

Bushra Pirzada quits PTI

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Another PTI leader Bushra Pirzada has announced partying ways with former prime minister Imran Khan-led party. She made the announcement at a press conference on Friday. She condemned the May 9 incidents and called upon the authorities to bring to book the culprits. PTI activists took to the streets to vent their spleen over the arrest of the party chairman in a corruption case last month.



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IHC stops police

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday granted bail to PTI leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Asad Umar in the case pertaining to vandalism and violence on May 9. A case was registered in Tarnol police station on the incidents of May 9. Grating bail to veteran politicians, the court stopped the police from arresting Qureshi and Asad Umar and issued a notice to the police and sought the records till July 10.

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PM, EU Commission President discuss coop in diverse areas

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday met President of the EU Commission Ursula von der Leyen here on the sidelines of the New Global Financing Pact Summit.

The prime minister thanked the President of the Commission for her participation in the Resilient Pakistan Conference held in Geneva on January 9 this year. He conveyed Pakistan's commitment to continue working in close collaboration with the European institutions for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the flood-affected areas.

The prime minister appreciated high-level interactions between Pakistan and the European Union and renewed an invitation to the EU Commission president to visit Pakistan. Recalling the importance of GSP Plus, the prime minister noted with satisfaction that it was on track as there was a strong political commitment in that regard.

The EU Commission president lauded Pakistan's efforts to recover from the 2022 floods and assured continued support. She appreciated the level of ongoing cooperation between the EU and Pakistan, including GSP Plus. After the meeting, Ursula von der Leyen tweeted that the trade preference measures had already helped Pakistan increase exports to the EU by 65% over the past eight years.

She also vowed to continue supporting reconstruction after the floods in Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in response to her tweet, acknowledged the vital support extended by the EU in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the flood-hit areas as well as its active participation in Resilient Pakistan Conference in Geneva.

"GSP Plus has provided a strong boost to our exports and continues to remain critical to our economy. My

Shehbaz urges expatriates to expose anti-Pakistan propaganda

PARIS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday urged the overseas Pakistanis to play their role to expose the anti-Pakistan propaganda in their respective countries, besides condemning the arson that took place on May 9.

The prime minister, in an interaction with the representatives of the Pakistani community in France as well as the Pakistan Business Forum, told the expatriates that the arsonists of May 9 were spreading lies to instigate the people abroad. The prime minister is visiting Paris to attend the New Global Financing Pact Summit hosted by France. He said the overseas Pakistanis were Pakistan's ambassadors and an asset, and that their services for the country's development were laudable. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the community members that through its tough economic decisions, the incumbent government saved the country from default.

During the last four years, the economy was pushed to the verge of collapse, and unemployment and inflation were at their peaks, he added. The prime minister said that having inherited an isolated Pakistan on the diplomatic fronts, his government made constant efforts throughout the year to revive foreign relations. He said the recently unveiled Economic Revival Plan would prove to be a milestone to restore Pakistan's economic position and that a Special Investment Facilitation Council had been established to remove impediments to investment. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that only economic sovereignty and stability could guarantee a safe future for Pakistan. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb and Special Assistant to the PM Tariq Fatemi also attended the meeting. The representatives of the overseas Pakistanis in France also presented a bouquet to the prime minister.

government is keen to further build on our strong partnership with EU. It is my pleasure to invite you for a visit to take our relationship forward in line with the vast potential at trade, economic and political levels," he added.

PM , Premier Li agree to celebrate Decade of CPEC this year to showcase success: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Chinese Premier Li Qiang here wherein the two sides agreed to celebrate the Decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) this year to showcase its success. The meeting was held here on the sidelines of the Summit for a New Global Financial

It was the first in-person meeting on our strong partnership with EU. Premier Li assumed office in March this year. Expressing satisfaction at the steady development of CPEC projects in Pakistan, the two sides agreed on CPEC's centrality for Pakistan's socio-economic development and expressed their firm commitment to continue working together for realizing its shared objectives for the two countries. The conversation was marked by traditional warmth and cordiality that has been the hallmark of Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

(Continued on Back Page)



PARIS: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with President of EU Commission Ursula Von Der Leyen on the sidelines of the New Global Financing Pact Summit in France.

Boat tragedy; 82 bodies recovered: Sanaullah

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Friday provided an update on the Greek shipwreck incident, revealing that 82 deceased Pakistani victims had been recovered, with their specimens obtained and the ongoing identification process being conducted through Nadra.

The Interior Minister informed the National Assembly that around 350 Pakistani migrants were aboard the boat. He said twelve Pakistanis survived the tragedy. He said 82 bodies of those aboard the boat have so far been recovered and their identification process is underway with the help of the forensic and NADRA data. The minister also warned that the toll in the incident may escalate dramatically.

Last week, an Italy-bound fishing trawler reportedly carrying at least 800 people including hundreds of Pakistanis capsized off Greece. Only 104 people are known to have survived and the chance of finding more survivors was seen as virtually nil. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has assured to take a firm action against those involved in the illegal business of human trafficking.

While speaking the recent boat capsizing incident near the coast of Greece wherein Pakistani migrants also lost lives, he said a high level inquiry committee has been constituted which will suggest different recommendations including amendments in the legislation to ensure conviction of the human traffickers. He said at present a crackdown is underway to nab those behind the tragic boat accident near the coast of Greece.

The Interior Minister said special desks have been established to contact the affected families so far 281 families have contacted these desks. He said 193 DNA samples have so far been collected to complete the identification process. Besides, the Interior Minister said that those involved in attacking military installations and desecrating martyrs' memorials must be brought to justice.

He said the nation has no sympathies with the gangsters involved in the May 9 incidents and wants them to be brought to justice. The Chair directed the power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) to carry out load shedding as per the schedule, saying strict action will be taken on unannounced outages.

He gave the ruling following MNA Noor Alam Khan alluded to the problems faced by the people due to load shedding in the scorching heat. In his remarks on the occasion, Minister for Education Rana Tanveer Hussain said the previous government of PML-N brought the power outages to Zero by installing several power plants.

Army Act applies to civilians: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial remarked on Friday that Pakistan Army Act applied to civilians. A seven-member bench — comprising CJP Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Ayesha Malik, and Justice Mazahir Ali Naqvi, was hearing a set of petitions trials of civilians in military courts.

The government had decided to try civilians under army laws after enraged protesters belonging to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vandalised army installations following the arrest of their party chief. The petitions, separately filed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan, former chief justice Jawwad S Khawaja, legal expert Aitzaz Ahsan, and five civil society members including Piler Executive Director Karamat Ali, have requested the apex court to declare the military trials unconstitutional.

During the hearing, CJP Bandial, while citing Justice Shah, said that the army is directly affected related to the matters like national security. "Provoking serving army officer for conspiracy against national security was a serious crime," CJP remarked, adding that reviewing Army Act claus-

es was not needed. "It wasn't correct to say that the civilians cannot be tried in the military courts ever. A civilian is tried in the military court if he incites the army for treason."

It needs to be seen what method was adopted to bring civilians under the jurisdiction of military courts, and on which basis the anti-terrorism court (ATC) sent the cases to the military courts, he added. At the outset of the hearing, petitioner Karamat Ali's lawyer — Faisal Siddiqui — took to the rostrum and maintained that he had submitted a written statement. "My petition is different from others. I have not challenged the Army Act and I do not contend that the civilians cannot be tried in military courts," the counsel stated.

He said that the military trials of civilians had taken place earlier as well. At this, Justice Shah inquired why hadn't he challenged the Army Act. Responding to the query, he said that the trial of "favourite persons" or specific civilians under military laws was wrong and unconstitutional. The counsel stated that he did not say that any clause of the Army Act was illegal, adding that a verdict against military courts in 1998 did not bring the Army Act under question.

At this, Justice Ayesha asked what principles had

been set regarding the Army Act in other cases and what was the basis on which the civilians were being tried under the said law. Meanwhile, Justice Shah observed that "a trial is conducted under the Army Act and Official Secrets Act when it comes to national security". The judge then told the lawyer to give arguments on the law if he hadn't challenged the Army Act.

As per a report submitted by Punjab government, 81 women had been detained following the May 9 mayhem. Of these, 42 have been released on bail, while the remaining 39 are on judicial remand. Moreover, the report stated that while 3,050 suspects had been found involved in incidents of vandalism following the PTI chief's arrest, 2,258 detention orders were issued under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Act. Of these, only 21 are currently in jail. Furthermore, the report added that 1888 people were arrested in the 51 cases registered under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) on May 9. Of these 1888, 108 accused are on physical remand while 1247 are in judicial custody. Additionally, the identification parade of 33 suspects was conducted while 232 were released on bail.

(Continued on Back Page)

Expatriates are 'pride of Pakistan': Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said being a precious asset, the overseas Pakistanis were 'pride of Pakistan' as they were playing a major role in its economic development.

"It is the foremost priority of the government to resolve the issues of expatriates," the minister said in a meeting with members of Pakistani diaspora in France. She extended gratitude to the Pakistani community for according a warm welcome to the Pakistani delegation on their arrival in Paris for a summit on New Global Financing Pact.

Marriyum said the journey of progress and development would continue in Pakistan under the visionary leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif. The community members lauded the efforts made by the PML-N led government in providing relief to the common man in the country. They acknowledged that since coming into power, the PML-N had been serving laymen as per the vision of Nawaz Sharif.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb also said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leadership was accorded rousing welcome by Pakistani community in Paris.

NAB summons Imran, Bushra Bibi on 26th

ISLAMABAD (PPI): PTI chairman and former first lady Bushra Bibi were separately summoned by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on June 26.

NAB Lahore and NAB Rawalpindi's two-member team reached Zaman Park on Friday to deliver the summons notice to the PTI chairman and his wife. The PTI chief and his wife were required to appear before the NAB in Rawalpindi on Monday, according to the NAB.

Biden & Modi questioned about human rights

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and US President, Joe Biden addressed a joint press conference in the East Room of the White House where they are both asked about the human rights from two different perspective.

President Joe Biden was asked that many of his democratic colleagues believe that he has "over looked" the way religious minorities are being treated in India under Prime Minister Modi. Whereas, Mr Modi was asked that India claims to

the largest democracy but reports about the mistreatment of religious minorities especially the Muslims are reported in the media on regular basis.

Both the leaders dodged the question in their own style and moved to different subjects. President Biden stated that he did have a discussion with Prime Minister Modi about democratic values and that democracy was in the DNA of both of India and America.

Prime Minister Modi replied by saying that President Biden is correct that democracy is in the

DNA of both India and the US and that his government does not believe in differentiating its citizenship on the basis of color, creed or religious beliefs.

It is pertinent to mention here that PM Modi is visiting the US for three days as State Guest and has signed several bilateral agreements with the US government and private entities such as General Motors. It is also important to mention here that President Biden did mention the Russian declared war on Ukraine but Prime Minister Modi did not name Russia during his press talk.

Bilawal urges coalition parties to strengthen PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto has said that there is no leniency in our hearts for those involved in the incidents of May 9. Speaking on the National Assembly floor on Friday, Bhutto said that May 9 rioters who attacked military installations and memorials of martyrs don't deserve 'any leniency'. The foreign minister said that there were provisions in the law that those involved in such heinous acts be tried in military courts. He said that the previous government damaged the reputation of Pakistan and they have to restore the confidence of the nation.

"It is the responsibility of the parliament, government, and the judiciary to establish the writ of the state," FM Bilawal said. Bilawal Bhutto thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for including the budget for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood survivors. He said the inclusion of flood reconstruction in the budget will enhance Pakistan's credibility in the eyes of the world community that Islamabad is serious in its efforts to deal with the issue of climate change.

He said that PPP has a cordial relation with Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and

Shehbaz Sharif is also the Prime Minister of the PPP. "PM Shehbaz Sharif is steering the country in the right direction and steps taken by him for the improvement of the nation's economy have started yielding results," he remarked, adding that the promises made by Prime Azam are being fulfilled.

He said that everyone should lend a helping hand to Shehbaz Sharif for the solution to the current economic crisis. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that character assassination is not part of our politics whether we are in the opposition or in the government. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said efforts will be made to do politics in a positive manner. FM Bilawal also urged major powers not to make the war on terrorism controversial and a victim of their geopolitics. He reiterated that Pakistan was the biggest victim of terrorism as it suffered more casualties than any other country of the world. He said it is in the interest of Pakistan to eliminate terrorism and extremism for the peace, stability, and prosperity of its own people.

Foreign Minister Bilawal said they have to work day and night to get the country out of problems being faced by the country. "We have to strengthen Prime Minister Shehbaz, he added. Bilawal Bhutto said that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar played an

important role in running the national economy. He said his party's fight is against poverty, inflation, and unemployment in the country, not other political parties. Taking a dig at PTI, he said that PTI considered the country's constitution as a piece of paper, and today, they are hiding behind the same paper.

In an apparent reference to former US president Donald Trump — whose Twitter account was suspended following the attack on Capitol Hill, the PPP Chairman said that the incumbent government did not suspend the social media accounts of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, he lamented. "We want to promote democracy in this country and a political party should work as a political party, he said adding that we can't remain silent if someone attacks the sensitive installation. We have to work day and night to get Pakistan out of its problems, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari added. The Foreign Minister said they will have to present a roadmap for political and economic stability in the country by also involving the reconcilable opposition members. "We will have to agree on bare minimum agenda for the sake of the country," he added. Bilawal called for a collective effort to preserve the democratic system and limit the impact of undemocratic politicians.

(خالی اسامیان)					
عدالت انسداد و دھشت گردی بنوں ڈویژن میں درج ذیل اسامیوں پر پھرچی کیلئے بنوں ڈویژن کے مستقل، بائیکاٹ مزدخوار تین (3) کے پاس ضلع بنوں، ضلع خیبر پختونستان اور ضلع ٹک سروس کوڈز دی گئی ہیں۔ جو درخواستیں سرسلیکٹ ہو - درخواستیں نمبر: 22-07-2023 کو مطلوب ہیں۔					
فائرنگ	اسامی	تقدیمات اور دعاوی	عمر کی حد	تعلیمی قابلیت / تحریر	کوڈ ایئرٹ
1	کیپٹن ریٹر (BPS-16)	01	32±18 سال	(i) Second class Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science / Information Technology (BCS / BIT four years) from a recognized University (ii) Second class Bachelor's Degree from recognized University with one-year Diploma in Information Technology from a recognized Board of Technical Education.	اوپن میرٹ
2	جوہر خٹک (BPS-11)	01	30±18 سال	a. FA/F.Sc with second division or its equivalent qualification from a recognized Board b. A speed of thirty (30) words per minute in typing	اوپن میرٹ
3	غائب قاصد (BPS-03)	02	40±18 سال	ترجمان خواہ مخواہ	اوپن میرٹ
4	خاکروب (BPS-03)	01	40±18 سال	ترجمان خواہ مخواہ	اوپن میرٹ

شرائط و ضوابط:

- 1- سیریل نمبر 02±01 کیلئے تقاضا تین سال کے کم جنوری 2023 سے ہونا جبکہ سیریل نمبر 04±03 کیلئے بانی داد درخواستیں وصول کرنے کی آخری تاریخ تک شامل ہو کر ہی منظور کی جائے گی۔ درخواستیں صرف مجوزہ طریقہ مطابق دی جانے گی۔ (2) - اسامی کے لئے درخواست فارم پُر کرنا حتمی حاصل کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ جو پُر نہ کرنے کے بعد دفتر خداوندی میں جمع کرائی جائے گی۔ (3) - ملکی ادارے میں مقرر ہونے والی درخواستوں کو قبول نہیں کیا جائے گا۔ (4) - امیدوار اپنی درخواست کے ساتھ ساتھ چار روزہ دو مسلحانہ تحریکات تمام افسانہ کے انداز کے تصدیق شدہ خطوط، دو ہمدردی سپورٹرز کا تعادب اور دو مزید سپورٹرز کے زیر نگرین تحریکات خود درخواست دہندہ کے رشتہ دار نہ ہواداران کے اخلاق و معاملات اور اپنا چلن سے بخوبی واقف ہو سیکر کریں۔ (5) - اسامی نمبر 3 اور 4 کے درخواست کے ساتھ دفتر زدگار سے ہر دو گاری سرسلیکٹ لگاوالا زاتی (6) - سربازی ملازمین اپنے گھمے کے توسط سے درخواست ارسال کر سکیں۔ (جیکائن انو سی (NOC) انشورہ کے ذریعہ برادر (7) - تقریری ماضی فیادوں پر کسی جانے گی (8) - نیٹس اور ایرواج کے لئے آنے والے امیدوار کو کوئی ٹی آئے ڈی سے نہیں کیا جائے گا۔ (9) - اسامی محترمہ زعات عالیہ چاندی اور صوبائی حکومت کی جانب سے جاری کردہ موجودہ طریقہ کے مطابق کوڈز پر مورخہ کیا جائے گا۔ (10) - ریٹائرڈ نگاہان فوجدارین معذور افراد کو تاہمین اور تعلیمی برادری کے لئے موجودہ طریقہ کے مطابق کوڈز پر مورخہ کیا جائے گا۔ (11) - تعلیم اور تعلیمی اسناد پر تاحیز کے والدین کے خلاف قانونی تاحیزی کارروائی کی جانے گی۔ (12) - نیٹس اور ایرواج کے وقت امیدواروں کو اپنے اصل دستاویزات فراہم کرنا ہوں گے۔ نیز کسی امیدوار کو اصلی ضابطہ کی کارڈ کے بغیر اخبار یا دل کے اجازت نہ ہوں گی۔ (13) - عوامی اتحاد کی حکومت کی پالیسی کے مطابق شہر میں تعلیمی ازیمیا سے مستثنیٰ کرنے یا اسے ایم ایس کی تعداد میں کسی پیشگی کارڈ کا تعادب رکھتی ہے۔

INF(P) 1406/23

جج عدالت انسداد و دھشت گردی بنوں ڈویژن فون نمبر: 0928-920200

Govt to make all-out efforts to solve problems of CPNE: Barrister Feroze

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors (CPNE) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa committee meeting was held on Friday in a local hotel in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Caretaker Minister for Information and Auqaf, Hajji, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil. In the meeting, Secretary Information and Public Relations Mukhtiar Ahmed, Director General Information and Public Relations Basir Ali Rehman Khan, President CPNE Irshad Ahmed Arif, General Secretary Ijazul Haq, Vice President Tahir Farooq, Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Committee FCPNE Rahatullah, Qaiser Rizvi, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Wazirzada, Mumtaz Sadiq, Arshad Khan, Jamshed Baghwan, Rashid Iqbal, Amjad Aziz Malik, Zahir Shah Shirazi, Salman Khan, Nauman Khan, Sardar Naeem, Maqsood Khan, Mumtaz Bangash, Najeebullah, and Aitzaz Hussain Shah and others participated.

On this occasion, the participants of CPNE demanded the caretaker government and caretaker information minister to take steps to pay the arrears of the newspapers. Addressing the meeting, Caretaker Information Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil said that efforts will be made to solve the problems of CPNE. He said that the journalist community is the main pillar of the state. Information department and journalist community are two wheels of a vehicle which cannot run without each other.

We have to work together and find solutions to all problems together. He said that if seen, the Information Department has paid about 16.67 million rupees to CPNE in the last one year while the caretaker government has paid 10.12 million rupees in just four months and we are taking concrete steps for further payments. He said that Information Secretary Mukhtiar Ahmed has paid special attention to solving these problems after taking charge. Some elements try to make matters worse. He said every department has some such neg-

ative sided elements but we have to do things properly and cleanly without discrimination. We have always focused on meaningful problem solving. All problems are solved by sitting at the table and consulting each other, that's why we are taking steps to solve the problems by sitting at a table today and are taking positive steps for repayment.

The Caretaker Information Minister further said that FIA is investigating the irregularities in the advertisement in the Information Department regarding payments on cross-cheques. He emphasized that it is the caretaker government's effort to solve all the problems related to all the departments and especially the information department on the basis of amicability, transparency and merit. Later, Caretaker Information Minister, Auqaf, Hajji, Religious and Minority Affairs, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil, presented a shield to Imdadullah, retired Director General of Information Department on behalf of CPNE, in recognition of his excellent services during his tenure.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Information Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil addressing during CPNE Khyber Pakhtunkhwa committee meeting.

RTS commits for good governance, says Chief Commissioner

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Public Services Commission (KPRTPSC/RTS) arranged orientational session for its Ambassadors to bring mass awareness across the province to ensure good governance, on Friday.

Chief Commissioner RTS Muhammad Salim Khan said that the commission is established to ensure delivery of notified services in stipulated time-frame to ensure good governance. He added that RTS ensuring accountability of public servants by placing liability on competent officerholder in case of delay in delivery of public services.

Chief Commissioner argued that the commission is committed utilize available resources to ensure good governance and claimed that passing amendments from provincial assembly will further enhance the motto of RTS to ensure accountability. Commissioner RTS Judge (retired) Muhammad Asim Imam briefed the participants on operation and statues of the commission as well as its aim of establishment. He added that RTS is established to ensure delivery of public service in stipulated time.

Commissioner claimed that RTS has finalized an outreach program to incorporate civil society in mass awareness campaign which will ultimately be beneficial for ensuring good governance. He added that the commission also provides the compensation to complainants from fine up to 70% deducted from the salary of concerned officials. RTS has granted certificates to Ambassadors to provide identity and recognition for their services towards society. Moreover, RTS also entertained recommendations of Ambassadors for betterment in delivery of services and public awareness.

TEVTA responsible for equipping youth with skills

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industries and Commerce Muhammad Adnan Jilil has said that the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) is an important institution for the provision of skilled education and training in the province, which has the responsibility to equip the youth from various state of the art technical skills.

"We have to bring this institution to a high quality standard and to make able it for preparing a skilled force in the province as per the requirements of the global manpower market", he

added. The minister said that in order to materialize this goal, he will take all possible steps to improve the standardized condition of TEVTA. He expressed these views in a meeting held on Friday at his office regarding TEVTA wherein he took briefing regarding the implementation of decisions issued in previous meeting regarding the improvement of institution. On this occasion, the minister directed the concerned authorities to take the reform and professional performance process on fast track for the improvement of the institution and also directed to report him in this regard accordingly. It is merit to mentioned that in the last meeting regard-

ing TEVTA, the minister had issued instructions regarding the standardization of technical educational institutions in various aspects, and had instructed the relevant authorities to follow austerity measures and control unnecessary expenditures in the institution.

The minister further said that improving of TEVTA and bringing its entire training system according to the contemporary global requirements was his key focus and he want the speedy implementation of this agenda with visible results. On this occasion, he predicted that the TEVTA head office new building at Hayatabad in Peshawar will be inaugurated soon.

KP Minister chairs Senate meeting of BKU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Higher Education Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser presided over the Senate meeting of Bacha Khan University Charsadda, in the meeting approved the surplus budget of 937.932 million for the year 2023-2024 of Bacha Khan University Charsadda.

Bacha Khan University Charsadda informed the senate about the financial budget of the university in the senate meeting and also told about the cost saving measures taken by the university. Bacha Khan University Charsadda had a surplus, budget of 29 million for the year 2023-2024.

Provincial Minister for Law and Higher Education Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser appreciated the financial and austerity measures taken by Bacha Khan University Charsadda.

Polio and Pakistan

Syed Ghayur Ahmed

ACCORDING to the WHO report, the polio virus can be transmitted from one person to another, its virus can attack the spinal cord and cripple the child for life, and in extreme cases, life can be lost. Three countries on top list, which include Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Now after a long time and despite the intervention of the extremist group Boko Haram, Nigeria has been declared polio-free, Afghanistan is second in the list.

The polio virus spread among children due to the country's civil war and lack of infrastructure, but after the success of the Taliban in 2021 and the insistence of other countries, children were immunized to this disease on a large scale in last March. In order to get rid of this virus, about nine million children were vaccinated against the virus. Director of the Afghanistan National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) Mr. Nik Wali Shah Momin, said in a statement that children in 31 out of 34 provinces of

Afghanistan were given these drops in a four-day campaign. This process will also be started in the remaining provinces later the situation will be normal in the northern areas.

Now let's come to Pakistan, where polio drops have been controversial since the first day, before 2016, most of the scholars were against it and were calling it a conspiracy of Western countries against Islam, and the people listen their voice as they have more influence on the people of Pakistan. This was the first reason for the rejection of polio by masses. So on the vise action the government made the scholars aware of the harms of the disease through an awareness campaign, after which the public was told through a joint (Islamic statement) Fatwa of the learned scholars that in the polio drops there is nothing harmful and it is not against Islam, after which it was believed that Pakistan will become a polio-free country one day.

But unfortunately, people associated with polio are still being attacked on a daily basis. According to reports, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan

has accepted responsibility for these attacks. A joint statement from these outfit if a Muslim feed polio drops to their kids, the child will grow up to be immoral, disrespectful and far away from Islamic traditions and will not be able to develop sexually. The second reason behind terrorist attack that, theoretically, the Taliban considers Al-Qaeda as its leader and they say that the help of America in 2011 In a fake hepatitis campaign in the northern city of Abbottabad, Dr. Shakeel Afridi took samples from Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, who was later killed in a military operation.

Regardless of all these conspiracy theories, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, assured the then Prime Minister Imran Khan during his visit to Pakistan in 2022 that we will fully support Pakistan in fighting against this deadly disease. An index has announced aid of two billion dollars to eradicate polio from Pakistan. Pakistan is working with great speed against this disease as well as the obstacles associated with it, for example, against extremist organizations.



PESHAWAR: KP Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry chairing a meeting regarding moonsoon rains.

Utalization of water vital for economic growth, arresting load shedding

PESHAWAR (APP): Bestowed with a unique geo-strategic location and plenty of natural resources, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa offers great opportunities for investors to invest in hydel energy, petroleum and mineral resources to gain maximum profit besides taking advantages of Govt investment friendly policies.

Besides Indus, Kabul and Swat Rivers, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa all small and big rivers including Kunhar, Punjkora, Khayali and Kurram with warm water throughout the year have plenty of sites for construction of water reservoirs to cater the growing energy and water demands of the people. Due to lack of dams and infrastructure, precious water was being wasted making negative effects on industries, agriculture, aquatic and human resources.

The position paper on the issues related to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's document has revealed that the province had been unable to utilize approximately 3 million acres feet (MAF) of its share of water against its allocated 8.78MAF share determined by the Apportionment of the Waters of the Indus River System (1991), which makes up 34pc of its share and is being presently utalized by the lower riparians. Owing to this huge non-utilization of water, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sustained a loss of around Rs112 billion since 1992, the report revealed.

"This huge water loss is posing serious challenges to agricultural and economic productivity besides food security," said ZA Malik, former Chairman, Economics Department, University of Peshawar while talking to APP. Out of 60,000MW hydel power potential of Pakistan, he said that about 30,000MW hydel power potential existed in Khyber

Pakhtukhwa that needed to be tapped. The untapped hydel power potential of KP has increased gap between supply and demand of electricity during summer, resulting an increase in load shedding mostly on high line losses feeders in peripheries of Peshawar, Bannu, DI Khan, Karak, Lakki Marwat and merged tribal districts. PESCO Power Distribution Company spokesman told APP on Wednesday that KP is currently receiving about 1873MW electricity from the national grid while its demand is about 3220 MW, thus facing a shortfall of 1347 being fulfilled through load management.

Dr ZA Malik said China had constructed about 98,000 dams and India 5,334 dams while Pakistan has built only 150 dams since its independence and no big dam after Turbella. He urged Federal Government to assist KP Govt in construction of new dams, and that a scheme need to be put in place for compensation to KP for its non-utilized share of water by the provinces which use the same.

As per the power generation policy 2015 approved by the Council of Common Interest (CCI), he said that water user charge (WUC) is to be paid at the rate of Rs0.425/KWh by the private sector hydropower projects to the provinces where the project is allocated. He said the rate of WUC is to be reviewed every five years by the Federal Government to determine if an increase in WUC is necessary.

He said for projects located in more than one provincial jurisdiction, the sharing of WUC would be decided among stakeholders on case to case basis and a review of WUC which was due in 2020 is yet to take place. According to the said document, CCI has endorsed Rs128 bil-

lion as KP share under net hydel profit (NHP) and Rs52 billion as Punjab share of NHP for FY 2016-17 based on Kazi Committee Methodology (KMC).

Later on, an out of box committee for solution of payments of NHP to the provinces was formed that completed its findings in 2022 and recommended transfer of hydel power stations to the provinces and announcement of a second interim arrangement with enhanced rate of NHP. Currently water storage component of Wapda development projects is financed out of PSDP whereas the power house component is meet through Wapda revenue leaving no surplus cash for payment of NHP to the provinces.

This mechanism needs to be reviewed so that the power house component is financed from PSDP funds thereby leaving surplus cash for payment of NHP to the provinces. KP Government has urged the placement of the out of box committee report before CCI for consideration and outstanding payment of Rs62 billion for FY 22-2023 should be made to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to address its financial issues amicably.

As per 1973 constitution, Dr Malik said the concerned province in which the hydro electric station is situated shall be paid net hydel profits and the Cheshma Right Bank Lift Canal needs to be taken to its logical conclusion and funds should be provided from public sector development programme to bring white and green revolution in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Engr Zahoor Hussain, Director Projects, Wapda (North) said that 72 percent work on multipurpose Kurram Tangi (Stage-I) Bannu and North Waziristan has been completed and expected to be inaugurated in November next year.

He said design and feasibility studies of its stage-II was under process that would be completed with a loan assistance of Asian Development Bank. Engr Zahoor said 1.2 million acres feet water would be stored and 80.9MW electricity to be generated from Kurram Tangi Dam, adding over three million people of southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be directly benefited.

Besides completion of 108MW Golen Gol dam in Chitral, the government has accelerated work on Mohmand dam of 800MW with 1.293 MAF water storage capacity that after completion would supplement/irrigate 160,000 acres of existing land and about 18,237 acres of new land with annual benefits of Rs2.23 billion. Likewise, 300 million gallons water per day will also be provided to Peshawar for drinking purpose with benefits of Rs.957 million from Mohmand dam. Mohmand dam would save Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera from floods having annual benefits in terms of flood mitigation was estimated at Rs1.467 billion besides producing 2.86 billion units of environment-friendly electricity to the National Grid every year with annual revenue of Rs. 45.76 billion. The overall annual benefits of the project stand at Rs. 51 billion.

HVDC converter station Nowshera would be linked by an HVDC transmission line to efficiently transmit electricity from hydropower-rich Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan via Afghanistan and onward via Torkhum to Afghanistan. The federal government has allocated Rs205.38 billion for power sector projects (HPP) in the budget 2023-24 include 2,160 MW Dasu HPP (Rs. 58,597 million), 1,410 MW Tarbela

IV Extension (Rs. 590 million), 969 MW Neelum Jhelum (Rs. 4,828 million), and 1,530 MW Tarbela V Extension (Rs. 4,449.463 million).

Major transmission projects such as CASA-1000 (Rs. 16,099.255 million), Dasu Evacuation (Rs. 5,667.094 million), Suki Kinari Evacuation (Rs. 13,800 million), and AMI IESCO project in the distribution sector (Rs. 3,000 million) in budget 2023-24. Additionally, eight projects for supplying electricity to Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have been allocated a total of Rs. 7,267.352 million and by the end of June 2024, the transmission sector is expected to have an additional capacity of 3,750 MVA on the 500kV grid and 6,900 MVA on the 220kV grid. The transmission lines will be extended by 522 km on the 500kV level and 668 km on the 220kV level.

Resultantly, 6,985 villages would be electrified and 1,403,592 consumers for Distribution Companies (DISCOs) would be facilitated besides extending distribution lines of 132 kV by 1,843 km, and the capacity of 132 kV grids would be strengthened by 4,199 MVA. KP Energy Department spokesman said that 36.6MW Daral Khwar HPP Madain Swat was completed and electricity generation with over Rs1.3 billion annual benefits started. Likewise, 300MW Balakot HPP worth Rs 85 billion approved by ECNEC would be constructed on River Kunhar in Mansehra.

About 10,000 MW projects are in different stages of implementation with a potential to generate about Rs100 billion annual revenue and efforts is on to utilize the remaining 14,000 MW through construction of new hydropower projects. Three hydropower projects (HPPs) amount-

ing of Rs177.244 billion including construction of 96 MW Batakundi amounting of Rs 40 billion and 188MW Naran of Rs70 billion Manshera would be developed with collaboration of International Finance Corporation (IFC) in Shangla. Feasibility study of 20.8MW Shangla HPP completed.

496MW Spat-Gah HPP amounting US\$ 1,015 million is being developed for which MoU between KP government having 26pc share and M/S Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power Company (KHNP) with 74pc share was signed. Gabral Kalam and Madyan HPP having 245MW capacity would be constructed with Rs115 billion. Modification in Malakand-III HPP amounting Rs 778 million initiated to generate additional 154 GWh electricity with Rs 382 million annual economic benefits were in different stages of completion.

Malakand-III (81 MW), Daral Khawar (36.6MW), Ranolia (17 MW), Pehur (18 MW), Machai (2.6MW), Shishi (1.8MW) and Reshun (4.2 MW) with accumulative 161.2MW generation commissioned to generate Rs5.4 billion revenue annually. About 12.8 million units would be saved having Rs 203 million annual economic benefits after converting 4,000 mosques on solar energy. More hydel power projects were required for conservation of water and arresting the problems of energy shortfall and load shedding for economic growth and prosperity.



In brief

Poultry vendors directed F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: Assistant Commissioner Gul Nawaz Afridi, along with the Food Safety Officer conducted a surprise raid on the shops of poultry sellers in Takhtbhai Bazar and inspected the slaughtered chicken in the shops and freezers, on Friday. According to details, the officers especially inspected the chicken parts in the shops of the chicken parts sellers issued strict instructions if unhealthy chickens or dead chickens and their rotten parts are found in any poultry shops, strict legal action will be taken against them. While talking to the media, he said that this immediate action has been taken on the news regarding the supply of unhealthy chicken meat by Ching-Chi Rickshaw in Takhtbhai Bazar. The people of Takhtbhai are also requested to immediately report this kind of heinous act and their information will be kept confidential. It is everyone's responsibility to bring those who play with people's lives to justice and people's health should be protected from these harmful health items.

Officers awarded for performance F.P. Report

LARKANA: Government of Sindh Department of Excise and Taxation held ceremony to public performance report and awarded officials with shields of recognition, on Friday. In the program organized by Provincial Minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla for showing the best performance in the year 2022-23, Excise and Taxation Officer Aziz-ur-Rehman Unnar of Qamber Shahdakt district, Excise Inspector Ali Ahmed Abbasi and Inspector Asif Ali Magi were also given trophies, shields and certificates of best performance. It was hoped that they will continue to be vigilant in order to perform their duties in the best manner.

Relief package distributed F.P. Report

KHYBER: Frontier Corps North in collaboration with Islamic Relief Pakistan and Qatar Charity distributed relief items in Tirah, Khyber district. According to details, relief items including food packages, hygiene kits and household kits were distributed free of cost among 287 families living in Rajgal, Sporai, Wacha Wanna, Gar Gat, Zari Gat, Surkas and Sakhi Kot areas of Tirah valley. The relief package distribution ceremonies were attended by the authorities of district administration, Frontier Corps North, Islamic Relief Pakistan & Qatar Charity, local elders and families. Locals thanked the Security Forces and NGOs for providing relief items and said that "such steps should be continue so that poor families survive in far flung areas".

Judicial complex inaugurated

GILGIT (INP): Chief Justice Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Court (CC) Justice Ali Baig inaugurated the judicial complex in Hunza on Friday. Addressing the event, Chief Justice Ali Baig emphasized the need for the establishment of model courts in Hunza that will help to lowering the burden of cases in lower judiciary. He highlighted the importance of expediting legal proceedings and ensuring swift justice delivery to the people. To enhance the judicial infrastructure in the area, the Chief Justice announced that the Gojal subdivision will soon get a civil court.

One out 10 doctors available at RHC in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: On public complaints Assistant Commissioner Mandanr Rahmat Ullah inspected provision of facilities at Rural Health Center (RHC) Nagari's hospital as well as Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) distribution centers established in the premises. According to details, the Nagari hospital is serving as many as 44 thousand residents of Amazai area of tehsil Mandanr district Buner. However, AC Rahmat Ullah found that hospital administration has failed to keep record of the medical store facility in the premises.

Moreover, AC also discovered that staff are absent including class-IV during the visit. He claimed that 10 doctors are appointed at

the hospital but only one is available for serving the patients. AC Manadnr added that laboratory is available in the hospital but to no veil for serving humanity while hematology machine has also available but didn't used for welfare patients due to lack of staff. He claimed that visit is made on complaints of local residents because they are suffering to obtain health facilities.

Nazim Nagari village council Yousaf Zada has upheld the issue at various forum especially during 'Kuli Katcheri' held in the running week at tehsil council Mandanr chaired AC Rahmat Ullah. The Nazim stressed upon administration and health department to inspect RHC Nagari and ensure provi-

sion of facilities as well as availability of the staff. The local residents also faced unavailability of facilities as well as absence of staff which has compelled public to visit Nawagai hospital or to approach District Headquarters hospital. The also requested competent authorities to ensure provision of medicines and ultrasound machine for the hospitals to provide basic facility at home in the locality.

Meanwhile, AC along with Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) Mandanr has finalized cleanliness drive for Eid-ul-Azha to ensure hygienic conditions in the premises. The admin is committed for provision of bio-degradable bags to local populace for disposing of remaining of sacrificial animals.

CM Punjab monitors anti-dacoits operation

F.P. Report

BAHAWALPUR: Interim Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi reached the Kacha area in Rahim Yar Khan to boost the morale of the police personnel participating in the Kacha operation against miscreants. He met police officers and personnel on the occasion. He appreciated the spirit of the police personnel who participated in the operation in the extremely hot weather.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Inspector General of Police Dr. Usman Anwar, Additional IG South Punjab and other police officers had lunch with the officers and personnel participating in the operation. Mohsin Naqvi also visited the police post, dispensary and school in the Kacha

area. He reviewed the progress of the ongoing operation against the miscreants.

The chief minister was briefed that the operation was going on successfully and the police have cleared most of the area from miscreants. The chief minister said, we salute the spirit of the police officers and personnel who participated in the operation. He said that it was our first priority to maintain peace in the Kacha area. Permanent infrastructure should be established after destroying the posts of miscreants, he said.

The Inspector General of Police briefed about the success of the ongoing operation against the miscreants. The caretaker chief minister also inspected the

cotton cultivation area in South Punjab. He expressed his satisfaction over the increase in cultivated area. He congratulated the Department of Agriculture, administration and field staff. He said that up to 3 billion dollars in foreign exchange would be obtained from cotton cultivation.

He said the South Punjab administration has worked efficiently to achieve cotton cultivation. He told that target of cultivating cotton on 5 million acres had been fixed in South Punjab and so far 96 percent of the target had been achieved. Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt (ret'd) Saqib Zafar in his briefing told that cotton had been cultivated on 4,345 million acres in South Punjab.

Fallen power transmission line kills forest staffer

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A forest department official identified as Abdul Jabbar, a resident of Khazana Dak was killed when a power transmission line fell upon a forest check post in Gopalum area of Khall here on Friday, residents said. They said the deceased was on duty during the incident that also damaged electronic appliances in the nearby shops and houses due to short circuiting. The victim was later laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard in Khazana Dak.

A nine year old boy Ilyas s/o Sultan e Room was killed when a speedy motorcycle hit him on the road at Walai Kandao area in the jurisdiction of Balambat police station here on Friday. The motorcycle riders Ismail 19 and Faisal 18 were injured who were taken to the DHQ hospital Timergara. The Balambat police registered a case and started investigations.

A youth identified as Abbas Khan son of Haji Nawab, a resident of

Ramora Darbar was killed when an unknown person opened fire on him at Ramora in the limits of Chakdara police station here the other day, residents and police said. They said the motive behind the incident was not known. The Chakdara police meanwhile claimed to have arrested the accused who was being interrogated.

Meanwhile a child identified as Imtiaz 9, son of Zarkmin, a resident of Tarai Badwan drowned in the River Swat at Tarai while taking a bath. Locals retrieved the body and shifted it to the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Chakdara.

UoM holds meeting to boost KP tourism: In continuation to the MoU signed by ORIC and University of Malakand (UoM) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture & Tourism Authority, a follow up meeting was held in Committee Room of UoM that was chaired by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Rashid Ahmad.

Manager, Digital Transformation Cell

KPCTA, Abdul Baseer gave a presentation on avenues and opportunities where both organizations can collaborate for the uplift of tourism.

The areas of mutual interest were data provision of tourists' influx and occupancy studies in Malakand Division, sources exploration for tourism data collection, the concept of hotel "eye" dashboard, training workshops for the tourism industry, to establish tourists facilitation centre at University of Malakand, to provide internships to students in the tourism sector, potential job opportunities in the culture and tourism sector and any other avenue of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Mohammad Hanif Khan, Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Dr. Khalil, Chairman, Software Engineering Department and Mr. Maqsood Mazhar, Manager ORIC, UoM. The VC UoM Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad pledged for joint collaboration for promoting sustainable tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Upgradation of high school demanded

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The tribesmen including tribal elders and leaders of the Central Kurram area have united in their demand for Government High School Minato to be granted the status of a Higher Secondary School. They urge immediate action to start intermediate classes, enabling students who have completed their matriculation to pursue their education without having to travel long distances to distant colleges.

During a Jirga held in the Minato area, prominent tribal leaders including Malik Nawab Khan, Haji Sharif Khan, Malik Nik Ahmad, More Khan, and others voiced their concerns over the lack of educational opportunities for the local students. They highlighted the financial burden faced by parents

due to rising inflation, making it difficult for them to afford education for their children beyond matriculation.

The leaders have directed their appeal to Federal Minister of Overseas Pakistanis, Sajid Hussain Turi, Chief of Pakistan Army, district administration officials, and Umar Orakzai, emphasizing the urgent need to grant Higher Secondary status to Government High School Minato. They highlighted that dozens of villages, including Kotki, Kharshu, Murghan, Langro, Donga, Zarif Kali, Varstha Mela, Kamran Kali, Khamari, Dolaragha Chinarak, Qurut, Sarubi, Omargi, Bezadi, Gawaki, Sir Khawi Dara, Mandan, Jabu, Leil Gada, Kandali Baba, Durrani, and Shagi, heavily rely on this school for education.

Lamentably, the absence of any high or higher sec-

ondary schools in these areas forces numerous matriculation students to enroll in schools and colleges located in remote regions. The leaders firmly believe that granting Higher Secondary status to Government High School Minato would prevent hundreds of students from being deprived of further education.

In light of these demands, the leaders earnestly request the current government to take immediate action and initiate intermediate classes at Government High School Minato, thereby ensuring that the students in the region have access to quality education. They hope that their appeal will be positively received by the authorities, allowing the youth to pursue their academic aspirations without facing unnecessary hardships.



QUETTA: BNP leader Haji Fujan along with Coordinator to Balochistan Chief Minister Noor Khan Tareen addressing a press conference.

WSSC conducts cleanliness campaign F.P. Report

KOHAT: Following directives of Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, social mobilizers of Water and Sanitation Services (WSSC) Kohat conducted a campaign to aware people about cleanliness.

The team of social mobilizers visited various areas of the city and met with people to aware them about benefits of cleanliness. The urged shopkeepers to help district administration in its efforts to maintain cleanliness during Eid and dispose of animal waste and offal on designated points for collection. They also distributed awareness creating material and pamphlets among the public.

Career Counseling Seminar held F.P. Report

UPPER DIR: Career Counseling Youth Seminar was held under the aegis of District Youth Office Dir Upper and District Administration Dir Upper on Friday.

The Seminar was based on Career Counseling including provide a guideline for youth wanted to go for PMS, CSS, and other competitive exam held at Govt Degree College Dir Upper wherein Deputy Commissioner Dir Upper Gohar Zaman Wazir in his address appreciated the organizing committee for conducting Career Counseling Youth Seminar. He said youth are the future builders of the nation and equipping them for the future.

He also enlightened the students with his views, shared his career journey and experiences. He gave a comprehensive and detailed lecture about Career counseling. Former DSO and Coordinator Malak Saad Shaheed Memorial Sport Trust Mukhtiar Hussain, also shared their views with students. District Youth Officer Jehan Zeb Pasha, Principal Govt Degree College Dir Upper Rasheed Ahmad, College

Administration and students thanked the District Youth Office for this commendable event. Deputy Commissioner Dir Upper Gohar Zaman also praised the District Youth Officer for successful conduct of different activities by involving the youth and expressed the hope that such a program would also be organized in future.

Mayor opens flyover for traffic F.P. Report

MARDAN: Due to the efforts of City Mayor Mardan Himayat Ullah Hayer, Charsada Chowk flyover was opened for traffic, which was closed for several weeks due to an alleged dispute over funds between two government departments.

Due to the closure of this flyover, the traffic passing through Mardan Bypass was severely affected and traffic jams became common in Charsada Chowk.

Water crisis in Tank raises due to malpractices

F.P. Report

TANK: The residents of Tank are facing a severe water crisis, leading to public outrage and demands for immediate action from higher authorities. Reports suggest that officials from the Tank Municipal Administration (TMA) and tanker mafia are involved in corrupt practices, exacerbating the water shortage.

The sources reveal that TMA personnel responsible for distributing salaries for water-related duties, from Head Zam to Ponds, are illicitly receiving payments while staying at home. This indicates a potential misappropriation of funds within the TMA. Furthermore, the water shortage has been exacerbated by the involvement of the TMA mafia in

the illegal sale of water. Private touts are reportedly selling water from Head Zam, the main water source, for personal gain. Informed sources claim that TOR (name) and TMO (name) receive a share of the profits from these illicit activities.

Disturbing images of Tanki supplying water to Mohalla Civil Line and Wazirabad have surfaced, revealing contaminated and foul-smelling water. This revelation has further enraged residents, who now struggle even to obtain water for basic ablution in mosques.

Residents demanded a transparent and immediate inquiry into the management of funds allocated for water supply. They seek intervention from higher

authorities, including Deputy Commissioner Tank Muhammad Shoaib Afridi, Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan, Secretary Local Government Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sector Commander Tank Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Attempts to contact TOR for comment have been unsuccessful at the time of this report.

The gravity of the situation calls for swift action to address the water crisis and investigate the alleged corruption within the TMA. The residents of Tank District hope that the authorities will promptly respond to their grievances and restore the essential water supply to the region.

Early delivery of public services directed

F.P. Report

BANNU: The first historic high-level 'Kuli Katcheri' of its kind was held in Duryoba Wazir Sub-Division Bannu under the supervision of Commissioner Bannu Division Pervez Sabit khel in which Regional Police Officer Qasim Ali Khan, Commander 116 Brigade Muhammad Tayyab, Deputy Commissioner Bannu Manzoor Ahmad Afridi, Colonel FC Muhammad Salim and elected local representatives and other relevant officials were also present on this occasion, on Friday.

Commissioner Bannu division Pervez Sabit khel has said in his speech that Chapari Syed Khel Duryoba Wazir Sub-Division's backwardness and deprivation should be eliminated and will try to bring it same to the settled areas of Bannu. So that the people of the area can also get out of the difficulties and live a life full of development, prosperity and facilities like other developed parts of the district.

Commissioner Bannu expressed these views on Friday while addressing the elders of the area and a large number of participants in the open session (Khuli Kachehri) held in Chapari area of sub division Wazir. He said that all available resources should be used for the development of in particular Chapri Syed Khel and in general the entire Duryoba wazir sub division. So that the masses of the area will join

the race of development like other developed areas of the Bannu district.

Commissioner Bannu Division also said that district administration, education and Health facilities centers should be made active immediately, which will help in providing basic facilities to the people of the area. He said that some of among other big challenges of the area are providing clean drinking water and the strengthening of the communication system.

Commissioner Bannu Division Parwaiz Sabatkhel said that he felt happy to come to Chapari, Duryoba area Wazir sub-division Bannu and they will focus all their attention to facilitate and improve the lives standards of the people of the area. In this connection, he will visit here in the future as well, so that the promises made to the people here can be fulfilled, he said. Meanwhile, Regional Police Officer Qasim Ali Khan said in his short speech that he is present day and night to resolve any problem related to the police department.

Moreover Commander 116 Brigade Brigadier Mohammad Tayyab said in his address to the session that all should made struggle together to provide basic facilities to the masses of Duryoba Wazir Sub-Division like other areas of Bannu district. So that the lives of the people here can get out of difficulties and would enter into constructed and developed life. He also issued instructions to take immediate steps to

resolve the problem of drinking water, which will fulfilled the basic need and long-standing problem of clean drinking water in the entire area. Commander 116 brigade said that the people of the ease are peaceful and progressive.

In the end, Deputy Commissioner Bannu Manzoor Afridi replied to the demands of the elders of the area and said that they will keep in mind the problems of the Duryoba area. And as soon as funds are available. He will leave no stone unturned for the development and prosperity of this area. He also invited the area elders to his office to share the details of the problems so that appropriate solutions could be found on the spot in available resources.

The local government elected representative, leaders and elders of the area Daryoba Wazir sub-division Bannu expressed great joy and happiness on the arrival of the Commissioner Bannu Division Parwaiz Sabatkhel, Regional Police Officer Qasim Ali Khan, Commander 116 Brigade Brigadier Muhammad Tayyab and Deputy Commissioner Bannu. And said that we will always be present for peace, development and prosperity of the area second to the government setup, due to which the backwardness and deprivation of the area will be eliminated. And will always continue the journey of peace development and prosperity.

PRCS provides cash assistance to 5 thousand Afghan's refugees

F.P. Report

BANNU: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent society (PRCS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Habib Malik claimed, "we have successfully completed the distribution of cash assistance to over 5,000 Afghan Refugees residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Friday.

PRCS has intention to initiate projects for Afghan migrant families residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing on providing cash assistance as well as healthcare and education services. Habib Malik, Chairman

of Pakistan Red Crescent, and Abid Ullah Khan, Secretary General, have stated that due to the Ukrainian conflict, there has been a decrease in financial aid from international organizations.

Secretary General Abid Ullah Khan emphasized that there is a shortage in providing monetary assistance. In response to this situation, Pakistan Red Crescent has taken on the responsibility of supporting Afghan migrant families in need. The priority will now be given to Afghan families who are

either unregistered or possess only Afghan citizenship cards, as they are considered more deserving. Pakistan Red Crescent will collaborate with the Ministry of Saferan and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to work together for the benefit of these families in the areas of health and education.

Chairman Habib Malik emphasized Pakistan Red Crescent's firm belief in serving humanity without any discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality.



Saturday, June 24, 2023

Zimbabwe elections 2023: What you need to know

HARARE (BBC): Zimbabwe heads to the polls in August against a backdrop of one of the world's highest rates of inflation and accusations of an intensifying crackdown on the opposition. Long-time president Robert Mugabe was deposed in 2017 but many say that little has changed. In the run-up to the vote, questions linger over how free and fair the ballot will be in a country that is trying to rehabilitate its image.

Zimbabweans will vote on 23 August to elect councillors, members of parliament, and a president. If there is no outright winner in the presidential contest, a run-off will be held six weeks later, on 2 October. Zimbabwe's electoral commission has approved 11 candidates. This is sharply down on the 23 who contested the last election, in 2018, no doubt because each candidate now has to pay \$20,000 (£16,000), up from \$1,000 (£800).

Mr Mnangagwa, 80, has led Zimbabwe since the military forced Robert Mugabe to resign in 2017, and then won a disputed election a year later. He was a long-time ally of Mugabe before the pair fell out. Mr Chamisa, 45, came second in 2018, winning 44% of the vote. A 2020 court ruling stripped him of the leadership of the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and he subsequently lost access to party assets and state funding.

He formed the CCC in 2022, remains hugely popular in urban areas and is the main face of the opposition. Other contenders include Saviour Kasukuwere - an exiled former Mugabe ally - and Douglas Mwonozora, the MDC's new leader. Zanu-PF has the advantage of incumbency, state power and access to state resources. The party, which has been in power since independence in 1980,

also retains strong support in rural areas.

However with the economy in such a mess, many people, especially those in urban areas and the youth, think it is time for a change. Rural voters normally turn out in huge numbers, unlike urban and youth voters, which could work against the opposition. The government has also refused to allow Zimbabweans living abroad to vote - which could also work against Mr Chamisa. Polling so far has predicted different results, so it is hard to use that as a guide as to who may end up president.

Furthermore, human rights activists say that in the past Zanu-PF has used various tactics to stay in power, including violence and intimidation, state-media blackouts and negative coverage of the opposition. Zanu-PF has previously denied using dirty tricks against its opponents. The cost-of-living crisis continues to be at the core of voters' concerns, with the last three years having been some of the worst in a decade. In the 12 months leading up to May this year, prices rose by 86.5%, one of the highest annual inflation rates in the world. Meanwhile, businesses are struggling to cope with crippling power outages and an unstable local currency, which lost 86% of its value between January and early June.

Allegations of corruption also remain a source of frustration, with a very low rate of prosecution. During the Covid pandemic, equipment was allegedly procured at inflated prices - the health minister was fired but then exonerated by the courts. For members of parliament and council candidates, the election is won on a first-past-the-post basis - in other words the person who has the most votes.

In the presidential race, however, a candidate needs more than 50% of

the vote to be declared the winner, otherwise there will be a run-off election between the top two. By law the presidential election results must be announced within five days after voting ends. Civil society groups and the opposition doubt that polls will be free or fair. They cite what they say has been a systemic crackdown on government critics.

The arrests and convictions of opposition figures and government critics has intensified over the last two years. The electoral reforms that the opposition have demanded for years - to level the playing field, provide access to public media and remove ex-military personnel from the electoral body - have not happened. CCC leader Mr Chamisa says more than 60 of the party's meetings were banned, or disrupted by police during by-elections last year, prompting fears it will happen again. As former Zimbabwean politician Jonathan Moyo put it, Zanu-PF will not "reform itself out of power". This will be the second time Mr Mnangagwa and Mr Chamisa face each other.

Five years ago, the president won in the first round with 50.8% of the vote, but violence followed polling day in which six people were killed when security forces opened fire on protesters. Observers generally commended the freedom of movement during the campaign period and relative peace on voting day, but the EU for example noted major shortcomings including state resources being misused in favour of the incumbent.

The EU said the final results as announced by the Electoral Commission contained numerous errors. Mr Chamisa's party failed in its legal challenge to have the result overturned after arguing that the presidential and parliamentary vote tallies were off by tens of thousands.

Qaddafi's son taken to hospital

BEIRUT (AP): A son of late Libyan leader Moammar Qaddafi was briefly taken to hospital this week after his health deteriorated nearly three weeks into a hunger strike to protest his detention without trial in Beirut, a person familiar with the case said.

The health of Hannibal Qaddafi, who has been only drinking small amounts of water, deteriorated the person said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the case. Qaddafi, who started his hunger strike on June 3, was taken to Beirut's Hotel-Dieu de France hospital after suffering a drop in blood pressure and inflammation in the spine.

Qaddafi was given serum, antibiotics and food supplements and after his health stabilized he was taken back to the jail where he is held in Beirut, the person said. A doctor checked on Qaddafi in his cell and he is in stable condition, the person said. He had been suffering back pain due to being held in a small room where he cannot move freely or exercise. Hannibal Qaddafi has been detained in Lebanon since 2015 after he was briefly kidnapped from neighboring Syria, where he had been living as a political refugee.

He was abducted by Lebanese militants demanding information on the whereabouts of prominent Lebanese Shiite cleric Moussa al-Sadr, who went missing in Libya 45 years ago. Lebanese police later announced it had collected Hannibal from the north-eastern city of Baalbek where he was being held. He has been detained in a Beirut jail without trial since then. The disappearance of al-Sadr in 1978 has been a long-standing sore point in Lebanon. The cleric's family believes he may still be alive in a Libyan prison, though most Lebanese presume al-Sadr is dead. He would be 94 years old.

Al-Sadr was the founder of the Amal group, Arabic for "hope," and an acronym for the militia's Arabic name, the Lebanese Resistance Brigades. The group later fought in Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war. Lebanon's powerful Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri heads the group. Most of al-Sadr's followers are convinced that Moammar Qaddafi ordered al-Sadr killed in a dispute over Libyan payments to Lebanese militias. Libya has maintained that the cleric and his two traveling companions left Tripoli in 1978 on a flight to Rome and suggested he was a victim of a power struggle among Shiites. Qaddafi was killed by opposition fighters in 2011, ending his four-decade rule of the north African country. Hannibal Qaddafi was born two years before al-Sadr disappeared.

Houthi rebels and S Arabia exchange bodies

SANAA (AP): Yemen's warring sides have exchanged 64 bodies of their fallen, local media and tribal leaders said. The handover between the country's Houthi rebels and Saudi Arabia marked the latest in reconciliation efforts amid Yemen's years-long conflict.

The rare exchange took place near the Saudi border town of Nahran, according to the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV and three tribal leaders. All three tribesmen spoke on condition of anonymity fearing reprisals. The TV reported that remnants of 58 rebels were handed over by Riyadh, while the Iran-backed Shiite rebels handed over the bodies of six Saudi soldiers. There was no immediate comment from the kingdom on the exchange.

The handover marked the third exchange of bodies between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia since the war began, al-Masirah TV said. The two sides have also exchanged prisoners in organized swaps brokered by the United Nations. Yemen's civil war erupted in 2014 when the Houthis swept down from their northern stronghold and removed the internationally recognized government from the capital of Sanaa, forcing it first to the south, then into exile in Saudi Arabia.

South Kordofan residents flee

— new front in Sudan war develops



DUBAI (Reuters): Residents of the city of Kadugli in southwest Sudan began fleeing the city as tensions escalated between the army and a powerful rebel group, threatening to open another area of conflict in the country's ongoing war, witnesses said.

Mobilisation around Kadugli, capital of South Kordofan state, and an escalation of fighting in Darfur came after nearly 10 weeks of fighting focused in the capital, Khartoum, between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The United States and Saudi Arabia adjourned talks they had been facilitating in Jeddah. US Assistant Secretary of State Molly Phee said at a congressional hearing in Washington.

"The format is not succeeding in the way that we want," she said, after a series of violated ceasefire agreements. Since mid-April the war has uprooted more than 2.5 million people from their homes and threatened to destabilise neighbouring countries suffering from a combination of conflict, poverty and economic pressures. In the fighting between the army and the RSF, army air strikes hit areas of southern Khartoum and Omdurman, and the RSF responded with anti-aircraft weaponry, residents said. The army accused the SPLM-N rebel group led by Abdelaziz al-

Hilu, which controls parts of South Kordofan state, of breaking a long-standing ceasefire agreement and attacking an army unit in the city.

The army said it had fought back the incursion but sustained losses. South Kordofan has Sudan's main oil fields and borders West Darfur State as well as South Sudan. The SPLM-N, which has strong ties to South Sudan, also attacked the army in the South Kordofan city of al-Dalanj, as did the RSF, residents said.

Residents of Kadugli said the army had redeployed forces to protect its positions in the city, while the SPLM-N was gathering in areas on the outskirts. There were electricity and communications outages as well as dwindling food and medical supplies, they said. The war has also brought an eruption of violence in Darfur, with the West Darfur city of El Geneina worst hit. In Al Fashir, capital of North Darfur, the army and the RSF clashed violently, including around the main market, witnesses said after having deployed across the city, witnesses said. Nyala, capital of South Darfur and one of Sudan's largest cities, has also seen clashes between the army and RSF in recent days, amid electricity and communications blackouts. Both cities had been relatively calm after locally negotiated truces.

UN convoy crosses from Syria regime areas to Idlib

DAMASCUS (AFP): United Nations aid transited from regime-controlled northwest Syria to rebel-held areas for the first time since a devastating February earthquake, an AFP correspondent and a humanitarian official said.

The correspondent saw the 10-truck convoy reach rebel-held Al-Nayrab in Idlib province from the direction of regime-held Saraqib, headed for storage facilities near the Turkish border. The last such convoy was in January, according to a humanitarian official in Idlib who requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

The trucks were covered with banners bearing the name and logo of the UN World Food Programme, the correspondent said. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Twitter the "cross-line

convoy is underway, carrying UN humanitarian supplies" to northwest Syria. A February 6 earthquake devastated parts of Turkey and Syria, including areas of the war-torn country's Idlib region that are controlled by jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS).

Around three million of people, most of whom have been displaced by Syria's war, live in HTS-controlled parts of the Idlib region. On February 10, President Bashar al-Assad's regime said it had approved the delivery of humanitarian aid directly from government-held territory to rebel areas, but HTS head Abu Mohammed al-Jolani refused assistance through such a route. The UN largely delivers relief to Syria's northwest via neighbouring Turkey through the Bab al-Hawa crossing -- the only way for aid to enter without Damascus's involvement.

The number of UN-

approved crossings has shrunk from four in 2014 after years of pressure from regime allies China and Russia at the UN Security Council. The UN chief said on February 13 that Assad had agreed to open the Bab al-Salama and Al-Rai crossings from Turkey to allow aid to enter rebel-held areas for an initial period of three months. Syria in May extended access for those two crossings, which are operated by Turkish-backed rebels, for another three months, OCHA said at the time.

Syria's war has killed more than half a million people and displaced millions since erupting in 2011 with a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests. Despite periodic exchanges of deadly fire, including in recent days, a ceasefire deal brokered by Moscow and Ankara has largely held in the northwest since March 2020.

South Korea, Vietnam to boost work on North Korea nuclear threat

HANOI/SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea and Vietnam agreed to boost security cooperation, citing North Korea's nuclear threat, and committed to increasing bilateral trade and investment despite a slump this year and Vietnam's planned tax hikes on large firms. In his first visit to Vietnam as president, South Korean leader Yoon Suk Yeol acknowledged economic woes but reiterated Vietnam's key role for Seoul's growth strategy.

He signed 17 agreements with Vietnam's President Vo Van Thuong on a number of issues, from critical minerals to Vietnamese workers in Korea, and said Seoul would step up cooperation with Vietnam against North Korea's nuclear threat. Vietnam is one of few countries which can boast close relations with Pyongyang. Vietnam "is ready to participate in the process of denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula", Thuong said in a joint press conference.

The two nations also agreed to boost defence industry relations and security cooperation in the South China Sea. South Korea is one of many countries discussing possible arms sales to Vietnam as it seeks to

modernise its arsenal. Korea and Vietnam over the last few decades have developed almost symbiotic industrial ties, with South Korea being the largest foreign investor in Vietnam. Seoul also enjoys the highest level of diplomatic relations with Hanoi, together with Russia, China and India.

The leaders reiterated a goal of boosting bilateral trade, despite a slump so far this year driven by lower global demand for smartphones and other electronic goods that Korean firms assemble in Vietnam with many components shipped from Korea. "Although the business environment is difficult in recent years, we must find new opportunities in Vietnam, which is the centre of global supply chain reorganisation and an emerging consumer market," Yoon said.

Bilateral trade has fallen by a quarter in the first five months of this year compared to the same period in 2022, with a nearly 30% drop in Vietnamese imports of South Korean products. This year Korean firms have also invested in Vietnam much less than competitors, with China and Japan easily outstripping Seoul, Vietnam's government data

show. Falling orders for electronic goods have forced South Korean firms to reduce their Vietnam workforce, multiple industry and business sources say.

To tackle this negative trend, Seoul agreed to financial support worth over \$4 billion by 2030, almost entirely in loans, to help Vietnam on climate change, education and health. Korean firms also signed over 100 agreements with Vietnamese counterparts during the state visit on energy, aviation, shipbuilding and research. However, to complicate matters, Hanoi is set to introduce from next year a new levy on large corporations, including big Korean multinationals, as part of a global reform of tax rules that could reduce Vietnam's appeal as a manufacturing hub.

Samsung Electronics, the biggest investor in the country, and LG Electronics are among large firms negotiating possible compensations to offset higher taxes. "Companies are seeking to reshore more and diversify rather than go all-in for Vietnam," said James Jung, Seoul-based analyst at Hyundai Motor Securities, noting Vietnam's appeal has fallen in recent months, also because of the new levy.

Somalia faces a 'dire hunger emergency'

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Somalia's "dire hunger emergency" is spiralling upward with one-third of the population expected to face crisis or worse levels of food needs, but the UN has been forced to drastically cut food assistance because of a lack of funding, the head of the World Food Program said.

Cindy McCain told the UN Security Council the latest food security data show that over 6.6 million Somalis desperately need assistance including 40,000 "fighting for survival in famine-like conditions." But she said WFP was forced to cut monthly food assistance, which had reached a record 4.7 million people in December, to just 3 million people at the end of April - "and without an immediate cash injection, we'll have to cut our distribution lists again in July to just 1.8 million per month."

McCain, who visited Somalia last month, said she saw "how conflict and climate change are conspiring to destroy the lives and livelihoods of millions of Somalis." She said the country's "longest drought on record, which killed millions of livestock and decimated crops, recently gave way to disastrous flash floods in the south. Urging donors to be as generous as they were and hauling Somalia "back from the abyss of famine in 2022," McCain warned that the survival of millions of Somalis is at stake.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited Somalia in April "to ring the alarm" and appealed for "massive international support" for Somalia. But the results of a high-level donors' conference for three Horn of Africa countries - Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya - on May 24 were very disappointing. It raised less than \$1 billion of the more than \$5 billion organizers were hoping for to help over 30 million people. Only in the past few years has Somalia begun to find its footing after three decades of chaos from warlords to the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group and the emergence of Islamic State-linked extremist groups. Last May, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who served as Somalia's president between 2012 and 2017, was returned to the top office by legislators after a protracted contest.

Somalia has faced numerous attacks from al-Shabab and recently the government embarked on what has been described as the most significant offensive against the extremist group in more than a decade. Catriona Laing, the new UN special representative for Somalia, told the council that the government's operations have degraded al-Shabab militarily and dislodged its fighters from a number of areas which is "a notable achievement."

US ship sailed through Taiwan Strait

TAIPEI (AP): A US Coast Guard ship sailed through the Taiwan Strait a day after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken completed a trip to Beijing during which he met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, in a move that Chinese authorities called "public hype."

The US Coast Guard cutter Stratton conducted a "routine Taiwan Strait transit" on June 20 through waters where "high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law," the US Navy's 7th Fleet said in a statement. "The ship transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State," it added.

China often maintains that the strait, which separates Taiwan and mainland China, is part of its exclusive economic zone, while the US and its allies regularly sail through and fly

over the passage to emphasize their contention that the waters are international. "Stratton's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows," the Navy's statement said.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said the ship sailed through the strait from south to north and that the military had monitored the surrounding waters and airspace and concluded that the situation was "normal." China's coast guard described the Stratton's transit through the Taiwan Strait as "public hype" and said Chinese coast guard ships tailed the ship the entire way.

"The Chinese coast guard will strengthen patrol law enforcement in waters under China's jurisdiction,

and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security and maritime rights and interests," a Chinese coast guard statement said. China has stepped up its military activities around Taiwan in recent months amid deteriorating US-China ties, with Taiwan reporting Chinese military activities in the strait almost daily.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary and regularly sends ships and warplanes into airspace and waters near the island. Earlier this month, the US military released video of what it called an "unsafe" Chinese maneuver in the Taiwan Strait, in which a Chinese navy ship cut sharply across the path of an American destroyer conducting a "freedom of navigation" transit, forcing the US vessel to slow to avoid a collision.

UAE leader welcomes Iranian foreign minister

DUBAI (AP): The president of the United Arab Emirates met with Iran's visiting foreign minister in the latest sign of improving relations between Arab Gulf countries and the Islamic Republic.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have long harbored suspicions about Iran because of its nuclear program and support for militant groups across the region, and have cultivated close defense ties with the US. But in recent months they have charted a more independent path, reaching out to US adversaries as Washington increasingly focuses on Russia and China. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian "discussed

the importance of building on positive developments to benefit the people of the region and enhance regional stability and prosperity," the UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported.

Iranian state TV said the two met for 90 minutes and discussed further cooperation in different fields. It said the Iranian foreign minister invited Sheikh Mohammed to visit Iran and that the UAE president invited Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi to visit the Emirates. The meeting follows similar recent outreach by Saudi Arabia, which agreed to normalize relations with Iran for the first time in seven years in a deal brokered by China in March. The two countries have since reopened embassies and held high-

level official visits.

The UAE, home to the futuristic cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, is a close US military ally that hosts some 2,000 American troops at the Al-Dhafra Air Base. US forces based there and in other Arab Gulf countries have long been seen as a deterrent to Iran. The UAE was also the driving force behind the so-called Abraham Accords, in which it and three other Arab countries forged ties with Israel. Israel views Iran as its greatest threat and hopes to further isolate it by pursuing closer ties with Arab states. Israel and the US are keen to reach a normalization agreement with Saudi Arabia. Saudi officials say any such agreement would have to be linked to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

'UN peacekeeping departure will kill deal'

BAMAKO (Reuters): The departure of a United Nations peacekeeping mission from Mali will strike a "fatal blow" to a peace accord and threaten stability across the region, a coalition of armed groups in the north of the country has warned.

Mali's junta asked the peacekeeping force, known as MINUSMA, to leave "without delay", a demand that followed years of fraying relations between the UN and Bamako's military leadership. "The departure of MINUSMA without a credible alternative would constitute a threat to securi-

ty in Mali and the whole region," the coalition, called the Permanent Strategic Framework for Peace, Security and Development (CSP-PSD), said in a statement.

A spokesman for the junta did not respond to a request for comment. It is not clear if or when MINUSMA will leave. The force has been in the West African country since 2013 after a Tuareg-led separatist insurgency was hijacked by Islamist groups that have gone on to kill thousands of people and control large parts of the north and centre. MINUS-

MA has struggled to contain the Islamist violence, but it has played a role in placating the separatists, who halted their offensive in 2015 with the Algiers Accord.

Still, the signatories have been at odds with the junta that consolidated power in two coups in 2020 and 2021. In December, CSP-PSD pulled out of talks, saying it would only come back to the table in a neutral country under international mediation. MINUSMA's mandate runs out on June 30 and it was in talks to extend it before Mali's announcement.

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Human rights concerns and US-India ties

INDIAN Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and US President, Joe Biden addressed a joint press conference in the White House during the recent visit of the Indian Prime Minister to the United States. Both leaders faced thorny questions from the media regarding their so-called tall claims on human and minority rights, and democracy vis-a-vis ground realities in both nations. President Joe Biden was asked that many of his Democratic colleagues believe that he has overlooked the way religious minorities are being treated in India under Prime Minister Modi. Reporters asked Prime Minister Modi that India claims to be the largest democracy but reports about the mistreatment of religious minorities, especially Muslims are reported in the media regularly. Interestingly, both leaders tactfully dodged the questions and moved to other topics. President Biden claimed that democracy was in the DNA of both India and America. While, Modi blatantly replied that his government does not believe in differentiating its citizens based on color, creed, or religious beliefs which is an open lie and deceit.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently paid a three-day state visit to the United States at the invitation of President Biden. Modi's Washington trip owes great importance to India as well as the United States amid worsening geostrategic conditions in the Indo-Pacific Seas and deteriorated ties with Beijing. Washington sees India as a critical regional partner and strategic swing state in the new global order amid ongoing global competition with Russia and China. Biden administration aimed at strengthening its defense partnership, trade, and economic collaboration with New Delhi to counterweight China.

Once denied an American visa and having been banned from entering the United States for severe violations of human rights and an alleged role in the Gujrat riots of 2002, Narendra Modi is now the most frequent visitor of the United States and receives great honor in Washington that is only reserved for close US ally that includes but limited to red carpet reception, address to a joint session of the US Congress, lavish state dinner, and joint press stakeout with the President of the United States. Interestingly, President Biden, the so-called preacher of human rights and democracy has seemingly turned a blind eye toward New Delhi's ever-increasing human rights abuses in its country just for the sake of strengthening defense and economic ties with Modi's India. This was not the first time that the American government shed off its commitments and promises regarding global human rights standards and stated policies on civil liberties in respect of the worst human rights record and deteriorating religious freedoms in India. According to reports, US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) had comprehensively reported on massive human rights abuses and crimes against minorities in India that had increased many folds under the Modi-led BJP Hindutva regime over the past years. The USCIRF had been recommending the State Department for the past many years to designate India as a Country for Particular Concern (CPC) because of its poor record of religious freedoms and reduced space for minorities and low-caste Hindus in certain parts of India. However, the US government looks at India as strong trade and economic partner and does not want to undermine the US interest in Bharat.

So-called secular India has now turned into a Hindu-majority state due to the ultra-nationalist policies and religion-based politics of the BJP regime that deliberately incite hate and spread Islamophobia to grasp power and increase its public rating among the Hindu nationalists. The recurrent incidents of hate speech, racism, and Islamophobia have become customary, whereas profanation of poise personality, desecration of the Holy Quran and Islamic verses, along with physical attacks on Muslim men, women, and Mosques are common in today's India. The RSS gangs had squeezed space for Muslims, Christians, and other minorities in the so-called biggest democracy in the world. Presently, India is occupying Jammu and Kashmir by force in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions, while religious minorities and local ethnic groups are pursuing political and armed movements in Punjab, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam, and other states to get freedom from Indian Occupation. As for the United States, hate crimes, racism, and white supremism are on the rise, while recurrent incidents of terrorism and shooting had caused serious concerns and insecurity in immigrants and people of color, however, the US government, schools, and media are currently not ready to admit this rising peril in their society.

Realistically, the US-India partnership is a marriage of convenience for both nations. As their interests coincide this relationship will grow, otherwise, their divorce would be a matter of days and weeks. Currently, both leaders admitted the presence of democracy in their DNA but could not judge betrayal, selfishness, and hegemonism in their plasma. Interestingly, thousands of Indian Muslims, Kashmiris, Sikhs, and other ethnic and religious minorities gathered on Lafayette Square outside the White House to protest the policies of the Modi government against minorities, the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, and the ongoing human rights abuses across India. Biden displayed impotence and weakness, abandoned his legacy, and even did not whisper a single word in support of millions of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Dillats who face high-handedness and prosecution at the hands of Hindu fanatics, RSS gangs, and BJP leaders in Modi's India. Although Biden missed the opportunity and Modis eluded justice/accountability at that moment, they would surely feel guilt throughout their life.

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Sunak had a chance to rise above Johnson's toxic legacy

Rafael Behr

RISHI Sunak sits in the office of prime minister as if placed there on secondment from some other Conservative party - one that hasn't been in power for 13 years. If there is credit for trying to fix things that are broken about Britain, he will claim it, but accountability for the breakage is not his concern.

He chose not to express a view on Monday when MPs endorsed the report that censured Boris Johnson for lying wilfully and repeatedly to parliament. Sunak said he respected the committee that investigated his predecessor but, speaking as head of the government, preferred not to meddle in matters for the legislature. That excuse doesn't even work as a constitutional fig leaf. The prime minister is also an MP and a citizen. He is allowed an opinion on whether politicians should tell the truth.

As leader of his party, mindful of public opinion, he might also have wanted to signal that Johnson's duplicities deserve formal rebuke. Even if the ethical imperative passed him by, he could have spied an electoral advantage in siding with the people who felt the personal sacrifices they made for Covid lockdowns were derided when the man who wrote the rules also flouted them. The real reason for Sunak's abstention was hope of an end to hostile manoeuvres from Johnson and his allies. To choose appeasement of implacable foes over alignment with millions of voters is gutlessness without guile; the stupidest kind of cowardice.

As a rule, if a prime minister's first pledge in office is to govern with "integrity, professionalism and accountability", and he is later asked if that commitment still stands, the answer should sound something like yes. Sunak's promise of probity on the threshold of No 10 always had a whiff of John Major's "back to basics" campaign about it - a piety so vague and vast as to be meaningless, except as a device for organising every subsequent scandal and mishap into a pattern of systemic hypocrisy. Every prime minister wants to signal a fresh start, and for Sunak there was the added

urgency of burying Liz Truss's short, calamitous reign. That was more than a party-political mission. Truss's adventures in budget policy cost Britain its credibility with financial markets. The country faced relegation from the tier of developed democracies that reliably manage their debts.

Conservative MPs desperately needed a replacement prime minister with a

"mini-budget" of September 2022 was reckless because it offered lavish tax cuts with no projection of compensating revenues beyond faith in the lucrative proceeds of growth to be conjured by the animal spirits of unleashed enterprise. But that alone might not have caused a financial derailment, had Truss and Kwarteng not also made a

The current cost of living crisis has causes that predate Kwarteng soiling the national balance sheet, but the immediate cost to the exchequer was somewhere in the order of £30bn. Interest rates would be rising anyway to contain inflation, but Trussonomics gave mortgage holders an early punch in the guts. Shredding trust among international lenders also limited future fiscal bandwidth. Having blown the right to mark their own economic homework, the Tories locked Britain on to a path of performative budget discipline that amounts to punitive austerity.

reputation for economic sobriety. Sunak, the chancellor who navigated the pandemic to general acclaim and then watched from the backbenches as the economy went into a tailspin, was the obvious candidate. The contrast with Truss gave Sunak a more potent aura of renewal than he deserved. The expedient of short-term stabilisation after a financial emergency laundered memories of the new prime minister's loyal service to Johnson, whose disgrace receded momentarily from view behind the spectacular implosion of his successor. But Truss's premiership is better understood as an extension of the "Boris" franchise. She beat Sunak as a continuity candidate. Or rather Sunak lost because Tory grassroots members despised him as Johnson's assassin. What followed was like a disastrous spin-off show devoted to a minor character in a longer-running series. It was the familiar script of Johnsonian bluster but in the mouths of a weaker cast performing to an audience of unamused bond traders.

Kwasi Kwarteng's

great show of contempt for what they saw as economic "orthodoxy". In her leadership bid, Truss had casually queried the Bank of England's independence in ways that alarmed the City. On arrival in Downing Street, she sacked Tom Scholar, the respected permanent secretary at the Treasury.

The Office for Budget Responsibility was blocked from vetting Kwarteng's numbers. When markets flinched from his unfunded tax cuts, he went on television and promised "more to come". Flinch turned to flight, and the whole budget had to be scrapped. Britain is still paying the price. The current cost of living crisis has causes that predate Kwarteng soiling the national balance sheet, but the immediate cost to the exchequer was somewhere in the order of £30bn. Interest rates would be rising anyway to contain inflation, but Trussonomics gave mortgage holders an early punch in the guts.

Shredding trust among international lenders also limited future fiscal bandwidth. Having blown the right to mark their own eco-

nomics homework, the Tories locked Britain on to a path of performative budget discipline that amounts to punitive austerity. Sunak is silent about both the economic pain that people are suffering and the reason. That might indicate deficient empathy, but it is mostly a function of his unwillingness to examine the causes of any problem that Britain faces when there is no way to tell the story without taking a portion of blame. It is the reason why he cannot call Johnson a liar or say, as some Tory MPs managed to do in the Commons on Monday, that deliberate lying from the dispatch box is an act of sabotage against democracy. He cannot articulate a simple constitutional principle - that a prime minister who is found to have broken the rules must be punished because the alternative is a system where executive power comes with an exemption from accountability.

Johnson entered Downing Street with that spirit of contempt for anything that might restrain a leader's impulse, then passed it on to Truss. It is their combined legacy that Sunak will not repudiate, even as he presents himself as a different kind of leader from a different Conservative party. There is a way to rationalise the decision not to provoke Johnson with an explicit endorsement of the privileges committee's verdict. Although the former prime minister enjoys less support among Tory MPs than he might like, his base is noisy and effective at commanding media attention. Their silence buys Downing Street time to talk about other things.

But a truce can only be temporary. The vendetta is personal. And even if Johnson's star wanes he represents a wider Tory tendency that needs Sunak's project to fail; that cares only about another Conservative party waiting to emerge on the other side of election defeat. That party will have to decide if it thinks integrity, professionalism and accountability matter in politics. It isn't a hard question. But it will hound the Tories into opposition because Sunak is too weak to answer it in government.

The Guardian

Sudanese refugee crisis adds to challenges

Kerry Boyd Anderson

LAST week, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi visited Egypt to speak with the country's leaders and refugees fleeing Sudan. As the fighting in Sudan continues, refugees are pouring across the country's borders, seeking refuge in neighboring states. However, many of those states already host other refugees and struggle to cope with their own political and economic crises.

Since the current conflict broke out in Khartoum on April 15, quickly spreading to other parts of Sudan, nearly 1.4 million people have been displaced, the UN reported on May 28. Most of those are displaced within the country. However, nearly 380,000 people have fled across Sudan's borders since April 15, according to a UN statement from June 2. Egypt has received the most refugees, at least 170,000. Last week, the UN said that more than 100,000 people have fled Sudan into Chad. On May 28, the UN reported that South Sudan had received about 71,000 refugees, the Central African Republic about 9,700 and Ethiopia about 5,000; however, those numbers have likely increased in the last week.

These numbers only represent refugees fleeing Sudan since the current conflict began in April. Most of the host countries already have pre-existing communities of Sudanese refugees from previous conflicts. Furthermore, Sudan itself is host to refugees from countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Some of those fleeing Sudan now were refugees in Sudan from other conflicts; for example, some of those crossing the border into South Sudan had previously fled the South Sudanese civil war and sought refuge in Sudan.

The refugees' experiences vary depending on which country they go to, where and how they lived in Sudan and when they fled. For example, fleeing a city such as Khartoum and traveling to the border with Egypt requires significant funds. In many cases, the poorest Sudanese lack the resources to flee the country. However, some other people are able to flee on foot, such as those in Darfur who live near the border with Chad. Most of the refugees - even those who had resources to get to the border - often arrive with little or nothing. Media reports, for example, have noted that some of those fleeing to Egypt have resources but are unable to access funds in bank accounts or assets left in Sudan.

Most of the refugees face dire circumstances. Some lost loved ones in the recent conflict or suffered abuse and terror. They often reach the border exhausted, hungry, dehydrated and traumatized. So far, most neighboring countries are allowing many refugees to cross. However, not all are able to cross the border; for example, many families were separated when Egypt allowed women and children to cross but demanded visas for boys and men aged 16 to 49. At

the border, some refugees faced long bureaucratic delays and occasionally abuse, but there also are reports of great generosity from the citizens of host countries and from Sudanese residing in those countries who stepped up to help.

The refugees face immediate housing problems. Many camps lack sufficient water and food. With the rainy season arriving soon, UN officials and aid workers are working to improve shelter. In some places, refugees remain close to the border, raising concerns that they are not yet safe and need to be moved further away.

The challenges of providing for hundreds of thousands of new refugees in various countries - with more likely on the way - come on top of pre-existing problems. Five of Sudan's neighboring countries have experienced conflict in recent years and are still struggling with the aftermath and continuing instability. More than 2.3 million South Sudanese are refugees in other countries, including Sudan; it is the largest refugee crisis in Africa. Ethiopia already hosts 924,000 refugees and asylum-seekers; the country also has 3.5 million internally displaced people and has generated its own refugee populations, including some in Sudan. Chad was hosting more than 580,000 refugees from Sudan and other neighboring countries before the latest influx. More than one-third of the Central African Republic's population is displaced, leaving the country ill-equipped to host those fleeing Sudan. Chad and the Central African Republic are two of the world's poorest countries. Egypt perhaps is the best placed neighbor to absorb Sudanese refugees, but it already hosted more than 291,000 refugees before April and is struggling to manage its own economic crisis.

The latest Sudanese refugee crisis highlights the problem of durable conflicts, chronic instability and ongoing refugee cycles. While the UN, other aid groups and several donor nations are trying to help, donor fatigue is likely to be more intense when future refugee flows seem inevitable in the same region. In the Sahel, instability can easily spread to other fragile countries. Furthermore, even if a political solution ends a particular conflict, displaced people face an uphill battle to recovery; those challenges increase for people who are displaced repeatedly. Without basic resources and stability, moving beyond survival to development can be nearly impossible. Sudan and the broader Sahel region desperately need peace. As long as conflict persists, economic opportunities will be elusive and many refugees will be unable to regain self-sufficiency. Humanitarian assistance is desperately needed to meet the basic needs of these vulnerable populations in the short term, and the international community must help. In the long term, without peace, the world should expect more refugee flows between these fragile states.

Kazakhstan is a bridge between the North, South, East and West

Serik Zhumangarin

MY country Kazakhstan has always been a bridge between the East and the West, lying along the old silk road. Today, not only is it bridging the divide between the East and the West, but also between the Global North and the Global South. It is in this context that on June 8 Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will open the Astana International Forum, a global event aimed at renewing the culture of multilateralism. It is part of our multi-vector foreign policy which seeks to engage countries in the north, south, east and west.

The forum will bring people together from across the world and give participants an opportunity to address global challenges and chart a new way

forward. We are honoured that one of our guests will be the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who will lead a delegation to the forum representing his country. Occasions such as the Astana International Forum present us with an opportunity to consider how to overcome key global challenges currently facing humanity, which broadly speaking, fall into three interlinked categories - economy, climate change and international relations.

First, the weak economic growth, high inflation, soaring energy prices, and critical supply chain issues which emerged following the COVID-19 pandemic and world conflicts continue to cast a shadow over the global economic outlook. In January, the IMF reported that the global economy is poised to slow

down even further in the coming months, with growth only expected to rebound next year. Hope on this front, however, can be seen in emerging markets, where higher than average growth rates - about 4 percent - are projected compared with advanced economies, which will expand by only 1.2 percent. This highlights the importance of emerging markets to investors at this time.

As minister of trade and integration, I have seen firsthand the benefits of foreign direct investment after the country's independence in 1991, especially in Kazakhstan's energy and mining sectors. These investments have contributed significantly to the development of cities and regions and have activated local economies.

Going forward, the manufacturing industry, the agricultural sector, and the heavy industry are at the top of our priority list for investment. Second, a growing concern for emerging and advanced economies alike is the climate emergency which is manifesting itself in increasingly more intense droughts, wildfires and floods. This has led to growing food and water security concerns in the Global South, where countries have to allocate larger proportions of their gross domestic product (GDP) to protect their populations and essential infrastructure.

The climate emergency is exacerbating the North-South divide and existing inequalities. That is why many countries in the Global South are calling on

development banks and global financial institutions to unlock more funds to help ease and accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

There is growing disunity on this subject at a time when the world needs to take a united stand to tackle this global challenge. Overcoming disagreement necessitates developing partnerships and cooperation. And this brings me to the third challenge: recognising the need for open, frank and productive global dialogue. Today, globalisation continues to bind us closer together and deepen our interdependence. And there is no way to tackle new economic hurdles, the climate emergency, shifting geopolitical priorities or mass demographic changes without cooperation and keeping channels

of communication open.

President Tokayev has often stated that there is no viable alternative to globalisation, interdependence, and the international order based on the UN Charter. It is imperative for us to strengthen global cooperation, not reject it. Diplomacy and dialogue are the solution, and global gatherings which bring partners together - old and new - are the means to facilitate this.

We hope that the Astana International Forum will become a key venue where multilateralism is resurrected and where we are able to agree on solutions for global problems. As hosts, we hope to see collective responsibility reaffirmed and collaboration and cooperation strengthened so we can all move towards a brighter future together.

EU infrastructure plan still a daydream

THE 10th year of President Xi Jinping's proposal for the Belt and Road Initiative is also a time to reflect on what the European Union has done to support or complement the initiative, or to promote a complementary or alternative infrastructure development plan. While a number of European countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, have signed bilateral Belt and Road memorandums with China, the EU has by and large shown reluctance or a lack of ambition to come up with a comparable proposal.

Why? Not only would it be in the EU's best interest to help develop Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, but the Belt and Road approach would also help solve some of the domestic problems of Europe's most developed countries. For even the West, once the model of modernity, has now squandered many of its leading advantages and is increasingly suffering from crumbling and outdated infrastructure, prolonged recessions and a decline in average living standards. EU's response mixture of hesitance, convergence

The EU's response to the Belt and Road Initiative has been unusually hesitant. It took the EU several years after the launch of the initiative in 2013 to announce its own "Connecting Europe and Asia - Building Blocks for an EU Strategy", and issued "Action Plan" of extremely modest scope in 2018. The EU Chamber of Commerce in China published a survey on European Involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2020, which quite bluntly states: "The EU needs to present a credible alternative by putting meat on the bones on its EU-Asia Connectivity Plan. Little progress has been made since the plan was announced in September 2018." Comparing the two initiatives, the same report revealed that they are worlds apart: "Although the EU Connectivity approach emphasizes openness, transparency, sustainability and high standards, it pales in comparison to the BRI as it currently remains all but unknown, underdeveloped and reactive, and is slow and arduous in project execution. For all its shortcomings, the BRI is fully developed and proactively seeks out partners and projects, delivers results quickly, and is on the lips of leaders across the globe."

Recall that in May 2017, when 29 heads of state and top officials from more than 130 countries and 70 international organizations gathered in Beijing for the historic first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, many leaders from European countries such as Italy, Greece, Spain, Poland, Serbia, Switzerland and Hungary were also represented. It was a moment of convergence. However, the EU member states were prohibited by the EU leadership from signing the final joint communiqué. And in 2018, 27 of the 28 EU ambassadors to China issued a statement rejecting the Belt and Road Initiative because they felt they were being treated unequally. Some countries came under enormous pressure. When Italy, not only a founding member of the EU but also a core G7 member state, signed the Belt and Road Initiative memorandum to express

its willingness to cooperate in the joint development of Italian ports and other infrastructure facilities, the government was quickly accused of selling out to China, and China was denounced for pursuing only its own interests. In March 2021, during a seminar on the Belt and Road Initiative, the German Ministry of Economics reviewed the EU-Asia connectivity plan and stated that only a "mere exchange of experience" on infrastructure projects had taken place with China, which "so far has not resulted in any joint ventures".

The EU-Asia connectivity strategy simply disappeared after that. Then came its supposed successor, "Global Gateway", presented by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Dec 1, 2021. According to the joint communication, the EU's commitment was to be expanded and better communicated, and the sum of 300 billion (\$328.44 billion) to be allocated between 2021 and 2027. While some flagship projects were listed in March this year, the Global Gateway has already drawn criticism from a whole network of public interest groups from almost every EU country. The European Network on Debt and Development has said in a report that the Global Gateway initiative is based on the assumption that it will mobilize or leverage resources from private investors. In addition, development funds are being redirected to achieve commercial competitiveness and geopolitical objectives, which goes against the principle of a publicly funded good for poverty alleviation. Global Gateway funding is often tied to meeting the International Monetary Fund's conditions, such as lowering public sector wages.

Even with Japan, with which the only "connectivity partnership" was established at the end of 2019, no concrete projects were planned. The EU and Japan were only negotiating the compatibility of standards on transparency and sustainability. Is this really all the EU could offer? One of Germany's leading business newspapers, Handelsblatt, leaked information in May 2021 that the German government had become very concerned about the EU's "lack of ambition" in this regard, leaving the field entirely to China for infrastructure projects worldwide. An internal government paper allegedly stated that instead of pushing for a "visible and globally oriented EU connectivity strategy", the project was not getting off the ground due to the "reluctance of the EU Commission". The EU-Asia connectivity strategy simply disappeared after that. Then came its supposed successor, "Global Gateway", presented by European Commission President Ursula von

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published an alerting statement on the Global Gateway, saying the countries of the Global South no longer automatically follow Europe's path. In order to secure the open trade routes on which European economies, especially Germany, depend, Hoyer urged that the approved Global Gateway projects be implemented now to advance urgently needed infrastructure construction in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Ironically, the EIB chief admitted that "our European standards", especially supply chain laws, are perceived as paternalistic in the Global South and the term "regulatory imperialism" has become a household word. Europe, he said, which needs access to critical raw materials, must not behave like former European colonial masters. Building processing plants and paying attention to local energy needs could create more trust, he concluded in his remarkable statement. 'EU mindset' driving the tragic dysfunction The reason why the EU leadership has not been able to come up with its own version of the Belt and Road Initiative has nothing to do with technicalities, but reveals a deeper flaw. Judging by some of the recent statements by EU leaders such as Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, or von der Leyen, it is what might be called the "EU mindset", with its contradictions, inconsistencies and frankly neo-colonial attitude, that is driving such tragic dysfunction.

Borrell's remarks at the European Diplomatic Academy in the fall of 2022 about Europe being an "idyllic garden" and the rest of the world mostly a "jungle", are far from the only instance that has caused much consternation. In a recent article for Le Journal du Dimanche on April 23, Borrell, channelling his imperial global ambitions, even called on European navies to patrol the Taiwan Strait "to show Europe's commitment to freedom of navigation in this absolutely crucial area". He declared that Taiwan is "clearly part of our geostrategic perimeter to guarantee peace". Many also listened with some puzzlement to von der Leyen's speech on March 30, five days before her visit to China in which she questioned China on many fronts.

An EU leadership hell-bent on lecturing China and other countries on how to behave within a Western "rule-based order" in an outdated display of a Euro-centric, out-of-touch superiority complex will, of course, never come up with a grand vision to complement and cooperate with the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative. There is no way around it: all European countries must be invited individually to represent themselves as nations at the upcoming Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

And as many European governments as possible should sign new or expand existing memorandums and form a "European Belt and Road mechanism" outside the non-workable EU to communicate with China on joint project implementation. Expecting the EU's constructive cooperation and eventually the birth of the EU's infrastructure development initiative is a vain daydream.

The China Daily

Britain is where populism comes to die, as Brexit and the SNP implode

BRITISH populism has ended not with a bang but with a shrug. Boris Johnson and Nicola Sturgeon were two wildly different populist beasts - the former postured as a deconstructed Churchillian figure, as oddly and irresistibly English as warm beer or beans on toast. The latter styled herself as a cross between Robert the Bruce and Margaret Thatcher, in her august fight to roll back the State of Westminster. In the end, both these charismatic titans have had their reputations torn apart. Neither is likely to recover.

There have been whispers that Boris Johnson might stage a comeback, opting to take Nadine Dorries' newly vacated safe seat or forming a new Right-wing party with Nigel Farage. He has certainly shown few qualms about tearing strips out of Rishi Sunak in the past 24 hours. None the less, Johnson's recent conduct, resigning his seat amid a spat about peerages and in anticipation of a possible by-election in his marginal Uxbridge seat confirms what we already knew: he is fundamentally a court politician who will always lack fights in the trenches. Even before, it was hard to see him leading a backbench war of attrition against Sunak; harder still slogging it out with a renegade start-up party. Meanwhile, Nigel Farage, still exhausted from the referendum campaign, seems reluctant to return to a politics unless it is alongside big-name Tories.

If the Tory Brexiters cause has just officially lost its secret weapon, then the SNP also has lost its human face. Sturgeon almost single-handedly transformed the SNP from an ossified legacy party into a liberal populist machine. Love her or loathe her, she transformed Scottish nationalism from a hoarse bray for power into a breezy pitch for freedom. In one sense, the simultaneous implosion of these two proves that British populism bucks the global trend. After all, in America and Italy the populist wagon rattles on. In the Johnson/partygate case, this is partly because British people have very low tolerance for rule-breaking. It is striking indeed that while Boris's career lies in tatters

Sherelle Jacobs

over lockdown parties, Trump's popularity is unaffected by his indictment for squirrelling away secret documents. But it is ultimately unsurprising, given the uniquely "upstanding" nature of British liberalism, bound up in Enlightenment ideals of politeness and rule of law (in contrast to American freedom, which despises central authority and is mesmerised by the romantic myths of the Wild West).

But to bring things back to earth, one also gets a sense that modern British populism has always been just a bit rubbish. There is a distinct lack of leadership vision. Johnsonianism was a greased puddle of incoherent opportunism - all pork barrel promises, green grandstanding and Brexit bluffs. Nicola Sturgeon's pro-EU nationalism was a contradiction in terms. There is also a certain inauthenticity to British populism. It is unclear whether Johnson really believed in Brexit. SNP politicians may rail against the remote Westminster elite, but they reside within their own hermetically sealed bubble of NGO professionals, academics and career campaigners. It goes a long way in explaining the way things have gone; in wet, sheltered, political conditions, court intrigue breeds like mould. It is also undeniable that at every turn, British populists have been outwitted. Remainers, in the end, understood much better than Brexiters that to win in a country like Britain, where rules and constitutional principles are sacrosanct, one must be a master at the long game, manipulating procedural detail in the shadows. We saw this with the privileges committee and the ousting of Dominic Raab. In a way, Sturgeon also failed to understand this, killing the independence cause by foolishly taking it to the Supreme Court, guns blazing, rather than steadily building a case while biding her time for a change in the country's judicial cycle, currently under the cautious stewardship of Lord Reed.

This is all in stark contrast to Italy's skilful Georgia Meloni, who puts her British counterparts to shame. Whatever one thinks of her politics, truth be told she has pivoted with reasonable dexterity from an anti-immigrant

agitator to the pioneer of an ambitious industrial strategy financed by sovereign wealthy money. All the while she is keeping global critics at bay, courting investors and thinking in the long term where the EU is concerned. Put simply she has shown that it is possible for populists as well as established elites to work the system. However, to be fair to British populists, taking on the status quo in a traditional country is particularly challenging. Brexit populists vowed to take on an anti-democratic metropolitan elite. Very quickly they found themselves to be overwhelmed by a pathological system. Britain is effectively stuck in the orbit of the world's regulatory superpower, a 21st-century Roman empire that de facto externalises its laws outside its borders. The UK's economy is overtaxed, overregulated and over-managerialised. Its laggard body has no room for manoeuvre, having woken up one day strapped into a suicide vest of toxic derivatives products. Things are even worse in Scotland, which is addicted to Westminster freebies and grappling with large pockets of endemic poverty. The government machinery cannot cope with these problems - not least because the Civil Service is tailored only to elegant political "fixing" and erecting quangos.

Perhaps then the biggest mistake our populists made was to fail to realise that the problem is not one of intrigue but ineptitude. It is not so much that elites have an agenda but that they have simply lost control. Not only does the ruling class not have the solutions, it is also oblivious to the problems. This country has been pretty much stagnant for 15 years (in Scotland, business investment has been flat since 1998). And yet the Westminster bubble is convinced that the problem is not one of systemic decay but popular psychosis, embodied by Brexit and collapsing faith in institutions and a new mania for fake news. British populists continue to show little understanding of these issues. They are still stuck in the phase of shock and self-pity. It will be a long journey back to power.

The Telegraph

Silvio may be gone, but Trump's still here

WHEN he hurriedly left the prime minister's official residence, Palazzo Chigi, for the last time on 16 November 2011, Silvio Berlusconi looked like a humiliated man. Italy's finances were in trouble, with international investors betting against the country's treasury bonds; prosecutors were on his heels due to the infamous "bunga bunga" scandal, which involved an underage sex worker; European allies Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel had made their displeasure with him public. Few would have guessed at the time how much future politics would follow Berlusconi's populist template.

Berlusconi has died at 86 - he had been in hospital in Milan, undergoing treatment for a lung infection. Yet look around, and you can see his legacy everywhere. In fact, the years that followed Berlusconi's exit from office vindicated his political style, which combined extreme personality politics, a skilful use of visual media and an unashamed demagoguery - all to tap into voters' disillusionment and cynicism about the status quo. It is hard to think of another politician more prefigurative of politics to come. Many rightwing populist politicians who were dominant in the 2010s have been compared to Berlusconi, the first among them former US president Donald Trump. Like Trump and well before him, Berlusconi insisted on the fact that he was not a career politician but rather a successful "self-made entrepreneur", who had decided to enter politics to save his country from leftism. Like Trump, Berlusconi owed his success to his extraordinary use of TV, which, in his case, was made easier by the fact that he owned most of the coun-

Paolo Gerbaudo

try's private TV channels. And finally, very much like Trump, Berlusconi took the political scene by storm by ignoring all the norms of institutional courtesy and politeness, preposterously presenting himself as a victim of judges and electoral authorities, while never shying away from the most vulgar and sensationalist tactics to capture public attention - including his famous penchant for sexual jokes.

Berlusconi embodied what Antonio Gramsci described as the Italian people's "taste for the operatic", with his rallies and TV interventions featuring moments that would have befitted a variety show. In terms of political content, though, he was simply a neoliberal: his revolution was one of cutting taxes and red tape and deregulating labour. In fact, he is best seen, historically, as the link between neoliberalism and populism. In Italy, Berlusconi was instrumental in allowing the far right to enter mainstream politics, forging alliances with the separatist party Northern League and with the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale party, from which the party of the current prime minister, Giorgia Meloni, is descended. (Meloni first came to the limelight by serving as the minister of youth in the last Berlusconi government.)

Curiously, with hindsight, the shift of Italian politics ever further to the nationalist right has made Berlusconi appear relatively moderate. Yet his constant attack on workers, his reported links to the mafia, his manipulation of the legal system, his disastrous economic policies that have accelerated the country's industrial decline, and his celebration of extreme individualism all set the conditions for Italy's current

reactionary turn. A key element of his success, which has been mimicked by rightwing populists worldwide, was his ability to transform accusations against him into fuel for his survival. Berlusconi's career was famously dotted with prosecutions for mafia-related, corruption and tax-evasion crimes. In response, he adopted a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, he vigorously insisted that he was innocent, the victim of communist judges - the most persecuted person in human history. On the other hand, for the benefit of his more disingenuous supporters, especially those from a business class often engaging in illegal or borderline practices, he often winked at the fact that his behaviour was not all that pristine, but whose is?

The echoes with Trump's current legal tribulations in the US are clear - and don't augur well for those who think the former president's fate will be sealed by one more indictment. In Italy, Berlusconi's rise was made possible by the fatigue that Italian liberal-democracy cultivated in ordinary people, ever since the Tangentopoli corruption scandal of the early 1990s. In other countries, rightwing figures have preyed on similar sentiments of disillusion towards politics that does not seem to advance the interests of anyone but the elite. As long as politics is seen - sometimes with good reason - as a big "swamp" (to cite Trumpist rhetoric) of corruption and hypocrisy, the cynical politics that Berlusconi pioneered, and rightwing populists perfected, will continue to triumph. The only way to break this toxic spell is to reinstate politics with a moral yet tangible mission that actually delivers concrete improvements for the citizenry. This is precisely what Berlusconi failed to do.

Putin's silence heralds the return of Russia's governors as a political force

FOR many Russians, their country's war against neighboring Ukraine is no longer a distant conflict that has no impact on their lives. Drones loaded with explosives have darkened the skies of not only border regions, but Moscow, too, while cross-border incursions by armed groups are now a regular occurrence in the Belgorod region. All the while, Vladimir Putin continues to pretend that nothing major is happening. The president intends to fight this war to the bitter end, but in order to avoid ever appearing to have lost, he cannot clearly articulate its ultimate goals.

Amid this deafening silence, anyone who recognizes the new reality looks preferable. As the figures responsible for dealing with the aftermath of attacks and for trying to reassure the residents of their regions, Russia's regional governors have found themselves in the spotlight, and may well be able to boost their popularity through effective crisis management.

The increased shelling of the Belgorod region - the first Russian region to find itself dragged into Putin's war - and incursions by armed groups are likely the greatest test Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov has faced in his career, but they have also provided him with plenty of opportunities to excel. Parts of the region, including the town of Shebekino with a population of 40,000, regularly come under fire, and residents of at-risk areas are being evacuated en masse away from the front. Gladkov was even publicly negotiating a prisoner exchange at one point, though he then quickly fell silent, likely upon the Kremlin's orders. The governor has also said openly that the region has insufficient funds to restore infrastructure after the shelling. Back in the 1990s, it was not

unheard of for powerful governors to talk publicly about budgetary problems, but in Putin's Russia, it's highly unusual.

It might seem that the federal leadership and Putin himself should be taking control of the tense situation in the region. But for now, any federal intervention has been limited to phone calls between the president and local authorities. Residents of the region have gotten no reassurances from Putin. Nor did the president have any words of support for Muscovites in the aftermath of the Moscow drone attack last month. Putin did eventually address the incident, but most of his tirade was devoted to the history of Ukraine and Russia. Instead, the reassurance came from Mayor Sergei Sobyenin, who said mobile teams of doctors were being set up in the city, promised to provide all necessary assistance, and tried to convince people that the city authorities would not abandon those impacted by the attacks.

This is not the first time that the central government has adopted this hands-off approach. During the pandemic, Putin also stepped back from talking about problems and trying to solve them, instead transferring all powers - and responsibility - to the governors. The logic back then was obvious. Russian officials were having to make difficult choices between unpopular lockdown measures and additional deaths. Either option was doomed to alienate at least part of the public.

While the ratings of governors dropped accordingly, Putin simply stood on the sidelines. He only began to talk about the pandemic once clear response protocols and vaccines had been developed. Then Putin reported on successes that

had nothing to do with him, since he had not been involved in the decision-making process. The current situation is potentially even more dangerous than the pandemic, and that is why Putin remains silent. As soon as the original plan - to take Kyiv in three days - failed, the president distanced himself from the military agenda.

Putin is neither willing nor able to stop the war and admit his mistakes. At the same time, he knows that attempting to put the country on a full-scale military footing would be extremely unpopular. Putin clearly expects to achieve his goal by attrition. In the meantime, he prefers to keep well away from issues that could jeopardize his ratings. All of this will strengthen the position of the governors and some government officials, since the more the war encroaches onto Russia's home territory, the more they will be needed. Opinion polls confirm that Russian society's desire for stability is as strong as ever. According to research conducted by the independent sociological group Russian Field, in presidential elections, Russians would rather vote for an "effective manager" than for a moralizer.

While Putin tells his people that "everyone has to die, and it's better to do so in war than from alcoholism," and then descends into another polemic about the history of Ukraine, "Anglo-Saxons," and anti-colonialism, the governors simply say: "all necessary assistance will be provided." It's not hard to see which is the winning rhetoric. For many years, the Kremlin diminished the role of governors, turning them into mere executors of Putin's decisions, his operational managers on the ground. The war - and the president's self-isolation from real prob-

Andrey Pertsev

lems - has changed everything. The enforced publicity of regional leaders may serve to restore their genuine popularity and authority. Governors are finally starting to behave like real public politicians. There is no clearer illustration of this than the evolution of Gladkov. From managing a broadly positive agenda of promises of investment and posting upbeat videos on his Instagram page, he has now switched to full military mode, visiting bombed-out areas and talking to those affected. And it's paying off: his approval rating is close to 90%, an unprecedented figure among Russian governors. Both Gladkov and Sobyenin understand that the average Russian does not really differentiate between the spheres of responsibility of governors versus the federal government, and that in any case, they will seek answers from whomever is closer. The regional heads anticipate grassroots demand and respond to it. In other words, they are doing what Putin stopped doing long ago.

Having permitted themselves to show initiative, these regional politicians are still only working to achieve specific tactical goals rather than far-reaching plans. Gladkov monitors his rating zealously, while Sobyenin is mindful of September's mayoral elections. But everything that is happening shows that amid the state of semiparalysis within the power vertical, those nearer to the bottom of it are gaining unprecedented autonomy, and that if needed, Russian officials are prepared to disregard the seemingly unbreakable rules of that vertical. In the event of the system's destruction, these people will not simply disappear. They will integrate into the new order - or even start to create new orders themselves.

The Moscow Times



Edible oil, ghee output grew 4.97pc and 16.72pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The production of edible oil and vegetable in the country during 10 months of the current financial year grew by 4.97 percent and 16.72 percent respectively as compared to the production of the same period last year.

During the period from July 2022 to April 2023, about 458,231 metric tons of cooking oil were manufactured as compared to the manufacturing of 411,710 metric tons in the same period last year, said the data of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics released on Friday. Over 1.268 million metric tons of vegetable ghee was also produced in order to tackle with local requirements in the last 10 months of the current financial year as compared to the output of 1.178 million metric tons of the same period last year.

The tea blending in the country also witnessed about 5 percent growth during the period under review as about 108,345 metric tons of tea blended locally as compared to 124,062 metric tons in the same period last year.

Meanwhile, domestic tractors assembling during the period from July 2022 to April 2023 was recorded at 5,492 units as compared to the assembling of the corresponding period of last year. During the period under review tractors assembling in local markets decreased by 46.19 percent as against the assembling of the same period of last year. About 25,645 tractors were assembled in the first 10 months of the last financial year (2021-22), whereas on a year-to-year basis, local assembling was recorded at 2,955 tractors in April 2023 as against the production of 5,495 tractors of the same month of last year. However, the output of power looms grew by 29.27 percent during last 10 months of current financial year as about 488 power looms were locally assembled as compared to the assembling of 390 looms of the same period last year.

CDNS set target of Rs 70 bln in Islamic FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set a target of Rs 70 billion rupees in Islamic finance year 2023-24.

The aim was to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector.

"Islamic finance has a very important role in the global financial sector at this time, and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Friday.

The senior official said, "Work on Islamic finance is still needed in Pakistan."

He said, "At present, work is being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations are being introduced." He said, "At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users."

The official said, "CDNS will now provide facilities to its customers as a complete bank."

Replying to another query, he said CDNS had reviewed and set a target of Rs 60 billion in the fiscal year (2022-23) for Islamic investment to introduce the new products in the market.

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

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) signed an agreement to start a pilot project to digitise and dematerialise NSCs last week. The senior official said, "This will increase investment in National Savings and increase consumers' confidence."

He said, "This agreement between National Savings and CDCP is a part of the automation and digitization of the institution."

Replying to a question, he said, "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," he said.

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

ICCI for supporting Food Authority

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Friday assured full support of the business community in implementing food standards set by the food authority.

He said that the chamber would also organize training programs for staff relating to the food industry in order to fulfill the required standards.

Addressing a training workshop for the staff of hotels and restaurants organized by ICCI in collaboration with the Food Authority, he said that it is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including food authorities, and restaurants, to ensure the provision of healthy food to citizens in a clean environment. He said that Islamabad as the federal capital has global recognition, as ambassadors, guests and other people from all over the world are constantly visiting this city. He urged the need to focus on improving the quality and standards of food to attract more visitors and providing them with quality services.

The food sector is very important and the government has taken steps for establishing food authority, which will ensure the enforcement of food standards. He urged the government for allocating sufficient resources for the smooth functioning of the authority.

Speaking on the occasion Director Food Authority Dr Tahira Siddique said that as a regulator, the main task of the Food Authority is to ensure the implementation of standard operating procedures. If the staff of hotels and restaurants pay attention to some basic points, this problem can be solved, she said adding that the authority has prepared 24-point SOPs, which will be provided to all hotels and restaurants.

Mosquito repellent spray should be ensured after closing the outlet concerned, she said adding that medical tests of the staff should be done in a timely and continuous manner, and the quality of the food should be ensured. The staff should also take special care of their cleanliness, she said adding that photos and videos are taken during raids only to improve the efficiency of the authority and for records.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice President Chamber Engineer Azhar ul Islam said that the aim of this awareness workshop is to provide basic training to the staff associated with the food sector, Islamabad Chamber will continue such activities to improve food safety and standards.

BRICS: A Solution to Pakistan's Economic Challenges?

Syeda Fatima Shah

Pakistan is confronted with unprecedented political and economic challenges amidst pronounced global polarization. The exacerbating financial problems faced by Pakistan increase its vulnerability to the US-China rivalry. The US has openly expressed concerns about Pakistan's substantial debt to China, a significant portion of which has come under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

On the contrary, China has attributed Pakistan's dire financial crisis to the policies of the US. Reeling under backbreaking inflation and stalled IMF funding, Pakistan has expressed willingness to join the BRICS bloc. However, a crucial question remains as to whether Pakistan is adequately prepared for economic alignment, considering the challenges associated with potential integration in the bloc and whether its membership will be welcomed owing to its prevailing economic crisis.

Despite not being a member, Pakistan aspires to garner support from the BRICS alliance. It is essential to acknowledge the inherent conflict of interest that exists among the BRICS nations regarding Pakistan and the varying influence this conflict may have on the country.

While recognizing the bleak scenario, it is worthwhile to also consider a more optimistic viewpoint. The potential inclusion of Pakistan in BRICS could possibly foster borderless trade with India and a more lenient approach towards the Kashmir issue. Although ensuring political stability and security remain integral to sustainable growth and cooperation, the readiness of BRICS to address conflicts that impede stability in Pakistan remain uncertain. Undoubtedly, Pakistan's economic predicaments, including the unsuccessful staff level agreement with the IMF, China's reluctance to engage in debt restructuring, impact of war on terror on development projects and unopposed exclusion of Pakistan from the BRICS summit, largely stem from its own choices and actions. It is imperative for Pakistan to devise and adhere to robust policies, which can only be achieved if the country seriously considers implementing structural reforms and avoids being a scapegoat.

Through long-term commitments, Pakistan can effectively address economic repercussions accumulated over the decades and successfully instill a sense of credibility within the global community.



LAHORE: A vendor displaying the ornaments of sacrificial animals to attract customers at local market in connection with upcoming Eidul Azha.

Asian, European markets fall again as traders eye more rate hikes

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Equity markets sank Friday and extended a sharp selloff after a string of interest rate hikes by central banks revived worries about the global economy.

Eyes are also on Tokyo after forecast-beating inflation figures fuelled speculation on whether the Bank of Japan (BoJ) will shift away from its ultra-loose monetary policy that has dragged on the yen. The optimism that characterized the first half of June -- fuelled by hopes the Federal Reserve was close to the end of its hiking cycle -- has given way to concern that officials still had several more in them as they battle stubborn price rises.

Last week's decision to stand pat after 10 straight increases added to the sense of hope, but warnings Wednesday from boss Jerome Powell that more work was needed took the wind out of traders' sails.

He told US lawmakers that two more this year was "a pretty good guess".

His comments came as the Bank of England (BoE) lifted rates more than expected, while officials in Switzerland and Norway also tightened. That followed hikes last week in the eurozone, Australia and Canada. And Turkey, which for two years had followed President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's unorthodox policy of dealing with high inflation by cutting rates, changed course and nearly doubled its borrowing costs. However, some observers are sceptical the Fed will follow through with its warnings as US inflation continues to subside, falling to 4.0 percent in May from 4.9 percent in April. The Fed's target is 2.0 percent.

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: DOWN 1.5 percent at 32,781.54 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: DOWN 1.7 percent at 18,889.97 (close)

Shanghai - Composite: Closed for holiday

London - FTSE 100: DOWN 0.6 percent at 7,458.19

Euro/yen: DOWN at 155.50 yen from 156.33 yen on Thursday

Euro/dollar: DOWN at \$1.0867 from \$1.0958

Pound/dollar: DOWN at \$1.2710 from \$1.2746

Dollar/yen: DOWN at 142.96 from 143.13 yen

Euro/pound: DOWN at 85.50 pence from 85.94 pence

West Texas Intermediate: DOWN 1.9 percent at \$68.18 per barrel

Brent North Sea crude: DOWN 1.8 percent at \$72.83 per barrel

New York - Dow: FLAT at 33,946.71 (close)

Gold prices decline by Rs 1,500

ISLAMABAD (APP):The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,500 and was sold at Rs 217,500 on Friday against its sale at Rs 218,500 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,285 to Rs 186,043 from Rs 187,328 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 170,539 from Rs 171,718, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,550 and Rs 2,186.21 respectively. The price of gold in the international market declined by \$10 to \$1919 from \$1929, the association reported.

PSX sheds 86 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 86.73 points on Friday, a slight negative change of 0.22 per cent, closing at 40,065.32 points against 40,152.05 points the previous day.

A total of 136,899,866 shares were traded during the day as compared to 116,478,645 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.3.372 billion against Rs.2.560 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 314 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 109 of them recorded gains and 178 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 23,260,624 shares at Rs.1.08 per share; Unity Foods Ltd with 7,471,161 shares at Rs.14.73 per share and TPLP_JULB with 6,223,000 shares at Rs.11.81 per share. Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.60.13 per share price, closing at Rs.1,753.13, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber with an Rs.49.15 rise in its per share price to Rs.1,108.00.

Rupee stands at break-even point against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee witnessed stability against the US Dollar in the interbank trading on Friday and closed at the rate of the previous day-Rs 286.73.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 289 and Rs 291.5 respectively. The price of the Euro went down by Rs 3.51 to close at Rs 311.66 against the last day's closing of Rs 315.17, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs 2, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.45 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound.

U.S. oil imports down, exports up last week

HOUSTON (Xinhua/APP): U.S. crude oil imports decreased while exports increased during the week ending June 16, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said in a report released on Thursday. U.S. crude oil imports averaged 6.161 million barrels per day (b/d) last week, down by 220,000 b/d from the previous week, while crude oil exports averaged 4.543 million b/d, up by 1.273 million b/d from the previous week, according to the Weekly Petroleum Status Report. Over the past four weeks, U.S. crude oil imports averaged about 6.54 million b/d, up by 2.3 percent from the same four-week period last year. During the same period, U.S. crude oil exports averaged about 3.801 million b/d, up by 12.5 percent year on year.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Frankfurt Express, Jeil Crystal and Houette Island carrying Containers, Chemicals and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday. Meanwhile, four more ships, Maersk Phuket, Karimata, Bochem Pegasus and Asia Inspire scheduled to load/offload Containers, Mogas and Palm Oil also arrived at the outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during the last 24 hours. A cargo volume of 95,566 tonnes comprising 79,807 tonnes imports cargo and 15,759 tonnes export cargo including containerized cargo carried in 1,863 Containers (936 TEUs imports and 927 TEUs export) was handled at the Port during last 24 hours.

eCom award call for participation - Let's join the race

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The e-commerce industry in Pakistan has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, with numerous businesses venturing into the digital realm to connect with their customers and expand their reach. Acknowledging the achievements and innovations within this thriving sector, the eCom Awards Pakistan is back with its prestigious recognition platform. As the deadline for nominations approaches, it's time to gear up and join the race to showcase your outstanding contributions to the world of e-commerce.

Nominations for the eCom Awards Pakistan will be closing by Mid July, making it imperative for all e-commerce enthusiasts to seize this opportunity. Last year, the event witnessed an overwhelming response with more than 400 signups, but this year, the organizers are setting the bar even higher, expecting more than 1000 participants to register. The increasing number of signups demonstrates the eagerness of businesses and entrepreneurs to gain recognition for their exceptional efforts in the digital realm.

The eCom Awards platform serves as a catalyst for growth, offering winners a chance to showcase their tireless efforts and innovative approaches to e-commerce. The winners will not only receive prestigious trophies as a symbol of their excellence but will also gain widespread recognition within the industry. The competition fosters healthy competition and inspires participants to raise the bar, ultimately contributing to the overall growth and development of the e-commerce industry in Pakistan. So, if you are an e-commerce entrepreneur or a business looking to make a mark in the digital sphere, take advantage of this opportunity to participate in the eCom Awards Pakistan. Participating in the eCom Awards Pakistan is a seamless process. Head over to com-awards.com and signup by giving basic details like company URL, category and description. Remember, the deadline for nominations is approaching fast, so don't delay any further. Join the eCom Awards Pakistan today and be part of the vibrant e-commerce community that is shaping the future of digital commerce in Pakistan.

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LAHORE: A potter is making traditional clay pots from clay in his workshop at the Kanchi Stop Area.

Oil prices fall as banks signal further interest rate hikes

ANKARA (AA/APP): Oil prices declined on Friday with concern of an economic slowdown caused by interest rate hikes of central banks. International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$73.58 per barrel at 09.40 a.m. local time (0640 GMT), a 0.76% loss from the closing price of \$74.14 a barrel in the previous trading session on Friday.

The American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at the same time at \$68.67 per barrel, down 1.21% from the previous session's close of \$69.51 per barrel.

Central banks raised interest rates this week and hinted at further hikes for the remainder of the year.

The Bank of England raised the policy rate by 50 basis points to 5%, while the Swiss National Bank increased its policy rate by 25 basis points to 1.75%. The Norwegian Central Bank raised the policy rate by 50 basis points to 3.75%.

US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said the Federal Open Market Committee agreed that 2 more rate hikes could be necessary.

Concerns of a slowdown in economic growth and a decline in oil demand put downward pressure on oil prices.

Also, the rise of the dollar against other currencies pushed oil prices lower. The US dollar index, which measures the value of the US dollar against other currencies, rose 0.31% to 102.315 earlier in the day. The strong dollar is expected to reduce demand by making oil more expensive for other currency users.

Meanwhile, US Energy Information Administration announced that crude oil inventories in the country fell by 3.8 million barrels last week. The expectation was for inventories to decline by 1.2 million barrels. Data implying a rise in oil demand in the world's largest oil consumer limited the decline in prices.



Five-wicket Hasaranga leads Sri Lanka to rout of Oman

BULAWAYO (AFP): Leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga took his second successive five-wicket haul as Sri Lanka crushed Oman by 10 wickets in the 2023 World Cup Qualifier on Friday.

Sri Lanka now have two wins from two matches and are well-placed to reach the Super Six stage.

Scotland are also on course for the next stage after they defeated the UAE by 111 runs in the day's other Group B fixture.

Hasaranga took six wickets in the opening win over the UAE, and was at it again with five for 13 against Oman who were bowled out for just 98.

Sri Lanka needed just 15 overs to chase that total down, Dimuth Karunaratne (61 not out) leading them home. Lahiru Kumara (3-22) also starred with the ball for 1996 world champions Sri Lanka as Oman slipped to 20 for four.

A 52-run stand between Jatinder Singh (21) and Ayaan Khan (41) hinted at a recovery before Hasaranga entered the fray.



His triple wicket maiden ripped the heart out of the Omani middle order, leaving them in dire trouble at 72 for seven.

Hasaranga finally removed Ayaan before finishing off the innings by trapping Bilal Khan leg before. Sri Lanka showed their intent from the very first ball of the chase, Pathum Nissanka (39 not out) slashing Bilal for four over point. The pair never really looked troubled, bringing up the 50 partnership in the seventh over with Karunaratne's fifth boundary of the innings.

"He's a champion. Whenever I throw him the ball, he delivers for me," Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka said of Hasaranga.

"Very good to see him keep getting five-wicket hauls and man of the match awards. I think the future is really bright and they support staff and management has done a good job to keep the environment calm."

Sri Lanka have now won two in a row with matches against Ireland and Scotland to come. Oman can still reach the Super Six with a win over Scotland in their next game.

Scotland backed up their thrilling one-wicket win over Ireland by beating the UAE by 111 runs, with a captain's knock from Richie Berrington.

His 127 with nine fours and three sixes fired them to 282 for eight before Chris Sole and Safyaan Sharif finished the job with the ball. Michael Leask with 41 also shone with the bat.

"It was really important today after the win against Ireland to turn up and adapt to the conditions. Pleading that we put in such a clinical performance with the ball and make it pretty comfortable," said Berrington.

Plenty of UAE batters got in, including skipper Muhammad Waseem (36), but none were able to turn starts into big scores as wickets fell at regular intervals.

With two wins apiece, the West Indies and Zimbabwe meet in Harare on Saturday and are both well-placed to make the Super Sixes from Group A.

The other match between the Netherlands and Nepal could end up being decisive in the race for third place.

For Nepal, only a win will do but if they can get the better of the Dutch, they will be on the brink of qualifying.

Netherlands will clinch a top three spot in the group with a win, ahead of a final match against the West Indies.

Faiza, Naheen win Gold medals in Badminton Doubles



KARACHI (APP): Pakistan's Faiza Nasir and Naheen Khan won the gold medal in the Badminton Women's Doubles Unified event of the ongoing 16th Special Olympic, being played in Berlin, (Germany).

In the badminton event

played at Messe Berlin, Pakistani players won the gold medal by defeating Uzbekistan by 21-5 and 21-17 points, Malaysia by 21-14 and 21-6 and Kyrgyz Republic by 21-12 and 21-13, said a communication here on Friday.

Head coach Mutahir

Sohail and coach Qamar Ali Mona of Faiza Nasir and Naheen Khan from Lahore said that both players have been preparing for the World Games for the past two years. They stayed busy in this regard, they also participated fully in the training camps organized by Special Olympics Pakistan in Karachi and Islamabad.

Meanwhile, in the men's unified doubles event of Badminton, Pakistan's Noshiwan Arif Raja and Talha Asif won the silver medal after defeating Paraguay 21-18 and 21-12 and Macau by 21-12 and 21-16.

However, Pakistan suffered a defeat against Hong Kong by the margin of 16-21 and 18-21.

AHF announces match schedule for Asian Champions Trophy

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) has announced the match schedule for the upcoming edition of the Hero Men's Asian Champions Trophy Chennai 2023.

The event will begin on August 3 and go on till August 12. The six-team tournament will see Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan, China, and India battle it out for top honours. All the teams are part of one pool and the positions on the points table will be decided by a league system.

The defending Champions at the Hero Men's Asian Champions Trophy is South Korea, who won the 2021 edition of the tournament. The

tournament will begin with Korea and Japan playing the first game at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium in Chennai.

Pakistan will take on Malaysia on August 3 in their opening match. In their second match, they will face Korea on

August 4. In the third match, they will meet Japan on August 6. On August 7, they will compete against China. In their last pool match, they will vie against traditional rivals India on August 9. The semifinals and 5th/6th place match will take place on August 11. The final and 3rd/4th place fixture will be held on August 12.

India (2011, 2016 &

2018) and Pakistan (2012, 2013 & 2018) have both won three titles each, and are the most decorated nations in the history of the tournament.

The president of AHF Dato Fumio Ogura said, "It is my great pleasure to announce the eagerly awaited match schedule for the Hero Asian Champions Trophy Chennai 2023."

This prestigious tournament promises to be an extraordinary celebration of hockey, showcasing the exceptional talent and unity of Asian hockey. Our vision for the Hero Asian Champions Trophy Chennai 2023 is to create an unforgettable experience for players, fans, and stakeholders alike."

Spirited Bajaur beat North Waziristan to clinch Inter-Madradas Tug-of-War title

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Bajaur won the tug-of-war final while Peshawar and Mohmand qualified for the final in volleyball events being played at Qayyum Sports Complex and PSB Coaching Center Hall respectively.

Secretary Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Captain (ret'd) Mushtaq Ahmad (ret'd) grasped the occasion as chief guest both at the Tug-of-War, and Volleyball event. Director Sports Merged Area Pir Abdullah Shah, Director Operation Aziz Ullah Jan, Assistant Director Sports Imran Khan, and a large number of spectators were also present on this occasion.

The Inter-Madradas Games in Peshawar have entered the last stage. In the Tug-of-War final, Bajaur claimed the title by defeating North Waziristan 2-1.

The North Waziristan District players won the first pull after a strong resistance from Bajaur and later on failed when Bajaur came back strongly by winning two consecutive pulls by handing a shocking defeat to North Waziristan team.

Peshawar and District Mohmand qualified for the finals in volleyball competi-



tions. Under the auspices of the Director of Sports Merged Districts, the final Tug-of-War match was played between Bajaur District and North Waziristan teams in the Peshawar Sports Complex. Secretary Sports Captain (Rtd) Mushtaq Ahmad also witnessed the final match wherein Bajaur players gave a stunning performance and defeated strong North Waziristan team by 2-1.

Secretary Sports Captain (Rtd) Mushtaq Ahmad also distributed the prizes among the players and Director Sports Pir Abdullah Shah presented him a shield of the Games. Bajaur in the first semi-final defeated South Waziristan by 2-1 in another hotly contested encounter while North Waziristan

recorded victory against Sub-Division Bannu by 2-0 in the second semi-final and moved to the grand final.

In the Volleyball event Peshawar defeated district Bajaur by 25-22, 27-25 and 25-21 (3-0) in the first semi-final while in the second semi-final, district Mohmand defeated South Waziristan by 25-22, 29-25, and 25-23.

In the football event Mohmand defeated South Waziristan 4-3 through penalty shootout and qualified for the semi-finals. In the second quarter-final, Peshawar sub-division defeated Khyber district by solitary goal. The final match of football and cricket of the Inter-Madradas Games will be played on Saturday.

Root backs England's aggressive tactics after Australia defeat

LONDON (INP): Joe Root backed England's aggressive approach in their first Ashes Test defeat against Australia as the former captain admitted he wished he used Ben Stokes' game-plan at the start of his own reign.

Joe Root was part of the England side beaten by two wickets in a thrilling conclusion to the opening Test of the Ashes series in Birmingham.

England's commitment to the attacking principles of 'Bazball' was criticised in some quarters after skipper Stokes declared on the first day of the match.

But England's players

remain completely supportive of Stokes and head coach Brendon McCullum.

Now Joe Root has joined the chorus, insisting the only thing he would change if he had his time again would be to bring a similarly aggressive style during his own reign.

Root led England in a record 64 Tests over five and a half years, walking away last April after over-seeing a draining run of one win in 17.

Asked if England would like to reverse their decision to make the fastest declaration in Ashes history, Root said: "That's not what we're

about as a team. If I could go back in time, I'd go back and start my captaincy tenure the way Ben has and try to play in a similar manner to how he does it."

"It's far more exciting, far more interesting and I think we are getting more out of our team and our individuals. We're playing better cricket to watch and producing better results overall."

England's all-guns-blazing style has revitalised their form after a dismal run prior to McCullum's arrival.

Far from shying away from those principles, Root believes England will be

Scotland cruise past UAE at World Cup qualifier

BULAWAYO (Agencies): Scotland made it two wins from two at the World Cup qualifier, sweeping past United Arab Emirates by 111 runs. Captain Richie Berrington was the Scottish hero with the bat, making 127 to steer his team to 282-8.

UAE kept their noses in front in terms of run rate, but losing wickets at regular intervals meant they could never build any real pressure. Sayfaan Sharif took 4-20 and Chris Sole managed 3-37 to make it a rare success for the side batting first in Zimbabwe.

Scotland, who enjoyed a dramatic final-ball victory over Ireland on Wednesday, were in trouble at 25-3 in the ninth over as the sharp bowling of Junaid Siddique accounted for openers Chris McBride and Matthew Cross.

However, Berrington came to the rescue with a splendid knock, bedding in and then accelerating aggressively, hitting nine



fours and three sixes before he was run out off the last ball. By then Michael Leask, the swashbuckling hero against the Irish, had contributed 41 and Chris Greaves added 22.

Mark Watt chipped in with a rapid 44 from 31 balls as he and Berrington forged a vital stand of 110 to set a respectable total.

UAE never got going in their run chase, losing three wickets inside the power-play, and when captain Muhammad Waseem was

dismissed for 36 they were teetering on 82-5.

Partnerships briefly threatened, then fizzled out, as Scotland kept cool heads and Sharif came back into the attack to close the match out with three wickets in close succession, ending matters with a sizzling yorker. Scotland now look forward to Group B encounters with Oman and Sri Lanka, while a third defeat for UAE snuffs out their hopes of reaching the Super Six stage.

"We have a lot of different match-winners"

Scotland captain Richie Berrington told BBC Scotland: "It was really important after the win against Ireland to come back strong again."

"The margin of runs was quite significant in the end, but it was definitely a hard fought victory and it's pleasing to get two from two. "It was just a case of me having to bat for as long as possible at one point and then it was about trying to cash in with a few wickets spare, especially with the short square boundaries here."

"We're lucky to have a lot of good players in this squad, we have a lot of different match-winners. "It's exciting and there's a lot of belief. If we keep playing our best cricket, we'll be in a good position. "But it's a tough schedule and we know the importance of every game in these kind of tournaments and we have a real tough test on Sunday against Oman."

Pakistan evaluating World Cup participation in India

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Amid doubts of a pullout from ICC World Cup 2023, the Foreign Ministry has said it was "evaluating all aspects" of Pakistan's participation in this year's 50-overs mega event in India.

Despite the stalemate over the venue for Asia Cup 2023 has ended, doubts continue to cast a shadow over Pakistan's involvement in the World Cup 2023 in October-November.

India's stubbornness over Pakistan's hosting of Asia Cup 2023 kept its hanging in the balance for over a month, as it refused to visit the country for the regional cricket tournament. In response, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had threatened to pull out of World Cup 2023, scheduled in India.

The matter was resolved as the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) greenlit PCB's hybrid model for Asia Cup earlier this month, while the foreign ministry said Pakistan's participation in World Cup was under evaluation.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan was of the view that "politics should not be mixed with sports". "India's policy of not playing cricket in Pakistan is disappointing," Baloch said in Islamabad on Thursday.

"We are observing and evaluating all aspects relating to our participation in the World Cup including the security situation for Pakistani cricketers and we will offer our views to PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) in due course."

Doubts over Pakistan's participation has meant that the dates and venues for the World Cup are yet to be confirmed with just over three months left before the start of the tournament.

It may be noted that the Men in Blue have not toured Pakistan since 2008 due to strained relations between the two countries. The last bilateral series between the arch-rivals took place in 2012, when Pakistan toured India for limited-overs matches.

Since then, the two countries have played each other only in multi-team events at neutral venues over the last decade.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari was among the foreign ministers who travelled to India's Goa last month for a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting, becoming the first senior Pakistani leader to visit India in nine years.

even more committed to putting pressure on Australia when the teams meet in the second Ashes Test at Lord's next week.

"A lot of times that would peter out to a draw. The wicket we had was very slow, it could have made for a long, mundane game, but the way we went about it we gave ourselves a great opportunity to win the Test match," Joe Root said. "If are going to grow as a team we can't just look at a couple of moments going against us and say 'we need to do things differently'."

Shehzad Club, City club to clash in Inter-Club Kabaddi in Bannu

PESHAWAR (APP): Shehzad Club and City Club clashed in the grand final of the Bannu Inter-Club Kabaddi Championship being played at Malik Riaz Kabaddi Arena with hundreds and thousands of spectators witnessing the semi-final matches on Friday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Mehmood Ahmad was the chief guest on this occasion who along with thousands of enthusiastic spectators witnessed the semi-finals matches. Regional Sports Officer Amir Zahir Shah, and other officials were also present. Before the start of the matches the teams comprised Shehzad Club, City Club, Seratkhalil Club and Kanda Club.

In the first semi-final

Shehzad Club defeated Serat Khail Club by 44-43 points. Both Shehzad Club and Serat Khail played well and gave each other a tough fight wherein they were also tied 23-23 at the half-time.

The vociferous crowd were at the toes when the riders either Shehzad Club or Serat Khail were on attack on each other's court. Shehzad Club played well, especially in the last quarters of the match. Shehzad Club had local support while the villagers of the Serat Khail were also there and supported their respective teams.

It was 44-43 when Shehzad Club defeated Serat Khail club and marched into the final. On the other hand Serat Khail also played well but their last rider due to mistake failed to get a point

and thus Shehzad Club won the semi-final.

In the second semi-final Bannu City Club defeated Kanda Club by 45-41 in another closely contested encounter played on hot-note. Bannu City has the services of a national Kabaddi player, who gave a tough fight to Kanda Club. Surprisingly Kanda Club was leading the first session at 24-26 but later on in the second session Bannu City Club played well and marched into victory.

Talking to APP, Amir Zahir Shah, said that the Bannu District Inter-Club Kabaddi Championship, is a regular feature of the District sports calendar wherein a total of six clubs are taking part in the Kabaddi Championship.

Haris to captain Shaheens in ACC Men's Emerging Asia Cup

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Haris will captain Pakistan Shaheens in the eight-team 15-match ACC Men's Emerging Asia Cup 2023, which is scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka from 14 to 23 July. The squad will assemble at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore following Eid Al Adha holidays on Monday, 3 July, for a week-long training camp before the team's arrival in Colombo on 12 July.

Shaheens, who are the defending champions, are clubbed with India A, Nepal and Sri Lanka in Group A, while Group B includes Afghanistan A, Bangladesh A, Oman and United Arab Emirates. The top-two sides from each group will progress to the semifinals,

followed by the final. Shaheens will open their campaign against Nepal on 14 July, followed by matches against India A on 16 July and Sri Lanka A on 18 July.

22-year-old Haris has represented Pakistan in five ODIs and nine T20Is, and will lead Shaheens for the first time. Other international players in the squad are: Arshad Iqbal (1 T20I), Kamran Ghulam (1 ODI), Mohammad Wasim Jnr (2 Tests, 14 ODIs, 27 T20Is), Sahibzada Farhan (3 T20Is), Saim Ayub (8 T20Is), Shah Nawaz Dahani (2 ODIs, 11 T20Is) and Tayyab Tahir (3 T20Is).

Squad: Mohammad Haris (captain, wicketkeeper) (Peshawar), Omair Bin Yousuf (vice-captain) (Karachi), Amad Butt

(Sialkot), Arshad Iqbal (Swabi), Haseebullah (Quetta), Kamran Ghulam (Peshawar), Mehran Mumtaz (Rawalpindi), Mubasir Khan (Islamabad), Mohammad Wasim Jnr (North Waziristan), Qasim Akram (Lahore), Sahibzada Farhan (Charsadda), Saim Ayub (Karachi), Shah Nawaz Dahani (Larkana), Sufiyan Muqeem (AJK) and Tayyab Tahir (Gujrat)

Non-traveling reserves – Abdul Wahid Bangalzai, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Junaid and Rohail Nazir Pakistan's fixtures in ACC Men's Emerging Asia Cup **Group A:** v Nepal, 14 July v India A, 16 July v Sri Lanka A, 18 July.

United States to host expanded Club World Cup in 2025: FIFA

ZURICH (Agencies): The first edition of FIFA's new 32-team Club World Cup will be held in the United States in 2025, world soccer's governing body said on Friday.

FIFA had confirmed in March that the revamped Club World Cup will be played every four years from June 2025.

The FIFA Council unanimously appointed the United States as the competition's hosts for the first edition of the expanded format.

The United States will also host the 2024 Copa America while they are also co-hosts of the 2026 World Cup along with Mexico and Canada. "The FIFA Club World Cup 2025 will be the pinnacle of elite professional men's club football," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said.

"With the required infrastructure in place together with a massive local interest,

the United States is the ideal host to kick off this new, global tournament."

Confederation championships from 2021-2024 will be eligible to play in the new Club World Cup, which means Chelsea, Real Madrid and last season's Champions League winners Manchester City have qualified from Europe.

The current version of the FIFA Club World Cup – an annual competition with seven teams – will be discontinued after 2023. FIFA said they have also agreed to postpone the launch of the bidding process for the 2030 World Cup for "additional consultation with all key stakeholders."

"The relevant bidding regulations will be presented for approval at the next FIFA Council meeting, due to take place in September/October 2023, with the bidding process to be officially

launched thereafter," it said.

"The expected appointment of the host(s) by the FIFA Congress will also move from Q3 2024 to Q4 2024."

The FIFA Congress is due to take place in Bangkok, Thailand on May 17, 2024.

FIFA also appointed Indonesia as hosts for the Under-17 World Cup later this year, three months after the Southeast Asian country was stripped of the Under-20 World Cup, which was then held in Argentina.

The decision to stop Indonesia holding the event was taken after the country's football federation cancelled the draw because the governor of the largely Hindu island of Bali refused to host Israel's team. Indonesia were awarded the Nov. 10-Dec. 2 tournament after Peru were stripped of the rights having failed to fulfil infrastructure commitments.



In brief

IRSA releases 295,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 295,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 403,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.03 feet and was 69.03 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 207,300 cusecs and 149,800 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1158.70 feet, which was 108.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 61,000 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 164,500, 128,500, 79,900 and 30,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 66,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 43,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Two bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters, members of 'Khawar' gang besides recovering 20 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, a team under the supervision of SHO, Cantt Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Khawar, the ringleader and Fakhar and recovered 20 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars. He said that the operations against the lawbreakers would be accelerated further.

Int'l Widows' Day observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Widows' Day was observed across the globe on Friday. The theme for the Day this year was "Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality". As the world observed the International Widows Day, Kashmiri women continued to suffer at the hands of Indian forces in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). The unabated Indian state terrorism in the occupied territory has rendered 22,960 women widowed since January 1989 in IOJK. Around 2,500 women have been forced to live as 'half widows' during the past 35 years as their consorts have become victim of enforced disappearance at the hands of Indian occupation forces. The half widows do not know whether their husbands are alive or dead.

AIOU inks MoU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Rupani Foundation Pakistan here at University's main campus on Friday. According to MoU, "Both institutions will collaborate to provide training to teachers of ECD centres across Pakistan, including Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The ceremony was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of AIOU Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood. Additional Registrar of AIOU Bibi Yasmin and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rupani Foundation Jalal-Ud-Din signed the MoU. Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood said, "Early childhood education plays a fundamental role in shaping a child's personality."



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Suh Sangpyo, paid a farewell call on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

NDMA advises authorities to take preventive steps in wake of heavy pre-monsoon falls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday advised all the relevant federal and provincial authorities to ensure preventive measures in the wake of forecast for pre-monsoon wind-thunderstorm with heavy falls causing risk of urban flooding and landslides in the north of country.

The NDMA, in its advisory, said the pre-monsoon rains with dust-thunderstorms were predicted from June 25-30 as an intruding weather system was bringing moist currents from the Arabian Sea which was penetrating upper and central parts of the country along with a westerly wave which was likely to enter upper parts on June 25.

"Under the influence of this weather system", it said, "the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted rain and wind-thundershowers

with few heavy falls in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) from June 24 (night) to 30, and rain and wind-thundershowers with isolated heavy falls in Punjab, KP, Balochistan, and ICT from June 26 to 29. However, from June 27 to 28 rain and wind-thundershowers with isolated heavy falls are expected in Sindh.

The NDMA said in light of the above weather system forecast, "following impacts are expected in aforesaid parts of Pakistan: prevailing heatwave conditions are likely to subside, while heavy rainfall may cause urban flooding in low lying areas of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Gujranwala and Lahore from June 26-27, and trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galliat and other hilly

areas of KP, Gilgit Baltistan and AJK."

Heavy rainfall might also cause flash flooding in the hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur and adjoining areas of north-east Balochistan on June 27, it added. Dust storms and wind-thunderstorms and heavy falls might cause damage to loose structures such as electrical poles, solar panels, hoardings, tall trees and under construction buildings, the NDMA warned.

"In the light of the above, all provincial, Gilgit Baltistan, and State Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs, GBDMA and SDMA respectively) and ICT Administration, National Highway Authority, National Highway and Motorway Police, Frontier Works Organization, Rescue 1122, line departments, ministries and federal agencies are required to undertake measures as per respective mandates," the Authority directed.

11 healthcare establishments sealed in capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) has sealed 11 Healthcare Establishments (HCEs) in different areas of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) on malpractices. The IHRA's inspection teams carried out inspections of 82 HCEs in different areas of ICT during the past two weeks.

Huma Clinic, Ismail Dental Clinic, Rehman Clinic, Al Eman Fatima Hospital, Grow Hair Transplant and Aesthetic Clinic, National Hospital, Fauji Dental Clinic, Al Shifa Clinic, Ali Clinic, Oxford Medical Centre, and Wada Clinic were sealed due to malpractices like the absence of qualified medical staff, unhygienic conditions, not getting registration with IHRA and functioning during the suspension. The Authority also suspended the services of two HCEs over different medical non-compliance including Abid Dental Clinic and Sidra Akhtar Foundation. Similarly, 33 Healthcare Establishments were served notices for minor non-compliance and instructed to comply with the directions given by the inspections team.

Pakistan to support Azerbaijan in mobile manufacturing, telecom sectors: Amin ul Haque

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin ul Haque has said that Pakistan had vast investment opportunities in various sectors including IT and Telecom. "We wish the bilateral relations in the Technology sector to be strengthened and the trade volume to increase further, he said during a meeting with Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov here Friday.

Syed Amin ul Haque further said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan had long-standing relations as Islamic brotherhood countries, Pakistan was the first to recognize Azerbaijan and the love between the two countries was natural, said a news release.

Cooperation in Trade and Industrial sectors can further strengthen mutual relations in this regard, he said.

The minister said the Ministry of IT will provide all possible facilities and supports to Azerbaijan government and

businessmen in all sectors including Incubation Centers, Software Technology Parks, Mobile Manufacturing and Telecom sector. The Ambassador said, the revolutionary steps taken in the IT sector in Pakistan are commendable. "We wish to benefit from these experiences of Pakistan", he said. He informed that the Minister for Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan would visit Pakistan in the second week of July. During his visit, we are looking forward to signing different Memorandum of Understandings on bilateral cooperation in Technology sectors. The Ambassador of Azerbaijan also extended an official invitation to the Minister of IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin ul Haque to visit Azerbaijan.

The meeting was attended by Secretary IT Navid Ahmed Shaikh, Member IT Syed Junaid Imam and Director General International Coordination Jawad Sherazi.

All-out efforts being made to resolve complaints of Overseas Pakistan: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatha here on Friday said that the government was making all-out efforts to resolve complaints of the overseas Pakistanis.

The Commissioner Rawalpindi Division along with the Commissioner Overseas Punjab, Syed Khadim Abbas presided over a meeting organized here to address complaints of the Overseas Pakistanis.

Director General, Overseas Pakistanis Mirza Naseer Inayat, Director Police Matters, Imtiaz Ahmed, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Nabil Sindhu and other officers concerned attended the meeting. The cooperation of Overseas Pakistanis is indispensable to get the country out of the current critical economic situation,

the Commissioner said.

The government was trying to resolve the problems of Overseas Pakistanis on priority basis, Liaquat Ali Chatha said. The Commissioner informed that July 15 was fixed a deadline for resolution of pending grievances in Rawalpindi Division, adding, instead of prolonging the revenue complaints by referring them to the courts, the revenue officers should solve them on their own. Out of total 2,588 complaints received in Rawalpindi Division 1956 had been resolved while 480 were still pending, the meeting was informed in a briefing.

District Rawalpindi received 1446 complaints out of which 975 had been resolved.

Similarly, out of 311 complaints of the overseas Pakistanis received in Attack district, 255 were

addressed.

Out of total 622 complaints submitted in Jhelum District, 533 were resolved while out of total 209 complaints received in District Chakwal, 193 were addressed. Syed Khadim Abbas on the occasion directed the authorities concerned to resolve complaints of the Overseas Pakistanis and provide relief to them within shortest possible time frame.

There is no room for any delay in cases of the Overseas Pakistanis, Syed Khadim Abbas said adding, the cases in the jurisdiction of the administration should be resolved on priority basis. He further said that the cases which were pending in the courts since long should specially be followed up and the solution should be assured as soon as possible.

Rs. 23 b disbursed among 2.5 m beneficiaries under Benazir Kafaalat

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed a total of Rs. 23 billion among 2.5 million deserving women under Benazir Kafaalat program during the last four days.

According to the disbursement details till date revealed by the BISP here Friday, those beneficiaries who have not received

their quarterly payment yet must visit their respective camps to receive the amount.

The beneficiary women must receive their full payment as well as a receipt.

The BISP has been disbursing Benazir Kafaalat cash and Benazir educational stipends since Monday (June 19). After a 25 percent increase, this

time the quarterly installment amount is Rs. 9000. About 81 billion rupees is being distributed among nine million deserving families under Benazir Kafaalat. In case of any complaint, the beneficiaries must immediately report to BISP toll-free helpline 0800-26477. All messages from BISP are sent from 8171 only.

ANF seizes 305 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 305 kg charras and arrested 12 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that in an operation near M-1 Toll Plaza, Islamabad, ANF recovered 72 kg opium and 61.2 kg charras from a vehicle. Two accused including a woman resident of Sheikhupura were arrested during the operation. In another operation near T-Chowk Islamabad, 2.4 kg opium was seized while two accused residents of Rawalpindi were netted. In third operation near Indus Chowrangi Karachi, 157.2 kg charras was recovered from secret cavities of two vehicles. Three accused residents of Karachi and Qilla Abdullah were rounded up.

In fourth operation near Khairpur Road Sukkur, 2.4 kg charras was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of

Khairpur while in fifth operation conducted near Sher Shah Toll Plaza, Multan, six kg charras was recovered from the possession of two accused including a woman resident of Multan travelling in a passenger bus. Sixth operation conducted in a deserted area near Jarobi Zaka Khail, Khyber and ANF seized 3250 grams Ice drug, he said adding, in an operation at Peshawar Airport, three charras-filled capsules weighing 576 grams were recovered from the possession of a Sharjah-bound passenger, resident of Bannu, going on flight no PK-257.

In another operation at Peshawar Airport, two charras-filled capsules weighing 106 grams were recovered from the possession of another Sharjah-bound passenger, resident of Bannu, going on flight no G-9555.

Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking

ISLAMABAD (APP): International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking will be marked on Monday to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society.

This day is supported by individuals, communities and various organizations all over the world.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has, over the years, been actively involved in launching campaigns to mobilize support for drug control. The UNODC often teams up with other organizations

and encourages people in society to actively take part in these campaigns.

Governments, organizations and individuals in many countries, including Vietnam, Borneo and Thailand, have actively participated in promotional events and larger scale activities, such as public rallies and mass media involvement, to promote the awareness of dangers associated with illicit drugs. According to the UNODC, nearly 200 million people are using illicit drugs such as cocaine,

cannabis, hallucinogens, opiates and sedative hypnotics worldwide.

In December 1987, the UN General Assembly decided to observe June 26 as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The UN was determined to help create an international society free of drug abuse. This resolution recommended further action with regard to the report and conclusions of the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Residents demand repair of broken city roads

RAWALPINDI (APP): The residents of several city areas have demanded the authorities concerned to pay attention on urgent repairs of broken roads which are not only causing traffic jams but also endanger public safety.

According to the citizens, several city and cantonment roads are giving a nightmare look for the residents as these have not been repaired and re-carpeted for the past many years and travelling on these dilapidated roads has been causing inconvenience for the motorists. Several roads have developed potholes and causing hazards for commuters.

The broken roads included Kashmir Road, Range Road, Allahabad Road, Tench Bhatta Road, Chor to Masri Road, Tippu Road, Zakria Masjid Road, Transit Camp Road, Dhoke Ratta, Workshop Road, Marrir Chowk Road, PAF Chowk to Committee Chowk Road, Bostan Khan Road, Westridge Bazaar Road, Gawalmandi Road, Farooq-i-Azam Road, Sadiqabad and Rehmanabad Roads, Railway Road, Dehri Hassanabad and several other roads.

In last two years, Municipal Corporation did not launch any major uplift project while Rawalpindi Cantonment Board paid attention to some areas and left several others neglected. The roads from Marrir Chowk to Gawalmandi, Westridge Bazaar to Allahabad, Kashmir Road

and others have developed ditches. The residents of the downtown are disturbed over the situation and have demanded of the provincial government to fulfill its promise of launching public welfare projects.

"I daily travel on Gawalmandi Road to Saddar and my vehicle has developed faults due to the broken road. Will the authorities concerned compensate us if our vehicle gets damaged due to the broken roads," said Altaf, a resident of Gawalmandi.

Najam of Allahabad said his motorcycle developed faults due to the potholes on Allahabad Road and it was difficult for middle class people to spend heavy amounts on repair of their vehicles.

Sajid Khan, a resident of Kashmiri Bazaar said that residents of the area had been facing problems due to the bad condition of several city roads. Travel on the roads is time and fuel consuming, he added.

Open manholes in several city areas are also endangering the lives of the motorists and pedestrian alike, he added. During a visit to the city, this reporter found open manholes and the drain covers were also missing in Chandni Chowk, Rehmanabad, Sadiqabad, Kuri Road, Iqbal Road, Circular Road, Banni Chowk and in several other areas.

The residents said they had lodged complaints with the authorities con-

cerned about the problem but the departments paid no heed to it.

Sajid, a resident of Chandni Chowk area, said he fell in a ditch few days back during electricity load-shedding hours at around 11pm while coming back from his office.

He said one of his legs was injured and some passersby shifted him to nearby hospital for medical treatment. "My wife narrowly escaped falling down in the drain while going to the market," said Asif, a resident of Rehmanabad adding, at several places, many slabs over the drains are missing exposing pedestrians to imminent danger.

The state of the streets has been bad for a long time and they have no option but to endure bumpy rides whenever they come out of their localities. Open manholes in many areas are inviting any untoward incident as anyone can easily fall into it. The level of the open drain and the road is almost the same. After dark, it becomes a more serious issue for the residents. The citizens appealed to the civic bodies to repair the broken roads and make the open drain properly covered. The monsoon comes with many challenges as the situation of streets in several city areas becomes worse and the water inside the potholes makes it more difficult for the commuters to discover the depth of the potholes.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displaying sacrificial animal attract to customer at Cattle Form in connection with upcoming Eid ul Azha.

KHOST (Agenciers): The head of the press directorate of the Khost educational department said that around 13,000 students, both boys and girls, lack access to schools in many districts of the province. The press director for the provincial education department, Abdul Kabir Sangin, said that deteriorated economic conditions caused thousands of children who are eligible for school to be deprived of education.

PAKTIKA (Agencies): It has been a year since the devastating earthquake that hit Paktika province and left more than 400 people dead and nearly 1,700 injured. More than 7,000 homes were destroyed by the earthquake, which struck in three Paktika districts. However, even a year later, many who were affected by the earthquake are still facing challenges. According to official figures, there are presently up to 5,000 families living in tents and caves.

A group of men are seated in a room with a large window and a flag. On the left, a man in a dark suit is seated in a wooden armchair, facing a group of men on the right. The men on the right are wearing traditional Middle Eastern attire, including white thobes and head coverings. They are seated on a patterned rug. A large flag with Arabic calligraphy is visible in the background. The room has a modern interior with a large window and a flag.

According to a statement of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), in his meeting with acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, Sinirlioglu said that the international community wants good relations with

According to the statement, Haqqani said that the world's interaction with Afghanistan is under

On the other hand, the Ministry of Foreign

“Afghans have only seen collective punishment, sanctions, demands and condemnations from foreigners instead of the fulfillment of their own obligations,” Muttaqi said as quoted by Balkhi.

The growing concern regarding the presence of more than 20 terrorist groups and foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan—the relocation of TTP or Shreek-e-Taliban Pakistan to northern provinces of Afghanistan and the ensuing security threats and challenges posed to the world, region and Afghanistan, and it alarms that Afghanistan is becoming



ing once again a terrorist hub despite the Taliban persistent denial," said Naser Ahmad Faig, the Chargé d'Affaires of Afghanistan's Permanent Mission to the UN. Ana Jiménez de la Hoz, deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Spain to the United Nations said that in "no case" should Afghanistan become a base for terrorist groups.

"Terrorism can have a very damaging spillover affect in the region, so we

The Islamic Emirate meanwhile once again denied the presence of terrorists groups in Afghanistan and said there is overall security and pledged efforts to counter terrorism. "The concern exists in this regard. Our strategy is to not allow Afghan soil to be used against others but rather

In April this year, a joint statement of the participants of the 37th meeting of the Working Group on Afghanistan at the CSTO Ministerial Council said that they "noted the persistence of unfavorable trends in the security situation, including the growth of terrorist and drug threats emanating from the territory of this country."

And according to numbers of international organizations, more than half of the population of the country is faced with hunger.



universities. The IEA government also barred women work for foreign NGOs and UN.

Titanic sub destroyed in ‘catastrophic implosion,’ all five aboard dead

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The five people aboard a missing submersible died in a "catastrophic" event, a Coast Guard official said, bringing a grim end to the massive search for the vessel that was lost during a voyage to the Titanic.

"These men were true explorers who shared a distinct spirit of adventure, and a deep passion for exploring and protecting the world's oceans," OceanGate Expeditions said in a statement. "Our hearts are with these five souls and every member of their families during this tragic time." An unmanned deep-sea robot deployed from a Canadian ship discovered the wreckage of the submersible on Thursday morning about 1,600 feet (488 meters) from the bow of the century-old wreck, 2-1/2 miles (4 km) below the surface, US Coast Guard Rear Admiral John Mauger said at a press conference.

"The debris is consistent with a catastrophic loss of the pressure chamber," Mauger said. Rescue teams from several countries have spent days searching thousands of square miles of open seas with planes and ships for any sign of the 22-foot (6.7-meter) Titan, operated by U.S.-based OceanGate Expeditions.

The submersible lost contact on Sunday morning with its support ship

about an hour and 45 minutes into what should have been a two-hour descent. The five people aboard included the British billionaire and explorer Hamish Harding, 58; Pakistani-born business magnate Shahzada Dawood, 48, and his 19-year-old son, Suleman, both British citizens; French oceanographer and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet, 77, who had visited the wreck dozens of times; and Stockton Rush, the American founder and chief executive of OceanGate, who was piloting the submersible. The detection of undersea noises on Tuesday and Wednesday using sonar buoys dropped from Canadian aircraft had temporarily offered hope that the people on board the submersible were alive and trying to communicate by banging on the hull.

But officials warned that analysis of the sound was inconclusive and that the noises might not have emanated from the Titan at all. Even if the Titan has survived, the air supply on board was estimated at 96 hours when it entered the water on Sunday around 8am (1200 GMT), meaning that the occupants likely would have run out of oxygen by Thursday morning.

The Titanic, which sank in 1912 on its maiden voyage after hitting an

iceberg, killing more than 1,500 people, lies about 900 miles (1,450 km) east of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and 400 miles (640 km) south of St John's, Newfoundland. The expedition to the wreck, which OceanGate has been operating since 2021, cost \$250,000 per person, according to OceanGate's website.

Questions about Titan's safety were raised in 2018 during a symposium of submersible industry experts and in a lawsuit by OceanGate's former head of marine operations, which was settled later that year. The sweeping search covered more than 10,000 square miles of ocean - about the size of the US state of Massachusetts. On Thursday, the deployment of two specialised deep-sea unmanned vehicles expanded the effort to the ocean's depths, where immense pressure and pitch-black darkness had promised to complicate any rescue mission.

The missing submersible and subsequent hunt captured worldwide attention, in part due to the mythology surrounding the Titanic. The "unsinkable" British passenger liner has inspired both nonfiction and fiction accounts for a century, including the James Cameron blockbuster 1998 movie, which rekindled popular interest in the story.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zubair Khan Niazi awarding medal to an officer during Pakistan investiture ceremony.

‘Ready to sign charter of economy’, says Zardari

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Co-Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and former president Asif Ali Zardari has termed the charter of economy as need of the hour. Speaking during a meeting with industrialists in Lahore on Friday, he underscored the nation's potential and dubbed the country as a "golden basket". The nation has been blessed with an abundance of resources by Allah Almighty, he added.

Asif Zardari said that he was willing to sign the charter of economy and investors were becoming uneasy and moving their money abroad. "I have reviewed the exports of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a buyer of Indian products," Zardari stated. The former president stated that "made in Bangladesh" labels have been applied to Indian fabrics in Bangladesh.

Rahim named as Interim CG Dubai

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office of Pakistan nominated Deputy Counselor General Rahim Ullah Wazir has as Interim Counselor General of Dubai and Northern Emirates, on Friday.

The nominee has severed as Deputy Chief of Protocol at Peshawar Camp Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well work as First Secretary in Kabul's Embassy.

Interim Counselor General Rahim Ullah Wazir has great expertise in Foreign Affairs as well as attracted foreigners for tourism in Pakistan. Rahim Ullah Wazir will secure national interests with enthusiasm due to his potential as Foreign Affairs expert on his new position.

PPP has history of doing horse-trading: Siraj

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq on Friday fired a broadside at the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), saying the latter was having a history of doing rigging, corruption and horse-trading.

Addressing a public gathering, Siraj took a swipe at the PPP, claiming, "The PPP leaders cannot compete us". The electoral watchdog had failed to hold transparent elections, he chided the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). "When it came to holding the elections, the ECP fell short of justice," he added.

"The aim of the PPP to win the Karachi mayor

election is to grab the state land after coming into the power," Siraj asserted. Earlier today, JI senior leader Hafiz Naeemur Rehman poked fun at political rivals on Friday, saying the Karachi's residents wanted the "mafia out of the city". Rehman expressed his opinion by claiming the JI was the "biggest party" in the city. "They [mafia] seek to enthrall whatever is left," he claimed.

He chided former president Asif Ali Zardari, saying, "The people of Karachi have defeated you [former president Asif Ali Zardari]. Through NRO, Asif Ali Zardari altered the Karachi mayor election results". Rehman assailed the Election Commission

of Pakistan (ECP), claiming, "The electoral watchdog had assisted the mafia."

On Thursday, Rehman asked the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to reciprocate fair play in accordance with the Karachi mayor election. Addressing an event, Mr Rehman said, "Everyone had seen what happened on the day of the mayor election. If we accept this election, subsequent elections will likewise be rigged". Rehman added, "Even PPP leaders thought the JI had the right to elect Karachi's mayor". "People tell me that it would be best to leave the country right now. In response, I advise people to keep working hard and not give up," Rehman continued.

PHC orders to stop smuggling of sacrificial animals

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Waqar Ahmad ordered to stop smuggling of sacrificial animals to Afghanistan and directed to submit reply till 27th June, on Friday.

Peshawar Bar Association (PBA) president Ishfaq Khalil Advocate filed Public Interest Litigation (PIL) writ seeking to stop smuggling of sacrificial animals to Afghanistan.

PBA counsel Yasir Khattak Advocate argued that smuggling of sacrificial animals from Peshawar and adjacent areas are carrying to district Khyber in wake of Eid-ul-Azha. The counsel further argued that earlier PHC and government has imposed ban in this regard which has controlled the prices of animals in the province.

On the other hand, the people facing stress to perform sacrifices due to high inflation and devaluation of rupee which is also caused due to smuggling, the counsel argued. The counsel added that sacrificial animals are smuggling to Afghanistan in different ways which has created fear among people that it would cause further hike in the price of animals as Eid-ul-Azha approaching closely and requested to direct government to stop smuggling.

The counsel Yasir Advocate requested for detailed judgement which will ensure curtaining of such act in future while PHC has ordered respondents to stop smuggling of sacrificial animals and directed to submit reply till 27th June after initial arguments. However, PBA has made provincial government, Inspector General of Police, Commissioner Peshawar, Deputy Commissioner Khyber and Secretary Livestock Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as respondents in PIL petition.

Governor highlights role of bureaucracy in uplift

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Friday highlighting significance of bureaucracy in country's development and said they should work with dedication and honesty to facilitate people.

He was talking to 14-members delegation of officers belonging to 33rd Senior Management Course that called on him in Governor House. The delegation that was on study tour included officers of various occupational groups and ministries. Faculty Director, Zoabia Masood was also present on the occasion. The delegation was briefed about constitutional responsibilities of the governor and matters relating to security, mining, higher education,

local government system and natural resources of KP.

Speaking in an interacting session after briefing, governor said that steps have been taken by federal and provincial government to address issues that come to forefront after merger of tribal areas. He termed unemployment the main reason behind law and order situation and said that policy of transparency, justice and merit would help controlling unemployment. Governor said that despite the importance of local government system in addressing problems of people, local government representatives are without any significant powers leading to increase of problems.

He said that local investors should also be facilitated alongside foreign investors to strengthen local government system and natural resources of KP.

He said that local investors should also be facilitated alongside foreign investors to strengthen

economy of the country. He also highlighted importance of women for attaining goals of development and said that women are 52 percent of our population and they should be encouraged to play their part in country's development. Haji Ghulam Ali said that enrollment of women has been increased in universities and higher education institutions have been directed to focus research and innovation to enable students to tap potential of the current world.

He also advised officers to work for facilitation of people abiding by code of conduct, principles and following policy of merit by ignoring personal liking and disliking. Delegation and Faculty Director, Zoabia Masood expressed gratitude to Governor and presented a shield to KP governor.

President for enhancing coop with Korea, S Lanka

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday called for further promoting bilateral economic, trade and cultural cooperation with the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka to further cement bilateral ties.

The president expressed these views while talking to the outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Suh Sangpyo, and the outgoing High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Vice Admiral (r) Mohan Wijewickrama, who made separate calls on him here at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Talking to the outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, the president said that Pakistan highly valued its multidimensional relationship with Korea, which involved collaborations in various fields such as political, economic, scientific, cultural and people-to-people relations. He highlighted that Pakistan was open for business and investment for all its friends and partners, and would especially welcome Korean investment in various sectors.

He stated that Pakistan wanted to increase cooperation with Korea, particularly in the areas of Information Technology and Agriculture. The president also called for further promoting cultural cooperation with Korea, adding that Pakistan offered some of the most exotic mountaineering and religious tourism sites and would welcome tourists from Korea to visit Buddhist sites. He remarked that Pakistan was home to the Gandhara Civilization and some of the most sacred relics in Buddhism, which could be a source of attraction for Korean tourists.

Talking to the outgoing High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, the President said that Pakistan attached great importance to its long-standing friendship and cooperative ties with Sri Lanka, which was its second-largest trading partner in South Asia. He added that Pakistan wanted to further expand economic cooperation and trade relations with Sri Lanka under the Pak-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement.

President Alvi stated that both countries should explore ways to rejuvenate SAARC and work together to fight poverty and promote peace, economic growth, and development for the benefit of the entire region. He also recalled Pakistan and Sri Lanka's support for each other at the UN and other international bodies and expressed the hope that this cooperation would continue at international fora.

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PM, EU Commission President discuss coop in diverse areas

(Continued from Page 1)

During the meeting, the two leaders held an in-depth discussion on the entire gamut of bilateral relationship, including CPEC as well as economic cooperation. Reiterating support to China on its core issues, the prime minister appreciated China's unflinching support to Pakistan's territorial integrity, sovereignty and socio-economic development. He noted that China's firm opposition to holding any G20 meeting in the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir was a vivid reflection of China's principled stance for upholding international law and the United Nations resolutions.

In his remarks, Premier Li said the Pakistan-China friendship was unique and had withstood the vicissitude of time due to deep fraternal ties between the peoples of the two nations. He added that as a close neighbour and iron-brother, Pakistan occupied a special position in China's neighbourhood diplomacy and that China would continue its efforts for safeguarding Pakistan's core interests and for the economic development and prosperity of its people.

Prime Minister Shehbaz and Premier Li Qiang agreed to continue the momentum of high level

exchanges between Pakistan and China. The prime minister invited the Chinese premier to undertake a visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience which the latter accepted.

Pakistan keen to benefit from Brazilian experience in agriculture sector: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed Pakistan's keenness in benefiting from the Brazilian experience of using modern technology in the agriculture sector.

PM Shehbaz met Brazilian President LuizInácio Lula da Silva here on the sidelines of Summit for New Global Financing Pact. The prime minister appreciated Brazil's cooperation in defence and other sectors.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the level of bilateral cooperation at multilateral forums. They also agreed to promote and expand the bilateral cooperation, besides working in close coordination to explore new potentials of cooperation in all sectors of mutual interests. The Brazilian president conveyed his best wishes to the prime minister and the people of Pakistan.

ISDB's partnership to help Pakistan's flood-hit people rebuild lives: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the Islamic Development Bank's beneficial partnership with Pakistan would go a long way in

helping the flood-hit people of the country to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

The prime minister, in a meeting with IsDB President Dr. Muhammad Al Jasser on the sidelines of New Global Financial Pact Summit being held in Paris, said the Institution's support would support the sustainable development objectives of the government. The long-standing cooperation and engagement between Pakistan and IsDB was discussed during the meeting.

The prime minister and IsDB president took stock of the progress on various ongoing projects and exchanged views on new avenues of collaboration. The prime minister thanked Dr. Al Jasser on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan for IsDB's participation in the International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan held in Geneva on January 9, 2023.

He lauded IsDB's announcement at that Conference to provide USD 4.2 billion in support of Pakistan's post floods recovery. The prime minister acknowledged the personal contribution and leadership role of Dr. Al Jasser in galvanising this huge volume of financial support.

The prime minister briefed Dr. Al Jasser on the recently formed Special Investment Facilitation Council to

streamline foreign investments in the country and provide a one-window solution to address all concerns of foreign investors. He also renewed the invitation to the President of IsDB to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

Pakistan, Germany agree to enhance cooperation in trade, investment: Pakistan and Germany agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in multiple fields, including trade, investment and energy.

The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, here on the sidelines of New Global Financing Pact Summit. The prime minister thanked Germany for its support to the flood-hit people of Pakistan, besides providing an economic support of 163 million euros to the country.

The prime minister said the additional 27 million euros for the Benazir Income Support Programme were spent for the assistance to the flood victims and provision of food to them. Lauding the development model of Germany, he said the progress achieved by the country was an inspiration for the developing countries. "I am personally impressed by the development of Germany as a country and the hard work and

resilience of the German nation," he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed the hope that Germany would raise the voice of developing world on the issues like climate change and financial stress. He said releasing the economic burden from the developing states would help uplifting their people.

The prime minister appreciated the services of German firms and non-governmental organizations operating in Pakistan. Expressing his pleasure to meet the prime minister, the German chancellor conveyed good wishes for the government and the people of Pakistan.

PM urges international community to deliver commitments made at COP27: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday urged the international community to deliver the commitments made at COP 27 in Sharm al-Sheikh and also operationalize Loss and Damage Fund on the principle of equity.

"The international community should deliver on the commitments they made at COP 27 in Sharm al-Sheikh, including the operationalization of Loss and Damage Fund on the principle of equity; provision of grants that don't increase the indebtedness of developing countries; enabling climate-vulnerable countries

to access the Fund on the basis of a climate vulnerability index," he said in a tweet. He said that as part of his interactions during the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, he drew world leaders' attention to the exogenous shocks that created the poly-crisis for developing countries like Pakistan.

These shocks, he said resulted in stalling growth, supply chain disruptions caused commodity prices to soar, leading to back-breaking inflation and then extreme weather events precipitated unprecedented floods that cost Pakistan \$30 billion in losses. "The inability to bridge the financing gaps to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) coupled with the cost of realizing climate goals is inflicting a heavy cost on the world, running into trillions of dollars annually," he added.

The prime minister said the world should use present economic and climate turbulence as an opportunity for course correction. The starting point could be rethinking the global financial architecture where IFIs design their programs to be pro-growth and aligned with SDGs and climate justice goals. "The world faces a moment of truth. Let us all vow to rise to the challenge hand in hand in a spirit of solidarity and compassion," he added.