's position on different reservations and conditions of the global lender those efforts failed to produce the desired results. The news surely fuel the speculations that Pakistan would default in the coming months as many experts and global institutions have already warned about the possibility. According to the reports, Pakistan is not on the agenda of the IMF Executive Board meetings scheduled to be held from June 20 to June 29. The country could not secure the IMF's final approval of the pending 9th review under the EFF program which will expire on June 30 without the disbursement of the remaining \$2.6 billion out of a total of \$6.5 billion program. In this way, Mr. Dar achieved another milestone of creating havoc through unmeasured policies and unnecessary overconfidence.

Pakistan had been struggling to revive the IMF \$6.5 billion Extended Facility Fund (EFF) which it secured in 2019 but the talks between the lingering South Asian economy and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) struck a deadlock over policy matters primarily on currency regulation and subsidies by the government. The country has been awaiting the IMF's final approval of the pending 9th review under the EFF program but the stubborn global lender did not move one inch from its position and Dar's dogma left no hope for any possibility of making progress on the 10th review and any reunion between Pakistan and the IMF at the crucial period in Country's history.

Pakistan and the IMF remained at odds and there had been exchanges of statements and accusations between high-ups of the Washington-based global financial institution and Pakistani authorities. The IMF handed over a long wish list to Pakistani authorities to put their house to achieve IMF backing and get the release of a highly essential \$1.2 billion tranche from the global lender. The coalition government adopted various administrative and tax reforms and received funds and assurances from friendly nations to get the nod from the IMF. However, the IMF continuously accused Pakistan of controlling the rupee exchange rate artificially and not reversing subsidies on certain accounts, the two issues about which Finance Minister Ishaq Dar is very much clear, but resolutely pursued his self-perceived agenda that finally pushed the dwindling economy in the turbulent Sea.

There was little hope that if coalition partners present a balanced budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, that might pave the way for the revival of the IMF's program but the government come up with a political budget, offered a mass increase in pay and pension of government employees, announced schemes for subsidies, increase defense spending and other extravagances that proved to be the last nail in the coffin of the EFF program for the country.

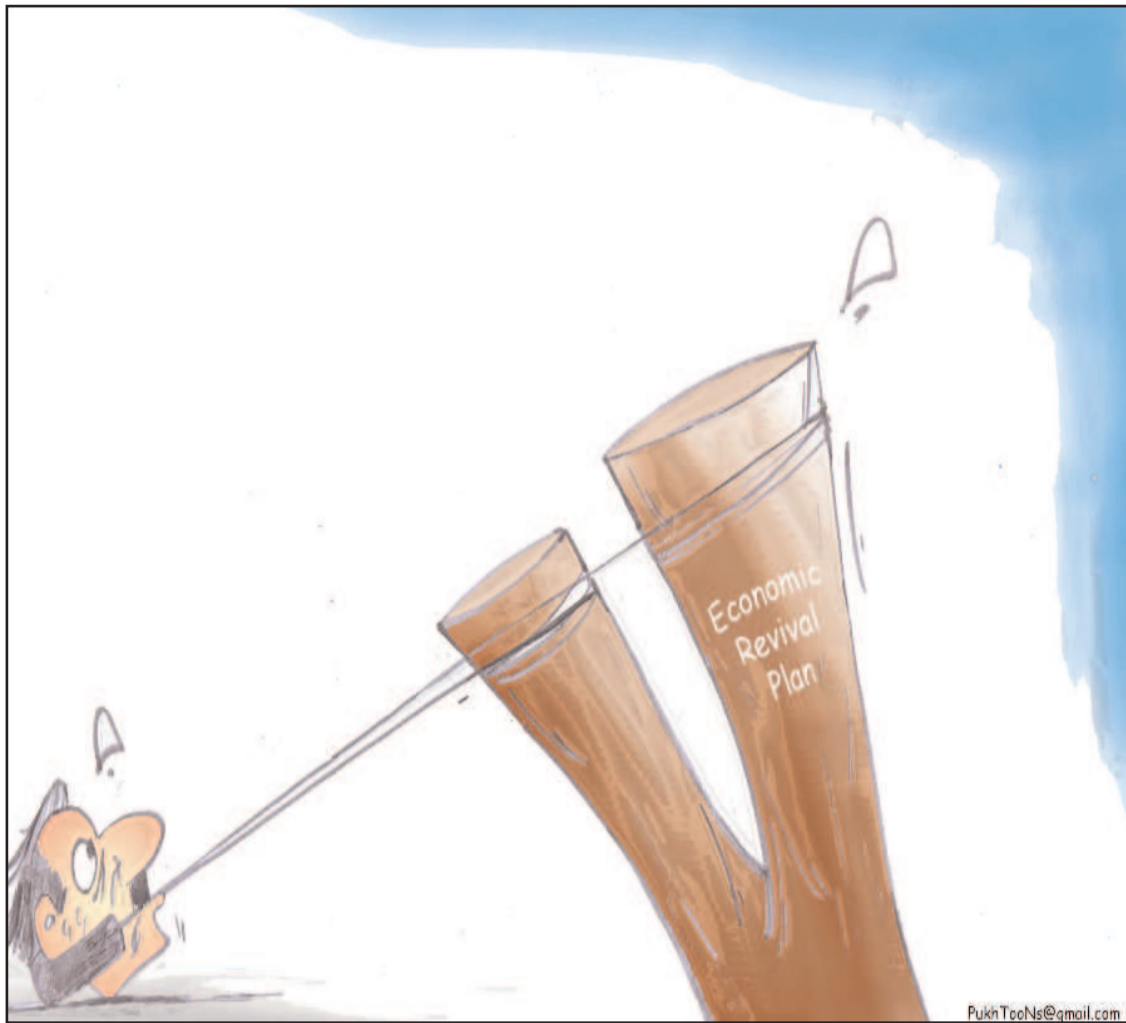
Interestingly, Finance Minister Dar announced a divorce from the IMF ahead of the annual budget but Prime Minister Shehbaz vowed to fulfill all requirements and expressed optimism about the revival of the IMF program during his recent media interaction a week ago, which was surely a lack of knowledge or misinformation feed by the Finance Ministry to the Chief Executive of the Country. Meanwhile, the government was preparing to follow plan B amid the likely scenario of failing to get the IMF deal done. After having successfully sabotaged the IMF program, the Dar led economic team of the coalition government was preparing a plan of foreign investment and billions of dollars in loans from friendly nations such as China, KSA, UAE, and other Gulf states to rescue the national economy and repay foreign debt without assistance from the IMF. Recently, the coalition government announced a so-called Economic Revival Plan during a high-level meeting chaired by the Prime Minister. The Army Chief was among the participants and assured wholehearted support to the government to achieve economic stability and enhance export-oriented growth in the country.

Realistically, keeping the military on board in economic and financial issues has no significance other than a political stunt, as the military can only adopt austerity measures but could not cease/cap the defense budget in the presence of a staunch enemy and evolving geostrategic conditions in the region and beyond. During a heightened risk of imminent economic default, the leaders' preferred to boost their politics at the cost of the national economy and presented an imaginary budget without taking essentially needed economic reforms, taxation, and trade measures. Resisting serious economic measures and preparing strategies to initiate a begging campaign for foreign loans/grants is no tact of the leaders and economists of any nation. The coalition government is considering void measures to attract foreign investment, and industrial growth without settling down energy issues, high production costs, trade and tariff issues, and low share in bilateral trade with other nations.

Historically, Pakistan had always been betrayed by its leaders who traded national interests for their ego, personal benefit, and public rating. The coalition government has missed an important opportunity to set the national economy on a sustainable growth track, by not honoring commitment to the global community which not only shattered the belief of the Pakistani nation in their leadership but badly tarnished the country's image at the international level. Our neighbors including Iran, India, and Bangla Desh are doing miracles in the field of IT, Science, and technology but our talented youths are fleeing the nation in a state of utter disappointment and uncertainty. The Pakistani government is unable to tax the rich but it is compelled to extend subsidies to the well-off segments of the society. Presently, decades-long businesses, industries, media houses, and newspapers face serious financial challenges and are rapidly closing down because of massive taxation, price hikes, shortage of energy, and no payment of dues by the government. Humiliation, disrespect, and collapse are the ultimate destinations of such nations. Currently, our government is aiming in the air to make a miracle out of daydreams, and political narrative otherwise they have ruined the economy and placed real economic mines for their successors and coming generations in the country.

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Why did it take a murderous war on Ukraine for Germany

Helene von Bismarck

UNDER the veneer of western unity in support of Ukraine, reactions to the war across Europe have been informed by different countries' readings of their own history, of earlier conflicts on this continent, and by their conceptions of Russia's national character. There is no automatic consensus within democratic societies about the lessons of the past, nor should there be. Remembrance is often selective, and the way ahead involves a discussion about what went wrong before.

Nowhere has this process of revisiting the past in search of the right decisions for the future been more fraught since the Russian invasion than in Germany. Over the past 16 months, the country has ended its heavy dependence on Russian oil and gas, abandoned its reluctance to send weapons to the war zone, and turned into one of Ukraine's most important military and financial backers after the US. Most Germans now support this policy shift - or Zeitenwende (turning point) as Chancellor Olaf Scholz terms it - but public debate about the future of Germany's security policy has not stopped. And arguments about history play a prominent part. The brutality of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Putin's blatant disregard for international law, and his explicit threats against the west have compelled Germany's political and intellectual elites to reconsider long-held and widespread assumptions about the lessons for Germany of the second world war and the cold war. The significance of this change should not be underestimated, nor should anyone be surprised that it remains precarious and contested.

In the three decades after the end of the cold war, Germany's policy in central and eastern Europe was heavily influenced by a reading of history that put Russia at the centre of German thinking about the

region, while neglecting the smaller countries in its neighbourhood. This Moscow-centric bias reflected the extent of Russia's power, but was also, at least in part, due to Germany's recognition of its historic responsibility for the second world war, which on its eastern front, was a brutal war of annihilation. More than 25 million Soviet soldiers and civilians died, and they play an important role in Germany's culture of remembrance. The readiness to face up to its historical responsibility for the second world war, and the focus on reconciliation and remembrance, are hard-won achievements of German democracy that should not be taken lightly. What remained problematic after the cold war, however, was a widespread German tendency to equate Russia with the Soviet Union, and for politicians to argue that Nazi Germany's crimes imposed a special German obligation to seek dialogue with Russia, without extending the same consideration to the other former states of the Soviet Union, such as Ukraine. After all, roughly 8 million of the Soviet victims of the second world war were Ukrainians, and Ukrainian territory was the site of brutal battles and unspeakable crimes, particularly against the Jewish population. There has been no lack of nuanced historical research on this, but it is only now, after Putin's invasion, that the important distinction between Russia and the Soviet Union is being more widely appreciated in Germany's public discourse.

The emphasis on the terrible price of war with the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1945 also resulted in a lack of German sensitivity about German-Russian collusion from 1939 to 1941 and its long-term consequences. Before Hitler decided to attack the Soviet Union two years later, he and Stalin agreed in the Molotov-Ribbentrop

nonaggression pact of 1939 to divide central and eastern Europe into Nazi and Soviet spheres of influence.

The countries that paid the price for this in brutal occupation, deportation and displacement were as deserving of Germany's special consideration after the fall of the iron curtain as Russia. The memory of this collusion has profoundly shaped central and eastern European thinking about both countries to this day, especially in Poland and the Baltic states. However, in the two decades leading up to the war in Ukraine, their point of view mattered less to Berlin than Moscow's. Another defining chapter in Germany's history that is now under re-examination is the famous "Ostpolitik" of the cold war chancellor Willy Brandt. This remained central to Germany's thinking about Russia until 24 February 2022. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Brandt and his Social Democratic party (SPD) pursued a policy of dialogue with the Soviet Union in the hope of stabilising West Germany's relationship with eastern Europe. His belief, 25 years after the end of the second world war, was that a strategy of "change through rapprochement" would reduce east-west tensions and possibly even help change the Soviet Union from within.

Rapprochement included trade with the Soviet Union. One does not have to be a member of the SPD to be proud of Brandt, albeit for a different reason. He is most famous for kneeling down in front of the memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1970, an unprecedented and hugely important gesture of shame and repentance for Germany's war crimes and the Holocaust. It is also important to stress that Brandt's pursuit of dialogue with the Soviet Union was from a position of strength. West German defence spending was at 3% of GDP a year during his time as chancellor, vastly higher

even than what is envisaged in Germany's first national security strategy, published on 14 June.

But Germany's Russia policy lost its way after the cold war, as large parts of the SPD maintained a naive attachment to the principle of "change through trade" and remembered or reinterpreted Brandt's policy in a selective way. Decades after Brandt, Gerhard Schröder, another SPD chancellor, is accused of turning this cherished and widely idealised tradition into a convenient excuse for prioritising German business interests in Russia over the geopolitical concerns of Germany's central and eastern European NATO and EU allies. In their recent book, The Moscow Connection, Reinhard Binger and Markus Wehner present a forensic and damning account of how Putin's Russia spent decades courting both German political elites and public opinion, showing that the debate about Germany's long-held Russia-centric assumptions is essential. Germany's support for Ukraine since the invasion constitutes a clear break with its Russia policy. The Scholz government has burned its bridges with Putin and abandoned long-standing principles that had resonated with many Germans until February 2022. This was not easy. But the crucial question is not just whether the Zeitenwende Scholz promised is really happening, but why it took a murderous war in Ukraine for it to begin. Germany changed its mind about Russia, but not until it was too late. The necessary and agonising interrogation of why is only just beginning. A change, which from the German government's point of view feels significant, even drastic, was long overdue and far too slow in the eyes of many of its allies. The criticism is valid. It is the urgency of Ukraine's plight that should set the pace of Germany's response to this catastrophic crisis of European security - not its own soul-searching.

Why Hezbollah's popularity is rapidly declining

Jerry Maher

IT is no secret that Hezbollah and its followers are restless about all that is happening in Lebanon on the economic, financial and social levels as a result of the suffocating crisis the country is going through. Hezbollah's immediate suffering is one of the consequences of the war in Syria and its involvement there, which has led to the martyrdom of a large number of young people.

However, amid signs of the end of the war in Syria and Damascus' return to the Arab fold via the Arab League, it has become clear to the families of the fighters that the blood of their sons was spilled in vain, with no gains resulting from the party's participation in the conflict in Syria on the basis of the "strategic aims of the resistance." Therefore, resentment among the many Shiites who make up the party's base increases on a daily basis, amid the stifling economic crisis and unstable living conditions the country is facing.

After all, they live with other Lebanese people and they share the same suffering. It appeared clearly and publicly with the launch of the popular movement of the Oct. 17 Revolution in 2019, when areas in Southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley witnessed popular movements under the slogan "All means all." They accused the political class, including Hezbollah, of bringing the country to a state of economic deterioration and financial crisis - the worst since the civil war ended. Anger and resentment against the party's policies are now being expressed publicly, no longer behind walls or in restricted meetings. As a result of the insane increase in the price of essential consumer goods and fuel, as well as the decline in purchasing power as a result of the Lebanese pound's deteriorating value against the US dollar, people can no longer tolerate staying silent and have started to publicly express their views. In the end, a hungry man is an angry man, and all barriers fall before starvation. The impact of Hezbollah's policies was evident in last year's parliamentary elections, as turnout declined significantly in some of its strongholds. It is worth noting that the party and its allies directly employed tactics of intimidation and fear toward voters. Such practices were intense and widespread.

Moreover, Hezbollah limited its payment of salaries in US dollars to fighters only due to the shrinking of its revenues from Iran as a result of sanctions. It also changed the salaries of employees within its institutions into Lebanese lira, which increased the resentment and anger. As a result, it is attempting to make up for its financial shortcomings by providing direct assistance to its most committed supporters, particularly by granting them Al-Sajjad cards, which can be used to buy products from its institutions at discounted rates. The same applies to the launch of special cards to

allow Hezbollah followers to buy medicines from a group of pharmacies it is affiliated with. These medicines are usually Iranian and are not subject to the conditions or control of the Lebanese Ministry of Health. The same is true of the foodstuffs imported from Iran. The same also applies to the party's attempt to expand its financial institutions, which are now operating in parallel to the legitimate banks in order to try to replace them in the future. These institutions, specifically Al-Qard Al-Hassan, which now has 31 branches, are distributed over a number of different regions after their work was confined to specific branches in order to absorb people's resentment. This institution has become part of the speculative black market in Lebanon by investing "fresh dollars" into its affiliated ATMs and carrying out normal banking operations as if it were a commercial bank, in violation of all banking and financial laws in Lebanon.

It is also remarkable that aid in the form of food baskets, mostly given by international organizations like USAID, benefit only families affiliated with Hezbollah, even though the party publicly declares its enmity to the US and other Western countries. However, it is evident that a number of its officials and their families lead normal lives and are unaffected by the crisis because they are fortunate enough to receive direct donations from the party. That increases the anger of the families that do not benefit from the same and who have to make do with crumbs. The children and wives of Hezbollah leaders enjoy a life of luxury, travel and vacations, showing off by carrying luxury bags made by the likes of Gucci and Chanel and watches from international brands such as Rolex. Meanwhile, the people who make up the popular support of Hezbollah are not given their daily sustenance or anything that helps them face the daily challenges of living in Lebanon.

Despite the fact that the country is undergoing social and economic deterioration, we clearly see the family members of Hezbollah officials living a fancy lifestyle, as explicitly revealed by the weddings of the children of these officials, which are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. This undoubtedly increases the popular resentment against them. Some experts say Hezbollah is now losing its grip on Lebanon, given the anger spreading even in its traditional strongholds, with many in the country dissatisfied with Hezbollah and the other longtime power holders. The decline of Hezbollah's popularity and its political alliances cannot be traced to a single incident. Rather, it is the result of an ongoing accumulation of missteps and miscalculations the party has made over several years, not to mention its negative influence, which has hampered Lebanon's democratic processes, impeded social cohesion and hindered its path toward prosperity.

Partygate: Parliamentary democracy the winner as Boris Johnson departs

Mohamed Chebaro

UK ex-Prime Minister Boris Johnson has angrily resigned as an MP, claiming that he had been forced out in a ploy by his political opponents. He has apparently decided to jump ship and resign before being sanctioned by the special parliamentary committee that was investigating whether the 58-year-old populist repeatedly lied to Parliament after he broke COVID-19 lockdown rules while he was in office - a saga referred to in the UK as "Partygate."

Johnson's resignation will likely be seen as a form of revenge on PM Rishi Sunak and an attempt to disrupt his premiership. Sunak has inherited a Conservative Party that is well down in the polls to the main opposition Labour Party after 13 years in power, and with a general election looming next year. But above all his resignation raises the question of whether Britain has finally seen the back of this colorful and divi-

sive politician.

The months-long investigation by the Privileges Committee, which has a majority of MPs from Johnson's own Conservative Party, goes to show that the parliamentary system is still able to weed out unruly leaders who try to act as if they are above the law. Even Johnson's popularity - along with his 80-seat majority in the December 2019 general election on the promise to "get Brexit done" and later his ability to push through his less-than-perfect UK-EU divorce deal - did not help his case when it came to breaking the rules of conduct for elected politicians in Britain.

By quitting, Johnson avoids the consequences of a humiliating fight to remain an MP. But he did not quit without denouncing the committee, calling it a "kangaroo court," which his supporters also did when the committee invited him to testify. During his testimony in March, he plainly said that he would judge the committee on its

findings; in other words, if it refrained from sanctioning him, then he would respect the ruling, but if the reputable committee elected to recommend that he was sanctioned by Parliament, then he would "think that would be not only unfair, but I think it would be wrong." In his resignation statement, Johnson, as expected, alluded - like any populist leader and bad loser - to his "bewilderment" and said that he felt appalled that he could be forced out in an antidemocratic way due to the Privileges Committee's "bias." While the committee's report is yet to be published, he elected to jump before he was pushed as, to his mind, the committee's purpose was to find him guilty regardless of the facts.

The controversial UK leader's rise and fall, however, should be seen as a vote of confidence in parliamentary democracy. UK MPs, who are elected by the people as their representatives, usually

have the final say on taming errant politicians, including those who, like Johnson, have tried to circumvent and undermine parliamentary rules and practices and tried to apply a presidential style of government. Responding to Johnson's resignation, a Privileges Committee spokesperson said he had "impugned the integrity of the House by his statement." The world will have watched with amazement the chapters of setbacks and scandals that plagued British politics on Johnson's watch. But his luck continues to fade, as the COVID-19-era party scandals forced him to quit as an MP less than a year after 60 members of his own government, including Sunak, resigned and forced him out of office as prime minister.

However, rumors have persisted that Johnson, a thrice-married father of at least eight children, has not given up hope of returning for another shot at the top job.

His rise to power was a conventional one, as he attended the elitist Eton College and Oxford University. His "cavalier attitude" was noted early on by a teacher. And later his apparent belief that rules were for other people, in addition to his elastic relationship with the truth, were forged when he was president of the Oxford Union, a debating society founded on rhetoric and repartee rather than mastery of cold, hard facts. After university, he was sacked from The Times newspaper after making up a quote, before he joined The Daily Telegraph as its Brussels correspondent, from where he became popular among Conservative euroskeptics for feeding them "euromyths," such as EU plans for a federal megastate that threatened British sovereignty.

He became an MP in 2001 and, three years later, was sacked from the shadow Cabinet by Tory leader Michael Howard for lying about an extramarital affair.

From 2008 to 2016, he served two terms as mayor of London, promoting himself as a pro-EU liberal, a stance which he abandoned to become the "Leave" campaign's figurehead for the 2016 Brexit referendum, capitalizing on his popular image as an unconventional but likeable rogue. Unlike former US President Donald Trump, who has blamed all his legal troubles on a conspiracy by his Democratic and liberal opponents, Johnson is blaming his demise on a "witch hunt" conducted against him by sections of his own party and Parliament. But it is not difficult for many to see how he has conspired against himself in his pursuit of his agenda of fame and gratification, breaking every rule of decency and public service on the way. Finally, his former colleagues in Parliament have managed to put a stop to his excesses and the damage he has caused to British public life and its reputation around the world.

How the US can lead the way on Sudan peace efforts

Dalia Al-Aqidi

THE protracted nature of the ongoing conflict in Sudan portrays a grim outlook, with it so far lacking any conclusion or resolution. It is disheartening to witness how two rival generals have effectively converted the peaceful capital Khartoum into a dreadful battleground, driven solely by their personal vendettas.

The ongoing power struggle in Sudan involves two influential figures vying for control and authority. At the forefront, we have Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, a prominent military commander who has assumed the de facto leadership role in Sudan, for an extended period, through his commanding presence and actions. Opposing him is Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who holds leadership over the Rapid Support Forces, a formidable paramilitary group within the country. This intricate power dynamic experienced a significant turning point in October 2021, when Al-Burhan and Dagalo formed an alliance to orchestrate a military coup that resulted in their ascension to the positions of effective leader and deputy leader of Sudan, respectively. However, the harmony between these two leaders has deteriorated, leading to public clashes and disagreements.

These tensions have manifested themselves in overt and covert maneuvers, as both generals have been observed deploying additional troops and equipment to military camps in Khartoum and across the nation. This accumulation of forces is a worrisome escalation, reflecting their intensified rivalry and determination to consolidate their power and influence. Regrettably, the civilian populace of Sudan is bearing the brunt of this power struggle. Within the city of Khartoum, an unfortunate multitude of individuals have found themselves trapped within the confines of their own homes since the initial eruption of violence on April 15. Perpetrators stationed in various central neighborhoods have engaged in relentless exchanges of fire, utilizing rooftops and the nar-

row spaces between buildings to target the warplanes above. This prolonged siege has resulted in an intermittent electricity supply, essential provisions such as food and water becoming scarce and a surge in incidents of looting and robbery, further intensifying the hardships endured by residents.

The Sudanese Armed Forces was responsible for the airstrike on the Al-Muwaliyyah market. Additionally, Laurence mentioned another incident that took place on the same day, when a child was reportedly killed after a shell struck their family residence in southern Khartoum. These incidents exemplify the grave toll being exacted on innocent lives amid the conflict.

According to the Ministry of Health, the distressing casualty figures stemming from the ongoing conflict indicate a civilian death toll in excess of 865, with an additional 5,000 individuals sustaining injuries. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these reported numbers likely represent a conservative estimate, with the actual magnitude of human suffering and loss probably surpassing the official figures. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has severe apprehensions regarding the ongoing conflict in Sudan and its dire consequences for civilians. According to spokesman Jeremy Laurence, the office highlighted a particularly distressing incident that occurred last week involving an attack on a bustling livestock market in Khartoum. This assault tragically resulted in the loss of eight civilian lives, including three members of the same family. The Sudanese Armed Forces was responsible for the airstrike on the Al-Muwaliyyah market. Additionally, Laurence

mentioned another incident that took place on the same day, when a child was reportedly killed after a shell struck their family residence in southern Khartoum. These incidents exemplify the grave toll being exacted on innocent lives amid the conflict.

In the quest to end the conflict

and restore peace, there are several measures that the US could consider implementing. Firstly, it could leverage its diplomatic influence by engaging in high-level negotiations with the conflicting parties in Sudan. By actively mediating and facilitating dialogue, America can encourage the rival factions to seek common ground, while emphasizing the importance of human rights, stability and reconciliation in their discussions. Moreover, Biden's administration can exert diplomatic pressure on Sudan by collaborating with international partners and organizations, such as the UN and regional bodies like the African Union. By coordinating efforts and leveraging collective influence, a united front can be presented to Sudanese authorities, reinforcing the imperative of a rights-based approach and encouraging them to actively pursue a peaceful resolution.

In addition to such diplomatic endeavors, Washington can offer support for humanitarian efforts within Sudan. By providing robust

assistance, including financial aid, resources and expertise, the US can contribute to alleviating the dire humanitarian conditions the Sudanese population faces. This could involve facilitating access to food, clean water, healthcare and shelter, thereby addressing the immediate needs of the affected civilians. Furthermore, the leader of the free world could prioritize efforts to strengthen governance structures, the rule of law and institutions in Sudan. The US could help establish a foundation for sustainable peace and stability by promoting transparency, accountability and inclusive governance. This may involve supporting capacity-building programs, fostering civil society engagement and promoting initiatives that uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

By aligning its actions with its stated commitment to human rights, the Biden administration could demonstrate its dedication to upholding its fundamental values and principles, while working toward a positive resolution in Sudan. However, the Biden administration's handling of the issue has been deemed inadequate. One notable example was the exclusion of Sudan from the summit with African leaders in Washington last December, which was partly influenced by the country's military coup. Additionally, during President Biden's visit to Saudi Arabia in July 2022, Sudan did not feature prominently in policy discussions. Arguably, the US could have pursued a more assertive stance against the rival generals in Sudan, although the feasibility of such a course of action is debatable.

Sudan's state of affairs has undergone such profound and transformative changes in recent months that a mere restoration of the previous status quo is no longer feasible or viable. Recognizing the urgency and magnitude of the challenges at hand, a concerted and collaborative effort is required to bring about meaningful change and restore stability in Sudan.

“I liked Silvio,” Tony Blair wrote in his autobiography. That was in 2010, when there was possibly some excuse. It was not until 2013 that the late “Silvio” was convicted of tax fraud; charges of false accounting having been dropped after Berlusconi changed the law on false accounting; formal sex charges against him were also yet to come. There were just the two public letters from the second Mrs Berlusconi, Veronica Lario, both denouncing her husband’s pursuit and shameless political promotion of objects of his sexual interest, to suggest that Blair might want to rethink his enthusiasm for a notorious chaser of young women and disrespector of older ones lest this be mistaken for some sort of endorsement.

Lario was provoked beyond endurance by Berlusconi’s attendance - bearing a gold and diamond necklace - at the 18th birthday party of a lingerie model who called him “Papi”. Lario told reporters: “I cannot be with a man who cavorts with minors.” If Blair, in the pre-#MeToo years, hadn’t noticed that well-publicised scandal, his old helpmeet, Alastair Campbell certainly had, to the point of appointing himself agony aunt to Berlusconi, with hints on escaping, as Clinton had done, the harsher consequences of satyrism. “He could do worse,” Campbell advised, “than adopt that same calm approach as Bill Clinton. Objective. Strategy. Tactics.”

Given it’s now also been forgotten, maybe Blair was wise not to let the 2009 perjury conviction of David Mills (the husband of his then cabinet minister, Tessa Jowell) influence his assessment of Berlusconi - someone he described only, in his book, as having “controversy around them”. Mills was found to have withheld incriminating testimony to help Berlusconi in a corruption trial, and sentenced to four and a half years in jail, though this was later quashed on a technicality. The statute of limitations also ensured that Berlusconi escaped a conviction for bribery. In any case, Blair was grateful. Berlusconi had supported him in both the invasion of Iraq and the UK’s bid for the Olympics. “At all levels,” Blair wrote, “politics is about people. If you like a leader, you try to help them.” Even, it turns out, after death. Last week Blair added his tribute to those of fellow Berlusconi fans Vladimir Putin, George Bush and Viktor Orban, in terms suggesting that Berlusconi’s reputation should rightfully survive further evidence, post-2010, of priapism, corruption, tax dodging, incompe-

Catherine Bennett

tence. “Silvio was a larger-than-life figure,” Blair said. “I know he was controversial for many but for me he was a leader whom I found capable, shrewd and, most important, true to his word.” “For me.” Good to know. We can feel confident that Berlusconi never groped Tony’s wife, perverted over his daughter or dis-

Even in Italy, where Berlusconi's supporters have responded furiously to critics of the state mourning, Rosy Bindi, a politician who was once publicly insulted by Berlusconi in a television debate, has argued for some balance: "Death doesn't naturally erase people's lives." "I believe he certainly contributed to change Italy," she says, "but certainly not for the better."

missed his colleagues as menopausal. Even allowing for funeral tact - de mortuis, nil mention of prostitutes - that temporarily forbids allusions to Berlusconi’s most sordid achievements, it is a strikingly generous way for a progressive leader to depict a less principled one’s dedication to sexual gratification, along with his reliance on television channels that continually demeaned women. It’s not as if the world was waiting for Blair to advertise how little he cared about Angela Merkel being called an “unfuckable lard-arse”. Or more recently, Berlusconi promising his football team, Monza, “a bus of whores”.

Not that Blair is alone in indifference to behaviour that once provoked women’s petitions, a complaint (about his insulting language) taken by two MPs to the European court of human rights, a documentary exposing the use of women on Italian television (dominated by Berlusconi) predominantly as sex objects, and in 2011, a demonstration by more than 100,000 women and their supporters against the “degrading” view of women fostered by Berlusconi, a keen user of escorts. The same year, Italian women were revealed to be the unhappiest in Europe. “If your only information about female people came from Berlusconi’s channels,” Ariel Levy wrote that year, for the New Yorker, “you would likely conclude that they exist specifically to be sexually humiliated in public.” In fact, given his own sexual boasts and unimpressive record in promoting women during the years of his and Campbell’s double act, Blair’s esteem is probably less disturbing than Berlusconi’s depiction last week, in news sources that would probably not use similar language about a

non-philandering version of the late billionaire, as “swashbuckling”, “colourful”, “buccaneering”, “flamboyant”, “raunchy”, a “force of nature” prone to “dalliance” (ie, more or less any antiquated compliment that would never be applied to a female politician). As opposed to the more plausible “sad”, “repulsive”, “desperate”, “creepy”, “smaller than life”, prone to “leering”. Aved accounts of the

orgies (with nun outfits!) to which he treated himself, created an impression - in contrast to weary commentaries from his old adversaries, Italian feminists - that would have surely delighted their hero: that the activities of the 86-year-old (whose most recent partner is now 33) are still considered more Casanova, or at worst, Carry On, than a persistent, dehumanising use of wealth and power.

Even in Italy, where Berlusconi’s supporters have responded furiously to critics of the state mourning, Rosy Bindi, a politician who was once publicly insulted by Berlusconi in a television debate, has argued for some balance: “Death doesn’t naturally erase people’s lives.” “I believe he certainly contributed to change Italy,” she says, “but certainly not for the better.” Likewise the Italian feminist Laura Onofri, for whom the number of politicians and commentators praising Berlusconi has, she writes, “truly exceeded the limit of decency”. Berlusconi’s greatest fault, she suggests, was his promotion on television of a “sexist, macho and patriarchal culture”, along with conduct “that not only made us ridiculous in the eyes of the world, but legitimised behaviour harmful to women’s dignity”.

If Britain had not also rewarded an incontinent shagger who made the country globally ridiculous, reports in which Berlusconi’s usage of women is repeatedly euphemised as dashing would still not suggest a culture significantly advanced. Whatever prevents a Johnson comeback, it will not be his pattern of workplace liaisons with women even Berlusconi might have considered young enough to apply.

The Guardian

Prepare for Ukraine’s counter-offensive to falter

Richard Kemp

NATO needs to brace itself for the prospect of Ukraine’s counteroffensive failing to achieve major success. Indeed, so far, Kyiv has attained only limited gains. But those who expected a lightning breakthrough were always going to be disappointed. This is not German panzers against Polish horse cavalry, nor is it American shock and awe against demoralised Iraqi forces in antiquated tanks with no air cover.

Instead, we are seeing something closer to an attritional style of warfare, with attacking forces battering against heavily fortified defences. Current operations are at the stage of reconnaissance-in-force along four separate axes of advance, with Ukrainian units probing Russian positions to identify weak spots that can then be softened up with artillery and exploited by armoured reserve forces. Commandos and partisans are said to be working behind enemy lines to create confusion and disrupt command and control centres. Long range strikes are being used to hit headquarters. Critical here is deception, attacking in as many areas as possible to keep the Russians guessing where the major thrusts will come. But in war, operations rarely go to plan and the odds are stacked against Kyiv. Russia’s General Valery Gerasimov has had a lot of time and resources to

prepare effective defences in multiple lines .The Russians also have numerical superiority in pretty much everything, from men and tanks to, perhaps most critically, artillery.

Then there is air power. Almost every attacking force from the Second World War onwards has succeeded only with air superiority or supremacy. This the Ukrainians do not have, and we have already seen the cost of that with battlefield footage apparently showing American-supplied Bradley fighting vehicles and German Leopard 2 tanks picked off by attack helicopters. So this counter offensive could go either way. But one thing is certain: a Ukrainian victory is very far from guaranteed. We can already see this concern reflected in notes of caution from the White House, where President Biden is presumably contemplating the damage to his political programme that might result from anything other than decisive gains on the battlefield.

1 Corinthians tells us: “If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” At the Vilnius Nato summit next month, if members are peering into the abyss of a failing counteroffensive, there will certainly be many uncertain voices. Those who were already reluctant to send

weapons will have a new excuse: Ukraine doesn’t have the fighting power to achieve victory. Never mind that, over the last year, we have seen a far less determined response from many countries than this crisis called for. Kyiv could be fielding far more Leopard tanks now if Berlin had not obstructed their deployment, and it would even be possible to have F-16s in the skies if the decision to supply them - still not yet made - had been taken in Washington a year ago. The risk is that the likes of Emmanuel Macron and Olaf Scholz will renew their lobbying to press Kyiv towards a peace treaty before the year is out. Wavering of that sort in Europe would undermine Biden’s position with Congress, with every prospect of House Republicans trying to thwart additional funding for Ukraine. But that would be exactly the wrong response. If the offensive falters, the West will need to turn in earnest to the question of how to expand Ukraine’s offensive capability. And that hard support will have to be backed up by announcing a definitive path to Ukraine’s membership of Nato. The leaders at Vilnius should ask themselves a question: if Ukraine with the might of the Atlantic alliance at its back cannot prevail against Russian aggression, then what is the point of Nato?

Snarls and smears from disgraced Boris Johnson, readying his troops for civil war

Polly Toynbee

NINETY days’ suspension and a lifelong ban from a pass to enter the Palace of Westminster. This is the punishing verdict for the only prime minister ever found to have misled parliament. Naturally, Boris Johnson lashes out at the privileges committee judgment as a “final knife-thrust in a protracted political assassination”, designed “to find me guilty, regardless of the facts”. All the committee’s painstakingly careful yet eye-popping evidence bounces off him, as he treats the detailed accounts of six (plus another 16) Downing Street parties, and the lies he told, with total contempt. Furious self-pity, paranoid victimhood and faith in his golden merit is true to form.

This verdict should be the stake through the heart of a disgraced career. Anthony Seldon and Raymond Newell already provided enough devastating evidence in the biography Johnson at 10 to prevent any conceivable resurrection of this monster, you would think. At a literary event this week, Seldon signed my copy with: “A story about the worst prime minister in (modern) history - rotten to the core.” The hypothetical punishment was multiplied for his complicity in a “campaign of abuse” against the committee, which he derided as a kangaroo court. His smears today were expected, claiming the findings that he deliberately misled the house were “rubbish”, and “a lie”, calling it a “deranged conclusion”. He said some of the committee’s arguments were “a load of complete tripe, and that “this report is a charade”. But don’t imagine these are the final ravings of a desperate man as he sinks into a hell of his

own making. No, there is nothing reckless or uncalculated about this Trumpian tactic. He does not for one moment expect to convince the likes of you and me, or any half-rational observers, but to give ammunition and hope to his little platoons of supporters, about two dozen in parliament and many more among the Tory membership, who might, just possibly, get some future chance to select him again as their leader.

There is nothing wild about Johnson’s flamboyant rejection of criticism, as it gives his many foghorns in the media a supply of ammunition to keep the Brexit fires burning, saluting their hero as the prince over the water. This is civil war. Their enemy is Rishi Sunak, the usurper in Downing Street, who even now is wrongfully enjoying Johnson’s gold wallpaper. The remainers, lefties, wokerati and metropolitan elite are now forgotten enemies for Johnson and his platoons, who focus all their fire on their own frontbench. That war may fizzle out, when you look at the quality of politicians rallying to the tattered flag of Johnson’s cohort - Michael Fabricant, Jake Berry and Jacob Rees-Mogg. But they can still inflict salvos of unfriendly fire. Nadine Dorries is trying to time her byection for maximum damage. Yet in this bizarre Conservative party nothing is impossible, so this embittered platoon may yet turn into more than revenge-seekers. If Sunak’s March budget tax giveaways fail to bribe enough voters, we already know that a panicked Tory party, which gave us Johnson and then Liz Truss, is capable of absolutely anything in a frantic

attempt to hold on to its vanishing seats.

Here’s the world they inhabit: the Sun reminds us of the insane power of the tiny Tory membership. When it comes to the free vote on the floor in the Commons on Monday, each Tory MP will have to decide for themselves whether to back the privileges committee report, or express continuing support for Johnson by rejecting it. The frightening anti-democratic threat, expressed by a senior Tory, is that any Tory MP who votes for the report “will be having some serious issues with their associations and wouldn’t be remotely surprised if they were given the boot”. So here we are in full Trump territory, where intimidation by a small group of Johnsonite Tories can terrify their MPs into backing him. They are deluded. The idea that the Johnson magic of Brexit and the 2019 election could be resuscitated is a phantasm. The public wouldn’t have it.

They view the idea of his resurrection as a joke. Fuel was added to his funeral pyre this week when the Covid inquiry opened with a sad cortege of heart-breaking witnesses talking of what happened to them and their families. They never visited the sick and dying. Now, they are left to mourn their obedience to rules ordered by Johnson at his nightly press conferences. The bereaved will always be there, like the parade of ghosts haunting Richard III on the eve of battle, reminding everyone that this was never a minor matter of a few parties. This act of contempt, of misleading parliament, might seem an arcane oddity to many voters

witnessing so many extravagant non-truths and factoids hurled about the House on an ordinary day. But a mother who was stopped by the police from saving her suicidal daughter is the kind of Covid story that, once heard, can never be forgotten. That Johnson and his coterie can imagine he has been hounded from office on trumped up charges shows just how unfit for office they all are and always were, and how far removed their lives are from the experience of the rest of the population during those lockdown months.

This was indeed the “worst” prime minister, the most unfit and yet, terrible though it is to admit, probably the most important. His short term in office has left the deepest and most enduring legacy that will scar the history books, when other leaders are long forgotten. No other prime minister in my lifetime has inflicted such permanent and crippling damage, dividing and diminishing the nation with a Brexit he didn’t even care about. Margaret Thatcher’s harms are many and searing, but they can be undone, and it looks as if many soon could be. Brexit is a deeper laceration. It will forever leave a mark as the most abrupt and pivotal point in the nation’s decline. Despised abroad, with a shrinking GDP and a loss of foreign investment as well as respect, Britain now finds itself alienated, alone, and sliding downwards on just about every league table. Johnson did this, the political wizard who cast a spell over the voters with his outrageous lies and promises. His cunning verbal wit - and even the seductive falsities he peddled - were part of his charm. This was his only talent, and it was lethal.

The Guardian

Experts’ take on China-EU relations

Ann Buel

ALTHOUGH relations between China and the European Union are undergoing changes, they will continue due to the undeniable economic power of China and its importance to the economic success of the EU, which is facing technical and/or real economic recession. The entire eurozone has already witnessed a slowdown in growth, much observed in the Czech Republic and Lithuania, also in Germany and other eurozone countries, which was in technical recession for two quarters in a row. The technical recession could turn into a real one or lead to economic stagnation and spread across the EU and the United States.

The main reason behind this is the industry-related crisis due to the failure of export operations owing to the lack of purchasing power in the domestic and international markets. To overcome this situation, but also under pressure from the US, the EU is set to take some challenging decisions and hold a series of meetings to define its policy toward China. At a key EU leaders’ summit on June

29-30, EU-China relations will be high on the agenda.

That EU-China relations will continue was, in a way, confirmed by what European Council President Charles Michel recently said that it is in the EU’s interest to maintain “stable and constructive” cooperation with China. Michel also called on China to use its “influence” over its neighbor Russia to end the Ukraine crisis. Josep Borrell, the EU’s high representative for foreign affairs, in a recent commentary, hinted at how the EU could adjust its three-part policy toward China (“partner, competitor and systemic rival”). And while Borrell came closer than before to acknowledging China’s aspiration to “build a new world order”, the prescriptions he provided are woefully tepid, especially on human rights. He called for “robust engagement” between the EU and Beijing, though.

“De-risking” is the latest term to enter the China-related policy lexicon of the EU. But it appears to largely mean, for some leaders at least, protecting EU economic

players’ interests. Perhaps the most vivid example was given by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who sought to “de-risk” ties with China by ensuring dozens of German business executives accompanied him to Beijing during his November 2022 visit to Beijing, an approach adopted by French President Emmanuel Macron in April. According to analysts, the EU should explain how it will recalibrate its human rights policy toward China. After all, human rights, hyped up in recent times by Washington and Brussels, are a global issue, with breaches in the US and the EU. The recent promises made by the US administration, especially State Secretary Antony Blinken’s claim that “America is back”, and are engaged in helping resolve issues such as climate change, Iran’s nuclear ambitions and human rights, have not been met.

There is evidence of greater silence on human rights violations in the EU, predominantly in Lithuania and in EU organizations, primarily the European

Commission, after complaints to the US State Department didn’t evoke the promise of improving the situation but, in contrast, the denial of Fulbright scholarships on political grounds; perpetration of discrimination in the job market, leading to economic violence; even stealing of personal funds sent by the United Nations through fake invoices; and US State Department’s support to offenders rather than the victims. It is worth remembering what some European officials have said: if you have nothing else to accuse China of, go for human rights even if it is not always real. Western countries, especially the US, should first set their own house in order before criticizing China. Otherwise, they would be manipulating the universal value of human rights.

Human rights cannot be the denominator of future China-EU relations. Sino-EU ties should be based not on polarization, but on mutual interest and respect, on multilateralism and economic exchanges, and should be free from unlawful US interference and pressures.

The China Daily



SCCI calls for implementation of business-friendly policies

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi called for implementation of business-friendly policies on a permanent basis to revive businesses and industries and ailing the country's ailing economy.

He was addressing participants of the 33rd Senior Management Course of the National Institute of Management (NIM) Islamabad here during their visit to the chamber's house on Wednesday.

Ijaz Afridi said the role of bureaucracy is framing policies and their implementation is pivotal so they should consult business community and relevant stakeholders during formulation of the economic policies.

The under training senior officials from various departments was led by Directing Staff NIM Islamabad Ms Zoobai

Masood.

Through a multimedia presentation, the under-training NIM Islamabad participants briefed about the SCCI's history, origin, objectives, targets/plans, future projects and other key-initiatives for promotion of businesses and industrialization, etc.

Ijaz Khan Afridi, acting president, former senior officer of the chamber and others responded elaborately of various queries raised by the NIM Islamabad participants, mostly relating to Pak-Afghan bilateral trade, Transit trade, Gems and mineral development, law and orders, rapid de-industrialization.

Senior office bearers of the chamber said potentials exist to boost up bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan and transit trade to Central Asian republic countries.

The speakers mentioned that non-removal of apprehensions of business com-

munity on Afghan Transit Trade Agreement, inconsistency in policies and lack of joint mechanism and strategy were main hindrance to improvement of bilateral trade between the two neighbouring countries as well as trade with rest of the regional states.

Members of the business community pointed out investment opportunities in the gems, marble and mineral sector and suggested different proposals in this regard, urging the senior officers of the departments concerned to make it part of policies. The speakers called for bringing reforms in the tax system and implementation of business and industry friendly policies.

The participants termed high power, gas tariffs and rising prices of petroleum products, poor law and order situation the main reason behind the rapid closure of industries in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

On the occasion, the

speakers explained the reasons for increasing informal trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan and gave proposals for converting into formal and documented trade between the two neighboring countries.

Besides, former presidents Fuad Ishaq, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Malik Niaz Ahmad, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, former senior vice presidents Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Imran Khan Mohmand, former vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, members of the SCCI's executive committee Abdul Hakim Shinwari, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Monawar Khurshid, Naeem Qasmi, Laal Badshah Safi, Minhajuddin, and Ihsanullah, Waqar Ahmad, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Faiz Rasool, Ishiaq Muhammad, Saddar Gul, Qaiser Shahzad, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz, a large number of traders, industrialists, importers and exporters were present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships namely MSC Sky-II, Maersk Hartford, MSC Madeleine, Scirocco, Maud, FSM, and Al-Areesh carrying Containers, Mogas, Coal, LPG, and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Oil Terminal, Bulk Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal, and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile, two more ships, Ikan Parang and Star Bovarius with Steel Coil and Coal also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim on Wednesday.

A total of nine ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, MSC Sky-II, Mega-I, and Santa Francesca sailed out to sea on Wednesday morning, and two more ships, FSM and Maersk Hartford are expected to sail on the same day (today) afternoon.

The cargo throughput of 166,050 tonnes, comprising 128,548 tones of imports Cargo and 37,502 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,623 Containers (2,417 TEUs Imports and 2,206 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are six ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Ikan Parang, Sea Harvest, and SC Hong Kong & another ship, Maersk Bostan carrying Steel coil, Palm, Chemicals, and Containers are expected to take berths at MW-1, LCT, EVTLand QICT on Wednesday & another containers ship 'Frankfurt Express' is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

'Govt to complete IMF programme'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said here on Wednesday that the government was committed to complete the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme.

During a meeting with Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan, Donald Blome who called on the minister, the minister informed him about the progress on the on-going talks with IMF, according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

He said Pakistan values

the deep rooted historic and durable bilateral relations with the United States on economic and trade fronts.

Dar shared the economic policies and priorities of the government to address the challenging economic environment and set the economy on the path to stability and growth.

He informed the US Ambassador about the government's budgetary measures to reduce the fiscal gap in order to meet its national as well as international financial obligations.

The two sides also exchanged views about areas of common interest and how the existing bilat-

eral relations between the two countries can be enhanced further.

On the occasion, the US Ambassador expressed confidence in the policies and programmes of the government for economic sustainability and socio-economic uplift of the masses.

He extended his support to further promote bilateral economic, investment and trade relations between both the countries.

Dar thanked the US Ambassador and reiterated the desire of the government to further deepen bilateral trade and investment ties with the USA.

PSX sheds 432 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 432.23 points on Wednesday, a negative change of 1.06 per cent, closing at 40,220.80 points against 40,653.03 points the previous day.

A total of 97,020,043 shares were traded during the day as compared to 124,856,236 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.3,572 billion against Rs. 4,031 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 323 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 69 of them recorded gains and 231 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 11,646,057 shares at Rs.1.11 per share;

Bankislami Pak with 7,858,759 shares at Rs.16.12 per share and Shell Pakistan with 4,664,600 shares at Rs.109.18 per share.

Js Global Cap witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.6.73 per share price, closing at Rs.205.00, whereas the runner-up was Gatron Ind. XB with an Rs.4.42 rise in its per share price to Rs.248.48.

Allawasaya Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.164.00 per share closing at Rs.2,024.00; followed by Bata (Pak) with Rs.85.57 decline to close at Rs.1,750.00.

Rupee gains 24 paises against US Dollar in interbank

Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday gained 24 paises against the US Dollar (USD) in the inter-bank trading as it closed at Rs 286.97 against the pre-

vious day's closing of Rs 287.21.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 288.5 and Rs 291 respectively.

The price of the Euro went down by 5 paises to close at Rs 313.63 against the last day's closing of Rs 313.98, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remain unchanged to close at Rs 2.02, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.07 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 365.13 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 367.20.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal depreciated by 06 paises each to close at Rs 78.13 and Rs 76.50 respectively.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is Published Through This Notice That I Mr Asad Dad S/o Mir Dad Resident of p.o Karak Tehsil and District Karak isThe owner Of House no 42-C Size 11.1 Marla Sector 9 Phase I KDA Kohat. He Has Requested That The Original Papers of The Said House Has Been Lost Some Where and now Issuance of Duplicate Papers is Desired The House 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 UADA Kohat Within 15 Days of Publication of This Notice in Writing with Proof otherwise Duplicate Papers will be Issued and no objection will be Accepted (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I /Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No. 311/1, Institution 27/3/2023. Date of hearing- 3/7/2023.Mahaq Zaron VS Fazal Akbar. Notice to 4.Fazal M a b o . 1 5 . H a b i b u r Rehman.20.Mir Afzal Khan. 21.Said Afzal Khan. 22.Feeoz Khan s/o Mezar Khan. 26.Zahid Khan. 27.Mst Hamed. 28.Mst. Aamea Bibi. 17/2.Nor Alam. 1 7 / 3 . A z a m . 17/4.Mohamad Afzal. 17/5 residents of Bhair Kalay/Ghazikhanay Buner in abroad. Buner in Malaysia.

Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will /shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 3/7/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court

Faraz calls for providing incentives to boost exports

KARACHI (APP): Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), Wednesday urged the government to develop a comprehensive 10-year policy in consultation with industry stakeholders to boost exports and foreign exchange earnings.

President KATI Farazur-Rehman, in a statement issued here, pointed out that Pakistan possesses the significant potential to earn foreign exchange through the textile, IT, pharmaceutical, and horticulture sectors.

He emphasised the need

of focusing on Pakistan's major export sectors and easing restrictions and conditions on exports as the government was in urgent need of foreign exchange and supporting the export industry was crucial in that regard.

He specifically highlighted the textile sector and urged the restoration of subsidised electricity and gas tariffs, as well as the provision of affordable and uninterrupted natural gas supply to industries.

He also emphasised the importance of restoring SRO 1125(1) of 2011,

which would have a positive impact on the export industry.

The president of KATI underlined that relying solely on loans from international financial institutions or friendly countries will not resolve the ongoing economic crisis and urgent measures were needed to pay interest on loans and diversify revenue sources.

He expressed hope that the government would take proactive steps in consultation with stakeholders to achieve economic stability and stimulate export growth.

PPL distributes ration among need families



F.P. Report

KARACHI: In line with the government's efforts to help underprivileged communities,

Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has recently organized a national-level ration distribution drive worth Rs. 100 million. To this end, the company distributed over 12000 ration bags to

deserving households around its operational areas.

The ration bags, containing flour, rice, sugar, milk, pulses and cooking oil, weighing 20 kg each, have been handed over to local administration for distribution among the deserving residents in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab. As such, the company has

always supported government's efforts during challenging national situations, including natural disasters and epidemics.

Apart from obligatory CSR initiatives, PPL has been contributing for welfare measures in education, healthcare, livelihood generation, infrastructure development and community transformation projects.

European stocks steady

LONDON (AFP/APP): European stock markets steadied and the pound dropped Wednesday as traders reacted to news of stubbornly-high UK inflation that risks pushing Britain into recession.

With annual inflation unchanged at 8.7 percent in May when markets expected a fall, the Bank of England (BoE) could react more aggressive than thought Thursday by hiking its key interest rate by a half point according to analysts.

"The impact of further monetary tightening on the British economy is likely to hinder economic activity and ultimately cause a contraction," noted Ricardo Evangelista, senior analyst at ActivTrades.

Ahead of the BoE decision, investors were braced for testimony to Congress due Wednesday from US Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell.

CDNS attains Rs1.48 trillion targets through fresh bonds by May 31

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) attained the target of issuing Rs 1.48 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year (2022-23).

The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.3 trillion for the current financial year (2022-23) which will "promote the savings culture in the country", the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Wednesday.

In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said.

Responding to a question, he said the CDNS surpassed its annual target in the previous fiscal year and set a historic record of Rs 1,250 billion in savings till

June 30, 2022.

It had set an annual gross receipt target of Rs 980 billion from July 1 to June 30 of the previous financial year 2020-21 to promote savings in the country.

The senior official said the CDNS had set a Rs 250 billion annual collection target from July 1 to June 30 for the year 2020-2021 as compared to Rs 352 billion during the same period for the previous year (2019-20) to enhance savings in the country.

The CDNS had set Rs 352 billion annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs 350 billion for the previous year (2018-19), he added.

Replying to another query, he said CDNS had reviewed and set a target of Rs 70 billion in the fiscal

year (2022-23) for Islamic investment to introduce the new products in the market.

In the current financial year, CDNS would achieve the investment target of Rs 70 billion, he maintained.

Replying to a question, he said the CDNS has digitized National Savings Certificates (NSCs) for the convenience of consumers and to modernize the institutional process.

He said the CDNS and Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDCP) have signed an agreement to start a pilot project for the digitization and dematerialization of NSCs last week.

The senior official said this will increase investment in National Savings and increase consumers' confidence.

Balochistan rich in minerals; resources need to be used in better way: Mir Behrooz Regi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's ambassador to Sudan Mir Behrooz Regi has said that Balochistan is a province rich in gold, gas and mineral resources.

He said that by utilizing these resources in a better way, the destiny of Balochistan as well as Pakistan can be changed.

The Ambassador expressed these views yesterday while meeting President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on the occasion of his visit to the chamber.

He said that the civil war of Sudan is causing the destruction of a very sad and important African country.

"We need to work together to improve the security situation of Pakistan and take the country on the path of development and prosperity"

he said. Within the city of Khartoum, thousands of innocent civilians have fallen victim to this war, he said.

"We need to abandon the politics of division in Pakistan and adopt the path of brotherhood, tolerance and dialogue. So that the country can move on the path of development and prosperity."

Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Balochistan is the future of Pakistan. After the completion of Gwadar Port, Pakistan will be able to gain new importance in the entire region, this is the reason why anti-Pakistan forces are obstructing the way to bring peace and tranquility in Balochistan and Gwadar.

He said that the armed forces have successfully fought these anti-nation-

percent. Meanwhile on year-on-year basis, the gold imports into the country witnessed an increase of 250.55 percent as these were recorded at \$3.421 million in May 2023 against the imports of \$0.976 million in May 2022.

In terms of quantity, the imports of the commodity declined by 271.43 percent, from 14 kilograms in May 2022 to 52 kilograms in May 2023.

Meanwhile, on month-on-month basis, the gold imports during May 2023 increased by 537.06 percent when compared to the imports of \$0.537 million in April 2023.

In terms of quantity, the gold imports increased by 550 percent in

May 2023when compared to the imports of 8 kilogram registered in October.

It is pertinent to mention here that the overall trade deficit witnessed a decline of 40.59 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The trade deficit during July-May (2022-23) was recorded at \$25.791 billion against the deficit of \$43.409 billion in July- May (2021-22), a decline of 40.59 percent.

The exports during the period were recorded at \$25.366 billion against \$28.871 billion last year, showing a decline of 12.14 percent.

Gold imports up by 44.22 per cent in 11 months



In brief

SBP Archery C'ship from June 23

LAHORE (APP): Secretary sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Shahid Zaman and Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail will inaugurate Sports board Punjab (SBP) Inter-Division Men's, Women's Archery Championship at Bhurban Stadium, Murree on June 22 (Thursday). Meanwhile, Dr. Asif Tufail, said on Wednesday that hundreds of male and female players from all nine divisions will exhibit their skills in team event, amateur, 30m, 70m and open categories events. "There will be exciting archery competitions in 2-day Championship", he added. He said that Murree Archery Championship is a suitable platform for talented male and female players and the potential youngsters must avail this opportunity to prove their mettle. "We are quite upbeat that this championship will play a key role in the growth of game of archery among younger generation", he added. Dr. Asif Tufail further said that the game of archery has also been included in Sports Board Punjab Summer Camp schedule so that young male and female players can polish their archery skills during the free time of summer vacations under the supervision of qualified coaches. Sports Board Punjab has also established an Archery academy in Nishtar Park Sports Complex where qualified coaches are imparting modern archery training to emerging male and female players, he added.

Medvedev through to last eight at Halle Open

HALLE (Agencies): Russian top seed Daniil Medvedev is through to the quarter-finals of the Halle Open after defeating Serbian Laslo Djere on Wednesday. Medvedev won 6-3, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3, with the world number three overcoming losing a tight second set to win with ease at the Wimbledon warm-up event. He will next face Spanish eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut. The former world number one and 2021 US Open champion was runner-up on the Halle grass in 2022, losing to Hubert Hurkacz in straight sets in the final. Medvedev has struggled on grass in his career so far and has never reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon. He missed last year's tournament at the All England Club due to Wimbledon's ban on Russian and Belarusian players competing. Medvedev has won five ATP titles already this year, but was beaten by Sebastian Korda in the Australian Open third round and was dumped out in the French Open first round for the fifth time in seven appearances. Later Wednesday, second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas faces Chilean Nicolas Jarry while home favourite Alexander Zverev will take on Denis Shapovalov.

West Ham fans banned

LONDON (Agencies): West Ham fans have been banned from attending the club's next European away match after objects were thrown from the stands at their Europa Conference League final win over Fiorentina. Fiorentina captain Cristiano Biraghi was left bloodied after cups and other items were thrown as he took a corner. West Ham have been fined 50,000 euros (£43,000) for the incident and a further 8,000 euros for a pitch invasion following the game in Prague. The Hammers beat Fiorentina 2-1. The London club have also been banned for selling tickets to away supporters for a second European match.



BULAWAYO: Michael Leask nails the sweep against George Dockrell.

Scotland edge Ireland in World Cup Qualifier thriller

BULAWAYO (Agencies): Michael Leask edged a four off the final ball to secure a dramatic one-wicket win for Scotland over Ireland in their World Cup Qualifier Group B game. Curtis Campher's superb 120 had helped Ireland to a total of 286-8, with Brandon McMullen taking 5-34. Scotland looked to be in trouble at 122-6 but Leask's brilliant unbeaten 91 saw them snatch victory in a thriller. Scotland were playing their first match of their campaign while Ireland lost to Oman in their opening game on Monday. That five-wicket defeat had come as an early setback to Ireland's hopes of advancing to the Super Six stage of the tournament and the loss to Scotland represents another major blow with fixtures against Sri Lanka on Sunday and the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday still to come.

Scotland can go into their next match against the UAE on Friday with confidence, with encounters against Oman and the Sri Lankans to follow.

The leading three from both groups will advance to the Super Six stage, with the top two from the 10-team tournament will progress to the World Cup in India later this year. Ireland's innings got off to a horrendous start as opener Paul Stirling and Andrew Balbirnie both fell to medium pacer McMullen without scoring to leave their side 1-2. Harry Tector and Lorcan Tucker also succumbed cheaply, scoring six apiece, with only Andy McBrine's 32 providing early resistance.

Campher and Dockrell breathed fresh life into the Irish innings with a sixth wicket stand of 136, before Dockrell became McMullen's fourth victim after contributing 69.

Campher's 120 came off just 108 balls and included nine fours and four sixes, before he was bowled by McMullen in the penultimate ball of the innings.

Chris McBride's 56 was the high point of the early part of Scotland's reply but wickets fell regularly thereafter to leave them 164 runs short of their opponents' total with four wickets remaining in the 28th over. Leask and Mark Watt (47) helped their side rally, putting on 82 for the eighth wicket, then as the Scots closed in on victory, Safyaan Sharif was dismissed in the penultimate ball with his side one run short of their target.

Leask completed his memorable contribution, which saw him blast 91 off just 61 balls including nine fours and four sixes, by scoring the decisive boundary. Mark Adair was the pick of the Ireland bowlers with figures of 3-57.

43-year-old Williams gets wild card to play singles at Wimbledon

WIMBLEDON (AP): Venus Williams is set to make her 24th appearance in the singles draw at Wimbledon after the 43-year-old American was given a wild-card entry on Wednesday. Williams is a five-time Wimbledon singles champion and was a finalist at the grass-court major in 2017, two decades after her debut at the All England Club. Ranked 697th, Williams beat 48th-ranked Camila Giorgi 7-6 (5), 4-6, 7-6 (6) on Monday at the Birmingham Classic. It was her first victory over a player in the top 50 in nearly four years.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion next plays Jelena Ostapenko at the Wimbledon warm-up event. Williams' younger sister Serena is a seven-time Wimbledon champion. Serena Williams lost in the first round at last year's tournament and soon after announced her decision to step away from tennis.

Ukrainian player Elina Svitolina and British players Heather Watson and Katie Boulter were also given wild cards for the women's draw. David Goffin, a Belgian who reached the Wimbledon quarterfinals in 2019 and 2022, was among of the men given wild cards. Wimbledon begins on July 3.

Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the strong support of Pakistan Army is organizing the Games with the aim to provide much updated facilities to the players hailing from different Madrasas across merged tribal areas. The youngsters of Khyber district performed a spectacular PT show and received a standing ovation from the spectators at the ground, the games included cricket, football, volleyball, tug-of-war, and Qirat competitions. Cricket Competition will be played at Islamia College Cricket Ground, Football at Tahmas Khan Football Stadium, Volleyball at indoor gymnasium of the Pakistan Sports Board Coaching Center, Tug of War and Qirat competitions will be held at Qayyum Sports Complex Peshawar. The competitions will continue for four days.

3rd Peshawar Open Taekwondo C'ship from Jun 23

PESHAWAR (APP): The 3rd edition of the Peshawar Open Taekwondo Championship is being played in Peshawar under the auspices of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo Association.

This was stated by Ilyas Afridi, Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo Association while talking to media men here. The Championship is being organized in which teams from Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mardan, Bajaur, Khyber, Mohmand, Swabi, Swat district and

Afghan refugees will participate.

According to Ilyas Afridi Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo Association, this Championship will consist of players of cadet, junior and senior categories and this Championship will be held from June 23 to June 25 at Hayatabad Sports Complex.

In response to a question, Ilyas Afridi Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo Association said there is immense Taekwondo talent in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province which should be highlighted and supported.

Finally, he said that all the arrangements for the Championship have been completed and more than 300 players are participating in this Championship. In the end, he congratulated and paid tribute to the former Provincial Minister of Sports and President Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Olympics Association Syed Aqil Shah, thanks to which the performance of the province was good in the National Games.

Babar Azam retains fifth slot as ICC issues latest Test rankings

F.P. Report

DUBAI: Pakistan skipper Babar Azam retained his fifth position in latest Test batting rankings for men issued by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday.

The right-arm batsman stands at the slot with 862 points and he is expected to improve the rankings as Pakistan is set to open his campaign for next cycle of the World Test Championship against Sri Lanka next year. The Babar Azam-led squad will take on Sri Lanka in two test matches.

Meanwhile, Marnus Labuschagne's reign as the No.1 ranked Test batter in the world is over with England's Joe Root replacing the Australian in top spot.

Labuschagne has held the premier position for just over six months, with the right-hander rising to the top in December last year on the back of a strong start to the Australian summer against the West Indies.



But a slow start to 2023 by his lofty standards, coupled with Root's 30th Test century against Australia in the dramatic first Ashes Test at Edgbaston has seen a major shakeup at the top of the batter rankings.

Root managed scores of 118* and 46 in a losing cause during the first Ashes Test in Birmingham and those superb individual efforts saw the 32-year-old rise a massive five places and regain his place as the No.1 ranked Test batter in the world.

Labuschagne drops to third as a result of scores of 0 and 13 against England, with Kiwi veteran Kane

Williamson jumping two places to second overall.

Fellow Australians Travis Head (down one place to fourth) and Steve Smith (drops four spots to sixth) also lose ground in the race to become the No.1 Test batter, with just 26 rating points now separating the top six players in what is one of the closest battles seen in recent times.

Australia opener Usman Khawaja was adjudged Player of the Match for his heroics against England and the 36-year-old rose to a new career best rating and seventh place overall, while young gun Harry Brook

also earned the highest mark of his short Test career by jumping five places to 13th on the latest Test rankings.

The ongoing ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier saw some minor changes to the latest ODI rankings, with Oman captain Zeeshan Maqsood perhaps the biggest beneficiary as the 35-year-old improved two places to third overall on the updated list for all-rounders.

Maqsood contributed a valuable 59 and picked up a wicket as Oman upset Ireland in their opening match of the Qualifier, while the left-arm spinner also jumped five places to 40th on the list for ODI bowlers.

USA pacer Saurabh Netravalkar has four wickets from two matches at the Qualifier and the left-arm jumper jumps five places to 18th overall and a career high rating on the list for bowlers. He is the first USA player to reach the top 20 in either batting or bowling in the ODI rankings.

Corps Commander Peshawar inaugurates Inter-Madrasas Games in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Corps Commander Peshawar Lt Gen Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat Khan Wednesday inaugurated the second edition of the Inter-Madrasas Games carrying 800 athletes of the religious Madrasas at Lala Ayub Hockey Stadium here.

The Inter-Madrasas Games is carrying 800 athletes from various Madrasas based in the merged tribal areas and are taking part in five different Games. Chief Secretary KP Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Secretary Sports Captain (ret'd) Mushtaq Ahmed, Director Sports Merged Areas Pir Abdullah Shah, Director Operation Azizullah, AD Operation Imran Khan, Ayub Khan, Administrator Syed Jafar Shah, Assistant Director Admin and Media Focal Person Awan Hussain, other high military and civil officials were also present.

Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the strong support of Pakistan Army is organizing the Games with the aim to provide much updated facilities to the players hailing from different Madrasas across merged tribal areas.

The youngsters of Khyber district performed a spectacular PT show and received a standing ovation from the spectators at the ground, the games included cricket, football, volleyball, tug-of-war, and Qirat competitions. Cricket Competition will be played at Islamia College Cricket Ground, Football at Tahmas Khan Football Stadium, Volleyball at indoor gymnasium of the Pakistan Sports Board Coaching Center, Tug of War and Qirat competitions will be held at Qayyum Sports Complex Peshawar. The competitions will continue for four days.

Earlier, the ceremony started with the recitation from the Holy Quran by Qari Adnan, followed by the National Anthem. All the participating contingent have their March Past wherein international baseball athlete from merged area Luqman carried the National Flag. The school kids of the merged schools presented an eye-catching PT display, followed by a Tug-of-War competition.

Arshad Nadeem ruled out of Asian Athletics C'ship



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Renowned Pakistan javelin thrower and Olympian Arshad Nadeem has been ruled out of the Asian Athletics Championship, the Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP)'s president Akram Sahi shared on Wednesday.

President Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) Akram Sahi, alongside the athlete, held a press conference here and announced that the latter will not be available for the Asian championship due to an injury to his left knee.

"Arshad is not fit to participate in the Asian Athletics Championship,"

shared Sahi.

Sahi also held WAPDA accountable for Arshad Nadeem's injury and alleged that the department forced him to participate in the recently-held National Games where he returned with a gold medal.

"Arshad was forced to participate in the National Games. We had warned WAPDA from taking any risk in Arshad's case as he just recovered from a knee injury," Sahi said.

Akram Sahi went on to assert that the track used during the National Games in Quetta was not up to the mark and played a major role in Arshad Nadeem sus-

taining the injury.

"Just for a medal, Arshad was forced to participate in the event in Quetta where the track is also not up to the mark," Sahid claimed.

The AFP President further requested WAPDA's high-ups to take care of their national heroes.

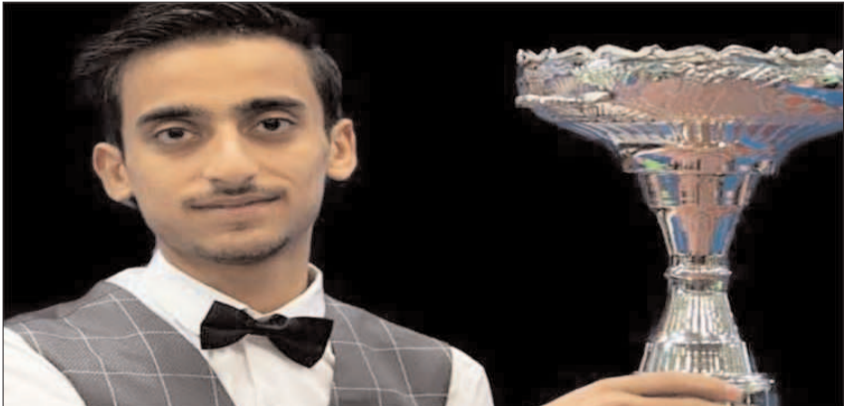
"Questions should be asked from higher authorities. We need to take care of our players," he reiterated.

It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan's Commonwealth Games hero Arshad Nadeem recently competed in the National Games.

He outpowered his opponents to get his hands on the gold medal in the ongoing 34th edition of the tournament. Arshad showcased his potential and proved his mettle once again as he recorded the longest throw of 78.02m in his third attempt.

His attempt was unmatched by any of his competitors and consequently clinched the gold medal.

Pakistani cueist takes home 21st Asian Snooker Championship



F.P. Report

TEHRAN: Ahsan Ramzan on Wednesday defeated his Iranian rival Malad Pourali to win the Under-21 Snooker Championship in Tehran.

Having won the first four frames convincingly, the young Pakistani cueist looked like the favorite from the start.

Even though the Irani won the fifth and sixth

frames, Ramzan did not loose his grip on the game and claimed the title by winning the seventh frame.

Ramzan defeated his opponent comprehensively in the best of seven frame by five-two.

Frame scores for his victory were 48-46, 70-5, 61-6, 62-29, 30-71, 55-67, 101-27.

Earlier, his victory in the Semi-Final secured a place in the final where he played

another Iranian cueist called Tirdad Azadipout. He won his semifinal by winning the Best of Seven 4-2 to secure his spot in the final. Earlier, Ramzan took the better of Indian Digvijay Kadian 4-3 in a fully-stretched quarter-

final. Ahsan, who topped group 'B', fought back after trailing 2-3 to inflict a 76-19, 76-36, 35-67, 31-63, 55-72, 65-27, 70-9 defeat on his opponent.

Zaka Ashraf declares Asia Cup's hybrid model an "injustice" to Pakistan



LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The chairman-designate of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Zaka Ashraf has termed Asia Cup's hybrid model an "injustice" to Pakistan.

Addressing a press confer-

ence along with Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari, the Federal Minister for Inter-provincial Coordination (IPC) in Islamabad on Wednesday, Zaka expressed his desire to have the hybrid model reviewed for keeping all matches of the Asia Cup tournament in Pakistan.

He asserted the tournament should be held entirely in Pakistan in accordance with the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). "But major matches are played elsewhere, and only minor teams like Nepal play in Pakistan. Injustice has been done to Pakistan," he explained.

Zaka Ashraf said that he will

try to make changes in the limited time available. "I will try to do what is in the best interest of Pakistan within the shortest possible time. There are many pending issues, and I am not delving deep into the matter since I haven't officially taken over," he added, noting that he also plans to engage with the Indian leadership.

Zaka Ashraf, who is expected to become the next chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), expressed his opposition to the hybrid model for the Asia Cup right from the beginning.

Ashraf, who previously held the position of PCB chairman under the previous Pakistan

Peoples Party (PPP) government, stated that the hybrid model does not benefit Pakistan in any way.

Following India's refusal to travel to Pakistan, the management committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), headed by Najam Sethi, proposed a hybrid model for the Asia Cup.

After facing several challenges, the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) eventually approved the hybrid model. As per the approved plan, the first four matches will be held in Pakistan, and subsequently, the tournament will move to Sri Lanka where nine matches, including the final, will be played.

The Asia Cup is scheduled to take place from August 31 to September 17. Yesterday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif nominated Zaka Ashraf and Mustafa Ramday for inclusion in the PCB Board of Governors (BoG). The Federal Minister for Inter-provincial Coordination (IPC) issued a notification in this regard on Wednesday.

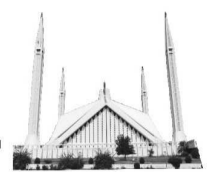
Following the notification of Zaka Ashraf and Mustafa Ramday, the Board of Governors (BoG) now has a complete membership of 10 individuals. Alongside Ashraf and Ramday, four representatives from cricket associations and four representa-

tives from departments will also be part of the BoG.

Ehsan Mazari said that the term of the PCB Management Committee ended on the night of June 19. People's Party leadership wanted Ashraf to be nominated as Chairman Cricket Board and the authority of PCB is with the Election Commissioner, he said adding that it will hold the election related to PCB before Eid Ul Adha.

Zaka Ashraf said that he was planning to build a cricket stadium in Islamabad, unfortunately, the project could not go ahead.

Ehsan Mazari said if India talks about neutral ground then Pakistan will not go to India.



In brief

Ex SC judge Qazi Amin passes away

RAWALPINDI (PPI): Former judge of Supreme Court of Pakistan Justice (retired) Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed passed away due to a heart attack in Rawalpindi on Wednesday. He was 66. Chakwal, was under treatment at Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology for the last many days. He last his breathed today due to the heart attack. He had been elevated to the Supreme Court in April 2019 and retired in March 2022. Amin, hailing from. Qazi Amin was born on 26th March 1957 in Chakwal. He completed early education from Government High School and Government Degree College Chakwal. He obtained a law degree from the University Law College in 1980 and was enrolled as Advocate in 1981. He joined a doctoral programme in Public International Law at the University of Amsterdam and completed collateral programmes in International Law and International Relations at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague in 1985.

IRSA releases 277,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 277,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 366,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1462.18 feet and was 64.18 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 178,800 cusecs and 138,300 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1153.95 feet, which was 103.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 62,800 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 146,300, 125,000, 83,200 and 30,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 67,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 35,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Complete renovation work of parks before Eid

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director General (DG) Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi, Ahmad Hasan Ranjha here on Wednesday directed the authorities to complete ongoing renovation work of all the parks in Rawalpindi and Murree before Eid-ul-Azha. The DG also instructed to repair faulty lights, swings and walking tracks as soon as possible besides improving the security of the parks. He also ordered the officers to utilize all available resources to ensure the provision of the best recreational and tourism facilities to the public in all the parks of Rawalpindi and Murree particularly on Eid ul Azha. The DG said that PHA would complete the ongoing renovation work without utilizing government funds.

Masood Khawaja remembered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Arts Council (PAC) on Wednesday organized Quran Khwani on the death anniversary of renowned TV and theatre artist the late Masood Khawaja. After the recitation of the Quran, special prayers were offered for the late Masood Khawaja, and a large number of artists from the twin cities participated. On the occasion, Naheed Manzoor said a vacuum in comedy acting in Pakistan due to the death of Masood Khawaja can never be filled.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Ms. Shazia Marri address a Press Conference on 70th Birthday of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

Media plays important role in creating awareness among masses: Amir Muqam

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture, Engineer Amir Muqam Wednesday lauding the role of media and Journalists, said that media has an important role in creating awareness among the masses about issues and promoting the national narrative.

Addressing second One Day International Urdu Journalism Conference titled 'Seventy-Five Years of Urdu Journalism' organized by National Language Promotion Department (NLPD), Engr Amir Muqam highlighted the role of Urdu journalism in the Freedom movement and stability of Pakistan and said that Urdu Journalists have rendered great sacrifices for the sake of the country and democracy.

Besides others, Federal Secretary National Heritage and Culture Fareena Mazhar, well-known literary figure Ifikhar Arif, senior journalist Mujibur Rehman Shami, Hafeezullah Niazi, Ishfaq Hussain and Farhat Ullah Babar were also present on the occasion. The opening session of the conference was presided over by Adviser to Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Engr Amir Muqam.

Addressing the conference participants, Engr Amir Muqam said that the present government is committed to promoting Urdu language and taking all possible measures for its promotion at all levels.

He said that Urdu journalism has played an important role in protecting human rights and democracy; and raising voice against economic injustices in the country.

Engr Amir Muqam said that one person has divided the nation. He said that PTI's narrative was anti-nationalism and anti-people. He said that the path of the constitution and the law must be adopted to stop this trend.

Engr Amir Muqam said that PTI protestors set Jinnah House and Radio Pakistan building on fire and destroyed archives. He said that no patriotic person can see the burnt images in Jinnah House. He termed the budget presented by the federal government as very balanced and people-friendly.

Adviser to Prime Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that despite the challenging economic conditions, the manner in which the coalition government has prepared and presented the budget in the House keeping in view the welfare of the poor and salaried class is commendable.

Earlier, Adviser to Prime Minister also inaugurated National Language Processing Laboratory (NLP) to implement and promote Urdu as the national language.

He said that the core objective of the project is to elevate Urdu to the status of languages with extensive digital data resources and equip it with modern technology applications.

The project includes the development of several applications, such as Machine Translation (MT), Speech

Recognition (SR), and Optical Character Recognition (OCR), that will make language learning more accessible, facilitate cross-border communication and commerce, enable people to access online content, promote cross-cultural understanding, and help preserve language resources.

Adviser to PM Engr Amir Muqam also inaugurated three-day books fair arranged by NLPD where books of the noted publishers and writers were available at discounted prices.

On this occasion, Engr Amir Muqam also visited the book fair, where government, semi-government and private institutions and publishers from all over the country set up their book stalls. Senior journalist Mujibur Rehman Shami said that Urdu newspapers have fought battles for freedom, adding that generation after generation, Urdu literature has trained people. He expressed pleasure on the inauguration of National Language Processing Laboratory and said that it would play important role in the promotion of Urdu journalism.

Mujibur Rehman Shami said that politics and journalism are inter-connected. Earlier, while addressing the ceremony Secretary National Heritage and Culture Fareena Mazhar highlighted the role of Urdu Journalism and said that during the last 75 years, journalism not only created awareness among masses about the national and international issues but also added a great literary asset in Urdu literature.

SBP issues revised Regulations for Electronic Money Institutions

E.P. Report

KARACHI: State Bank of Pakistan has issued revised Regulations for Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs) with the aim to enhance outreach and scope of these innovative fintech-enabled payment companies.

According to a press statement Wednesday, the updated regulations now allow EMIs to offer their customers, including minors and freelancers, increased monthly wallet limits, offer new payment services such as Payments Aggregation, Bill/Invoice Aggregation, Payment Initiation, Account Information, Escrow Services for domestic e-commerce transactions, Services via APIs to

FIs/Fintechs/TPSPs and Inward cross border remittances to their customers.

Since the issuance of earlier EMI Regulations in 2019, there has been increasing interest by local and foreign fintech companies to work as an EMI in Pakistan. Till date, State Bank has given approval to four (04) EMIs to launch commercial operations while six (06) EMIs are at different licensing stages. As of March, 2023, these EMIs have opened close to 1.6 million e-money wallets with total outstanding e-money of Rs. 2 billion.

The revised Regulations issued on June 21, 2023 are in line with SBP's vision of encouraging non-banking fintech companies' entry into payments space to pro-

mote digitization in the financial sector and accelerate level of outreach of EMI operations for achieving the objective of boosting adoption of digital financial services. The new regulations, issued after detailed consultation with existing and prospective EMIs and relevant stakeholders, would allow customers to avail improved services from these regulated e-money providers.

SBP expects that the revised regulations would attract more fintech companies from Pakistan and across the globe to enter into the EMI business in Pakistan and provide innovative, affordable and improved payment services thus increasing digital financial inclusion in Pakistan.

Shazia Marri vows to uphold Benazir Bhutto's mission

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri Wednesday said Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will always stand with the people of the country and fight against poverty, inflation and unemployment, following the mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

Paying tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 70th birthday anniversary, Shazia Marri said, "Her contributions to the restoration of democracy in the country will be remembered forever".

Addressing a news conference along with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi, the federal minister said that the PPP leadership and its workers have rendered great sacrifices for upholding democratic values in the country. Benazir Bhutto was not only the first women Prime Minister of the country but of the entire Muslim Ummah giving a new perspective to the country's politics.

She took a number of unprecedented initiatives for empowering women including establishing Women Police Stations, and First Women Bank as well as launching the Lady Health Workers project.

The Ghazi Barotha and Neelum Power Projects were also launched in her tenure of electricity generation.

The federal minister said that oil and

gas production increased during the tenure of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto while Pakistan's relations with foreign countries were also significantly improved.

Referring to the Thar Coal project which Shaheed Benazir Bhutto once termed as 'black gold', Shazia Marri said that the Thar coal project is now the biggest cheap source of generating electricity for the country.

Being a woman, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto never considered herself weak but changed the dynamics of politics by empowering women in the country. "Shaheed Benazir Bhutto always fought for the rights of people of the country especially downtrodden segments at every forum and became the voice of the voiceless," she said.

She advocated the policy of reconciliation in front of the country's political forces through the Charter of Democracy and was of the view that "Instead of fighting with each other, we have to fight with those who are against progress and democracy in Pakistan".

The essence of the Charter of Democracy reflected that two opposing political parties can sit together for the sake of the country's stability and ensure democracy. "We must show the same political maturity even today", Shazia Marri added.

Early childhood education key to shape children's personality: PM

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said early childhood education was a building block for shaping the personality & determining career pathways for the children. He said this was at this early stage in their educational journey that they imbibe the basic norms and values of social conduct.

"Happy to announce the holding of Pakistan Learning Conference 2023 that focuses on building foundations by adopting the global best practices to

empower children," he said in a tweet. The prime minister said he was very keen to attend the Conference and listen to the varied perspectives from scholars and policy practitioners from different backgrounds but could not make it due to his commitment to represent Pakistan at a global financial moot in Paris. "However, I wish the Conference all the best and look forward to its recommendations for building a resilient and happy future for our children," he added.

Azerbaijan Embassy celebrates 105th Anniversary of Azerbaijan Armed Forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Islamabad hosted a grand reception to celebrate the 105th Anniversary of the Azerbaijan Armed Forces.

Speaking at the reception, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, said, "We celebrate the 105th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijan Armed Forces. Undoubtedly, the peak of the warpath of our National Army during this period is the glorious Victory gained in the Patriotic War, Karabakh Victory. There has been no similar Victory in the cen-

tures-old history of our nation". He said that on June 26, 1918, by the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the first regular military unit - the Combined Azerbaijan Corps was created. The government set the task of creating an army of 25 thousand people. On August 1, 1918, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan was established.

The Ambassador highlighted that the process of army building in Azerbaijan entered a qualitatively new stage under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev. He successfully continued the

army-building policy, and continuous steps were taken toward increasing the military's professionalism, improving the soldiers' fighting spirit and moral-psychological training, and supplying our Armed Forces with the most modern weapons and equipment.

The 44 days Patriotic War of 2020, which resulted in the liberation of our territories from Armenian occupation by the brave Azerbaijani Army under the leadership of Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, was written in golden letters in our history.

ANF recovers 54 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan in six operations conducted across the country recovered 54 kg drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that in an operation near Motorway Islamabad, 21.6 kg opium and 25.2 kg charras concealed in secret cavities of a vehicle were recovered. An accused resident of

Faisalabad was rounded up. In another operation near Pak-Afghan Border area in Chaman, three accused were arrested on recovery of 4.8 kg suspicious material. In third operation conducted in a deserted area of Khyber, 1.5 kg Ice drug was recovered.

In fourth operation, a vehicle was intercepted near main Kamalpur Interchange Faisalabad, 9.6 kg opium and six kg charras were recovered while

two accused resident of Mardan and Peshawar were netted. In fifth operation conducted in Marakupura Sialkot area, one kg heroin was recovered from the possession of an accused, resident of Sialkot. In sixth operation, 42 grams opium was recovered from a parcel booked for Britain at G.P.O Lahore. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

Wafaqi Mohtasib inspection team visits Islamabad Airport to ensure facilities to the overseas Pakistanis

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: On receiving a number of complaints from the domestic and international passengers pertaining to Islamabad International Airport, the Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, constituted an inspection team comprising officers of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat headed by Senior Adviser Overseas Pakistanis.

The team visited the airport on 15 June 2023 to assess the functioning of the personnel deputized at the airport as well as to look into the procedural issues, especially working of the joint search counters. Consultations were held with the ASF, ANF and Customs representatives. It was observed that within the resources available, the task assigned to them was being carried out satisfactorily. Their input for improving the mechanism was noted for further action by the concerned authorities.

Inspection Team also visited National and International and CIP lounges, baggage claim area, immigration counters, health services, Airport Security office, and other related agencies counters. The team directed to install CCTV cameras at joint search

desks of the FIA, ANF, ASF and Customs. The directions for displaying bill boards disseminating information for passengers in Urdu and English regarding prohibited items be displayed at all counters were passed to administrative staff.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib received some complaints of demanding unlawful money from the passengers. The inspection team directed the airport management to conduct inquiry against such elements involved in this activity and submit report accordingly. The team also observed the absence of representative of Ministry of Religious Affairs and directed the concerned Ministry to make their representative available at OWFD during Haj flights. It was also brought into the notice of inspection team that the check-in staff was asking for the printed copy of the E-reservation for which it was decided that the Airport Management will install printer at the counter to facilitate the passengers. It was also recommended by the team that a pamphlet showing the list of prohibited items be attached with ticket and the same may also be displayed on screens at the airport, to facilitate passengers.

The team took the notice of non-availability of 'Visa Protection Stamp' for the convenience of travelling immigrants and directed for its immediate availability.

The team also visited One Window Facilitation Desk (OWFD) which has been established on the direction of Federal Ombudsman to facilitate overseas Pakistanis having representatives of all 12 Federal Agencies present round the clock, to assist and resolve the passenger's complaints on the spot.

The Airport official informed that as per direction of Ombudsman, Separate counters for senior citizens, females and diplomats have been earmarked during the process of check-in and visa control. Most of the complaints of overseas Pakistani immigrants were related to the careless handling and loss of their baggage, delayed passport control and unnecessary harassment by the Narcotics Control officials, posted at the airport. At the end of the visit; a combined meeting with heads of all relevant agencies was held, in which the recommendations were finalized for facilitating the overseas Pakistanis. The inspection team submitted their report to Federal Ombudsman, today.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervesh Ashraf addressing to the participants of Launch ceremony of internship for O/A Levels Students at Parliament House.

Wahid met German CEO

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Wahidullah Halimi on Wednesday met with the CEO of German 30 Company Dr. Sebastian Haniyeh and his delegation in Kabul. The two sides talked about investing in Afghanistan's mines and providing job opportunities to the people. Dr. Sebastian asked for an investment in the country's mines, which was welcomed by Deputy of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum who promised to cooperate with a German company.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Hajj 03, 1444 — Thursday, June 22, 2023

MoD repairs broken vehicles

KABUL (Agencies): A total of 225 various military vehicles which had earlier been destroyed and broken during the ex-governments have recently been repaired by the technical team of Reshkhoo Army Corps. "The repaired vehicles include 125 armored Humvees, 75 battle tanks, 25 internationals, and other transportation vehicles," said a statement. Efforts are underway to repair all destroyed and unusable military vehicles countrywide, the statement added.

Afghanistan switches petroleum purchase from Iran to Russia and Uzbekistan: Iran

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan has reportedly reduced buying fuel from Iran and has instead started buying it from Russia and Uzbekistan, according to Hamid Hosseini of Iran's Syndicate of Exporters of Oil Products. He cited the Taliban's changing preferences as the reason behind the shift in fuel procurement. "The Taliban no longer want to purchase Iranian petrol," he said and continued that to obtain petrol with higher technical standards, Iran and Afghanistan have been purchasing their fuel needs from Russia and Uzbekistan, Iranian Media reported. "The higher quality of

products from Russia and Uzbekistan is the reason for the return of gasoline by the Taliban, and Afghanistan and Iraq no longer accept products of any quality," Hosseini said. The Iranian official further emphasized that Iran's export market share has decreased due to the higher quality petrol supplied by other countries. He mentioned that Iran controlled 70% to 90% of the market for oil exports to Iraq and Afghanistan. The National Standards Authority of the Taliban declared in January that it had sent 26 fuel tankers back to Iran because of quality problems.

According to a report from Petro View, an Iranian oil and gas consultancy and research platform, gasoline and gasoil are Iran's principal exports to Afghanistan. Iran shipped roughly 400,000 tons of petroleum to Afghanistan between May 2020 and May 2021. As Afghanistan and Iraq attempt to diversify their sources and choose to import higher-quality petrol, the change in petrol suppliers highlights the changing dynamics in the regional fuel market. Iran faces difficulty, underscoring the necessity for the country's petroleum sector to adapt and look into new export prospects.

Minister calls Afghan migrants to return home

KABUL (Agencies): Acting of Refugees and Repatriations Minister, Alhaj Khalil-ur-Rehman Haqqani, on "International Migrants Day", called on Afghan migrants to return to their country, and asked the host countries not to deprive Afghan migrants of their rights. Years of wars and foreign invasions caused Afghan to migrate to other countries mainly to Pakistan and Iran, said Khalil-ur-Rehman Haqqani, Acting Refugee Minister on the occasion of International Migrants Day. The host countries have the responsibility to treat refugees well and deal with their problems in accordance with international laws and the Geneva Convention, Minister of Refugee added. According to the Ministry, about 2 million Af-



ghan refugees have returned to the country, and more than 2 million internally displaced people have been sent back to their regions. Refugee Minister Haqqani asked the Afghan refugees living abroad to return to their country since security is maintained. Meanwhile, Acting Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a message, asked the countrymen who are living abroad to return home, since security has

been maintained after the Islamic Emirate re-establishment in the country. Deputy Minister of Economy Abdul Latif Nazari asked the countries to deal with Afghan immigrants with compassion and prevent any harassment of Afghan immigrants. Every year, the world marks International Migrants Day, a day set aside to recognize the important contribution of migrants while highlighting the challenges they face.

Earthquake of magnitude 4.3 rocks Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): An earthquake of 4.3 magnitude struck the Zebak district of Badakhshan province of Afghanistan on Wednesday morning. The earthquake of magnitude 4.3 occurred around 6:25 am local time with a depth of 100 Km, the Indian National Center for Seismology reported on Wednesday. "Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.3, Occurred on 21-06-2023, 6:25 am local time, lat: 36.51

N/71.28E, Depth 100 km, location: Zebak district, Badakhshan, Afghanistan." Earlier, a similar earthquake of 4.6 magnitudes jolted Faizabad capital city of Badakhshan province of Afghanistan. "Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.6, Occurred on 04-06-2023, 09:05:32 local time, Lat: 36.71 & Long: 72.96, Depth: 150 Km, Location: 218km E of Fayzabad." Within a week, three earthquakes occurred in the

province ranging from 4 to 5.2 magnitude of the quake. No casualties have been reported from the province as of now. The province is most vulnerable to natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods, avalanches and landslides. A massive earthquake of 6.5 occurred in March of this year in the Badakhshan province with the epicentre of Zebak district, killing 13 people and injuring 100 others.

Bread weight unchanged despite significant cut in flour prices



JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Despite a significant decrease in flour prices, bakers are yet to increase the weight of bread in eastern Jalalabad city, residents say. The residents urge the municipality to increase the weight of bread or decrease its price. But Jalalabad municipality officials say they have prepared a new pricelist and distributed it to bread bakers and monitoring teams have been also tasked with implementing the new pricelist. After the collapse of the

previous government, flour prices went sky high in the country as a 49 kilogram bag of Qazaq flour was sold for 2700 or 2800 afis and simultaneously the bakers decreased the weight of a bread to 120 grams. According to a report of Pajhwok Afghan News, a 49 kilogram bag of flour is sold for 1650 afis these days. The citizens of Jalalabad emphasize that after the drastic fall in flour prices, the weight of bread must be increased. Sayed Karimullah, a resi-

dent of Jalalabad city, told Pajhwok the price of a bag of flour had decreased from 3,000 afis to 1650 afis, but the weight of bread remained 120 grams. He asked the municipality of Jalalabad City to either to decrease the price of bread or increase the weight of bread. Mohammad Nasir Malikzai, a resident of 'Roshan Mina' area of Jalalabad city, said bread bakers should must increase the weight of bread in line with the decrease in flour prices.

UN Security Council to hold meeting on Afghanistan's situation

KABUL (Khaama Press): The UN Security Council is scheduled to hold a session on Afghanistan at around 6:30 hours in Kabul local, the UN said in a statement on Wednesday. "UN Security Council is scheduled to hold a session on Afghanistan today at 10:00 hour New York local time (18:30 hours Kabul local)." The statement also said that the "head of UNAMA, Roza Otanbayeva, is scheduled to brief the Council as part of the session." The United Arab Emirates Permanent Representative to the UN, Lana Nusseibeh, said the UNSC will hold a meeting on Afghanistan on June 21. The Security Council's current President, Nusseibeh, announced: "We will convene a comprehensive meeting on the situation in Afghanistan on June 21. "Our focus will be concentrated on Afghanistan's situation, women's rights in particular, over which all the members of the Security Council have agreed," she added. In the meantime, Nusseibeh assured the reporters in New York that the UN Security Council would continue to work on Afghanistan's issues, particularly women's rights.

2 new health centers opened in Nimroz

NIMROZ (Agencies): Local health officials of Nimroz say that two new health centers were opened in the Delaram district of the province. The two health centers have been built with the financial support of the relief organization, which this center will provide basic health services in the Delaram district of Nimroz, said local officials of the province. The provincial head of public health in Nimroz, Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Abdullah, told Bakhtar News Agency, that with the construction and opening of these treatment centers, villagers no longer need to travel far from their places for meeting doctors. The medical centers were built at the cost of two million Afghanis, according to the Public Health Department of the province. Residents of Delaram welcomed the opening of these medical centers, and they demanded from aid organizations to donate ambulances to these centers.

FAO deliver 31,000 metric tons of improved wheat seeds to Afghan farmers

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Minister, Mawalvi Ataullah Omari met with the Director of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization FAO Richard Trenchard in Afghanistan. The two sides discussed the coordination and implementation of joint projects and missions for the development of agriculture, livestock, and irrigation in Afghanistan, a statement said. Acting Minister Omari hailed the efforts and support of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization with the farmers and ranchers of Afghanistan and said that the distribution of improved agricultural seeds, chemical fertilizer, and animal feed is commendable. Meanwhile, the Ministry called for more support



from FAO in building processing plants. For his part, the Director FAO, Richard Trichardt, said about 31,000 metric tons of improved wheat seeds will be distributed to

the farmers, as well as the distribution of animal feed and vegetable seeds is a part of the aid to farmers and farmers affected by the drought. The Food and Agriculture

Organization of the UN (FAO) is one of the cooperating organizations with the Ministry of Agriculture, which has assist farmers in different sectors in the country.

Islamic Emirate reacts to UN rapporteur's report

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate said in reaction to the United Nations Human Rights Council's report on the situation of women in Afghanistan, that the Western countries have begun an extensive effort of propaganda against the current Afghan government. The Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said that orders regarding women are in accordance with Sharia law, and that the world's opposition to the decrees of the Islamic Emirate stems from their problems with Islam. "The entire report is anti-Afghanistan propaganda. Second, all of the laws that are in effect here are Islamic and Sharia-based. The issue with Richard

Bennett, his ilk, and organizations like them that propagate in the West, is with Islam and Islamic law," Mujahid noted. The UN Human Rights Council's special rapporteur for Afghan human rights, Richard Bennett, criticized the policies of the current Afghan government towards women in Afghanistan. "Grave, systematic and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid. A serious human rights violation which although not yet explicitly an international crime requires further studies," Bennett noted.

The UN Human Rights Council's special rapporteur highlighted that "a durable peace will only come about through recognizing the richness of the diversity of Afghanistan's people, women, men, and gender and different ethnic and religious groups." However, political experts believe that it is not enough to emphasize human rights by broadcasting reports in Afghanistan. "Bennett's attitude should be truly expert and very practical, which means changing the situation," said Wais Nasiri, a political analyst. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan must reconsider the orders issued for the education and employment of Afghan women, so that Afghan women have

rights granted to them by the noble religion of Islam," said Ahmad Khan Andar, another political analyst. The UN Human Rights Council's special rapporteur for Afghan human rights, Richard Bennett, on Monday presented his report at the 53rd meeting of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, in the presence of representatives from various countries and international organizations. Earlier, Bennett has said in a report that between September 2021 and May 2023, more than 50 edicts were issued regarding women and girls by the Islamic Emirate, which has "deprived Afghan women of the right to education, work, and participation in social and political life."

Blind Uruzgan residents receive treatment after news story

URUZGAN (TOLONews): After the broadcast of a TOLONews report about the high rate of eye problems—more than 100 residents—in a village in the Deh Rawood district of Uruzgan province, a group of doctors from the Ministry of Public Health went to Deh Rawood to treat the residents of this village. Officials said that the cause of blindness is hereditary and those who cannot be treated inside the country will be sent abroad. "If they are operated on in foreign countries, the result is the same, we do their operations here in their homes, we have facilities and everything," said Agha Mohammad Totakhil, head of the eye care section of the Ministry of Public



Health. The family members who have been provided with treatment are happy and said that they could not afford their treatment. "My father had an eye problem and we did not have the money to take him

to other countries to treat it. I'm glad that these doctors are here now," said Faridullah, a member of a family in Uruzgan (gat has a high rate of blindness. "We are so happy that treatment services are provided for the blind in this

district," said Abdul Karim, an Uruzgan resident. A month ago a group of doctors, with the financial cooperation of Australia, went to Uruzgan, where they treated 300 eye patients in Tarinkot city hospital.

IEA deeply condemned Israeli raid

KABUL (Agencies): The Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan deeply condemned the raid by the invader Israeli forces in the Palestinian city of Jenin. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate strongly condemns the cruel attack of the Israeli invader forces in the city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank camp, the Ministry's statement said. Lately, a number of innocent Palestinians were martyred and many others were injured in a raid by the invader Israeli forces, including a 15-year-old boy among the martyred Palestinians. The country's Foreign Ministry said that such anti-invasion acts by the Israeli invader forces against the oppressed Palestinians are a clear violation of international, Islamic, and humanitarian laws and have aroused the feelings of Muslims around the world.

4,400 eye patients applied to receive free treatment

KANDAHAR (Agencies): Saudi Arabia-Malik Salman Charity Foundation financially supports treating thousands of eye patients in southern Afghanistan. 4,400 men, children, and youth from Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul, and Uruzgan provinces have registered for eye treatment, a statement said. The process is carried out by the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), with the assistance of health officials and along with the financial support of the Malik Salman Charity Foundation. All the patients are supposed to be treated for free at Mohmand private hospital in Kandahar until next Saturday.

Out of four thousand four hundred patients, the eyes of four hundred patients requires surgery, said Mawlawi Islam Pal, the head of the Afghan Red Crescent in the south of the country. Eye disease is one of the most common diseases in Afghanistan. The exact statistics of

the number of people suffering from this disease have not been published in Afghanistan, but tens of thousands of citizens are suffering from this disease. The low economy of Afghan citizens has always made them unable from referring to meet a doctor for getting a cure.



MNAs deliberate on Senate budget recommendations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lawmakers in the National Assembly on Wednesday deliberated on recommendations of the Upper House of the Parliament presented for incorporation in the federal budget 2023-24, suggesting measures to improve the national economy, strengthen key financial sectors and provide maximum relief to the common man.

Resuming debate on the federal budget and the Senate recommendations, Dr Sobia Aslam Soomro of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) said the past regime of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) installed landmines for the incumbent government by weakening the national economy and pushing the country towards the default-like situation.

She said the present government effectively tackled all the economic challenges and put the country on a path of macro-economic stability with collective wisdom, setting remarkable growth targets in the fiscal year 2023-24.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, she said, soon after assuming charge of the office restarted the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project that remained on backburner during the three-hand-an-half year rule of the PTI.

Commenting on the Senate budget recommendations, she suggested increasing sales tax on sugary-energy drinks and tobacco products so the generated revenue could be utilized in health and education sectors besides controlling the increasing population. Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali of

Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMAP) recommended ensuring interest-free economic system in the country in line with the Islamic laws, terming the Senate recommendation in this regard 'insufficient.'

He agreed with the suggestions of the Upper House of the Parliament about availability of daily use items in the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) outlets at the subsidized rates; and allocation of a regular budget for producing quality manpower in the health sector including doctors and pharmacists aimed at stopping the brain-drain. He was of the view to establish medical colleges at district level across the country to accommodate maximum number of students who wanted to join this noble profession and serve the ailing humanity.

Similarly, he agreed with the recommendation of the Senate about tax exemption on import of sports goods, which were not being produced locally, as it would help create a healthy society and keep the younger generation away from social evils especially drug-addiction.

The lawmaker endorsed another recommendation to increase the television license fees, being charged through electricity bills, from Rs 35 to Rs 50, fixing Rs 15 for Radio Pakistan, declaring it 'justified.' However, he suggested exempting all worship places from the television license fee/tax, and advocated for declaring Gwadar, Malakand and merged districts of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) tax-free zones.

Rs2.32tr AJK budget for next fiscal year presented in Legislative Assembly

MUZAFARABAD (NNI): The budget for Azad Jammu and Kashmir for the fiscal year 2023-24 has been presented in the Legislative Assembly.

The total outlay of the budget for the next financial year has been proposed at Rs2.32 trillion.

There is a 29% increase in this year's total budget as compared to last year's.

The development expenses have been proposed at Rs42 billion, while the tax revenue target has been set at Rs44

billion. Moreover, Rs190 billion worth of non-development expenditures have been suggested. Income tax has been estimated at Rs31 billion, other taxes Rs13 billion, variable grant Rs90 billion, while federal revenue resources have been estimated at Rs29.85 billion. For the next year, the target for literacy rate in Azad Kashmir has been set at 85%. The estimated income generated from water use is Rs1.70 billion.

In the development

budget, Rs30 billion will be provided by the federal government, while Rs12 billion will be generated from the region's own resources. The next year's budget is Rs69 billion more than the total allocation of last year. Next year's development budget is proposed to be 47% higher than the outgoing year's expenses.

The largest portion of the proposed development budget – Rs14.5 billion – is planned to be spent on newspapers and magazines.

Chairman Bilawal opens Rs1.3bn completely rehabilitated Kakri Sports Complex

KARACHI (NNI): The people of Karachi witnessed a significant moment as Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari inaugurated the newly rehabilitated Kakri Sports Complex known as Kakri Ground, Lyari.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto congratulated the people of Lyari for the development of such a beautiful sports complex from where their youth would be trained to compete in international sports events. The complex, located in the historic Lyari area, that holds immense cultural and social importance for the local communities. This project is a testament to the commitment of the provincial government to considerably improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods and promote sporting excellence for its citizens, especially the young generation. The Chief Minister briefing the chair-

man Said that The Kakri Ground and its' surrounding area have long served as a hub of social and sporting activities, catering to the diverse groups residing in the vicinity. "The area has played a crucial role in supporting the residents' well-being with numerous amenities, businesses, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities in the vicinity, however, over time, the Kakri Ground facility needed an upgrade to meet the youth's evolving demands and cater to a wider range of sports," he said.

Recognizing the significance of the Kakri Sports Complex and the need for neighborhood improvement, the Sindh government, on the directives of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto embarked on a rehabilitation project, Murad Shah said and added that the project involved developing a comprehensive land use plan and optimizing the existing facilities to inter-

national standards.

Mr. Shah said that in addition, new indoor games and facilities were incorporated to ensure a diverse presence in national and international competitions. The Karachi Neighborhood Improvement Project (KNIP) played a key role in conceptualizing and executing the project, involving extensive consultations with stakeholders.

It may be noted that the project started in January 2022 and was completed in June 2023 at the cost of Rs 1.365 billion. The project scope comprised of the Sports Complex having a multipurpose building on a footprint of 18000 square feet accommodating 45 parking spaces in the basement. The upgraded Kakri Sports Complex boasts several remarkable features that would enhance the sporting experience and overall well-being of the community with the upgradation and addition of additional spaces to achieve diversity.

ECP decides to issue arrest warrant for Fawad

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has decided to issue an arrest warrant for former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry in contempt case. In August 2022, the ECP issued notices to Imran Khan and others for allegedly using "intemperate" language against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja and the electoral watchdog. Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja resumed the hearing into the contempt case registered against the PTI chairman, Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry. Where is Fawad Chaudhry? he was supposed to appear before the ECP in person today, the CEC asked. Upon the absence of the former PTI leader, ECP decided to issue a bailable arrest warrant for him.

CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja has again summoned Fawad in person on July 6 in the case. Earlier, the arrest warrants issued for the former prime minister and Fawad were suspended by the Lahore High Court.

PPP revokes Latif Khosa's membership

LAHORE (NNI): The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has revoked the basic membership of veteran leader Senator Latif Khosa for "violating the party's code of conduct".

Speaking to media in Model Town on Tuesday, PPP Central Punjab acting president Rana Farooq Saeed said the decision was taken after the senator crossed the party's redline for "not being accommodated for personal favours".

He alleged that after joining the party, Khosa continued receiving perks and privileges and started blackmailing the party after being refused to get his son appointed as the attorney general.

During an interaction with media, a "wall of shame" carrying Khosa's photo was displayed and inaugurated by the PPP leaders. Senator Khosa met the PTI chairman a few days ago.

Three drones downed near military base in Moscow region

MOSCOW (AFP/APP): Moscow said Wednesday it had downed three Ukrainian drones and accused Kyiv of perpetrating a "terror" attack, after officials said the vehicles had targeted a military base near Russia's capital.

"An attempt today by the Kyiv regime to carry out a terrorist attack by three aircraft-type unmanned aerial vehicles on facilities in the Moscow region was thwarted," the defence ministry said in a statement.

The ministry added that each of the drones was downed by electronic warfare defensive systems and that no one was injured in the attack. Earlier the governor of the Moscow region Andrei Vorobyov said two drones had crashed around "on approach to storage units of a military base" some 50 kilometres (31 miles) southwest of Moscow.

The attack came as Ukraine is waging a counter-offensive to recapture land seized by Russian troops.

Kyiv said on Wednesday that its air defence systems had shot down six Iranian-designed attack drones launched by Russia forces over the western Khmelnytskyi region.

Those attacks came one day after Ukrainian officials said Russia had deployed a "massive" barrage of nearly three dozen assault UAVs that targeted key infrastructure in western Ukraine.

Attacks, mostly by drones, on Russian territory bordering Ukraine have increased over the past weeks. Moscow and its environs, lying some 500 kilometres from the Ukrainian border, have up to now been rarely targeted. In early May, two drones were shot above the Kremlin and late the same month drones hit Moscow high-rises.



RAWALPIND: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCsSC) calls on Chinese Chief of Joint Staff Department, General Liu Zhenli.

Israelis, Palestinians hold teen funerals after West Bank violence

SHILO (AFP/APP): Israelis and Palestinians held funerals Wednesday for teenagers killed in a shooting targeting Israelis and an army raid on a Palestinian city, as violence rages in the occupied West Bank.

Mourners gathered in the Israeli settlement of Shilo around the shrouded body of 17-year-old Nahman Mordof. The teenager was one of four Israelis killed Tuesday when gunmen attacked a petrol station adjacent to nearby Eli settlement before being shot dead. Israeli forces later arrested three "wanted people" in the West Bank village of Orif, which the military said was home to the gunmen.

In Jenin, Palestine TV aired footage of girls in school uniform carrying the body of their classmate killed in an Israeli army raid on the city on Monday.

Sadil Nagnaghya, 15, died from gunshot wounds

sustained during the hours-long Israeli incursion, the Palestinian health ministry announced on Wednesday.

Six other Palestinians, including a 15-year-old boy and a militant, were killed in the raid. A spokesman for the Palestinian militant group Hamas, Hazem Qassem, described Tuesday's attack against Israel as a "response to the crimes of the (Israeli) occupation" in Jenin and elsewhere. The European Union condemned the shooting as a "terror attack".

"The EU is deeply worried about the ongoing escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory and continued settlement expansion," the bloc said in a statement Wednesday.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since the Six-Day War of 1967 and, excluding annexed east Jerusalem, the territory is

now home to around 490,000 Israelis who live in settlements considered illegal under international law.

The deadly shooting sparked reprisal attacks by Jewish settlers against residents of the nearby Palestinian town of Huwara, its mayor and a resident told AFP.

Several dozen people were wounded, the Palestinian Red Crescent said. An AFP reporter saw olive groves on fire.

Other settler attacks were reported in the evening, in Al-Lubban al-Sharqiya, near Eli, and in Beit Furik, another town in the northern West Bank.

"The destruction includes more than 10 homes, more than three commercial stores, this petrol station, the wheat field and many trees," said Yacoub Aweiss, head of Al-Lubban al-Sharqiya town council.

ECC approves Rs1.9b technical supplementary grants

ISLAMABAD (DNA): In addition to approving various summaries, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, here on Wednesday approved Rs1,914.83 million technical supplementary grants for various ministries and divisions.

The cabinet committee meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Ishaq Dar, according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

According to press statement, on Ministry of Commerce summary ECC suspended Import conditions contained in Import Policy Order 2022 related to import of Timber/Wood from the date of issuance of IPO 2022 to 31st October, 2023 with direction to the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to review the import policy and come up with suggestions to settle this issue.

The ECC also approved another summary of Ministry of Commerce regarding amendment in

relevant clause in the Import Policy Order 2022 to allow government agencies to import pharmaceutical raw material. Ministry of Energy (Power Division) submitted a summary regarding Quarterly Tariff Adjustments of K-Electric and informed that as per National Electricity Policy 2021, the government may maintain a uniform consumer-end tariff for K-Electric and state owned distribution companies.

Accordingly, KE applicable uniform variable charge is required to be modified to maintain the uniform tariff across the country. The ECC approved a surcharge of Rs.1.52/unit to be recovered from K-Electric Consumers in 12 months. The ECC further allowed release and utilization of available budget of Rs. 76 billion as payment of arrears under different heads. The ECC considered another summary of Ministry of Energy (Power Division) regarding implementation of revised circular debt management plan

and utilization of Rs. 20,726 billion to government owned power plants.

The committee after discussion authorized Power Division to utilize one-time full amount out of assignment account in relaxation of limit of using Rs. 4 billion per month during June 2023 for the next five months and to ensure that there will be no more payment liability to IPPs for the period July 2023 to Nov, 2023.

The ECC also considered and approved another summary of Power Division regarding release of Rs. 56 billion as approved under revised CDM against the AJ&K receivables. The ECC approved various Technical Supplementary Grants (TSG) including Rs. 567.120 million in favour of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training for its development expenditure and Rs. 40 Million in favour of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training for Cadet College Hassanabdal for need based scholarships to financially challenged students.

NA pays respects to Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto on her 70th Birth Anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday, unanimously adopted a resolution in commemoration of the 70th birth anniversary of the late Shaheed Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto, paying homage to her significant role in the struggle for democracy. Presenting the resolution, PPPP MNA Nawabzada Ifthakhar Ahmed Khan Babar highlighted that today marked the 70th birth anniversary of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

He emphasized that her political struggle remained vividly imprinted in our minds and hearts and would continue to inspire us. As the first female Prime Minister of Pakistan and the first woman elected as Prime Minister in the Islamic world, her achievements were widely recognized through lectures and seminars held worldwide, focusing on her unwavering commitment to democracy and political acumen.

PML-N to replace Sanaullah as party's Punjab president

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz on Wednesday has started working on a plan to alter the organizational structure of the party in Punjab. Sources informed that the PML-N has set on a course to change the party's organizational structure and has decided to replace Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah as PML-N president of Punjab.

It has also been decided to replace PML-N General Secretary Sardar Awais Leghari. Sources revealed that Mian Javed Latif, Saud Majeed, and Haneef Abbasi are included in the race for Punjab presidency.

However, the notification will be issued after the final approval by PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif. According to sources, Mian Javed Latif is a strong candidate for the presidency of PML-N Punjab. It has been decided to replace Sanaullah due to his ministerial engagements. The nomination for the party presidency in Punjab, however, is subject to the consent of incumbent President Sanaullah.

‘Pakistan Navy ready to tackle maritime security challenges’

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi visited National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad and addressed the course participants of National Security & War Course. On his arrival, the Naval Chief was received by President NDU Lt Gen Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan.

While addressing the course participants, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi paid rich tribute to the role and sacrifices of Pakistan Armed Forces for defence of the motherland. He lauded the efforts of officers and men for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations during recent cyclone and nationwide floods last year.

Naval Chief underscored the need for officers to remain abreast of major geopolitical developments and technological changes occurring across the world. He emphasized that synergy remains central



to the modern concept of military operations as no military force can achieve success in today's warfare single handedly.

The Naval Chief highlighted that Pakistan Navy with the active support of sister services is ready to tackle the maritime security challenges facing the country today.

The Admiral appreciated efforts

of NDU for providing the academic stimulus and honing the professional abilities of course participants.

National Defence University is the apex military training institute of Pakistan inculcating advanced professional military training to officers of Pakistan Armed Forces and friendly countries for assuming future key Command and Staff appointments.