

Maryam to perform Hajj
ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, her daughter Maryam Nawaz and other family members are all set to perform Haj. Nawaz will leave London for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where he will be joined by Maryam Nawaz Sharif and others. After performing Haj, Maryam is likely to go to London where the top brace is mulling over the ex-PM's return to the homeland.



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PARIS: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director IMF, before departing for London.

All conditions for IMF agreement met: Dar Govt to impose Rs215 billion new taxes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday informed the National Assembly that Pakistan had agreed on Rs 215 billion taxes after three-day parleys with the officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to complete the 9th review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), pending due to the country's external financing gap.

"As a result of the talks with IMF, for the fiscal year 2023-24, the final taxes of only Rs 215 have been agreed, ensuring that it will not burden the poor and middle segments of the society," he said while winding-up general discussion on the budget for the year 2023-24. Similarly, he said Pakistan would bring down the running expenditure by Rs 85 billion, which would have no impact on the proposed development budget, the raise in salaries and pensions of the federal government employees.

He said Pakistan held talks with the IMF with complete sincerity and assured the House that once the things with the international lender were settled; all details would be made public by placing the agreement on the official website of the Ministry of Finance. Resultantly, he said the proposed tax collection target of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had been increased from Rs 9200 billion to Rs 9415 billion, with the provincial share going up from Rs5276 billion to Rs 5390 billion, the federal government total expenditure estimate from Rs 14460 billion to Rs 14480 billion and pension estimate from Rs 761 billion to Rs 801 billion. Similarly, he said the subsidy estimate would be at Rs 1064 billion and grants at Rs 1405 billion, adding as a result of all these measures, the overall budget deficit would come down with a cushion of Rs 300 billion [Rs 215 billion taxes and Rs85 billion reduction in running expenditures].

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar expressed gratitude to members of the National Assembly, coalition partners, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly leader Raja Riaz Ahmed for giving valuable suggestions to improve the federal budget. He also acknowledged the role of the NA and Senate Standing Committee for Finance and Revenue, and

the Senate for giving input to finalize the budget and subsequently strengthening the national economy.

Highlighting the prevailing economic conditions, he explained that in December last the import restrictions were imposed to ensure timely external payments and address the country's debt situation. However, now considering the impact on traders, businesspersons, and industries, the government had decided to lift all import restrictions following a circular issued by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), adding the decision was aimed at redressing the issues faced by traders and business communities, contributing to the foreign exchange reserves.

"Yesterday evening, the SBP issued a circular to lift all restrictions on import, which has now come into effect. This decision will resolve the issues faced by traders, businesspersons, and industries, and it will also contribute to an increase in foreign exchange reserves." In a recent development, the minister said the government had incorporated changes to the super tax system, increasing the slabs and introducing new tax rates based on recommendations.

Introduced last year, Ishaq Dar said the super tax structure had been made more progressive and for effective enforcement of the 10 per cent tax, the income tax slab had been increased from Rs 300 million to Rs 500 million. Similarly, he said the tax ratio had been made progressive, like 1-4% and 6, 8 and 10%, which was earlier straight 10%, using the 'progressive canon of taxation.'

The purpose of the super tax is to target individuals with higher incomes and ensure a fair contribution to the country's economy. Furthermore, in an effort to document the economy, non-filers will be subjected to a 0.6% withholding tax on cash withdrawals from banks. "It is an important step towards documentation of the national economy and bringing the maximum number of taxpayers on the net," he said. Addressing concerns raised by the lawmakers, the finance minister acknowledged opposition to the tax on bonus shares. Historically, companies have rewarded their shareholders through cash dividends and bonus shares, while cash

(Continued on Back Page)

Cop martyred in Turbat suicide attack

F.P. Report

TURBAT: A police constable was killed and three other police personnel, including a female police constable, sustained injuries in a suicide attack carried out by a female suicide bomber on Commissioner road area of Turbat in Balochistan province on Saturday.

According to Deputy Commissioner, Turbat, the incident took place on Commissioner road area of Turbat where unidentified female suicide attacker blew herself up near the vehicle of security forces, resultantly, one police constable namely Niaz Ahmed was killed and three others, including a female police constable, sustained injuries.

Personnel of Frontier Corps (FC), Police and other security forces

reached the site of the blast, cordoned off the area and rushed body and injured of the suicide attack to Turbat Hospital. Further investigation was underway.

Expressing heartfelt grief and sorrow over the killing of one police constable and injuring of three other police personnel, including a female police constable, in the terrorist attack in Turbat city, Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus said that purpose of terrorism was to thwart the process of development in Balochistan and demoralise security forces, said a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Secretariat on Saturday. Bizenjo said that the nefarious designs of terrorists would not be allowed to succeed. He said that the determination and courage of security forces could not be demoralised.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday condemned suicide attack on police personnel in Turbat. In a message, he sympathised with the families of the martyred policemen and condoled with them. He directed Chief Minister Balochistan to give martyrs package to the families of martyred police personnel and make arrangements for the education of their children.

He said the policemen were the martyrs of the nation and the nation recognized their sacrifices. He also expressed sympathy with the injured female police official. He ordered that best possible medical assistance should be provided to the police official. He prayed to Allah for elevation of ranks of martyred policemen in Jannah and for grant of patience to the bereaved families.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Kristalina Georgieva in Paris on Friday and reiterated the resolve of Pakistan to complete the loan programme with the financial institution.

The PM met the IMF chief before leaving for London. It was his third meeting with the IMF chief, on the margins of the summit of world leaders on a new financing pact. He appreciated the Managing Director IMF for taking into consideration the economic realities of Pakistan.

He said, "Pakistan is determined to fulfill all its commitments." He said Pakistan valued the assistance of the world in coming out of its severe economic challenges. The

floods in Pakistan further increased the economic difficulties but despite that, the government gave relief to its people, he noted.

He said it was the right of the people of Pakistan to receive relief as economic challenges caused a lot of unbearable pain to people. "We want a balance between relief to the people and economic reality," he said adding bringing the economy back on the path of growth was imperative for meeting the targets set by the IMF.

The PM said important measures needed to be taken for restoring the economy that had been battered in the four years of the previous government, adding revival of the economy would help in better achievement of targets of the IMF. He said as always Pakistan would fulfill its commitments and pledges made to

the international community. The Managing Director IMF appreciated the resolve of the Prime Minister. Shehbaz asks overseas Pakistanis to be wary of propaganda: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said overseas Pakistanis should be wary of malicious propaganda and the use of disinformation to tarnish the image of Pakistan and the state institutions.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter on Saturday, he said, "I was greatly pleased to meet and interact with the members of our expatriate community in France. Overseas Pakistanis are making vital contributions to their adopted countries all over the world. We, in Pakistan, celebrate and are proud of their achievements as proud sons & daughters of the soil. They feel passionately for their mother-

land."

"I explained to them the circumstances in which the coalition government assumed office as well as the mammoth economic, diplomatic and political challenges that the government had to deal with over the last one year," he added. "In my talk, I also focused on the grave implications of the tragic incidents of May 9 including the careful & methodical build-up to the Black Day. I appealed to them to be wary of malicious propaganda & the use of disinformation to tarnish the image of Pakistan & the state institutions." "I also outlined the broad contours of the Economic Revival Plan to put the economy back on track through long-term policies. Achieving economic self-reliance remains the overriding goal for the government," he added.

US officials meet Khadija Shah

LAHORE (PPI): A team of the United States officials held a meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Khadija Shah, who is also an American citizen of Pakistan origin, at the Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore.

Reports said the US officials discussed matters related to her arrest as she was arrested by police for her alleged involvement in the attack on Lahore Corp Commander's residence, also known as Jinnah House, during the May 9 protests.

The meeting continued for an hour to discuss various legal aspects of her release. The renowned fashion designer is currently in police custody after a court in Lahore approved her 14-day judicial remand in the case. Earlier this month, the Ministry of Interior approved a request made by the US to get consular access to Khadija Shah. On June 8, the US officials visited Ms Shah to discuss the case with her.

Parvez Elahi gets bail

LAHORE (Agencies): The special court central on Saturday ordered release of former chief minister Parvez Elahi – also the PTI president – after accepting his bail in the money laundering case.

On Wednesday, the Federal Investigation Agency had arrested Elahi as soon as he came out of the prison after an anti-corruption court granted him bail in another case related to illegal recruitments. Both the father and his son – Moonis Elahi – were booked a day earlier over alleged money laundering on the basis of the revelations made in the Panama Papers, which showed they were owners of businesses abroad. They are accused of committing fraud and resorting to money laundering, thus concealing billions of rupees in five Panamanian firms.

Two martyred in firing of Indian forces along LoC

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Two civilians were martyred and another critically injured when Indian forces opened indiscriminate fire on innocent shepherds in Sattwal Sector along the line of control on Saturday. Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said.

According to military's media wing, "The Indian Army in a Army, in a display of its usual inhumane approach towards innocent Kashmiris, opened indiscriminate fire at 11:55 am onto a group of shepherds in Sattwal Sector."

The martyrs included Obaid Qayyum son of Muhammad Qayyum, age 22 years and Muhammad Qasim son of Muhammad Din, age 55 years. Both martyrs were residents of Village Bara Dari Tetrinote,

Tehsil Hajira District Poonch.

The military's media wing said that driven by a newly found geo-political patronage, Indian forces have embarked on a plan to take innocent lives to satiate their false narratives and concocted allegations.

While a strong protest was being launched with India and Pakistan reserved the right to respond back in a manner of its choosing to protect Kashmiris' lives in the LoC belt. "Indian side is reminded to respect basic human rights of Kashmiris, particularly, their inalienable right to till their lands," the ISPR said.

Meanwhile, the Indian Charge d' Affaires was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to register Pakistan's strong protest

over the ceasefire violation committed by the Indian forces in Sattwal Sector of the Line of Control (LoC).

The incident, which took place on 24 June 2023, resulted in killing of two civilians and injury to another one.

Condemning the deplorable targeting of innocent civilians by the Indian forces, it was underscored that such senseless acts are in clear violation of the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding, reaffirmed in February 2021. It was further underscored that targeting of civilians is contrary to human dignity and international human rights and humanitarian laws. The Indian side was urged to respect the Ceasefire Understanding, investigate the incident, and maintain peace along the Line of Control.

Muqam survives unhurt in Shangla terrorist attack

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam survived unhurt in terrorist attack on him in Martung area of district Shangla of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday.

According to details, Amir Muqam was targeted by the militants during a visit to his hometown for the inauguration of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) office. An exchange of fire took place between the assailants and the police after which they fled the scene.

Expressing his special thanks to Allah Almighty for survival in terrorist attack, Amir Muqam said that he was grateful to the people of Shangla for supporting him. It should be mentioned here that the PML-N leader was attacked at the same place in 2014.

The two attacks on a convoy of Muqam had left ANP leader Mian Mushtaq and at least seven other people dead. He described terrorists as enemies of the country. Pakistan can achieve goals of development and stability "only by curbing the terrorism," Muqam said.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has strongly condemned the attempt on the life of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President and his Advisor Engineer Amir Muqam in Martong area of Shangla.

Talking to Amir Muqam on Saturday, he said, "We are thankful to Allah Almighty that Amir Muqam remained safe in the attack and there was no loss of life." Premier Shehbaz Sharif also paid tribute to bravery and steadfastness of the PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President.

"You are lion of Nawaz

Sharif and we appreciate your services for the public, nation and the party," he added. An attempt was also made on the life of Amir Muqam at the same place in 2014.

PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz Sharif Saturday called Adviser to PM Amir Muqam and condemned the deadly terrorist attack. Maryam Nawaz paid tribute to Amir saying Amir is a brave man as he continued to serve the public despite the terrorism threats.

Eradication of terrorism is a very crucial step that has to be taken for the development and stability of Pakistan and the entire nation stands with its armed forces, rangers, police and law enforcement agencies in this fight, she added. Maryam said that Pakistan will be freed from terrorism once again like in 2018 under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Cadets parade held at Naval Academy

F.P. Report

R A W A L P I N D I : Commissioning parade of cadets of 119th Midshipmen and 27th Short Service Commission was held at Pakistan Naval Academy Karachi, on Saturday.

Cadets from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia & Bahrain were also among the passed-out cadets. During the event the Sword of Honour was awarded to Midshipman Muhammad Mustafa, Quaid-i-Azam Gold Medal was awarded to Lt Badar Ali, Officer Cadet Sanaullah Safer was awarded CJCSC Gold Medal. Officer Cadet Abdul Rahman Jaza S Alharthi from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was awarded Chief of Naval Staff Gold Medal.

CJCSC General Sahir Shamsah Mirza, was the chief guest on the occasion, who on arrival was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi.

Bilawal pays tributes to women diplomats

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid rich tributes to the women diplomats of Pakistan, appreciating their contribution to the country's foreign service.

In a post uploaded on Twitter on Saturday while the world celebrates the International Day of Women in Diplomacy, Bilawal said "I recognise and honour Pakistan's women diplomats as they raise the flag high with spirit, grit and grace." The foreign minister further added: "We appreciate their contributions to Pakistan's diplomacy and celebrate their many accomplishments." The International Day of Women in Diplomacy is observed annually on June 24 to honour and recognize remarkable women in the fields of diplomacy and decision-making across the globe.

The Frontier Post

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin says he ordered his mercenaries to halt their march on Moscow to avoid "shedding Russian blood". Prigozhin said while his men are just 200km (120 miles) from Moscow, he decided on Saturday to turn them back to prevent killings.

"We are turning our columns around and going back to field camps," he said. The comments by Prigozhin in an audio message came after Belarus' leader Alexander Lukashenko said he negotiated with the mercenary boss to stop Wagner's troop movement. He accepted Lukashenko's offer to halt the Wagner group's advance and further steps to de-escalate the tensions, Lukashenko's office said, adding the proposed settlement contains security guarantees for Wagner troops. It did not elaborate.

Prigozhin did not say whether the Kremlin responded to his demand to oust Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu. There was no immediate comment from the Kremlin. President Vladimir Putin faced the biggest threat to his rule yet with rebel mercenaries advancing towards the Russian capital after seizing a key military base. Pavel Felgenhauer, a Russian defence analyst, said it remains to be seen how the incident plays out.

"What's really going to happen, we'll have to see tomorrow. And who actually did give which concessions to whom," he told Al Jazeera. "Ceasefires don't hold that easily. Before you see the small print, it's not the time to say that it's over. It can easily unravel in an hour or two, or tomorrow." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday the revolt by Wagner troops exposed complete chaos in the country.

"Today the world can see that the masters of Russia control nothing. And that means nothing. Simply complete chaos. An absence of any predictability," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. Addressing Putin while switching from Ukrainian into Russian language, Zelenskyy said: "The longer your troops remain on Ukrainian land, the greater the devastation they will bring to Russia."

Russian mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin appeared to suggest he had sent an armed convoy on a 1,200-km (750-mile) charge towards Moscow on Saturday in an unlikely attempt to topple the military leadership. Russian local officials said a military convoy was on the main motorway linking the southern part of European Russia, bordering Ukraine, with Moscow, and warned residents to avoid it.

Hours earlier, the Russian authorities had accused Prigozhin of staging an armed mutiny after he alleged, without providing evidence, that the military leadership had killed a huge number of his fighters in an air strike, and vowed to punish them. The FSB domestic security service said it had opened a criminal case against Prigozhin for armed mutiny, a crime punishable with a jail term of up to 20 years.

The dramatic turn of events, with many details unclear, looked like the biggest domestic crisis President Vladimir Putin has faced since he ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine - something he called a "special military operation" - in February last year. Prigozhin, whose Wagner militia spearheaded the capture of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut last month, has for months been openly accusing Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Russia's top general, Valery Gerasimov, of rank incompetence and of denying Wagner ammunition and support in its battles in Ukraine. As their feud appeared to come to a head, the ministry issued a statement saying Prigozhin's accusations were "not true and are an informational provocation".

Prigozhin said his actions were not a military coup. But in a frenzied series of audio messages, in which the sound of his voice sometimes varied and could not be independently verified, he appeared to suggest that 25,000 fighters were en route to oust the leaders of the defence establishment in Moscow.



PML-N not interested in delaying elections: Javed Latif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif Saturday said that his party was not interested in delaying elections after the completion of the constitutional period.

Talking to a private news channel, he said elections would be conducted on time and date.

"In the upcoming budget, the government will allocate funds for elections, security arrangements for polling stations and ensure the availability of equipment for obtaining transparent results," he added.

Commenting on support from coalition partners in the general elections of 2023, he said that the seat adjustment formula would be applied to winning the next elections. He claimed that PML-N had good working relationships with coalition partners including Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

FIA arrests human trafficker from Lyari

KARACHI (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency FIA on Saturday arrested an alleged human trafficker from Lyari in an already registered case against him at the Agency's anti-human trafficking circle, Karachi.

According to an official, accused identified as Tahir Mehmood was a notorious human trafficker, who was arrested in a raid conducted in Agra Taj, Lyari.

The accused was nominated in an FIR registered at FIA anti-human trafficking circle police station. The case was registered upon the detailed accounts provided by two deportees wherein they identified three human smugglers that facilitated them in their illegal migration among which the arrested had the primary role.

The said action was the part of an underway nationwide crackdown against the human traffickers in the wake of the gruesome Greece Boat Tragedy.

4,912 cases registered against drug-peddlers

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore police registered 4,912 cases against drug-peddlers and arrested 4,918 suspects during the current year so far.

In a statement, issued here on Saturday, Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana said that more than 2,666 kilograms of charas, 46,705 kilograms of heroin, 25,412 kilograms of ice drug, and 1,06,615 litres of liquor were seized by various police stations during a crackdown on drug-sellers.

The police also registered cases against 1,073 drug-traffickers in Cantonment Division, 499 cases in Civil Lines Division, 990 in City Division, 613 in Iqbal Town Division, 745 cases in Sadar Division, and 992 in Model Town Division, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Ms. Shazia Marri addressing a press conference at PID media center. —APP Photo

Punjab govt decides to increase canola, sunflower production in province

LAHORE (NNI): The Punjab government on Saturday decided to increase land for growing canola and sunflower crops in the province in order to reduce the edible oil import bill.

The decision was taken at the Punjab cabinet meeting held with CM Syed Mohsin Naqvi in the chair.

The chief minister ordered continuation of crackdown on the manufacturers of spurious and contaminated pesticides in the province.

He directed commissioners to monitor the crackdown in their divisions.

The meeting agreed to

chalk out an effective strategy for increasing wheat production in the province.

A proposal to give more subsidy on agricultural machinery also came under discussion at the meeting so that the production of wheat, cotton and other crops could be increased.

Agriculture experts, present on the occasion, agreed on increasing crops' production through drill machines.

The meeting decided to start IT-based cotton crop management programme in the province.

It was also decided to hire the services of 2,000

interns for the cotton campaign advisory service.

The meeting was briefed that the SUPARCO would assist in obtaining satellite images of the cotton crop.

The chief minister was of the view that all stakeholders would have to make untiring efforts if cotton production targets were to be met.

DG Strategic Project Major General Shahid Nazir, provincial minister SM Tanveer, renowned businessman Gohar Ejaz, Fawad Mukhtar, chief secretary, and agriculture experts were in attendance.

Sindh police DIG visits PSCA

LAHORE (APP): Sindh Police DIG (IT) Pervaz Ahmed Chandio on Saturday visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) Headquarters here to enhance collaboration and understanding of the operational workings between PSCA and Sindh Police for Karachi Safe City project. PSCA Managing Director Muhammad Kamran Khan gave a detailed briefing about the working of the safe city. The DIG also visited the various departments of the PSCA center and was briefed on the usage of LTE advanced handsets, geographic information system, 15 emergency helpline call dispatch process and the media management centre. The intelligent traffic management system and face recognition system were also highlighted during the visit. The MD said that the PSCA was providing unwavering technical support for the Karachi Safe City project. DIG (IT) Pervaz Ahmed Chandio said that PSCA was a role model for modern policing. He emphasized the importance of learning from PSCA's experience to implement similar initiatives in Sindh.

PPP always strives for ensuring political stability, democracy: Shazia Marri

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri Saturday said that Pakistan people's Party had been always striving for ensuring political stability and democracy in the country.

Addressing a presser along with the Senator Rubina Khalid here, the federal minister said that all the political parties were sitting together, despite ideological differences, for the sake of the country's economic and political stability and strengthening democracy".

The coalition government came into power, after the removal of former Prime Minister through a constitutional way, to address the suffering of people amid inflation, unemployment and poverty due to the ineffective policies of the previous government, Shazia Marri said.

About the sufferings of those affected due to the floods last year, Shazia Marri said that the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto have effectively voiced the miseries of the 33 million people affected due to devastating floods at international forums. As a result of this, Pakistan received financial assistance of nine billion dollars for the flood affected people's rehabilitation, she told.

Referring to the Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto's recent speech in National

Assembly, Shazia Marri dispelled the impression of any strife between Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party and said Bilawal Bhutto has explained that the basic issue was the funds for the flood victims.

Bilawal Bhutto has reiterated the commitments regarding rehabilitation of the flood-affected people during his speech, she said and added, Bilawal Bhutto in his speech highlighted the way a fascist leader in the United States promoting hatred-based populism gave a call on January 06 for attacking the parliament and sensitive institutions led the democratic country take action against him for the country's stability, banning him on social media from where he was instigating violence.

The same story was repeated in our country when the sensitive military installations and monuments of army martyrs were vandalized on May 09 which, she said, Pakistan People's Party cannot forgive.

All the provisions in law and constitution will be followed according to the kind of crimes committed on May 09 and those responsible will be taken to task, she added. Referring to the quote of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah "Scrupulous maintenance and enforcement of law and order are the prerequisites of

all progress", Shazia Marri said economy and society cannot progress unless there is peace and stability.

She criticized the role of the judiciary and said that not any constitutional institution was allowed to play with the peace and stability of the country and support those creating unrest and responsible for ransacking the military installations and martyrs' memorials.

"If we all are not on the same page today, then it will become a tradition that whoever wants to disrupt peace of the country will be free to do which is not acceptable for any country", she said.

Shazia Marri said that Bilawal Bhutto in his speech stated that there was always a red line in any democratic country which bare such actions that were threat to the country's integrity and security. "Civilized countries always take action for national integrity," she added.

Responding to a question, Shazia Marri said that Pakistan People's Party was not a party but an ideology with which people want to connect. "We are welcoming those who are joining Pakistan People's Party to serve the masses".

She said that Pakistan People's Party do not believe in the politics of revenge as the President of PPPP, Asif Ali Zardari believes democracy as the best revenge.

Tessori stresses need for adopting technology

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Governor Kamran Tesori said on Saturday that in a rapidly changing world, it was very important to learn modern technology and adapt to the digital revolution.

Addressing the Future of Work Conference organized by Pakistan Freelancers Association, he said that PAFLA's out-

standing efforts deserved appreciation as empowering freelancers and entrepreneurs in the digital era was commendable.

The governor said in the digital age only creativity could lead on the path of success adding PAFLA had provided a platform to connect youth, experts and entrepreneurs adding there

was an opportunity to bridge the gap between industries.

He further said that an environment had been fostered where knowledge and innovation thrive because success lied in the ability to learn and collaborate mentioning that through determination and shared vision the nation could face the challenges bravely.

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System)

The C&W Division Malakand Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites Electronic Bids from eligible firms / constructors in accordance with KPPRA Procurement Rules 214 amended up to 10-05-2022, on Single Stage Single Envelop Procedure for the following work(s).

S/No	Name of Work	Required PEC Category	Bid Security i/c Stamp Duty Rs.(M)	Tender Fee@ 0.03%	Period of Completion	Last date and time of submission of E-Bids	Date & Time of Opening
AOM&R BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2022-23 FOR DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGES (DSJs) AND SENIOR CIVIL JUDGES (SCJs). (DEPOSIT WORK)							
1.	AOM&R of Office Building, Sub Head:- M&R of Mosque in District Courts Malakand	C-6	13250	200	As per W/Order	02/08/2023 at 12.00PM	On the same day at 12:30 PM
CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNAL ROADS IN DIFFERENT UICs IN PAK-18 DISTRICT MALAKAND ADP NO.9571/190571. (M.R.S.-2019)(BALANCE WORK).							
2.	Rehabilitation & B/Topping of Shulawai road (Length-609-M) (Risk & Cost)	C-6	98628	1420	-do-	-do-	-do-

01. Bid Solicitation Documents and Instructions to Bidders can be obtained from the office on any working day or downloaded from C&W Website (www.cwd.gkp.pk) on day before the submission date / time.

02. The bidders should submit their E-Bids as per KPPRA Notification NO.SOR (14)/Vol:1-24/2021-22 dated:- 10-05-2022.

03. Complete Detail of Bid Security in shape of CDR i.e. Bank Name CDR Numbers and Dates must be submitted electronically along with-Bid on the E-Bidding System.

04. All Bidders are required to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority under Finance Act No. XXI of 2013.

05. Venue of Bid opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Malakand.

06. All Bids will be accepted through Pakistan Post or courier Service representative positively.

07. Separate CDR for 2% E/Money & Separate CDR for Tender Form Fee One Original and second photo copy will be shown to the undersigned at the time of tendering.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, C&W DIVISION MALAKAND

INF(P)# 1405/23, The Frontier Post Peshawar, Dated: 25-06-2023

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A PART OF PCAA'S PROFESSIONAL TEAM

SITUATION VACANT NOTICE NO. 13/2023

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority requires services of qualified individuals to fill the following vacant posts on contract basis where selection will be made purely on suitability and merit:-

Post	No. of Seat (s)	Prescribed Qualification	Quota & Pay	Contract Period	Age Limit
Assistant Director Accounts (EG-01)	Thirteen (13)	<p>■ CMA Passed / CA Finalist-articles completed / ACCA member</p> <p>OR</p> <p>■ MBA (Finance) / M.Com with 2nd Division or equivalent CGPA with HEC recognized university with two (02) years of post-qualification experience</p>	<p>■ Merit-01, Bat-01, Ex-FATA-01, KPK-2, Punjab-06, Sindh (R)-02</p> <p>■ Lump Sum Pay Package shall be offered equivalent to Gross Pay of Executive Group - I (EG-01).</p> <p>■ 05% increment shall be applicable annually on Lump Sum Pay Package</p>	<p>■ Three (03) Years (extendable)</p>	<p>■ Maximum 30 years of age (age relaxation shall be applicable as per rules)</p>

Application Procedure:

(a) Interested candidates are required to fill & submit Online Job Application Form available at www.caapakistan.com.pk within fifteen (15) days from the date of this advertisement.

(b) Candidates will be required to upload scanned copies of certificate / degree (HEC Verified) of the required qualification only of the concerned post as mentioned above and CNIC while applying for the job.

(c) In case a candidate does not upload the above documents with the online application form, his/her application will be rejected.

(d) Domicile holders from all Provinces are eligible to apply for selection against seat reserved for Merit.

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Monsoon rains to start from today

— PDMA takes precautionary measures

PESHAWAR (APP): The Monsoon rains will start from June 25 and an emergency meeting in this connection was chaired by Commissioner Peshawar Division Muhammad Zubair wherein a mechanism has been prepared to deal with torrential rains and floods as a precautionary measure.

Representatives of the irrigation department, WSSP, Cantonment Board Peshawar, PDA and the administrative officers of the municipal institutions participated in the meeting to deal with the situation in view of the torrential rains from the night of June 25. A report will be sent to the Commissioner

Peshawar Division in 48 hours, the meeting decided. Besides, an operation will be started on an emergency basis to eliminate the encroachments around the rivers, Irrigation Department, WSSP, PDA and Orders have been issued to the municipal bodies to ensure the availability of heavy machinery so that relief can be provided in case of any emergency.

The meeting issued instructions to speed up work on the Under-construction Rivers and waterways passing through the city. The instructions to start the cleaning of historic Shahi Khata and Budni Nala on an emergency basis are also issued

so that the flow of water can be maintained in the event of stormy rains and the water does not enter the population.

Instructions were also issued to be more efficient and prepared for the situation, Commissioner Peshawar Muhammad Zubair said. Due to the intense heat, the flow of water in the rivers is already expected to increase and there is a fear of worsening the situation in case of heavy rains, due to which precautionary measures have been taken. Actions are inevitable, the meeting issued instructions to all concerned institutions to monitor the situation and be careful.



PESHAWAR: Residents of PK-69 protesting against load shedding. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

3-day Pashto literary conference innagurated

PESHAWAR (APP): A three days literary Pashto conference has been inaugurated at Nishtar Hall.

The conference was inaugurated by renowned literary figures, including Dr. Yar Muhammad Maghmom, Dr. Khalid Khan Khattak, Dr. Abaseen You-safzai, Haseena Gul Tanha, and Kalsoom Zaib, among others.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), in collaboration with Pashto Jirga Pakistan, organized the

conference.

Its aim is to provide a platform for literary individuals, particularly poets and scholars of Pashto literature, to present their works concerning the preservation and promotion of the language and literature.

The inauguration ceremony was followed by various sessions covering themes such as poetic and literary personalities, preservation and promotion of the Pashto language and history of language.

Audience from diverse

backgrounds attended the conference and enjoyed the sessions.

The first day of the conference was followed by different sessions on the next two days (June 24th & 25th, 2023).

KPCTA has initiated the activity to preserve and promote Pashto language and to attract enthusiastic literary audience to a platform where they can learn and share the experience of linguistics and advancements in language preservation and promotion.

3 children killed, parents injured due gas leakage

PESHAWAR (APP): Three children were killed and their parents were injured due to a gas leak explosion at Kohat road, said Rescue 1122 on Saturday.

The incident took place on Kohat Road, Dora Chowk, Street No. 4. As a result of the incident, the roof of the house was collapsed. Rescue 1122 responded to the emergency, provided medical assistance and police and locals also conducted a search operation to retrieve them from the debris.

The injured individuals have been identified as Shahzad and his wife, who were shifted to a nearby hospital.

Protesters blocked road against load shedding

PESHAWAR (APP): Residents of the Yaka Tut area came out on the streets against unannounced load shedding of electricity in Peshawar with the protesters blocking the road for all kinds of traffic.

There is no electricity since morning due to extreme heat in neighboring areas including Zargarabad, Shahi Bagh, Fidaabad, Bari Bagh and even at night, the series of electric shocks continue, the protesters said during their protest.

Due to illegal load-shedding neither the electricity in the day nor in the night due to which the people of the area have been facing adequate drinking water in this hot weather. The children and women are also suffering badly due to uncalled load-shedding, protesters said.

The protesters shouted slogans against WAPDA officials. Due to the power outage, drinking water has also disappeared in the houses, the protesters said.

They also demanded to the chief minister and governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for taking immediate action in this regard.

Zulfiqar Ali posted as RDP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The competent authority has posted Senior Public Prosecutor Zulfiqar Ali Khan as Regional Director Prosecution Mardan division.

The competent Authority Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has please to appoint Zulfiqar Ali Khan at the position on own pay scale with immediate effect.

Intensity of heat continued

PESHAWAR (APP): The temperature in Peshawar is likely to rise to 44 degrees Celsius Saturday, said an official of the Meteorological Department here.

He said, the weather is likely to remain extremely hot and humid in most districts of the province while rain is expected in Abbottabad, Mansehra, Bitgram, Torghar, Kohistan, Shangla, Swat, Buner and Dir.

He also predicted rain in other parts of the province including Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Karak, Kohat, Peshawar and Charsadda.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing a seminar.

SCCI wants special incentives to boost up construction industry

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry sought pragmatic steps for provision of relief and special incentives to boost up the construction industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Ijaz Khan Afridi while talking to project head of Al Quresh Trade Centre Maj (retired) Asghar Ali, which is adjacent to Peshawar Expo Centre during the meeting held at chamber's house on Saturday said construction industry has played a pivotal role in economic development of the

country.

Essentially, he said the construction industry is a major source of employment for many people, which should be incentivized at every level.

He viewed the economic and commercial activities would be accelerated with the uplift of the construction industry. Besides, he added the national economy would also be stabilized by luring investment in the sector.

The meeting was attended by the SCCI's executive member Farhad Asfandiyar and former executive member Muhammad Shafiq

Afridi, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz and Coordinator Research and Development Cell Ishiaq Ali and others.

Asghar Ali briefed the meeting about the significance of the project and invited SCCI acting president to visit on site of the project.

He said the project would be established at more than 11 kanals, which would be equipped with all modern needs and facilities. He said the project is close to its completion. He invited the private companies and investors to become partners in the

project.

Farhad Asfandiyar and Shafiq Afridi also spoke on the occasion and gave several proposals for the success of the project.

Ijaz Afridi termed the project as a milestone in the construction industry of KP and assured the SCCI will take all possible measures to convince investors to make investment in the project.

The project head thanked the acting president of SCCI for highlighting the importance of the project and assuring to bring investment in the project.

Mayor directs replacement of old gas pipeline, 100 KV in Gulbahar

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali directed the replacement of an old gas pipeline and the installation of 100KV by replacement of 25 KV in order to overcome the overloading of electricity in Gulbahar No. 5.

aji Zubair Ali on arrival at Afridi Ghari Gulbahar No. 5, where the Peshawar Goods Carrier Association organized a program regarding the solution to their problems. President of Ittehad Alaima Gulbahar Sheikh Al Hadith Hazrat Maulana Abdul Sattar Marwat Sahib, Advisor to Chief Minister (CM) in

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Malik Maher Elahi, Chairman of Tehsil Pishitakhara Haroon Safat, Chairman Imran Naveed were also present. Mayor Peshawar, and officers of Capital Metropolitan also participated in the program.

Addressing the event, Mayor announced the replacement of 25 KV transformers with 100 KV and issued instructions to the relevant authorities to provide 100 KV transformers within 24 hours.

Along with this, at the request of the Goods Carrier Association, the Mayor of Peshawar issued

orders for the installation of street lights in all the small and big streets of the area within 24 hours to reduce street crimes.

He also issued orders for the replacement of gas pipelines and issued instructions to the gas authorities in that regard.

Moreover, Peshawar Goods Carrier Association requested the Mayor of Peshawar the repair the base road and the cleaning of the main drain sewer line.

Mayor Peshawar immediately issued instructions to WSSP regarding the main drain sewage line sys-

tem and its cleaning and in that regard issued orders to send a special team the next day.

Regarding the repair of the road, Haji Zubair Ali said, "He will send a team of officers to conduct a survey and work on this road will be started after Eid-ul-Adha."

Haji Zubair Ali assured to have a meeting with customs and FBR officials, finally, Peshawar Goods Carrier Association thanked Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali for listening to their demand and taking steps for its early solutions.

4-day enterprise development training concluded by KPEC, ECI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: KPEC and ECI have identified 10 business clusters in Peshawar and Khyber districts, including the honey, boutique and Gemstone clusters, through a detailed assessment study and now based on training needs assessment, 500 entrepreneurs are being trained in business management under a capacity building programme.

In this regard, ECI organized a four-day training for business women and men related to honey, boutique and gemstone under the project of KPEC in Peshawar. The training was conducted from June 20 to June 23, 2023 with the objective of enhancing business development, promotion, and management skills. In these trainings, 24 women and 74 men com-



pleted their training successfully. At the end of the

training, the chief guests distributed certificates to

those who successfully completed the training.

Nature based solutions proving cost effective sustainable ways of combating environmental degradation

PESHAWAR (APP): Nature based solutions for tackling the growing and serious threats posed by environmental degradations and climatic changes are proving as highly cost effective and sustainable approach in overcoming these challenges.

An exposure trip to an hamlet in Salt range of Pakistan revealed as how a simple and cost effective approach of rain water harvesting helped within a couple of months in recharging of ground water reservoir, benefiting more than 350 families in getting water both for drinking and irrigation purposes from four almost dry wells located within the vicinity of

their homes.

The exposure trip was arranged by Institute of Urbanization (IoU) for awareness of members of its Eco-Journalists Cohort to explore the transformative potential of sustainable solutions to growing challenges of environmental degradation.

"Earlier we used to travel around three kilometers long distance on foot for fetching water only for drinking purpose and now after sudden increase in water table of our dry wells, we are getting the very basic need of life at our doorsteps", Nadeem Akhter, a farmer in Siral hamlet in Khoshab district commented.

Taking to newsmen, Nadeem said our female family members have to carry heavy water filled pitches over their head which was not only much burdening for them but also affecting their health.

However, now we are very happy over getting water from a facility about which we had become hopeless, Nadeem added.

"The rainwater recharge system has been installed by WWF-Pakistan under its 'Water Stewardship and Replenishment Strategy' in water stressed Soon Valley which has two famous lakes including Khabeki and Uchali but both are lifeless due to their water being saline," informs

Umer Bin Khalid, Senior Environmental Expert WWF-Pakistan.

WWF-Pakistan had set up its office at the Uchali lake, a Ramsher declared wetland site, in mid 90's for protection of migratory birds and other aquatic species found in the lake, Umer apprised journalists.

"After recent rains, water level in our well increased drastically, providing us a great relief in obtaining drinking water in the locality of around 2000 population," shared Tasleem, another villager.

We have installed two recharge well systems at a cost of Rs. 1.5 million each and that will work for years, depends on rain

which is received twice in a month on average, Umar Bin Khalid told media men.

Apart from installing ground water recharge wells, WWF-Pakistan also worked over introduction of rainwater harvesting technique used to collect and store rainwater for future use from relatively clean surfaces such as roofs.

We have provided tanks with a storage capacity of 1000 to 2000 liters of water to around 40 houses for utilization of rain water for gardening and for provision of drinking water to livestock, WWF official added.

Another technology of floating platform of vegetation introduce by WWF-Pakistan in Mard Wal vil-

lage of Soon valley is proving beneficial in treatment of waste water, converting it as useful for drinking for livestock and irrigation in the area.

The technology involves placing a mat or raft of buoyant materials such as foam on the water surface and planting it with wetland plants. As the plants grow and root extend into the water, they take on nutrients, pollutants and other contaminants, making the water consumable for meeting the needs of plant, fields and livestock.

We have released around 150 mats carrying plants of wetland and each mat has been arranged at a cost of Rs. 8000.

This technology is not only nature based solution but also a very low cost approach of treating waste water, Umar told newsmen.

The technology has been introduced by Dr. Muhammad Afzal of National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (NIBGE) and has proved beneficial even in treatment of lubricant carrying waste water of OGDCL (Oil and Gas Development Company) plant in Dakanni in Attock district.

"If this concept of treating waste water through such low cost nature based solutions is promoted, a large amount of waste water of the country can be reused for non-potable pur-

poses like irrigation and can relieve the immense pressure on water bodies, lower pollution levels and provide water security in the face of climate crisis," observed Dr. Ejaz Ahmad, Senior Fellow IoU.

These efforts are aimed at encouraging public participation and behavioral change towards sustainable management practices of utilizing natural resources, Umar remarked.

Locals are also giving positive response and extending full cooperation in the introduction of nature based salutation as adaptive measures in fighting against the perils of climatic changes and environmental degradation.



In brief

Timergara school reopened F.P. Report

LOWER Dir: Frontier Corps North have restored Frontier Corps Public School and College, Timergara, Lower Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), which had been burnt and looted by miscreants on May 9, to its original position after hectic efforts spreading over several weeks on Saturday. Students are ecstatic over the reopening of the educational institution and have demanded stern punishment for those who were involved in the incident. Thousands of people took to streets in different cities of the country on May 9 to protest the arrest of former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan in Islamabad. They ransacked and burnt government and military buildings besides damaging the memorials of Pakistan Army martyrs.

Two swept away by River Swat

MINGORA (INP): Two including a woman a minor girl drowned to death after a steel role of a cable car broke and it fell into River Swat on Saturday. According to details, the incident took place in Mankiyal Aryani area of tehsil Bahrain of Swabi where a chairlift snapped a woman and one-year old girl fell into River Swat and swept away by gushing waves of the water. The deceased woman and girl hailed from Chakail Bandha area of Swat. The local people and rescue teams started search operation for the drowned woman and girl.

Youth kills father, step-mother

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): A merciless youth gunned down his father and step mother in Narang Mandi tehsil Muridke district Sheikhupura on Saturday. Police said that the accused was annoyed with his father Iqbal who had entered in second marriage few months earlier. The culprit gunned down his father, step-mother and fled the scene after committing dual murder. Police and rescue teams reached the scene and shifted the bodies to hospital for post-mortem. The police after registering a case against the murderer at respective police station started raids for his arrest.

Two persons gunned down

MUZAFFARGARH, June 24 (INP): Two people were mowed down by unknown assailants riding a motorcycle in Muzaaffargarh, rescue officials said on Saturday. Some unknown motorcyclists opened indiscriminate fire on two people standing at Kutchehri Chowk, killing them on the spot. The incident seems to be the result of old vendetta, the rescue men assumed. Police have started investigation of the case. The incident was occurred in the most sensitive area of the city in the early morning. The Deputy Commissioner Office, DPO Office, and houses of top ranking government officers are also situated on this road. The CCTV cameras have been installed for the monitoring of the area 24/7.

Okara police kill three bandits

OKARA (PPI): Police killed three alleged dacoits in Okara district during the wee hours of Saturday night. According to police, upon receiving information of robbery by some miscreants in Kot Bari area of the city, a police team rushed to the scene. Upon seeing police arriving, the outlaws started firing on them.



FAISALABAD: Locals drinking beverage from 'Subeel' at Karkhana Bazaar in City.

Cops get prizes for bravely fighting bandits

MULTAN (PPI): Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday visited Katcha area of Rahim Yar Khan and gave away prizes to policemen bravely fighting bandits.

Accompanying Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar, Additional IG South Punjab Maqsood ul Hassan Rana, the CM visited the police post, dispensary and school in the Katcha area. CM later visited a historical and beautiful mosque in Bhong, Rahim

Yar Khan. Earlier, upon arrival in Rahim Yar Khan along with IGP Punjab, CM was received by Additional IGP South Maqsood ul Hassan Rana, DPO Rizwan Omar Gondal, DC Ashfaq Ahmad Bhatti, and ASP Bhong circle Shahzaib Chachar.

CM said, he was well aware of the challenging situation in which police were performing duty in the Katcha area amid harsh weather conditions and added he was among them today to elevate their

morale and acknowledge the bravery and determination with which they were fighting the criminals of the Katcha area.

Earlier, IGP Dr Usman Anwar gave a detailed briefing to the CM on the ongoing operation in the Katcha area. During a visit to a school and dispensary in the Katcha area, CM distributed prizes among school children and extended financial assistance to people who visited the dispensary on the occasion.

Anti-India rally to be held on 26th

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter will organize an anti-India rally in Muzaaffarabad on June 26, International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, to express solidarity with the victims of Indian state terrorism in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

APHC-AJK leader Mushtaq Ahmed Butt during a meeting with Tehreek-e-Shabab-ul-Muslimeen Jammu and Kashmir Students Wing Chairman Riaz Ahmad Awan in Muzaaffarabad said that solidarity would be expressed with the oppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir on June 26. He said anti-India protest demonstrations and rallies would be organized in Muzaaffarabad on the day and efforts would be made to convey the voice of Kashmiris to the international community.

Mushtaq Ahmed Butt said the freedom-loving people of Jammu and Kashmir are fighting the Indian state oppression and violence with courage and are determined to continue their struggle till taking it to its logical conclusion. He added that the international community should break its criminal silence over the Indian atrocities on innocent Kashmiris and hold India accountable for serious crimes against humanity in the occupied territory.

Tehreek-e-Shabab-ul-Muslimeen Students Wing chief patron Jahangir Qureshi, Vice Chairman Muneer Ahmad Konshi, General Secretary Zubair Durrani, Chief Organizer Faizullah Durrani, Central Chief Organizer of Tehreek-e-Shabab-ul-Muslimeen Naseer Mir, Deputy General Secretary Shahid Iqbal Awan and Media Advisor Arshad. Awan were also present on the occasion. Riaz Ahmad Awan in his speech said that the leaders and workers of his party would fully participate in the anti-India rally on June 26 and would express solidarity with the people of IIOJK. He said that the sacrifices of Kashmiris would definitely bring positive results and Jammu and Kashmir will be freed from the illegal occupation of India.

People welfare top agenda of PML-N, says Muqam

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage, Engr Amir Muqam here Saturday said that development of Pakistan and people welfare was the top agenda of Pakistan Muslim League (N) and his party after winning the upcoming election would change the destiny of masses of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Addressing a big public gathering at Martung after inauguration of NADRA Office here, Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan had made rapid progress and achieve heights of prosperity during the government of Pakistan Muslim League (N) and expressed the hope that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would vote PML-N into power for their socioeconomic development.

He said that PML-N has strong roots in masses and due to its pro-people welfare and Pakistan's policies, senior and popular politicians were joining it to put the country forward on road to economic prosperity under the leadership



of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Engr Amir Muqam said that former member national assembly, Shahge Gul Afridi along with four others parliamentarians have joined PML-N and has reposed full confidence in the policies of PML-N leadership.

Engr Amir Muqam while congratulating the people of Martung on inauguration of NADRA office said that he would make efforts to establish its offices in other tehsils of Shangla to facilitate its people. He said people of KP including Shangla are ready for political change and would vote PML-N into power for resolution of

their problems.

Amir Muqam said he was well aware of electricity related problems of Martung and advised people to pay electricity bills regularly for uninterrupted power supply. On this occasion, member national assembly Dr Ebad Khan and others thanked the PML-N leadership for completing record development projects in Shangla district. He said that inauguration of Nadra office at Martung would save time and money of people by obtaining computerized identity cards at their doorsteps. On this occasion, people raised full throated slogans in favour of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Engr Amir Muqam.

Provision of facilities at cattle markets directed

Saqib Mushtaq

LODHHRAN: Under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Lodhran Abdul Rauf Mehr, the provision of essential facilities including cold drinking water and provision of essential facilities including fool-proof arrangements and provision of essential facilities for the sacrificial animals in the temporary cattle markets established in view of the arrival of Eid-ul-Zhaha. The review meeting was held in the Committee Room of the Deputy Commissioner Office.

In the meeting, a detailed review of the provision of facilities in cattle markets across the district was taken in view of public convenience. In the meeting, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Syeda Anna Maududi gave a briefing. On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Lodhran Ashraf Saleh, Assistant Commissioner Kahrupka Ghulam Hussain and Chief Officers of Municipal Committees, District Emergency Officer Dr. Syed Majid Ahmed, Veterinary Officers, Rescue 1122 were present in the meeting. Officers of the police department and other departments participated.

The meeting was told that one cattle market has been established in the three tehsils of Lodhran district, while a cattle market will also be set up on permits in the days near Eid.

At Mandi Old Municipal Stadium while in Tehsil Kahrupka, a temporary cattle market under the management of Municipal Committee Kahrupka has been set up along with Mandi Civil Veterinary Hospital. Similarly, in Tehsil Dunyapur, a temporary cattle market has been set up at a place adjacent to General Bus Stand, Dukota Road, with the collaboration of Cattle Market Management Company Multan and Municipal Committee Dunyapur.

In the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Rauf Mehr has strictly instructed the officers of the Livestock Department to ensure tick spray on the animals brought to the cattle market.

He said that strict action will be taken on the complaints against the staff for collecting excessive fees or receiving money without receipt. He said that great care should be taken in administrative affairs and fee collection in the cattle market and all the responsibility of ensuring trans-

parency in this regard will be given to the respective Assistant Commissioners and Chief Officers of the Municipal Committee. In the meeting, a detailed briefing was given by the officers of the relevant departments on the preparations for Eid Al-Zahi.

Addressing the meeting, he further said that police personnel should be specially deployed for providing security. The Deputy Commissioner said that on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, issue a special schedule for the duties of the officers and employees of the Health Department, Municipal Committees, Rescue 1122 and other related departments. The Deputy Commissioner said that the district administration, police and municipal officers will jointly take legal action against the illegal sale of cattle in urban areas.

He further said that camps should be set up at the entrances and exits of cattle markets by the Livestock Department to protect the animals from diseases and viruses etc. The Deputy Commissioner has also directed the officers of the health department to set up emergency counters to deal with any possible emergency in the cattle markets.

Two killed in armed clash

JHAL MAGSI (PPI): Two men were killed and two others sustained injuries in an armed clash between two groups near Seed Farm, Gandawa area of district Jhal Magasi in Balochistan province on Saturday.

According to police, armed clash between two groups near Seed Farm area of Tehsil Gandawa in district Jhal Magasi took the lives of two men while two

other persons sustained injured in the gun battle. The bodies, identified as Muhammad Usman Khinjani and an employee of Public Health Engineering Department, Jhal Magasi, Ali Asghar Khinjani, and injured Saleem Khinjani and Qadeer Hussain Khinjani, were taken to District Headquarters Hospital, Gandawa for completion of codal formalities and treatment, respectively.

The bodies were handed over to the heirs after fulfilling necessary medico-legal formalities while the injured, stated to be in critical condition, are being treated at District Headquarters Hospital, Gandawa. Tense situation prevailed in the area after the incident. Further investigation was being conducted by the authorities of concerned police station.

Punjab Governor lauds services of Afzal Tarar

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman visited village Kolo Tarar to condole demise of Mian Nasir Hussain Tarar only son of former Parliamentary Secretary Mian Afzal Hussain Tarar and brother of former Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar, the other day.

He expressed his sympathies with bereaved family. He offered pray that Allah Almighty may be blessed departed soul with eternal peace in JANNAT-UL-FIRDOOS and grant due strength to all family members to bear this grief with patience and perseverance.

District president Muslim League (N) Hafizabad Ch. Muhammad Bukhash Tarar was also present on the occasions. Governor also lauded social, political and religious services of Mian Afzal Hussain Tarar.

Spurious milk production unearthed: Punjab Food

Authority unearthed spurious milk production unit at Pindi Bhattian and recovered 1300 liters spurious milk, 170 kg powder, and 800 kg ghee.

According to details, on the directions of Director General Punjab Food Authority Raja Jhangir Anwar, Food Safety Team raided fake milk production factory situated at Pindi Bhattian on a tip off. The Team took spurious milk, ghee, white powder, vegetable oil and chemical from the factory and discarded 1300 liters spurious milk, 170 kg powder, and 800 kg ghee.

The accused supply fake milk in Hafizabad and Gujranwala districts and ingredients use in preparation of spurious milk hazardous for human health, DG Food Authority Committed to take punitive action against accused involve in this inhuman practice.

AGEGA hold protest: On the call of All Government Employees Grand Alliance (AGEGA), government employ-

ees staged protest demonstration in front of Press Club Hafizabad, against alleged anti-employees policies of the Punjab government and shouted slogans against the government.

Addressing District Chairman AGEGA Hafizabad Muhammad Nasir Amin and Chairman Muttahida Mahaz Aastiza Hafizabad Ch. Riaz Ahmad Tarar said that storm of inflation has created starvation like situation for the employees already whereas the Punjab government is making amendments in government employees service rules 1974 for confiscating pension and other privileges including decreased in commutation and leave encashment on retirement which could not be tolerated at all.

They also demanded the Punjab government to increase salaries and pension on enology of federal and other provinces. Unions leaders including Provincial President IT Teachers Association Punjab Aqeel Azad,

Talib Hussain Bajwa, Ch. Asghar Hanjra, Rana Waqar Ahmad Khan, Farooq Ahmad Bazmi and others rejected the Punjab budget and demand the government to protect future of government employees so that employees could perform their duties with mental satisfaction.

Govt commits for provision of relief: Care Taker Provincial Minister for Education Punjab Mansoor Qadir said that on the directions of the Care Taker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, all provincial ministers are visiting different district for addressing problems of people and providing maximum relief to masses as well as improving performance of government departments.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of district heads of departments at district complex, on Friday. Deputy Commissioner Umer Farooq Warraich, DPO Dr. Fahad Ahmad, ADCR Imtiaz Ahmad Baig and other officers

attended the meeting.

Mansoor Qadir inspected under construction DHQ hospital, University of Hafizabad and Kot Sarwar Motorway Interchange to Gujranwala Road being completed more than 26 billion of rupees. He said that provision of educational, healthcare, communication and other facilities was top promote priority of the government. He also visited DHQ hospital and reviewed treatment facilities in children ward, emergency, general ward, CCU and ICU.

DC Umer Farooq Warraich briefed the Minister regarding performance of different departments including price control committee, establishment of cattle markets, and rehabilitation of Public Parks, water filtration plants, renovation and beautification of the city, provision of healthcare in hospitals.

Policy for uplift of economy prioritized: Former Governor Gilgit Baltistan Chaudhry

Barjees Tahir said that present government has introduce prudent policies and due to positive policies of the government, national economy was improving day by day.

While talking to media at residence of ex-Chief Officer District Council Hafizabad Malik Muhammad Mansha, he said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was a game changer project which would change fate of the region. He said that present government was giving very importance to CPEC and committed to complete this project on stipulated period.

He said that Foreign Reserves of Pakistan was improved significantly and in 1999, Pakistan had addition electricity and was negotiating with neighbor country for importing electricity. After 1999, no any government did not give attention to increase electricity production as a result of which, we are facing shortage of electricity, he claimed.



Sudan conflict: Army outnumbered on Khartoum's streets



KHARTOUM (BBC): The Sudanese army's infantry battalions have hardly been present on the streets of Khartoum during the two months-long conflict that has raged in the country, leaving much of the capital under the control of the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

This is despite the fact that the army is made up of about 200,000 soldiers, roughly twice the size of the RSF. Yet the army is heavily outnumbered on the streets of Khartoum, as well as the two cities across the River Nile - Bahri and Omdurman. RSF fighters were initially moving the three cities in their armed pick-up vehicles, but they now mostly do so in ordinary cars.

Huge numbers of people have complained on social media about the RSF stealing their cars from their homes. The suspicion is that the RSF is using them to avoid being hit by air strikes. With its air-power being its greatest strength, the military has been constantly carrying out strikes to weaken the RSF. Although they are believed to have killed hundreds of civilians, they have not prevented the paramilitaries from advancing in Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman.

In a serious blow to the army, RSF fighters carried out an assault earlier this month on al-Yarmouk, one of Sudan's biggest military complexes, where arms were manufactured and stored. While a fire raged at the complex for days, the RSF declared that it had seized control of it, which was confirmed by local residents. The military, however, has not confirmed the loss of the complex.

It launched a counter-offensive, but could only manage in briefly wresting control of a vitally important bridge that linked RSF fighters in Omdurman to those in Khartoum and Bahri. The headquarters of the spy agency was also said to have been occupied by the RSF early in the conflict, but it is unclear who is currently in control of it. The military is known to have held on to a few key places - the most important of which are its headquarters and the airbase in Wadi Saeedna, from where its fighter jets fly to hit the RSF.

Troops have dug long and deep trenches to prevent the paramilitaries from over-running the two locations. "Their attempt to attack us does not have any effect now. The shells they fire fall on trees, or are cold by the time they land on our side," an officer said. About two million residents, out of around 10 million, have fled the once-peaceful cities, abandoning their homes, shops and offices. Some of them have been shelled and bombed, others have been occupied and ransacked, with air-conditioners and furniture among the items carted away by the RSF.

For some, the failure of the infantry battalions to make significant battlefield gains is not surprising, as Sudan is not a democratic state with a well-trained professional army. The army - like many other sectors of society - is still bedevilled by

Sudan's history of racism, slavery and colonialism. It dates back more than two centuries when Ottoman and Egyptian conquerors established an army of slaves.

Recruitment from mostly poor black African communities continued under British rule, and has remained so throughout the post-independence era. Some of the soldiers are, in fact, descendants of slaves. Under the three decades-long rule of ex-President Omar al-Bashir, black Africans were rarely accepted in Sudan's military college, with applicants required to mention their ethnic groups.

As a result, only a few have risen to senior ranks, with the army largely under the control of generals from the Arab and Nubian elites bordering Egypt. Soldiers earn a mere \$11 (£8.5) to \$16 a month, in contrast with the generals who have enriched themselves by setting up companies and factories that have given them control of 80% of the economy, according to Sudan's short-lived civilian Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdok. Because of their low pay, some soldiers even joined the RSF to fight - at one point, as part of the Saudi-Emirati coalition in Yemen, in exchange for vast sums of cash.

RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo became a big gold trader when his forces took over Sudan's most lucrative gold mines in 2017, and control of the border with Chad and Libya. Sudan's army chief of staff did not like it - he wanted the money from the gold trade to go to strengthening the regular forces, but Bashir had confidence in the RSF, giving Hemedti the nickname "Himayti", meaning "My Protector". Training camps were set up near Khartoum. Hundreds of Land Cruiser pick-up trucks were imported and fitted with machine guns.

With an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 men and more than 10,000 armed pick-up trucks, the RSF became Sudan's de facto infantry. Arabs from Darfur form the backbone of the RSF. They appear to believe that it is now their turn to rule - especially after their pivotal role in helping the military fight the Darfuri rebels in the 2000s. One of the RSF's greatest strength lies in the fact that many of its "battalions" are made up of members of the same family or ethnic group, so they fight ferociously to protect each other. In contrast, the defence minister has been forced to call for the mobilisation of retired officers and soldiers to beat back the RSF. His appeal was met with derision by many Sudanese, who saw it as further proof of the army's weaknesses. The reality is that Sudan's army, rather than fighting wars on its own, has long relied on militias. This is something it did in the decades-long civil war, which ended with South Sudan gaining independence in 2011, and more recently in Darfur, where Arab militias were accused of committing a genocide. Now those militias - heavily armed by the military - have come back to haunt it, plunging Sudan into its latest crisis.

Sierra Leone election: Tense poll amid fears of violence

SUERRA LEONE (BBC): Sierra Leoneans are set to vote in a general election following a tense campaign marred by violence. The main opposition party alleged that one of its supporters was shot dead by police, which the police have denied.

Supporters of both main parties have been accused of attacking opponents. This election is taking place against the background of a troubled economy, the rising cost of living, as well as concerns about national unity. The voters will be choosing a president, MPs and councillors in the West African country's fifth election since the civil war ended in 2002.

The 11-year conflict cost an estimated 50,000 lives, but since then the country has a tradition of largely peaceful, free and credible elections, according to Marcella Samba Sesay, chairperson of the NGO National Elections Watch. With strong party loyalty among the 3.3 million registered voters, the campaigns have focused on shoring up their parties' bases rather than articulating and debating policy issues. President Julius Maada Bio, 59, of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) is running for a second five-year term. His main rival among the 12

challengers is Dr Samura Kamara, 72, of the All People's Congress (APC).

This is a repeat of the race in 2018, which saw Mr Bio narrowly win following a second round run-off. There has been an uptick in violence compared to five years ago, according to the West Africa Network for Peace-building Sierra Leone. It has counted 109 violent incidents since April. This week, the APC said one person was killed by security forces as its supporters gathered for a protest at its headquarters in Freetown.

The police alleged the shots were fired from the direction of the APC building. Dr Kamara has also said that his motorcade came under attack and there were reports that the APC office was set ablaze in the city of Bo last weekend. The SLPP has said that it too has faced attacks in opposition strongholds.

President Bio has called for "peaceful elections" and "no violence". The African Union has also expressed concerns over reported incidents of violence and intimidation in parts of the country. Sierra Leoneans have been alarmed by campaigners' rhetoric, the Reuters news agency reports. "All I want is peace. I am scared by the high level of hatred I see

being exhibited on social media by political extremists on both sides," a student from Freetown who was wanted to remain anonymous told Reuters.

This election comes months after a landmark law which says women must make up 30% of all positions in both the public and private sector - including in parliament. But analysis from Sierra Leone's Institute for Government Reform (IGR) suggest the next parliament will fall short of this. Parties have put forward lists of candidates running in each of the country's districts to be elected on a proportional representation basis. But according to the IGR, not enough women are placed high enough on those lists to make sure the 30% threshold is crossed.

Out of the 13 candidates running for president only one is a woman - the little-known Iye Kakay. The APC has also expressed concerns about the transparency of the counting process and has cast doubt on electoral commission's ability to hold fair elections. The commission has defended itself, saying measures have been in place to ensure the credibility of the voting and counting process. Results should be known within 48 hours of polls closing.

UNSC calls for halt to fighting in Sudan

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The UN Security Council called for a halt to fighting in Sudan and the protection of civilians. The brief press statement followed closed consultations by the UN's most powerful body. The council also called for the scaling up of humanitarian assistance to Sudan and neighboring countries, support for humanitarian workers, and respect for international humanitarian law.

Sudan descended into conflict in mid-April after months of worsening tensions exploded into open fighting between rival generals seeking to control the African nation. The war pits the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, against the Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary force commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. A three-day cease-fire brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia expired and a protest group and residents said clashes resumed between the army and the paramilitary force in and around the capital, Khartoum.

The conflict has been centered largely in the capital and western Sudan's Darfur region, which have seen ethnically motivated attacks on non-Arab communities by the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias, according to UN officials. The fighting has killed thousands of people and forced more than 2.5 million people to flee their homes to safer areas in Sudan and neighboring countries, according to UN migration agency. The UN said that in the two months after the conflict began, some 85 humanitarian groups reached 2.8 million people across Sudan with vital assistance, including food, water, health services, education, sanitation, hygiene, non-food supplies and protection services.

"Partners are delivering medical supplies and providing support to health facilities that are still operating. Between 15 April and 15 June, 19 organizations reached more than 470,000 people," UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

37 migrants missing

ROME (Reuters): Thirty-seven migrants are missing after their boat capsized between Tunisia and the Italian island of Lampedusa, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said, citing an account by four survivors of the shipwreck. The United Nations agency said the survivors, all from sub-Saharan Africa, arrived on Lampedusa, having been rescued from the shipwreck by another vessel.

The survivors told the IOM they left the Tunisian port of Sfax heading for Italy with 46 people aboard, but their boat capsized in strong winds. They recounted that five of their fellow travellers were picked up by another boat, while 37 are missing feared dead, including seven women and a child, an IOM spokesman in Italy told Reuters.

Earlier, the UN's High Commission for Refugees gave a similar account of the same incident, but said 40 people were believed to be missing, rather than 37. There has been a surge in migration across the Mediterranean from Tunisia this year after a crackdown by Tunis on migrants from sub-Saharan Africa living in the country illegally and reports of racist attacks amid an economic downturn.

Vietnam on financial grey list over weapons-proliferation risks

HANOI (Reuters): Vietnam was added to the watch list of the FATF international financial crime watchdog, which said the nation has nonetheless committed to proving it effectively prevents the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Decision adds the southeast Asian nation to the "grey list" of two dozens countries across the world subject to closer scrutiny, including Panama, the Cayman Islands, the United Arab Emirates and Syria. Myanmar, Iran and North Korea are the only countries on the group's "black list". Vietnam is one of the few states with good relations with North Korea, which is actively pursuing a nuclear weapons programme despite widespread global denunciations and international sanctions.

Hanoi enacted rules in March to

fight money laundering and terrorism financing, but the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) did not consider the overhaul sufficient to avoid the greylisting. The FATF said Vietnam has now committed to demonstrating it effectively monitors banks, accountants and lawyers to prevent funding for the proliferation of arms of mass destruction, such as nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Vietnam has also agreed to prove it can prevent the evasion of sanctions against individuals or entities that face international restrictions because of their involvement with proliferation of mass destruction weapons.

In addition to Vietnam, 10 African countries, including Mozambique and Uganda, are under FATF scrutiny for risks of proliferation funding, according to the public list on the

body's website. Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Saturday. Vietnam has also committed to implementing additional reforms to address its shortcomings. It will work to ensure the independence of authorities responsible for investigating financial crime, regulate virtual assets and boost international cooperation against money laundering, the FATF said.

The FATF does not recommend enhanced controls on greylisted jurisdictions, but effectively that is what happens when a country is added to the list, as foreign financial institutions tend to monitor more closely their dealings with them, which can result in hurdles to financial flows. At a summit with South Korea, Vietnam said it would participate in the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Nearly 1/3 of the US homeless population lives in California

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP): An elevated train clangs along tracks above Dr. Kwane Stewart as the veterinarian makes his way through a chain link gate to ask a man standing near a parked RV whether he might know of any street pets in need.

Michael Evans immediately goes for his 11-month-old pit bull, Bear, his beloved companion living beneath the rumbling San Francisco Bay Area commuter trains. "Focus. Sit. That's my boy," Evans instructs the high-energy puppy as he eagerly accepts Stewart's offer.

A quick check of the dog reveals a moderate ear infection that could have made Bear so sick in a matter of weeks he might have required sedation. Instead, right there, Dr. Stewart applies a triple treatment drop of antibiotic, anti-fungal and steroids that should start the healing process. "This is my son right here, my son. He's my right-hand man," an emotional Evans says of Bear, who shares the small RV in Oakland. "It's a blessing, really."

"The Street Vet," as Stewart is known, has been supporting California's homeless population and their pets for almost a decade, ever since he spontaneously helped a man with a flea-infested dog outside of a convenience store. Since then, Stewart regularly walks the heart of Los Angeles' infamous Skid Row, giving him a glimpse into the state's homelessness crisis — and also just how much these people cherish and depend on their pets. After treating Bear, Stewart hands Evans, a Louisiana transplant, a list of the medicine he provided along with contact information in case the dog needs further treatment. Stewart always promises to cover all expenses.

"It was a good catch," Stewart said before heading out on his way to the next stop, in West Oakland. California is home to nearly a third of

the nation's homeless population, according to federal data. About two-thirds of California's homeless population is unsheltered, meaning they live outside, often packed into encampments in major cities and along roadways. Nationally, up to 10% of homeless people have pets, according to an estimate from the advocacy group Pets of the Homeless. Stewart believes that number is greater. Homeless shelters often don't allow pets, forcing people to make heart-wrenching decisions. Stewart sees it as his mission to help as many of them as he can.

A 52-year-old former college hurdler at New Mexico now living in San Diego, Stewart is a lifelong animal lover who grew up in Texas and New Mexico trying to save strays — or at least feed and care for them. He founded Project Street Vet, a nonprofit charity dedicated to helping homeless pets. Stewart funded the group himself for years, saving a chunk of his paycheck before later gaining sponsors and donors. There's plenty of heartbreak in Stewart's work, too. He once performed emergency surgery on a pregnant chihuahua and the two puppies didn't make it. But more often than not these pet owners are beyond grateful for Stewart's kindness. He guesses that maybe 1 in 25 times does someone turn down his help.

Stewart hollers "Hello?" outside tents, makeshift structures or campers. He can usually tell there's a pet if he sees a dog bowl or animal toy. He purposely wears his navy scrub top with his name so nobody mistakes him for animal control or other authorities and feels threatened. "People are reticent, they don't always know why I'm coming up to them. If they're going to you to beg or panhandle, it's different but if you come up on them they don't know if you're law enforcement or you have an agenda," he said, "so I do take it

very slow and I'll announce myself from afar."

Approaching Misty Fancher to see if her pit bull, Addie — purchased at a nearby gas station for \$200 — might need shots, Stewart offers, "Can she have treats so we can make friends?" "Sometimes I pull over and just talk," Stewart explained.

Addie is Fancher's first pet as an adult, and provides the 42-year-old with some comfort that she is safe living in a relatively unstable neighborhood of Oakland. "She's a very good girl," Fancher said. "She keeps a lot of trouble away. She protects me. She'll bite someone if they act aggressive or anything toward me. She has before. But she just discourages them from even trying."

Stewart notices a puncture on the dog's paw to monitor and also gives her a rabies shot, writing out a certificate for Fancher to keep as proof her dog is vaccinated. He leaves her with tablets for de-worming, treatments for fleas and ticks and — as usual — his contact information. A little while later, Stewart stops on the outskirts of a park nearby. He walks the perimeter and encounters an RV owned by Eric Clark, who has lived in the same downtown spot for seven years. He has a male bulldog, pregnant pit bull and another pregnant Doberman.

"It's hard to get to the vet," Clark said. "I appreciate you. They're family," Stewart is happy he can make a small difference like this with a largely misunderstood community. He strives to treat every person on the streets with the same professionalism and care as he would a patient at his veterinary clinic. His mantra: no judgement, just help. "They live in the shadows. They live amongst us but not with us," he said. " ... It is really rewarding. It gets to you a little bit. When they tear up about the tough times they've had, you try to care for them, support them."

Serbia again threatens armed intervention in Kosovo

BELGRADE (AP): Serbia reiterated a threat to intervene militarily in its former province of Kosovo if NATO-led peacekeepers there fail to protect minority Serbs from what Belgrade called the terrorist threat of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian authorities.

In a brief televised address, the Serbian army chief-of-staff, Gen. Milan Mojsilovic, said Kosovo Serbs can no longer "tolerate the terror" of the Kosovo government, and that Serbia's military stands ready to fulfil its tasks "in accordance" with the Serbian constitution and any orders from President Aleksandar Vucic. Serbia has put its troops on the border with Kosovo on the highest state of alert amid a series of recent clashes between Kosovo Serbs on one side and Kosovo police and NATO-led peacekeepers, known as KFOR, on the other. In recent weeks, NATO has sent in reinforcements amid fears of an open clash between ethnic Albanians and Serbs.

Serbia's armed intervention in Kosovo would mean a direct clash with some 4,000 NATO troops cur-

rently stationed there. Serbia and its former province of Kosovo have been at odds for decades. Their 1998-99 war left more than 10,000 people dead, mostly Kosovo Albanians. Belgrade has refused to recognize Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence.

Tensions flared anew last month after Kosovo police seized local municipality buildings in northern Kosovo, where Serbs represent a majority, to install ethnic Albanian mayors who were elected in a local election that Serbs overwhelmingly boycotted. The latest flareup focused on Kosovo police arresting at least eight Serbs who are suspected of taking part in last month's violent clashes with the NATO troops and Kosovo police, leaving dozens of injured on all sides.

In his brief address to the nation, the Serbian army chief-of-staff said that Kosovo Serbs can no longer "tolerate the terror of the regime of" Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti. "According to the facts, I informed the commander of KFOR that we demand urgent measures to protect

the Serbian people," Mojsilovic said. "This is our request to KFOR and other international organizations."

In their meeting in Brussels, the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo made no breakthrough in EU-hosted emergency talks amid fears of a return to open conflict. EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell described the soaring ethnic tensions in northern Kosovo as alarming.

"Despite yesterday's crisis meeting, escalation continues (and) is becoming dangerous," he said on Twitter. "We will not tolerate it." NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg vowed that the alliance's peacekeepers "will continue to act impartially" and increase its presence to ensure environment and freedom of movement for all communities in Kosovo. Both Serbia and Kosovo are seeking EU membership, and need to normalize their relations to do so. There are fears that Serbia's ally Russia could inflame another armed conflict in central Europe to divert at least part of the international focus from Moscow's aggression in Ukraine.

Police in California aren't immune from certain misconduct lawsuits, court rules

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP): Police in California are not immune from civil lawsuits for misconduct that happens while they investigate crimes, the state Supreme Court ruled this week, overruling a precedent made by lower courts that had helped protect law enforcement from litigation for decades.

The justices unanimously rejected an argument by Riverside County that its sheriff's deputies couldn't be sued for leaving a man's naked body lying in plain sight for eight hours while officers investigated his killing. California law protects police from being sued for any harm that happens during a prosecution process — even if the officer acted "maliciously and without probable cause." Now, the Supreme Court says police can be sued for misconduct during investigations.

The ruling cites previous case law that defined investigatory

actions as those before charges are filed. "The potential for factual overlap between investigations and prosecutions does not justify treating them as one and the same," Justice Leondra Kruger wrote in the ruling. Kruger noted the court issued a similar ruling in 1974. But in 1994, a state appeals court adopted a broader interpretation to shield police from lawsuits stemming from conduct during investigations. Lower courts have been relying on that ruling to dismiss misconduct lawsuits against law enforcement that did not involve prosecutions.

A lawyer representing Riverside County in the case did not immediately respond to a request for comment. This particular case centered on Jose Leon, who was shot and killed by a neighbor in 2017 southeast of Los Angeles in Riverside County. Shortly after sheriff's deputies

arrived at the shooting, they heard several gunshots nearby and dragged Leon's body behind a police vehicle, causing his pants to fall down and exposing his genitals, according to the lawsuit. His wife Dora Leon sued the county for negligence and emotional distress, saying police had left her husband's naked body in plain view for hours. The case was dismissed by lower courts that ruled state law provides immunity to law enforcement officers and agencies for police conduct during investigations. The Supreme Court reinstated Dora Leon's lawsuit. Kruger wrote that the lower courts' decision was wrong, saying police investigations cannot be interpreted as part of the prosecution process.

Many local police departments have routinely argued that they are

immune from damage claims "the moment a police officer arrives on the scene of a crime," said Richard Antognini, a lawyer representing Leon. If the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the county, "it would have essentially immunized them for almost anything," he said. The recent ruling helps remove an obstacle for victims seeking damages from police misconduct, Antognini said. California laws still provide immunity to certain aspects of police investigations.

The ruling was praised by John Burris, a California civil rights attorney who has represented more than 1,000 victims of police misconduct across the country. "This should have a positive impact on police reform, because now the law has spoken," Burris said. "Police should be trained and be better informed as to what their obligations are."

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Oldage politics and need for leadership revolution

FOREIGN Minister and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed his concerns about the state of democracy in Pakistan, urging for a united effort to prevent it from being pushed into a closed alley, circumstances similar to that led the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government to collapse. During his speech in the National Assembly, Bilawal emphasized the need to strengthen Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif and called for politics free from backbiting and character assassination. He urged political parties to function within the bounds of democracy, uphold the constitution, and the law and protect democratic values in society. Bilawal claimed that his party functions democratically, and does not harbor any sympathy for those who resorted to violence and terrorist-like tactics in politics. Bilawal called for a collective effort to preserve the democratic system and limit the impact of undemocratic politicians.

Politics and statesmanship are old-age professions, while famous public leaders, clerics, and rulers served their people by means of those prestigious crafts. Principled and merit-based Politics is no less than worship, however, foreign pawns, corrupt and disbelievers had always spoiled this poise profession through conspiracies, blackmail, and propaganda. The PPP Chairman has now attained sufficient expertise in political tradecraft and changes his stance, style, and appearance so recurrently and instantly that even the PPP workers are unable to grasp the true spirit of their leader. A few days earlier, Foreign Minister and the PPP Chairman warned the PML-N leadership of grave consequences if it fails in releasing funds for the flood victims in Sindh, and threatened to pull back his party's support for the coalition government. Interestingly, the allocation of Rs. 20 billion for the relief and rehabilitation work in Sindh entirely changed the tone of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who delivered a comprehensive lecture on the principles of democracy, demerits of political blackmail, and advantages of unity and cooperation.

Apparently, the PDM coalition has matured its real life and accomplished its sole mission of removing their common adversary from the Premiership of the country and creating a favorable environment for the next general election. The PPP has tactfully played its cards by keeping itself at a considerable distance from criticism about poor economic policies, alleged human rights abuses, and maltreatment of their political adversaries over the past year. Bilawal has gained significant experience in statesmanship and global diplomacy and currently preparing for a higher role presumably Prime Ministership in the next political setup in the country. The PML-N will carry the whole baggage of failed economy and non-deliverance to the public, criticism for mis-handling of its political opponents, and will face allegations of violating the constitution and human rights abuses.

At the time, the PPP aims at forming the next government in the country, it enjoys a majority in Sindh and will intend to make coalition governments in Balochistan and the KP with the help of local groups. Meanwhile, PPP might agree to constitute an alliance or seat adjustment with PML-N or with Tareen's Istikham-e-Pakistan party in Punjab. On the other hand, the PML-N is also aware of the challenges it faces at its home ground in Punjab. Shehbaz is okay to cooperate with JUI-F and ANP in KP and Balochistan to form PML-N-backed provincial governments there. presently, the coalition government has limited time on its credit to shed off the backlash of rising inflation and poor economic conditions in the country to steer for the upcoming general election.

Over the years, politics has become a tool to grasp political, economic, and monetary benefits for oneself, family, and friends instead of a source of service to the public and the country. Public issues became tools for trading, bargaining, and a source of blackmail against the ruling government and people in power. Earlier, party politics and horse-trading wrapped the PTI government a year ago, while similar situations are being faced by the ruling coalition government. Each coalition partner evades responsibility but demands lucrative ministries, and monetary incentives for his support to the government that undermines democracy and causes an ultimate burden on the national exchequer. After recurrent martial laws, experiments for a controlled democracy, and a failed attempt to revive the model of Risanat-e-Madina, the people of the country had lost their faith in the national leadership across the board. In fact, no positive change is possible until and unless Pakistani leaders reform themselves, bring pivotal change in their politics, segregate their business from this poise profession, and work for the benefit of the nation. Being a representative of the new generation, Bilawal and other young politicians must get rid of old-aged tactics, introduce new trends, selflessness, and genuine pro-public manifestos, so this nation comes out of chronic political, economic, and social issues and moves toward political stability, economic growth, and social revolution.

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Russian Crisis..2023



When it comes to rich countries taking the environment seriously, I say: vive la France

George Monbiot

WHILE we remain transfixed by a handful of needy egotists in Westminster and the crises they manufacture, across the Channel a revolution is happening. It's a quiet, sober, thoughtful revolution, but a revolution nonetheless. France is seeking to turn itself into an ecological civilisation.

Like every government, the French administration should be going further and faster to address the greatest predicament humankind has faced: the gathering collapse of Earth systems. But you can measure the seriousness of the government's plan by its institutional commitment. France now has a ministry for ecological transition. By the end of next year, the nation's 25,000 most senior civil servants will have been trained in the principles behind this transition. By the next presidential election, in 2027, every public sector worker will have had this training, tailored to their sector. Think about that: 5.6 million people will be taught about the biodiversity crisis, the climate crisis and the natural resources crisis – how these phenomena relate to the public services they supply and how public sector workers can use this knowledge to change the way they work.

Already, in energy, water and resource conservation, France has done what the UK government vaguely promises for 2040 or 2050 (I've come to see 2040 and 2050 as codewords for "never"). Let's take a look at one of these programmes: waste reduction. The French government has passed a circular economy law, which seeks to stop the unnecessary use of resources. Single-use plastics are forbidden in public procurement. Shops must allow people to bring refillable containers, and charge lower prices when they do. Anywhere that people gather in large numbers must be equipped with drinking

fountains, as part of a wider plan to phase out plastic bottles. Manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers are forbidden to throw away unsold items: they must instead be given away or recycled, creating an incentive to avoid overproduction.

The government is seeking to eliminate planned obsolescence. Major commercial sectors – electrical and electronic equipment, toys, sports, leisure, DIY, gardening, textiles, footwear and furniture – must pay into a repair fund. Companies have to provide spare parts and repair instructions. Next year, some sectors will need to display a "durability index" on their products. Manufacturers are banned from using any strategy to restrict the repair or longevity of the devices they sell, such as the software updates that slow down phones and tablets.

Producers and distributors of a wide range of goods – from sanitary towels to cars – are or will shortly be financially responsible for their processing and disposal once they have been used. Manufacturers must produce new eco-design plans every five years to cut their resource use and improve recyclability. By 2025, single-use plastic packaging will be reduced by 20%, all new washing machines will have filters to catch plastic microfibres, and supermarkets and caterers will have to reduce food waste by 50%.

Compare this with the UK. The government will ban a narrow range of single-use plastics in England, mostly in the fast-food sector. But it has sabotaged Scotland's plans to go further. The Scottish government's attempt to introduce a deposit scheme for glass bottles has been delayed for two years, after the Westminster government refused to grant an exemption to the Internal Market

Act.

There are similar contrasts in other sectors. For example, France has published a plan for protecting its water resources from source to sea, reducing the amount withdrawn from rivers and groundwater, reusing grey water (the water that drains from sinks, showers, washing machines etc), tackling pollution and improving the ecological condition of rivers and lakes. The government is spending 1.4bn (£1.2bn) on cleaning up the Seine, in which, for much of its length, swimming has been forbidden since 1923, as the water is so toxic. The river will be the centrepiece of the 2024 Paris Olympics, when triathletes and marathon swimmers will compete in its waters.

The UK, by comparison, failed to include an overall improvement in water quality in its Environment Act targets, and appears to have abandoned its feeble pledges to take action on sewage pollution. Emmanuel Macron's is not a radical government, and none of these should be seen as radical measures. They are the minimum policies that any responsible government should be implementing now, as our planetary emergency unfolds. France is no eco-paradise, and its policies are beset with contradictions. French lobbying is responsible for some of the worst aspects of the EU's common agricultural policy, one of the most destructive forces on Earth. This week, the French government banned a leading environmental direct group, Les Soulèvements de la Terre. And it is of course still committed to growth-based capitalism.

But even the basic green measures implemented in France feel like an impossible dream in the UK, where the bugles keep sounding the retreat from reality. Our government has wasted its entire time in office on cul-

ture wars, scapegoating and self-inflicted scandals. It will do anything to secure its own survival, nothing to secure anyone else's.

Rather than ramping up environmental standards, it seeks to rip them down. On Tuesday, the House of Lords accepted two amendments to the retained EU law bill. Their purpose was to prevent environmental protections from being weakened when European laws are either scrapped or replaced. The government has promised that "environmental protections" will never be downgraded", and the amendments sought to write this promise into law. But the following day, the government whipped Conservative MPs to reject them in the House of Commons. Now environmental protection hangs on the good faith of government ministers – and we know how far that goes.

After 13 years of Conservative government, the UK has become a dumping ground for every new assault on the planet corporations can devise, from disposable vapes containing lithium batteries, of which 1.3m, impossible to recycle, are dumped every week, and which can burst into flames when they are crushed in bin lorries (a literal bin fire), to private cars the size of builders' vans, with fuel consumption to match.

Every government should be making the transition towards an ecological civilisation. That France, mundane as its measures are, is among the world leaders should be a source of bitter shame to other rich nations. The only politics that matter now are those that might arrest our rush towards the brink. If Earth systems collapse, nothing else counts. Yet every day government and media produce a new distraction, hypnotising us with spectacle after meaningless spectacle. This is how we go down, gasping and gurning at the antics of those who claim to govern us.

The Guardian

Germany, China should nurture resilience

Michael Schumann

approach.

Germany's current emphasis on decarbonization and climate protection presents a remarkable opportunity for future cooperation with China. Both countries have made

technology. By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of both nations, Germany and China can lead the charge in addressing the most pressing challenge of our time. The resumption of bilateral gov-

In this context, Germany, despite its long history of transatlantic partnerships, must be cautious not to align itself too closely with US interests. Chancellor Olaf Scholz is well aware of this and appreciates the need for an independent and balanced approach.

substantial commitments to combating climate change, and collaboration in this domain can yield tangible results. By joining forces, Germany and China can accelerate the transition to a sustainable and green economy.

This collaboration can go beyond climate action and encompass other areas such as renewable energy, sustainable urban development and environmental

ernment consultations between Germany and China after the COVID-19 pandemic is a positive development. These consultations allow representatives from both governments to reconvene and build upon a long-standing tradition. This year marks the 45th anniversary of the signing of the bilateral basic treaty on scientific and technological cooperation between Germany and

Why Astana peace process in Syria is far from over

Sinem Cengiz

As the veteran Turkish ambassador Ertugrul Apakan once noted: "Success might sometimes only be achieved after many failed attempts ... there is no single recipe for successful mediation, just as no conflict is the same as another."

The Astana peace process for Syria was initiated in January 2017 when the Geneva talks had been stalled for a year, having shown that they were not likely to achieve success. The main difference in the Astana peace process is that it is being led by Russia, in contrast to the Geneva talks which were led by the US and Western countries. It is implemented by key players — Türkiye, Russia, and Iran, who are all involved militarily in Syria.

Astana was chosen as the venue because Kazakhstan had no stake in the Syrian conflict and was considered neutral by all parties. The initiative's timing, participant list, location, guarantors, and geopolitical context pointed to an important shift in the international effort to end the conflict.

The Astana peace process began as a less ambitious effort, focused only on ceasing hostilities and on the functioning of de-escalation zones, rather than on developing an immediate political solution. Thus, it adopted a shift in the Syrian peace process from Bashar Assad's removal to humanitarian issues and the cessation of violence. The Astana process aimed to bring the conflicting sides to the table to negotiate, and changed the power equations on the ground in Syria. Türkiye's role was to guarantee the participation of the opposition; Russia guaranteed the regime's participation; and Iran was included to avert its disruption.

The 20th round of the Astana peace talks began on Wednesday. The sides agreed to reconvene for the next round in the second half of the year, but Kazakhstan surprisingly proposed ending the process, showing its reluctance to host the next meetings. Kazakh officials cited Syria's recent return to the Arab League and efforts to restore ties with Türkiye as proof that the Astana talks had achieved their purpose. Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister Kanat Tumysh said: "Syria's gradual emergence from isolation in the region could be regarded as a sign that the Astana process has completed its task. Considering Syria's return into the Arab family, we propose officially declaring the 20th meeting under the Astana process as the final one."

Kazakhstan's decision was an unexpected one as the former Soviet republic has provided a venue for talks to representatives of Russia, Türkiye, Syria and Iran since 2017. The Russian envoy to Syria, Alexander Lavrentyev, who led Moscow's delegation at the talks, said Kazakhstan's decision was a complete surprise. Lavrentyev said that no decision was made about a new venue for

future talks later this year, but suggested they could be held in Moscow, Ankara, Tehran, or even Damascus.

Did the Astana peace process accomplish its mission? When considering this, first and foremost to be considered is that it managed to achieve modest but meaningful success in the formation of the de-escalation zones inside Syria, a lessening of the conflict in a way that serves the national interests of all three countries, and brought all the parties in the conflict to the negotiating table — all of this despite many conflicting ambitions being at stake. The three guarantors support the territorial integrity of Syria. The partition of Syria was of no benefit to any of them, and each of these three countries may be faced with significant losses in such a scenario.

Secondly, the guarantor states also found themselves on the same page on the issue of fighting extremism. They shared a common concern that jihadist extremists finding fertile ground in Syria may harm their interests. At Wednesday's meeting, the most prominent topic was counterterrorism efforts in Syria, where terrorist groups rose to prominence amid the conflict.

Beyond its modest success, what did the Astana peace process mean to those involved? From the regime's point of view, the process was a chance to regain lost credibility in the international community's eyes and to remain relevant. After a decade-long isolation, the Syrian regime returned to the Arab fold last month with Assad attending the Arab League summit in Jeddah.

From the guarantors' point of view, the Astana peace process meant more leverage, and the strengthening of their hand at the table and on the ground. Despite their having opposing visions of the war in Syria, the process eventually built closer ties among them. The process even started after tension in Türkiye's relations with both Russia and Iran in 2015-16. Since then, Türkiye carried out several military operations in northern Syria while the Astana process was on track. Those operations would not have been possible without Russia's explicit approval, as it controls Syrian airspace.

With the change of venue and the inclusion of Syria on the track, the Astana format has been going through a change. While the Astana peace process paved the way for direct talks with the Syrian regime, the new format is likely to formalize the normalization path between Ankara and Damascus along with the push of Syria's two allies, Moscow and Tehran. However, the next stage seems to be a tougher one as Ankara and Damascus differ in their approach to opposition forces, to the Turkish presence in northern Syria, and refugees. Astana's initial task may have been accomplished, but the main one is yet to be achieved.

The China Daily

Three scenarios for an unlikely breakthrough on Syria

KAZAKHSTAN on Wednesday surprised everyone, including the Russians, by stating that it would stop hosting talks aimed at resolving the Syrian conflict. The announcement came as delegates were wrapping up the 20th round of talks held in the capital, Astana.

The basis for the decision was that the talks that started in 2017 have achieved their purpose. However, in reality, we are far from any political solution in Syria. A military solution is also not on the table: The regime cannot face the Americans in the northeast or the Turks in the northwest. Neither Turkiye nor the US are ready for another faceoff in Syria.

Today, Syria is de facto divided into three regions. The northeast is controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party, known as the PYD, is the force behind the SDF, but Turkiye views this group as the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, the terrorist group that conducts operations on Turkish soil. The SDF operates under American protection. In the northwest, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, formerly known as the Al-Nusra Front, is the main armed group. The northwest — or the greater Idlib area — is under Turkish protection. The rest of Syria is under Assad regime control, with some areas run by Russia and others by Iran.

If there is to be a breakthrough, these three areas need to be reconciled. If two areas were to come together, this would put pressure on the third. There are three possible scenarios, but they are equally difficult to achieve; hence, we are most likely to remain in a state of deadlock.

The first scenario is for there to be a regime-SDF agreement. This would be encouraged by the Russians, accepted by Gulf countries and even tolerated by the US. Brett McGurk, who currently han-

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

dles the Middle East for the US National Security Council, wrote an article in Foreign Affairs magazine in 2019, in which he said the war in Syria would not end as a result of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, but rather by an agreement between the Kurds and the regime.

Though estimates vary, the SDF has approximately 50,000 fighters who are trained and equipped by the US. They could make up the backbone of the Syrian Army and beef up Assad's forces, which are

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stressed by financial pressure. However, the various discussions held between the PYD and the regime resulted in no breakthrough. Even if the regime does agree to something, the Kurds know that it will renege on its promises.

To add to that, the regime, which perceives itself as being the winner of the 12-year war, does not feel the need to relinquish anything to the Kurds as they are in a precarious position. There are a lot of tensions with the Arab population. They are protected by a minimal American force and are constantly attacked by the Turks.

The second possible scenario is an extension of the Astana talks. This revolves around a Turkiye-Bashar Assad rapprochement. However, this is equally difficult.

To start with, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's recent overture to Assad was mainly for electoral purposes. The Turkish public mood has been growing increasingly against Syrian refugees. The opposition was blaming Erdogan for the problem and arguing that he was preventing their return because of the bad relationship he has with Damascus.

One of the main campaign promises made by Erdogan's opponents ahead of last month's presidential and parliamentary elections

was to ensure the return of refugees through negotiations with Damascus. Erdogan wanted to remove this argument from the opposition's armory, so he announced that he was ready to meet with Assad for "peace" in the region. Now that Erdogan has won a new term, however, such a meeting is unlikely.

Assad, who has always had an uncompromising attitude, is conditioning any meeting on a Turkish withdrawal from the northwest. This is totally unrealistic. The people who are in Idlib are irreconcilable with the regime. If the regime attacked Idlib, it would result in a new wave of refugees that Turkiye cannot absorb, while the international community also does not want to see a new wave of refugees or any new carnage created by

Assad's forces. Also, Assad, despite the rhetoric, could not handle Idlib with all the problems it has. And Erdogan, who has been a supporter of the opposition for more than a decade, cannot pull the plug on them. This would greatly affect his image and his credibility.

The third and best scenario is a northeast-northwest agreement. This is equally difficult for the simple reason that Turkiye does not feel it needs to make any concessions to the Kurds. The PKK problem is solved at home and it is keeping the PYD contained by various coercive methods. Though such a solution would, in the long run, achieve stability, which would be in the best interest of Turkiye, Turkish policy has been conducted in a transactional manner. From the Turkish perspective, they do not have to make concessions to a weaker foe. Also, Turkiye does not trust the PYD, believing that the group will renege on its promises when it has the chance.

For this deal to happen, the US should intervene and clinch a bargain with Turkiye, one that gives both Ankara and the Kurds security guarantees. The deal should involve the PYD turning in their heavy and medium weapons. The local council that is now controlled by the PYD must also become democratically elected to ensure that it represents the variety of the communities and that the PYD's influence is lessened.

In order to make sure that these changes are maintained, international observers should be deployed. In return, Turkiye would open its border and allow the flow of water. Ankara has been using the water of the Euphrates as a coercive measure against the Kurds in Syria. This solution, though difficult to achieve, is the best option because it will create enough pressure on Assad and his backers to abide by UNSC Resolution 2254 and accept a political transition that will end the conflict.

Arab News

Why China can't broker peace between Israel and Palestine

PALESTINIAN P- Ahmadi Ali & Ahmed Alqarout President Mahmoud Abbas visited Beijing last week, where he met Chinese President Xi Jinping. Abbas was the first Arab President to visit China since the China-Arab States Summit of Riyadh in December 2022 — signalling the importance that China appears to be placing on the Israel-Palestine issue.

The visit resulted in a leap forward in relations between China and Palestine. They agreed to a strategic partnership. Palestine will participate in Xi's Belt and Road Initiative and a trio of new plans that Beijing has unveiled in recent months — the Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and the Global Development Initiative — which collectively aim to present an alternative model of international relations to Western liberal norms. The two sides also activated a range of economic plans targeted at increasing trade between them. All of this stirred speculation about China's new offer to mediate a peace process between Israel and Palestine, and whether it can succeed. So here's the harsh reality: Beijing likely won't be able to broker peace, yet could notch up a geopolitical win for itself by just trying.

China's plan includes supporting full membership for Palestine in the United Nations as a sovereign and independent state with Jerusalem as the capital, the preservation of the status quo in Jerusalem's religious holy sites and the resumption of peace talks with Israel on the basis of UN resolutions. The aim: a "two-state solution" to finally realise peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel which has been attempted for decades. But what's in it for Beijing?

The growing Chinese interest in the Palestinian issue stems from several motives that are consistent with Beijing's broader objectives in the region and internationally. First, China is trying to build on its success in brokering a deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran to extend regional peace to the Palestinian-Israeli arena. China is interested in protecting its growing investments in the Middle East and helping end or curb conflict is to its advantage.

Second, China is trying to become a global leader in economic peacemaking. Any progress towards solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would solidify that image, one of the objectives of its

Global Security Initiative.

Third, China is trying to disperse and counter Western pressure regarding the issues of Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Ukraine, by emphasising an issue of equal complexity and importance.

Importantly, the final two goals do not necessarily require that Chinese mediation succeeds in bringing a lasting end to the decades-long conflict and struggle for Palestinian statehood. It can secure some of its ambitions simply by positioning itself as a champion of diplomacy and mediation.

That's vital to remember because, despite its growing enthusiasm, China's ability to actually advance a peace process is questionable — despite the regional trend in the Middle East towards diplomacy. Israel's headline government stands as the most decisive reason for this bleak outlook. For Israel, the occupation and the aggressive military and techno-authoritarian system of population control over the Palestinian people represent larger religious and ethno-nationalist goals that transcend basic state interests. It cannot be disabused of these aims with instruments of statecraft such as diplomatic arm-twisting or trade incentives. This conflict, unlike the Saudi-Iran row, is also not a conflict between two states on somewhat equal standing. It is between the occupied and an occupier who feels unchallenged and emboldened. Israel is even moving towards the further annexation of Palestinian land. The rapid growth of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank has already rendered the two-state solution obsolete. For Palestine, China's growing interest still has clear advantages. By pushing forward the Abraham Accords with multiple Arab nations, the United States isolated Palestinians who cut ties with the US government in 2017 in protest and reduced their security coordination with Israel. In a recent interview with CNN, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said negotiations with the Palestinians are no longer a priority and the US-led Abraham Accords and peace with Arab countries will come first.

As so, the Palestinians welcome Chinese leadership in negotiations to balance against perceived US bias in favour of Israel. Though the Palestinian Authority (PA) remains reliant on the US and its allies to sustain its economic survival, as Washington increases pressure on the Palestinians by cutting aid, Abbas and his administration need Chinese economic and development help.

Nonetheless, for the moment Chinese aid and investment in Palestine remain insignificant. Questions about the PA's domestic legitimacy and internal divisions among the Palestinians also present potential obstacles to any efforts to kick-start negotiations. Meanwhile, the trajectory of Sino-Israeli economic ties does not bode well for Chinese leverage and influence with the Israeli government, either.

China is Israel's third-largest trading partner globally. Trade volume increased from \$50m in 1992 to \$15bn in 2021. But US pressure on Israel to downgrade ties with Beijing, as part of its global competition with China, has changed this trend.

In 2018-2022, Israel's exports to China stagnated at about \$4.5bn. Between 2018 and 2021, Israel's imports from China also stagnated at \$10.5bn. In 2020, Israel set up an advisory committee to inspect national security aspects of foreign investments — essentially to scan deals with China as potential national security threats, per the US's request. Chinese investments in Israel have slowed as a result and will continue to do so, undermining Beijing's ability to use trade to bargain for peace. All of this, undergirded by the refusal of the current far-right Israeli government to talk with the Palestinians, means it is unlikely the Chinese efforts will be fruitful in achieving peace between Palestinians and Israelis. Beijing is likely to continue to pursue mediation between Palestine and Israel as doing so is consistent with its own interests even if nothing is achieved.

Great diplomatic accomplishments tend to take place when expert diplomats are presented with an exceptional geopolitical opportunity. That was the case when China managed to broker a deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia. While a diplomatic coup for China, the Iran-Saudi detente was a product of both nations reevaluating how their long-simmering enmity was impacting their actual interests. Many rounds of painstaking talks in Baghdad had already created fertile soil for this achievement. Such an opportunity does not seem evident on the Palestinian-Israeli issue. China can't change that.

Why it is time for the US to end its strategic ambiguity

FRICTION points between the US and China are increasing. The most alarming is that warships from the two countries were involved in a near-collision in the South China Sea on Saturday. Moreover, there are signals indicating a transformation in the dynamics of international foreign policy, with the spheres of influence of both countries being reshaped. However, all this should not be solely framed as part of the great power competition. Another important factor within this new dynamic is the rise of regional powers.

From Asia to the Middle East and even in South America, we are noticing a new positioning of countries and attempts to solve regional problems and advance their national objectives swiftly. Many analysts are now framing this great power competition as a new cold war, but the rise of regional powers is not similar to the nonalignment movement of the Cold War era. Also, the dynamics between the US and China are not the same as with the Soviet bloc. First, there is no ideological confrontation that is apparent at this stage. Second, the US and China have ongoing trade relations and still have positive diplomatic relations - even if they are deteriorating.

And so, as the West debates decoupling or de-risking with China, this situation is supporting regional powers as they push forward with their own plans and take responsibility for their future. We are noticing that countries come up with a solution to a conflict and then solicit the support of international powers to bring it forward. Moreover, most countries, including Israel, have been balancing their interests between the two superpowers. As long as the US and China stay in this gray zone, this will continue. This change is apparent within the bloc of Western friends. Many of them question the

Khaled Abou Zahr

future of the US' guardianship of global stability. This is particularly important in regions or countries where the US is no longer the leading trade partner, specifically where it has lost this spot to China. How will the world navigate this new dynamic? This has also led to an increase in criticisms of the US, especially from African heads of state.

When the headlines warn of an end to the dollar as the world's reserve currency of choice, when the BRICS group becomes a larger economic bloc than the G7 and other signs, it becomes a valid question. Moreover, will we witness the birth of a new system or will the current institutions be transformed to accommodate this change? As the criticisms increase, we should ask ourselves what is the state of the world today? Since the Second World War, extreme poverty has been steadily declining worldwide. Child mortality rates have dramatically decreased. Life expectancy has increased globally. Education has improved. Violence - including armed conflicts, war and homicides - has declined over time. This is still true despite the war in Ukraine. This progress was mostly made, whether people want to admit it or not, thanks to the global role of the US. And so, could this also come to an end if the US loses ground internationally?

It is symbolic that these structural changes are happening as Henry Kissinger celebrates his 100th birthday. Indeed, one of Kissinger's best-known concepts is "strategic ambiguity." In short, this is the use of deliberate ambiguity or uncertainty in the actions and intentions of a superpower, which can serve as a tool for maintaining stability and preventing adversaries from accurately predicting their next move. This concept acknowledges unpredictability as a privilege of superpowers, which can confuse foes and friends alike.

But today, the US has become precise in its ambiguity and predictable in its unpredictability. And so it needs a new approach. This is why the US needs to reengage with its partners and flip the existing modus operandi. In short, it should support and back these regional powers to become more independent in deciding their own fate. It should also avoid basing this international approach with a greater agenda for humanity. It should, in fact, only help these countries achieve what the US promises its own citizens in the pursuit of happiness. It is a strong enough message. The empowerment of regional powers to carve their own future is the best way to build strong and long-lasting partnerships in this new era. I would say that, to a certain extent, we are seeing this nascent new formula emerge between the US and India. Although my bet is that India will also one day become a major power, maybe even surpassing China.

One cannot deny that, even if the international order and decision-making mechanisms that regulate global affairs have maintained greater stability, they are not reflective of this changing world. And so, will these institutions change to accommodate the new status of China and the rise of regional powers or will we witness a second system? When looking at the world map today, we can imagine a worst-case scenario where the world is once again divided in half, with a frontier at the border between Ukraine and Russia. This is why it is important for the US to reengage with its partnership network in a straightforward manner and to abandon its strategic ambiguity with them. Regional powers in the Middle East and elsewhere have evolved, matured and taken on greater responsibility for their fate. The US should support this transformation and build the new alliances that will keep the world safe for another 100 years.

Weaponisation of anti-Semitism is bad for Palestinians – and Jews

M Muhannad Ayyash

ON May 12, in her commencement address for the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, Yemeni-American graduate, Fatima Mohammed, dared to speak about the plight of the Palestinians – honestly and truthfully. The response was predictable. An organised campaign was launched to intimidate, harass and silence her by declaring her insightful speech “anti-Semitic”. Right-wing platforms like the New York Post and Fox News amplified these baseless accusations. Politicians – both Republicans and Democrats – joined in the senseless bullying of the young graduate, and Republican state legislators even called for funding to be withdrawn from CUNY for giving her a platform.

CUNY soon buckled under the pressure. On May 30, its Board of Trustees released a statement in which they condemned Mohammed's words as “hate speech”. Of course nothing Fatima said that day was hateful, or false. Everything she said was based on facts and guided by a desire for justice and decolonisation. Every claim she made in her commencement speech could be found in peer-reviewed journal articles, in academic books by world-renowned experts or in the everyday realities of millions of Palestinians.

If you listen to her speech, you will see that she actually said nothing whatsoever about Jewish identity or people. She made no mention of Jewish life in the US, Canada, the UK, France, or even in Israel, for that matter. Her speech was about the Israeli state, its settler colonial foundations and practices – and the US imperial hegemony of which Israel is a part. Even if you disagree with her views, you must ask: what does such a critique have to do with Jewish identity? We are constantly

told that we should never conflate Jewish life in, for example, New York, with the Israeli state. And I totally agree with that. To assume that a Jewish person in New York has “loyalty” to Israel – or is responsible for its actions – is undoubtedly anti-Semitic. But unfortunately, that association is precisely what campaigns by pro-Israel and Zionist groups have advanced as common sense within public discourse in the West. As a direct result of such campaigns, now whenever someone dares to criticise Israel in public, and especially when that person is associated with a public institution like a university, they are accused of launching an anti-Semitic attack against the local Jewish community.

The first consequence of this is that voices speaking about the plight of the Palestinian people and their aspirations for freedom and liberation are branded “anti-Semitic” and thus condemned and censored. This can have dire consequences for the lives and livelihoods of these individuals, and contributes greatly to the marginalisation of Palestinian and Arab communities in the West by creating the perception that these communities are intrinsically hateful.

But due to the bravery of people like Fatima who continue to speak up for Palestine despite the heavy price they know they will pay, many in the US and beyond now see right through these campaigns and view the charge of anti-Semitism in such cases as the baseless accusation that it is. In the case of Fatima's commencement speech, for example, the massive applause she received at the end alone proves that her peers – who selected her to deliver the speech in the first place – do not perceive her views as anti-Semitic.

There is, however, another, equally concerning and damaging

consequence of the baseless accusations of anti-Semitism directed at pro-Palestinian voices: they make all charges of anti-Semitism, including very real ones, less convincing.

Indeed, accusing everyone criticising Israel's settler-colonial enterprise of being anti-Semitic is extremely dangerous because it will eventually begin, if it hasn't already, to cast doubt on the very existence of the very real, damaging and pervasive societal ill that is anti-Semitism.

In this context, regardless of its few flaws, the recently released US National Strategy to Counter anti-Semitism appears to be a step in the right direction. The strategy rightly focuses on examples of anti-Semitism rising from conspiracy theories about “Jewish power and control” and even separates what it calls “domestic anti-Semitism” from global anti-Semitism. It does in passing list “efforts to delegitimise the state of Israel” as an example of global anti-Semitism (an assertion I wholeheartedly disagree with for reasons stated above) but beyond that, barely mentions Israel as it focuses on real acts of anti-Semitism rather than politically motivated accusations aimed at shielding Israel from criticism.

Because of this, this new strategy, I believe, may actually help curtail the new and very real wave of anti-Semitism in America. Today, as pro-Israel groups focus on maligning any and all left-wing critiques of the settler colony as “anti-Semitic”, the right wing is rapidly normalising age-old anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about “Jewish power and control”.

Indeed, right-wing politics in the US, drifting ever more to the extreme, are now replete with conspiracies about “globalists” taking over the world, operating vast paedophile rings, stripping ordinary people of their freedoms, committing mass murder with vaccines and so on. Of course “globalist”, for these people, is just a code word for “Jew”. It is critical that such dangerous ideas are properly labelled as anti-Semitic and effectively countered – for the safety and wellbeing of Jewish people as well as society at large. But the more the Israeli lobby and other Zionist groups weaponise anti-Semitism to allow the Israeli state to cement and expand its colonisation of Palestine, the less effective the fight against real anti-Semitism becomes.

With no power and no water at this huge nuclear power plant, the chance of the meltdown of reactors and spent nuclear fuel starts to become plausible. Putin has threat-

ened the West with nuclear weapons since the beginning of this war, but even if this is a hollow threat, ZNPP could still be used as an improvised nuclear weapon, with plausible deniability. It is uncertain what contamination would ensue or where it would go, but it would be a global humanitarian and environmental disaster. The “Special Military Operation” is now in its death throes, with a rampant, confident, well-trained and equipped Ukraine army on the march. It is becoming clearer that the Russian military will hit a speed bump conventionally, and with a leader and army commanders with no morals or scruples we must brace ourselves for further unconventional violence. The attacking of schools and hospitals was a portent of the evil of Putin's regime, and blowing the dam is another move of truly terrible intent. Whatever it takes, we must ensure Ukraine prevails as quickly as possible, as there is still the spectre of escalation to chemical, biological and - terrifyingly - nuclear war.

The Telegraph

We are now dangerously close to nuclear war

Hamish De Bretton-Gordon

THE blowing of the dam at the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant (KHPP) by the Russian state is, quite simply, an act of terror by this terrorist state. With his army failing, his air force stuck in its hangars, it would appear Putin is prepared to do almost anything to cling on to the Russian occupied areas of Ukraine and his throne in the Kremlin. This is another war crime to add to the growing list, a list that includes the unlawful deportation of children - something that led to the International Criminal Court to issue a warrant for his arrest.

The Russian military motivation behind the blast is clear and not unexpected. The vast area to the west of the dam is a 'tank' highway to Crimea, and Putin knows his demoralised forces are likely to collapse in the face of Challenger and Leopard tanks charging towards them. The flooding will likely block this axis for many weeks. The ecological and agricultural damage alone will be legion, and with no power coming out of

KHPP or Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP), Ukraine is going to be short on electricity for a while. This type of terrorism is not new and is to be predicted from the tyrant. I had the honour to be one of the Peshmerga's chemical weapons advisors in the fight with another terror state: IS. In 2017, as the Islamic State was falling in Iraq, they blew up the Al Mishraq sulphur mine south of Mosul. From a tactical perspective this had the same effect as blowing the dam at KHPP. The 400,000 tonnes of very toxic sulphur dioxide went across the route of the advancing Iraqi army's direct approach to Mosul and delayed them for several days, allowing IS to dig deeper into the city. At one point the toxic cloud was heading to the Kurdistan capital Erbil, with over one million people in mortal danger. Thankfully the 'gods' intervened, and the poison dissipated in the high atmosphere. When you have no limits or concern for civilian casualties like IS and Putin, sadly virtually nothing is off limits.

But the Ukrainians are canny, very canny. No doubt the Ukrainian high command will have planned for such an eventuality and will have numerous lines and methods of attacks to rid themselves of this evil scourge. At the early stages it also looks as though the Russian plan may have backfired, with Russian troops defending this sector scrambling for high ground and the water needed for Crimea disappearing into the Black Sea. However, the long-term intended consequence may well be the weaponisation of ZNPP. For months now I have been arguing that Putin would think nothing of triggering some kind of incident there if they felt it would give them a tactical advantage. Some dismissed me. But if the West shrugs now, we take a major step closer to such an incident becoming a horrifying reality.

With no power and no water at this huge nuclear power plant, the chance of the meltdown of reactors and spent nuclear fuel starts to become plausible. Putin has threat-



IT exports to touch \$15b in next 3 years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology, Syed Amin ul Haque on Saturday expressed the hope that IT related exports would reach to \$ 15 billion per annum from the existing \$ 2.6 billion in next three years if the current facilitation extended by the government was continued.

Speaking in the National Assembly here, the minister said IT export was \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2019-20, \$ 2.1 billion in 2020-21 which jumped to \$ 2.6 billion till May, 2023.

He said that the IT industry's confidence was being restored due to the Prime Minister's keen interest in taxation and industry-related matters.

The Minister enlightened about the ongoing projects said objective of these to provide broadband services in under served areas and outlined steps taken to promote the IT and Telecom industry over the past five years.

He highlighted that the IT industry witnessed a remarkable 28% increase in exports in May 2023,

attributing this positive development to the government's efforts.

The minister said the government formulated mobile phone manufacturing policy and today 28 companies were working in Pakistan under the vision of smart phone for all. It would help promote E-banking, E-Commerce, E-agriculture and E-Education etc, he added.

He said made in Pakistan products were also being promoted adding that broad-band consumers witnessed significant increase.

Cutlery association members visits Woman chamber

SIALKOT (APP): A Pakistan Cutlery & Stainless Utensils Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PCSUMEA) visited Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) Sialkot for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing ceremony.

Both the organizations signed the MoU to enhance partnership that would be designed to build the institutional capacity of agencies involved in Women Entrepreneurs development, representing them at all national and international forums, to support women empowerment.

The parties shall endeavor to undertake the professional training programs, exchange of technical know-how, joint research, innovation, commercialization activities and collaborate on Project Institute of



ISLAMABAD: A throng of people purchasing ice from a roadside vendor during a scorching weather in twin cities.

Collection of duties, taxes on 27th, 28th & 30th

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Pursuant to the request of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), following instructions regarding observance of banking hours and clearing/settlement of tax receipts on 27th, 28th & 30th June 2023, are issued for compliance by all banks in order to facilitate the taxpayers:

On Thursday, June 27, 2023 all Banks and SBP BSC field offices will

remain open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for same day clearing whereas on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 all those branches of Banks that remain open on Saturdays will remain open from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for same day clearing. NBP Custom House Branch will remain open on Friday, June 30, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for special clearing to be held on 3rd July, 2023 at 09:00 AM (value date of 30th June 2023).

For the purpose of closing exercise for FY2022-23, to be held on 3rd July 2023, SBP's core banking as well as Pakistan Real-time Interbank Settlement Mechanism (PRISM) will be operating in value date of 30th June 2023. Banks and M/s NIFT shall accordingly define 30th June 2023, as working day in their systems so as to enable settlement of special clearings, to be held on 3rd July 2023, in value date of 30th June 2023.

Court Notice

IN the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No.343/1.Institution.31/12/2021. Date of hearing. 8/7/2023.Mst Bibi Reda VS Hizbullahvetc.Notice to No 40. Husainullah s/o Muhibullah.60. Sher Afzal.61 Lal Mohamad sons of Taizar (Gujor)residents of Juga Chamlia tehsel Mandamr district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 8/7/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

IN the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal No.81/13. Institution 14/9/2022. Date of hearing. 6/7/2023. Bakhti Ajmal etc VS Badshahi Room etc.Notice to 10/1. Abdul Waris Khan. 10/2.Hidayatullah.10/3. Jkramullah. 10/4.Sahib Roz Khan sons of Abdul H a m e d . 1 0 / 5 . M s t Zenat.10/6.Mst Robenat daughters of Abdul Hamed. 11.Sher Nawab Khan s/o Jamroz Khan. 16.Hamdarzay s/o Ranezay. 20. Amerullah Khan s/o Masood Khan. 27.Amer Bahadur s/o Sadullah Jan. 32.Sher Azam Khan s/o Jamroz Khan. 36.Zardullah Khan s/o Alam Shah. 37.Ajmal Khan s/o Shahi Room.42.Said Akbar Shah s/o Rehmat Shah.44.Fazal Husain s/o Said Hakim Shah residents of Anghapur tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 6/7/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte.Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Pakistan's HC, foreign ministry team visit SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Pakistan's High Commissioner to Rwanda Naemullah Khan, along with a delegation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, here on Saturday.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir and Vice President Amir Majeed Sheikh welcomed the guests. During a meeting, the SCCI president emphasised the need to further increase trade volume between the two countries. He said the current trade volume between the two countries was very small,

which the business communities of both countries could increase through mutual trade efforts.

Ghafoor Malik suggested a few measures for expansion of trade between the two countries, saying both countries should facilitate single-country trade exhibitions and encourage frequent exchanges of trade delegations; the Rwanda businesses should be encouraged to explore joint venture possibilities in Pakistan, and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) should be signed to find new ways of cooperation between the trade bodies of the two countries.

He said Sialkot city was manufacturing surgical instruments, leather products and gloves of all sorts, textiles items, sports wear, martial arts uniforms and accessories, musical instruments, kitchen ware and

table ware, hollow ware, hunting knives, table cutlery/ flatware, and military uniform badges. He suggested the Rwandan traders should import these products from Sialkot.

The delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said "we are going to establish a separate window for the business community to facilitate them at the Foreign Office and other camp offices across Pakistan".

They said that 45 per cent people come from Gujranwala division to the Foreign Office for document attestations.

The business community of Sialkot stressed to open a camp office at SCCI premises. President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce offered a high commissioner to set up a camp office in SCCI.

The meeting was attended by the business community of Sialkot.

China's postal industry registers stable growth

BEIJING (APP): China's postal industry witnessed stable growth in both business revenue and parcel volume in the first five months of this year, official data showed.

The sector raked in 596.39 billion yuan (about 83.07 billion US dollars) in business revenue during the period, 12.2 percent higher compared to a year ago, according to the State Post Bureau. In May alone, the business revenue totaled

123.19 billion yuan, up by 12.2 percent.

Some 60.28 billion parcels were delivered in the January-May period, increasing 14.3 percent year on year. The figure was 13.48 billion last month, up by 16.5 percent.

The expansion of the postal industry was in part driven by robust online shopping and sent a positive signal that the country's consumption is steadily recovering.

Vietnam, SK to expand economic ties

HANOI (APP): South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol wrapped up a three-day state visit to Vietnam on Saturday.

Yoon and Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong on Friday agreed to strengthen economic and security ties through the signing of 17 agreements on a number of issues during a summit meeting in the country's capital Hanoi.

South Korean leader put a heavy emphasis on boosting bilateral trade, stating that it was "more important than ever" given the ongoing global headwinds.

The two leaders agreed to achieve the target of 150 billion US dollars in bilateral trade by 2030.

ICCI hails Zardari's proposal for Charter of Economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Saturday welcomed the statement of former president and co-chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Asif Ali Zardari regarding the Charter of Economy among all political parties to overcome the economic challenges, which was faced by the country.

The business community of the federal capital strongly supports this proposal, he said in a statement received here.

He further said that the his (former president's) address to the business community in Lahore was a reflection of the true understanding of the economic problems faced by the country.

He said that his suggestion to give the most important ministries related to the economy to people associated with the business community was also a step towards solving economic problems.

He said that his suggestion of cotton cultivation in Jhal Magsi area of Balochistan can be a milestone for achieving quality production as well as development of the province.

He said that lack of long-term planning and in continuity in policies were the main reason of the economic problems that were faced by the country today.

The former president offered the business community that he was ready to strike a deal with all political parties on the issue of economy, which was highly commendable Initiative, he remarked.

He said that the Pakistan People's Party was the largest political party in Pakistan and the second largest party in the current coalition government and urged all other parties to

positively respond the offer for turning around the national economy.

Ahsan Zafar said that a grand national dialogue on the issue of economy was the needs time and the Islamabad Chamber being the representative chamber of the federal capital and the country, was ready to play its full role to organize such debates and dialogue.

He said that the former president's vision regarding regional connectivity was commendable.

Pak-Iran gas pipeline can be the best alternative to solve energy problems, he added.

LCCI welcomes politicians' response to Charter of Economy initiative

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Saturday welcomed the positive gesture of politicians for the Charter of Economy initiative.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar told the media that it was the result of LCCI's untiring efforts. "It is good omen that politicians have taken the LCCI suggestion for Charter of Economy seriously," he added.

He said that he had urged the politicians at every forum including Senate of Pakistan that the political parties should set aside their differences and sign a Charter of Economy

for revival of national economy. He said the Lahore Chamber had also worked out a Charter of Economy and shared it with the political parties for the sake of economy. He vowed that the Lahore Chamber would extend all possible cooperation for this cause.

Kashif Anwar said that a comprehensive Charter of Economy would attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and promote local investment as key drivers of economic recovery. He said that the Charter of Economy should encompass a range of strategic measures, including policies to enhance the ease of doing

business, establish investor-friendly regulations, develop robust infrastructure, and foster a conducive environment for domestic and international investors.

"These initiatives would revitalize economic growth, generate employment opportunities, and stimulate sustainable development across various sectors," he said. The LCCI president's plea for political parties to unite under the Charter of Economy was based on the understanding that the stability and prosperity of the nation depend on collective action and shared responsibility.

"By setting aside partisan

interests and focusing on the well-being of the economy, it is hoped that political leaders will pave the way for a brighter future, ensuring stability, progress, and prosperity for all citizens. As the nation grapples with the aftermath of recent political unrest, the implementation of a comprehensive Charter of Economy stands as a beacon of hope, offering a pathway to economic recovery and the restoration of investor confidence. The time is now for political parties to pay heed to the call for unity and join forces in charting a course towards a resilient and thriving national economy," he added.

FCCI chief asks members to attend FoodAg-2023 in Karachi

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) President Dr. Khurram Tariq said on Saturday that 'Food and agriculture exhibition' will pave the way for value addition industry at grass-roots level, and open new avenues of surplus food products on sustained basis.

He was addressing an awareness session about FoodAg-2023, to be organized by TDAP on August 10-12 at Expo Centre Karachi.

"280 exhibitors from 55 countries are expected to participate in it while more than one hundred products would be displayed and 500-800 foreign buyers are expected to attend it," he said and added that the

FCCI members must participate in it to enhance Pakistan's contribution to global food basket.

He said that well before the start of the exhibition, the TDAP must issue a final list of products with their domestic and international demand and price. "It would help us to make accurate estimates to meet our domestic needs and

export only surplus produce to earn foreign exchange," he said and added that in the absence of a basic date, we may create shortage of commodities in our domestic market.

Similarly, TDAP must identify measures to increase per acre yield with value addition in collaboration with foreign investors through enhanced linkages.

From door-to-door salesman to marketing maestro: Tahir Malik's trailblazing journey of empowerment and economic impact

Javed Malik

In the dynamic landscape of the 21st century, marketing has emerged as a powerful force that shapes society, fuels economic growth, and empowers both businesses and consumers. It serves as a vital bridge, facilitating the exchange of goods and services while disseminating valuable information. Marketing not only empowers consumers with many choices but also propels businesses toward growth and success. Whether conventional or digital, marketing informs, creates awareness, and influences public opinion on products, services, and social issues. It impacts the economy, fostering competition, spurring innovation, and ultimately leading to job creation and wealth generation.

One remarkable example of the transformative power of marketing professionals can be seen in the story of Tahir Malik, a visionary marketer who recognized the vast potential of mar-

keting during his visit to the United States in the early 2000s. Inspired by the enormous benefits it offered to professionals and society, Tahir embarked on a journey to master the field of marketing.

Tahir's path to success began in 2002 when he courageously entered the sales department of Worldcall Private Limited, Lahore's pioneering and largest cable network, selling cable connections door-to-door without receiving any compensation for several months. This remarkable experience provided him with invaluable insights into business and marketing, fueling his determination to learn more and significantly impact more.

It was his zeal to learn more that led to his enrollment in the MBA program, specializing in Marketing, from the prestigious University of Central Punjab and graduating in 2005 at the top of his class. Even before completing his degree, Tahir garnered mul-

multiple job offers from prestigious companies. He chose to join Mobilink, Pakistan's largest telecom company, renowned for its commitment to nurturing bright talent and offering promising career prospects. Starting in the customer service department, Tahir quickly realized that his true calling lay in marketing and creating a broader societal impact.

Tahir's journey took an exciting turn when he joined Pakistan State Oil (PSO), the country's premier oil marketing company, as a Management Trainee in the retail department. His keen market analysis, strategic insights, and exceptional sales skills played a pivotal role in identifying untapped market opportunities in smaller cities and rural areas like Sargodha, Khushab, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur, Faisalabad, and Lahore. Through innovative marketing campaigns, effective sales strategies, and dedicated promotion of PSO prod-

ucts, Tahir drove substantial revenue growth and catalyzed business activity, job creation, and overall economic development in these regions. Recognizing his outstanding performance, Tahir received accolades as the "Best Sales & Marketing Manager Nationwide."

Driven by a deep commitment to promoting Pakistani products and services, Tahir remained steadfastly loyal to PSO despite receiving tempting offers from numerous multinational corporations. As a Business Manager, he played a pivotal role in transforming PSO's retail network from outdated establishments into vibrant, customer-centric outlets. Tahir's exceptional marketing strategies revitalized the business landscape, generating increased economic activity and benefiting local communities. Additionally, he spearheaded the introduction of environmentally friendly fuel options, such as Ethanol-mixed fuel, and successful-

ly launched PSO's first synthetic range of lubricants. Tahir enhanced their visibility and competitiveness in the Pakistani market by showcasing the quality and uniqueness of PSO's offerings.

Tahir's impact extended beyond sales and marketing. Within PSO, he actively promoted corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs and championed Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) policies. As the Regional Sales Manager (Incharge of the Punjab Division) in the HSE department, Tahir trained thousands of personnel on HSE initiatives, ensuring that PSO's business activities aligned with health, safety, and environmental values. His contributions to HSE and CSR strategies furthered the overall welfare and development of the communities PSO served.

In 2019 recognizing the increasing influence of e-commerce and digital marketing in Pakistan, Tahir transitioned to a tech start-

up called "CodeBuilderz" as Director of Marketing, Sales, and Strategic Planning. In these new roles, he guided businesses in establishing a robust online presence, implementing effective e-commerce strategies, and expanding their customer bases. Through his expertise, Tahir facilitated the growth of Pakistani businesses and attracted international clients, leading to an influx of foreign reserves and contributing to the country's economic development.

Beyond corporate jobs, Tahir actively worked as a business consultant for many local start-ups and international firms and was able to attract foreign investment to Pakistan. Leveraging his insights into the country's potential, market advantages, and investment opportunities, he consulted with foreign investors, facilitating their entry into Pakistan's untapped digital market. This endeavor culminated in the launch of Pakistan's

first digital matchmaking platform, "qaboolhai.com," in 2023, fostering economic partnerships and injecting capital for crucial development projects.

Furthermore, Tahir played a pivotal role in promoting tourism in Pakistan by collaborating with a dynamic tourism start-up called "Vacations Travel and Tours." Through comprehensive tourism marketing plans, digital platforms, and strategic engagements with local and international companies, Tahir successfully attracted tourists, stimulated the tourism industry, generated revenue for local communities, and positioned Pakistan as one of the desired tourist destinations in 2021.

Lastly, Tahir's commitment to education and societal development led him to engage in consumer awareness initiatives actively. Tahir diligently educated Pakistani consumers about responsible consumption, their rights, and ethical practices through his role as a visiting faculty member,

workshops, and training sessions. Tahir contributed to a more informed and empowered society by empowering individuals with knowledge.

In summary, Tahir Malik's extraordinary journey from a door-to-door cable seller to one of Pakistan's foremost marketing experts exemplifies the profound impact and significance of marketing in our society. Through his exceptional expertise, strategic acumen, and unwavering dedication to creating a positive societal impact, Tahir spearheaded economic growth, promoted Pakistani products and services, championed social impact initiatives, facilitated e-commerce and digital transformation, attracted foreign investment, stimulated tourism, and empowered consumers. His story illuminates the transformative power of marketing professionals in driving societal change, fostering economic development, and shaping a better future for all.



In brief

Asian Hockey Champions Trophy to start from Aug 3

KARACHI (PPD): Asian Hockey Federation announced the schedule of Asian Champions Trophy. The Champion's Trophy will be played from August 3 to 12 in Chennai, India. A single pool was created for all the teams involved in the event. The teams include India, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and China. Pakistan will play their first match against Malaysia on August 3. Pakistan will face arch rival India on August 9.

England call up Rehan to squad

LONDON (AFP): Teenage leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed has been added to England's squad for the second Ashes Test against Australia as cover for Moeen Ali. Ahmed, 18, became the youngest man to play Test cricket for England when he was picked to play in Pakistan in December. The Leicestershire player made an eye-catching debut for Ben Stokes's side in Karachi, taking seven wickets in the match and 5-48 in the second innings. But Ahmed has taken just six wickets in seven matches in the second division of the County Championship this season, at an average of more than 67. Off-spinning all-rounder Moeen struggled with a finger blister in the dramatic first Test at Edgbaston, which Australia won by two wickets. The 36-year-old, who was playing in his first Test for two years, still hopes to be fit for the second match of the five-game series at Lord's, starting on Wednesday. There is also the possibility that England will select a four-man seam attack augmented by Joe Root's part-time spin.

Asian countries aim to quit Boxing Association

BANGKOK (Reuters): The Asian Boxing Confederation said it aims to withdraw from the embattled International Boxing Association (IBA) after the global governing body was stripped of its Olympic recognition for failing to meet a set of reforms. The Asian group's board of directors met in Bangkok on Thursday and Friday after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) expelled the IBA over a failure to complete reforms on governance, finance and ethical issues. The board recommended an extraordinary congress to amend its constitution and allow it to join a federation recognised by the IOC, president Pichai Chunhavanjira wrote in a letter on Friday to the body's 43 member nations. A date for the congress has not been decided. This year's Asian Boxing Championships have been postponed until further notice, including the youth and junior championships scheduled for July 14 in Astana, Kazakhstan. "As a confederation we believe that the Olympics represent the pinnacle of athletic achievement," wrote Chunhavanjira, who is a member of the IBA board of directors due to his position as ASBC president. "The Asian Boxing Confederation wants to assure our national federations, boxers and supporters that we remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting the sport of boxing and supporting our athletes within Asia and on the international stage." An IOC extraordinary session approved an executive board recommendation to withdraw the IBA's recognition by a 69-1 vote. The Olympic body had suspended the IBA in 2019 over governance, finance, refereeing and ethical issues.

Pakistan clinches two more gold medals in Special Olympics

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): In a major achievement, Pakistan on Saturday won two more gold medals during the ongoing 16th Special Olympic World Games in Germany, pushing their overall gold tally to 9.

As per details, Pakistan's athlete Muhammad Luqman won the gold medal in the 100-metre race while powerlifter Habibullah bagged the gold medal in the 83kg category for the deadlift.

Luqman won the race by covering the 100-metre distance in 15.21 seconds. He also clinched the silver medal in the long jump event. Habibullah, however, bagged silver medals in bench press and combined weight.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Mirwaiz won the silver medal in the 300-metre race by covering the distance in



Pakistan's athlete Muhammad Luqman celebrates his victory.

10.11 minutes.

A day earlier, Pakistan's Faiza Nasir and Naheen Khan won the gold medal in the Badminton Women's Doubles Unified event of the ongoing Special Olympic.

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.

On this occasion, Faiza and Naheen stated that they were happy to win the gold for the country.

"We are very happy that our hard work paid off and we were able to win a gold medal for our country. Our coaches played an important role in our success. We will

try our best to maintain this streak of success in future events as well," the duo said.

Head coach Mutahir Sohail and coach Qamar Ali Mona of Faiza and Naheen 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.

Netherlands storm into CWC Qualifier Super Sixes as Nepal crash out

HARARE (Agencies): Logan van Beek's career-best bowling figures of 4-24 followed by a sensational 90-run knock by Max O'Dowd powered Netherlands into the Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier Super Sixes.

After sending Nepal to bat first, the Dutch bowlers trounced on their batting lineup and booked them for a skimpy 167 as van Beek led the attack with a four-for.

The Asian side, after getting off to a poor start, lost wickets at regular intervals and were eventually bundled out for 167 in the 45th over.

Skipper Rohit Paudel offered brief retaliation with a cautious 33 off 55 deliveries but could not manage to get the behold of his side's struggling batting.

Opening batter Kushal Bhurtel and lower-order batter Sandeep Lamichhane were the other notable run-getters for the side as they scored 27 each. The rest of the Nepal batters made insignificant contributions with the bat as they seemed clueless against a disciplined Dutch bowling attack.

Logan van Beek led the ruthless bowling charge of the Netherlands with four wickets, followed by two each by Bas de Leede and Vikramjit Singh. Set to chase 167, the Netherlands comfortably completed the pursuit for the loss of just three wickets and 137 balls to spare.

Opening batter Max O'Dowd spearheaded Netherlands' run chase with a brisk 90-run knock and top-scored before perishing on the first delivery of the 27th over when his side needed just 10 more runs.

He faced 75 deliveries and smashed eight boundaries and four sixes during his brilliant knock. His opening partner Vikramjit Singh (30) and Bas de Leede (41*) also made significant contributions and paved the way for a comfortable victory for the Netherlands.

Raza masterclass aids Zimbabwe to thrash West Indies in CWC Qualifier

HARARE (Agencies): Sikandar Raza put on a brilliant all-round show and propelled Zimbabwe to a stunning 35-run victory over West Indies in the 13th match of the Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier on Saturday.

In a hill-hill Group A clash, hosts Zimbabwe handed a 35-run thrashing to former champions West Indies and solidify their grasp on the top spot in the standings.

Dynamic all-rounder Sikandar Raza was the star of the show as he backed his sensational 68-run knock with two wickets and earned the Player of the Match award for his brilliance. Put into bat first, Zimbabwe accumulated a par 268-run total before bundling out in the final over.

The home side had a promising start to their innings as openers Joylord Gumbie and Craig Ervine raised 63 runs for the first wicket until the former perished in the 16th over.

Gumbie could score 26 off 50 deliveries with the help of two boundaries and a six. His dismissal triggered a brief collapse and the hosts, consequently, slipped to 112/4 in the 25th over with Ervine and Sean Williams also walking back.

Ervine remained the notable run-getter for Zimbabwe with a 58-ball 47 which featured seven boundaries while Williams could score 23 off 26.

Following the slump, Sikandar Raza once again stood up for his team in CWC Qualifier and stitched a crucial 87-run partnership with Ryan Burl and both scored half-centuries.

The duo counter-attacked the West Indian bowlers and scored at a rapid pace until Akeal Hosein trapped Burl in his legs soon after the latter raised his bat for a well-crafted half-century.

Ryan Burl scored 50 off 57 deliveries, laced with five boundaries and a six.



Tadiwanashe Marumani consoles Akeal Hosein after the game

Sikandar Raza then put on a brief partnership with Clive Madane (5) before finally perishing in the 46th over and Zimbabwe, as a result, had their batting tail exposed. Raza top-scored for Zimbabwe with a brisk 58-ball 68 which included six boundaries and two sixes.

The West Indian bowlers then soon wrapped up Zimbabwe's innings by bundling them out on the penultimate delivery of the innings with 268 runs on the scoreboard. Keemo Paul led the bowling charge for West Indies with three wickets but was expensive, followed by Alzarri Joseph and Akeal Hosein who took two each.

Set to chase 269, West Indies could only raise 233 before being bowled in the 45th over despite Kyle Mayers' half-century.

West Indies too, had a decent start to their innings as their openers raised a quick 43-run opening partnership which lasted with Brandon King's (20 off 12) departure in the seventh over. Following his dismissal, the Caribbean side dealt with another blow as Johnson Charles fell three overs later, scoring one off five.

With their side two down

for 46 in the 10th over, Kyle Mayers received was joined by skipper Shai Hope at the crease.

The pair briefly stopped the flow of wickets and took West Indies past the 100-run mark but Wellington Masakadza drew a massive breakthrough in the 21st over as he got rid of Mayers.

Mayers remained the top-scorer for West Indies in the run chase with 56 from 72 balls with the help of eight boundaries and a six.

West Indies then began to lose wickets at regular intervals and despite some notable contributions in the middle by skipper Shai Hope (34) and Nicholas Pooran (30), they slipped to 180/6 in the 33rd over.

Roston Chase, the only batter who hung in there for the West Indies, fell in the 43rd over after a gutsy 44-run knock and Zimbabwe moved just one wicket away from claiming a morale-boosting victory over the West Indies.

Tendai Chatara soon picked up the last wicket in his next over by dismissing Alzarri Joseph and drove Zimbabwe to their third consecutive victory in the CWC Qualifier.

Kuwait humble Pakistan in SAFF Championship

BENGALURU (Monitoring Desk): Mubarak Al Fanani scored twice and powered Kuwait to a dominant 4-0 victory over Pakistan in the ongoing South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship on Saturday.

Kuwait started their second fixture of the SAFF Championship campaign on a high as the side took an early lead just 10 minutes into the game as Hasan Al Enezi fired the opener after a patient build-up from the right flank.

Al Enezi received a fine cross on the far post and made a gentle touch before burying the ball into the net.

Mubarak Al Fanani then doubled Kuwait's lead in the 17th minute by tapping the ball in after Alrashidi had plenty of room to run into on the break before aiding the goalscorer as Pakistan's defence was exposed.

The green shirts then made desperate efforts to

push their way back into the game after being put under immense pressure but failed to breach Kuwait's defence. Kuwait then put on a cagey show as the contest moved closer to the break and held possession without making any further attempts.

As the game further advanced, Kuwait finally dropped their plan of playing defensively and made a move towards Pakistan's post after a swift build-up from the midfield. Mubarak Al Fanani was once again there for Kuwait and he dodged the charging Pakistan goalkeeper by chipping the ball over his head and into the net in the dying minutes of the first half.

Kuwait went into the break with a convincing 3-0 lead over Pakistan, who were in dire need to produce a contrasting outcome in the second half.

However, the second

half also followed the same pattern as Kuwait once again looked more threatening with their possession and attempts. Kuwait soon converted their dominance into the fourth goal after Eid Khaled Al Rashedi made no mistake in guiding the ball into the net in the 69th minute.

This was Pakistan's straight second defeat in the ongoing SAFF Championship and came two days after they suffered a 0-4 loss at the hands of India. On the contrary, Kuwait registered their second consecutive win in the tournament and firm their hold on top of Group A standings.

In today's second fixture, hosts India will lock horns with Nepal. A victory for India would propel them and invitee Kuwait into the semi-finals of the event while Nepal and Pakistan would crash out.

Qadeer Rehman wins Hashim Khan KP Junior U17 Squash title

PESHAWAR (APP): Qadeer Rehman clinched the trophy of the Hashim Khan KP Junior Squash Championship U17 category organized by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association which concluded here on Saturday.

Former World Champion Mohib Ullah Khan was the chief guest on this occasion who witnessed the final of the U11, U13, U15 and U17 category along with Women Senior Squash final. Chairman of KP Squash Association and Squash Legend Qamar Zaman, Sajjad Khalil, Executive Member and Director Blue Tone Academy Wazir Gul, Chief Referee Munawar

Zaman, coaches and players were also present.

In the final of the U17 category Qadeer Rehman defeated Muhammad Furqan by 4-11, 11-7, 11-4 and 11-3 in a one-sided affair. In the U15 final Talal Rehman recorded victory against Abdullah Zaman in another one-sided match, the score was 11-3, 11-6 and 11-6.

In the Under-13 final, Danish Sikandar defeated Abdul Kabir by 3-0, the score was 13-11, 13-11 and 11-5. Abdul Kabir gave a tough resistance to Danish Sikander in the first and second sets wherein they were stretched to 13-11 in each set. However, Danish Sikander did not take

much time in the third and decisive sets and marched into victory at 11-5. In the U11 final Ayan Mehboob defeated Ahmad Ali Naz by 3-0, the score was 11-8, 11-9 and 11-9.

In the Women Senior category Pakistan No. 1 Sana Bahadur of Pakistan Army in the Junior category, recorded victory against Kainat Amir, also from Pakistan Army by 3-0, the score was 11-6, 11-9 and 12-10. Sana Bahadur fully dominated the proceedings and did not allow her rival to play with free hands.

At the end of the final, the chief guest Mohib Ullah Khan gave away trophies and cash prizes to the winners and runners-up.

Kvitova ousts Garcia to reach Berlin semi-finals



BERLIN (Agencies): Former Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova edged Caroline Garcia 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) to seal her spot in the semi-finals of the rain-hit WTA German Open in Berlin on Saturday.

The seventh-seeded Czech -- Wimbledon champion in 2011 and 2014 -- built on a solid first serve to defeat her third-seeded rival.

"I never played her on this surface and it was an advan-

tage for me," said the 33-year-old Czech. "It's sweet revenge after my defeat in the Cincinnati final (last year)."

The quarter and semi-finals are being played on Saturday, after rain washed

out play on Friday in the traditional Wimbledon warm-up. France's Garcia, the world number four, had been in the game until conceding her serve in the seventh game of the first set which the Czech won in 52 minutes.

She saved break points in the second set, notably at 4-4, but was unable to match Kvitova in the tie-break with the Czech player sweeping 7 points to 3. Kvitova next takes on 22nd-ranked Ekaterina Alexandrova who advanced to the last four after fellow Russian Veronika Kudermetova withdrew.

Croatia's Donna Vekic beat Russia's Elina Avanesyan 6-2, 7-6 (7/0) to reach her first grass-court semi-final in four years.

She next plays Greek sixth seed Maria Sakkari who battled past Czech Marketa Vondrousova 7-6 (9/7), 6-1 to reach her fifth semi-final of the year.

Mohmand District with two gold medals win general trophy in Inter-Madrasas Games



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mohmand District clinched the general trophy after two gold medals after winning gold medal in volleyball and Qirat competition in the Inter-Madrasas Games of the Merged Tribal Areas, which concluded here on Saturday.

Secretary Sports Merged Areas Pir Abdullah Shah, District Sports Officer Sub-Division Dara Adam Khan Sajid Khan Afridi, DSP Amjad Khan, Secretary General Merged Areas Volleyball Association Khurshed Iqbal, Coordinator Awan Hussain, Raid Gul Molagori, Director Events Ayub Khan, players, officials and large number of spectators were also present.

The players of Mohmand district claimed the major trophy by winning gold medals in two different events -- Volleyball and Qirat competitions by giving excellent performances. Khyber district won the trophy of football by defeating sub-division Kohat 6-5 on penalty shoot-out after a sensational match of the football final organized at Tahamas Khan Football Stadium. Qari Mohammad Ehsan of Mohmand district won the first position, Qari Mohibullah of Khyber district

won the second position and Jahanzeb Ali of Karam district won the third position.

After Mohmand, Bajaur got second position by winning gold in Tug-of-War and silver medal in cricket while Khyber remained at third after winning gold medal in football event. It should be noted that last year the children of the religious madrasas of Bajaur performed beyond the expectations and came first in cricket, badminton, tug-of-war, volleyball and second in athletics shot put competition. The general trophy was won by getting the position. North Waziristan was second and Khyber was third.

In the final held at PSB Gymnasium Hall, district Mohmand defeated Peshawar sub-division by 3-2 after a sensational contest. The score was 23-25, 27-29, 25-22, 25-21 and 15-11. In the cricket final held at Islamia College University ground wherein Peshawar defeated Bajaur by 8 wickets. Bajaur won the toss and batted first and scored 72 runs, in which Abdul Rehman scored 18 runs and Waqas scored 15 runs. In response, Peshawar sub-division achieved the target at the loss of two wickets.

On this occasion, Vice Chancellor Islamia College University Prof. Gul Majeed Khan distributed prizes

among the players along with Director Sports Pir Abdullah Shah Islamia College Director Sports Ali Hoti. AD Sports Raheed Gul Malagori and other personalities were present.

Talking to the media Vice Chancellor Islamia College Peshawar Gul Majeed Khan appreciated Director Sports Merged Areas and his teams for successfully holding five different events during the second Inter-Madrasas Games.

Secretary Sports Captain (Rtd) Mushtaq Ahmed said that Madrasas Games aim to attract Madrasas students towards sports activities. The Madrasas students should be encouraged as sports are very important for mental and physical development. He said that there was a general impression that students of madrasas were not interested in sports, which the participation of a large number of students in these games proved that the students of madrasas were no less than anyone else and had their own interest in sports as well as academic activities.

Mushtaq Ahmad said that he is grateful to the scholars who contributed to make this event a success. He said that games will be organized for the students of other Madrasas of the province like the merged districts in future.



In brief

IRSA releases 303,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 303,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 436,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1470.55 feet and was 72.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 223,200 cusecs and 150,300 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 186,700, 137,900, 81,600 and 32,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 67,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 51,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Sultan Rahi remembered on birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Famous film actor Sultan Rahi, the most popular Punjabi hero during the 1970s and 1980s at Pakistan's silver screen was remembered on his birth anniversary on Saturday. Born on June 24, 1938, his real name was Muhammad Sultan. His film career began in 1959 with his appearance as a guest actor in the film 'Baghi'. During a career spanning 40 years, he acted in over 700 Punjabi films and 100 Urdu films, winning around 160 awards. Rahi earned two Nigar Awards for his work in 'Babul' (1971) and 'Basheera' (1972). Director Aslam Dar's film 'Bashira' proved to be the first milestone in his career. His most prominent films include 'Maula Jutt', 'Warryam', 'Sher Khan' and 'Godfather'. His pairing with actress Asia and Anjuman was favourite among the viewers and his last movie was with actress Saima. Sultan Rahi was murdered by unidentified persons on January 9, 1996, during a highway robbery on the Grand Trunk Road near Gujranwala, while returning to Lahore from Islamabad.

Eight gamblers booked during raid

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested eight gamblers and recovered bet money Rs 24,560, 08 mobile phones from their custody here on Saturday. Race Course police conducted raid and arrested gamblers who were identified as Qasim, Hamza, Ehtsham, Suleman, Shahab, Hayat, Agha Hasan and Azhar. Police have registered separate cases against all of them under gambling act and further investigation was in progress. SP Potohar commended police team and said that gambling was the root of other social evils. He said the accused involved in such crimes cannot escape from the grip of the law and action against gamblers will be continued.

04 stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested three members gang involved in motorcycle theft and recovered four stolen motorcycles and weapons from their possession during the crackdown launched here on Saturday. The accused arrested were identified as Waqas alias Vicky, Sohail and Fawad Khan. Police have registered separate cases against them and started further investigations. Superintendent of Police (SP) Rawal Faisal Saleem hailed the performance of Rata Amral Police and said.



ISLAMABAD: A view of rainy weather in capital city after hot and humpty days. —INP Photo

ANF recovers 94 kg drugs; arrests 11 accused including two women

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 94 kg of drugs and arrested 11 accused including two women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that in an operation near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad, ANF recovered 4.5 kg heroin concealed in a motorcycle. ANF also arrested an accused resident of Sargodha.

In another operation near Hafizabad Road, Gujranwala, 9.6 kg opium and 24.4 kg charras were recovered from the possession of a drug smuggler, resident of Gujranwala.

In third operation conducted near M-2, Saleem

Interchange, 18 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of four drug pushers including two women, residents of Rawalpindi.

The spokesman further informed that in an operation at DHL Office in Kot Lakhpat Lahore, 830 grams heroin concealed in dress T-shirts was recovered from a parcel being sent to Doha.

In fifth operation conducted near Al-Asif Square Karachi, 14.6 kg opium and four kg charras were recovered from a vehicle while an accused resident of Naseerabad was rounded up.

ANF also seized four kg Ice drug from a motorcycle intercepted near Ayub Hotel in National Highway Hyderabad area. Two accused resident of Matari were netted during the

operation.

In seventh operation near Machni Checkpost near Torkham, ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Torkham to Peshawar and recovered five kg Ice drug from a vehicle.

He informed that in eighth operation conducted near Landi Kotal area, one kg Ice drug was recovered from the possession of an Afghan national.

In ninth operation near Khar area of Bajaur, 3.5 kg Ice drug was seized while in tenth operation conducted in a deserted area near Sindna Khyber, 4.8 kg charras was recovered.

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

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Saturday issued 2-day power suspension programme for Sunday and Monday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Sunday From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, New Wahidabad, Tramuri Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 6:00 PM, SES (Independent Feeder), From 09:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, IST, New Rawat Feeders,

Jhelum Circle, F-3 Gul Afshan Feeder On Sunday from 09:00 AM to 2:00 PM Islamabad Circle, Anguri, NCP, Mangyal, Shahdara, Shahpur, Khayaban Iqbal, Pir Suhawah, Q u a i d - e - A z a m University, Punjab House, Buri Imam, Mandala, Athal, NIH Feeders Rawalpindi City Circle, People's Colony, Azizabad, Nogazi, Bajniyal Feeder, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, FECHS, Swan Garden-I, PWD-I, NPF-I, Dr. Town Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Garmala, Chhapran Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Khanpur Feeder, From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Park View, Pindibor, Jail Park-I, Car Chowk, Mehboob Shaheed Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 13:00 PM, Attock Circle, Shikardra, Kamra Rural, Mansar, Gondal, Haji Shah, Hameed, Ghorghashti, Bara Zee, Maskinabad, Shah Dir, Radio Pak-I, Radio Pak. II, Larnpur, Qaziabad, GBHP Colony feeders, From 06:00 AM to 18:00 PM, GSO Circle, City II, Charuhi feeders and surrounding areas.

NA speaker refers 'highlighted issues' to concerned committees

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ahsraf on Saturday referred all the highlighted issues to the concerned committee for further discussion and deliberation.

The speaker emphasized that the outcomes of these discussions must be shared with the House.

One of the issues brought forward was raised by Minister for Narcotics

Control Nawabzada Shazain Bugti, who drew attention to the problem of gas load-shedding in the Balochistan province. Additionally, Bugti highlighted the increased gas bills faced by residents of the province.

The concerned committee, composed of members from various parties, will now analyze and deliberate on these matters. The objective is to arrive at

viable solutions and recommendations that address the concerns and interests of the members and the public they represent.

The referral of these issues to the concerns committee reflects the commitment of the National Assembly to address the grievances of its members and work towards resolving pertinent challenges faced by the citizens of Balochistan.

Local population has first right on natural resources: Shazia Marri

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Mari emphasized that the constitution and the directives of the Supreme Court explicitly stated that the first right to natural resources belonged to the local population.

Expressing concerns related to the utilization of natural resources in the National Assembly here Saturday, she highlighted the importance of abiding by the constitution and the orders issued by the Supreme Court.

She reiterated that these legal frameworks clearly define that the initial entitlement to natural resources rests with the local population.

The minister emphasized the significance of ensuring that the rights of the local communities are

respected and protected. By adhering to the constitutional provisions and Supreme Court directives, equitable access and fair distribution of natural resources can be achieved, ultimately benefiting the people residing in the respective regions, she expressed.

She reiterated that the relevant districts in Sindh should be given priority in receiving gas, as the province or region with a gas well has the primary entitlement to its utilization, which ultimately benefits the people residing in that area.

Federal Minister for Water Resources, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, highlighted water-related issues pertaining to irrigation in the lower and border areas of Sindh.

Acknowledging the

failure in addressing electricity load shedding, he drew attention to the significant 20 percent line losses in Sindh alone that require immediate attention.

Shah mentioned the existence of five grid stations in Sindh, each with a capacity of 66 kilowatts.

He noted that while the Rohri and Nara Canals were currently flowing at full capacity, there was a shortage of water in the lower and border areas.

He assured that water was being supplied to Balochistan according to its specific requirements.

Furthermore, Shah acknowledged the challenges in Kherthar but conveyed optimistic news that water is available and efforts are being made to provide even more water to the region.

Over Rs 41.37 trillion charged expenditure presented in NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government on Saturday presented in the National Assembly over Rs.41.37 trillion charged expenditure included in demands for grants and appropriations for the financial year ending June 30, 2024.

Charged expense included Rs. 28,89,039,594,000 for repayment of domestic debt, Rs.6,430,305,002,000 for Servicing of Domestic Debt, Rs.4,398,067,501,000 for Foreign Loans Repayment, Rs.872,218,501,000 for Servicing of Foreign Debt, Rs.46,690,000,000 for Repayment of Short Term

Foreign Credits, Rs.658,644,140,000 for External Development Loans and Advances by the Federal Government.

Similarly, these expense included Rs.4,017,000,000 for Superannuation Allowance and Pensions, Rs. 26,400,000,000 for Grants, Subsidies and Miscellaneous Expenditure, Rs.10,000,000 for Pakistan Post Office Department, Rs.50,000,000 for Foreign Mission, Rs 369,105,000 for Law and Justice Division, Rs.4,000,787,000 for National Assembly, Rs.3,281,840,000 for Senate, Rs.596,646,000 for

Staff, Household and Allowance of the President (public), Rs 812,380,000 for Staff, Household and Allowance of the President (Personal), Rs.7,561,128,000 for Audit, Rs.3,555,000,000 for Supreme Court, Rs.1,543,322,000 for Islamabad High Court, Rs.7,786,255,000 for Election, Rs.1,250,195,000 for Wafaqi Mohtasib, Rs115,000,000 for Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection against Harassment of Women at Work Place and Rs.390,621,000 for Federal Tax Ombudsman.

Committee expresses concern over absence of ministry of interior representative

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Special Committee on Arms License held its first meeting under the chairmanship of Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, where serious concerns were raised regarding the absence of a representative from the Ministry of Interior.

As a result, the committee directed the ministry to ensure attendance in future meetings. The agenda for the meeting focused on the issuance of arms licenses, specifically the "Detail of Arms License of Prohibited and Non-Prohibited Bore along with its criteria of

issuance from April, 2022 till date."

Members of the Special Committee expressed their strong concerns over the Ministry of Interior's absence, considering it a significant matter. Consequently, they emphasized the importance of the ministry's representation in future meetings to ensure the committee's smooth proceedings.

The meeting was adjourned until Monday, June 26, to further discuss the crucial agenda related to arms licenses. Additionally, the committee issued direc-

tions for holding future proceedings in-camera, indicating a need for privacy and confidentiality.

The meeting was attended by esteemed Members of the National Assembly, including Zahid Akram Durani, Deputy Speaker/Member, Nawabzada Shazain Bugti, Mohsin Dawar, and Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry. The Special Committee on Arms License aims to address and examine the issuance of arms licenses, ensuring transparency and adherence to relevant criteria.

Rs30b loans given to youth over last five months, NA told

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Assembly (NA) resumed its session at the parliament house in Islamabad on Saturday with Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in the chair.

The National Assembly was informed that loans worth thirty billion rupees have been given to fifty thousand youth under the Prime Minister Youth Program over the last five months.

Special Assistant on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja, rising on a point of order, highlighted the initiatives taken by the present government to create opportunities for the youth.

She said it is the first time that loans have also been given in the agriculture sector including for seed, fertilizers and purchase of other agricultural inputs.

Shaza Fatima said training has been provided to sixty thousand youth in various areas including Information Technology, whilst training of another forty thousand youth is in progress.

The Special Assistant said the budget for the next fiscal year envisages allocation of eighty billion rupees for special initiatives. Under this, ten billion rupees have been allocated for laptop scheme, ten billion rupees for soft loans and five

billion rupees each for green revolution fund, women empowerment, IT and skills development. She said one hundred thousand laptops will be distributed amongst the students this year on merit.

The Special Assistant said sports are also being promoted to engage the youth in healthy activities. Responding to the points of members, Minister for Water Resources Khurshid Shah said at present sufficient water is available to meet the requirements of the provinces. He said Balochistan is being provided as per their demand and capacity.

The National Assembly today unanimously passed a resolution acknowledging the contribution of international organizations, civil society and the international Diaspora of Pakistan in the fight against climate change and their assistance in rehabilitation of vulnerable communities affected by climate induced disaster.

The resolution was moved by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Romina Khurshid Alam. The resolution recognized the urgent need for global cooperation to combat climate change and mitigate its adverse impacts.

The resolution emphasized the importance of collective actions to

protect and uplift the vulnerable communities in the face of climate related challenges.

The House expressed deep appreciation to Islamic Relief Worldwide as well as the United Nations for their vital role in steering Pakistan's climate action. Their initiatives have supported development of climate resilient infrastructure, enhanced disaster risk management systems and promoted sustainable livelihoods.

The House encouraged the Government of Pakistan to strengthen collaboration with international organizations, leveraging their expertise and resources, to enhance country's climate change mitigation policies and disaster risk reduction strategies. It also called upon the international organizations to continue supporting Pakistan's efforts to tackle climate change through knowledge sharing.

The resolution recognized the invaluable contributions made by Pakistani philanthropists abroad and within Pakistan towards fostering national economic growth, strengthening relations between the nation and its diaspora. The House strongly advocated for the integration of gender mainstreaming and inclusivity in all climate-related interventions.

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the sale of sacrificial animals all over the country's makeshift cattle markets are gearing up where enthusiastic buyers especially youngsters are taking a keen interest in buying some unique names and heavy-weight animals.

According to a private news channel, despite prices, most people have been visiting animal markets to get the animals of

their choice well before Eid day, to provide their family members, especially children, to spend maximum time with these animals before they are slaughtered to fulfill the command of Allah Almighty.

Children are enjoying the best time while enjoying at the cattle market, said a citizen. For the attraction of buyers, sacrificial animals are being decorated with colorful gar-

lands, sterling bands, embellished belts and crowns.

All kind of heavy weight and various unusual name animals including cows, bulls, camels, goats, lambs are becoming part of cattle markets across the country. A goat with heavy weight more than 300 kilograms has become an attraction for youngsters in the Faisalabad cattle market.

Refugees in allowed to return

KABUL (Agencies): Afghan citizens living in Pakistan can return to country from Torkham Port having their identity cards. Torkham Commissioner Esmatullah Yaqoob said those Afghan refugees who are stranded in Pakistan without passports can enter the country through this port showing their IDs. The opportunity was provided by their efforts and talks with Pakistani officials in Torkham port, and Afghan immigrants can return by the beginning of Eid, he said.

6-year-old Afghan boy died

KABUL (Agencies): A 6-year-old Afghan boy traveled to the US in 2021 died while in government custody. The boy was one of hundreds of Afghan children who arrived in the US in 2021 without their parents after being evacuated from Afghanistan. These children entered the US without parents or legal guardians, they are being held in the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement, where unaccompanied minors are kept.

Exam for medical students given, only males attend

KABUL (TOLOnews): The examinations for General Internal Medicine and Surgery were held with nearly 2,000 participants attended, but there were no female participants

The examinations were held in the Polytechnic University in Kabul.

The National Examination Authority said that 100 participants who secure the highest scores will be admitted to Avicenna University and Nangarhar University. "100 people will be selected and from among them, 69 will go to Kabul and 31 others will be admitted to Nangarhar medical university," said Abdul Baqi Haqqani, head of the National Examination Authority.

The participants of the examinations urged the officials to proceed with the examination transparently.

"We call on the government to present doctors to the society who are really doctors at an international level. The opportunities that are provided for the international doctors should be provided to the (Afghan) doctors," said Rahim Gul Darwish, a participant.

"I hope justice will be served. Those who studied and made a great effort, their efforts should not be wasted," said Nisar Naseemi, a participant.

Earlier, TOLOnews interviewed graduates of medical universities who voiced criticism over the delay in setting the date of the medical expert examination, which is scheduled annually by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

The exam was held on



Friday, but there were no female participants. Prior to the examination of medical experts, female students throughout the

Exam for graduates of health sciences given

JALALABAD (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Public Health has held an exam to issue government educational certificates for the graduates of health sciences institutions in Nangarhar province.

According to the officials in this exam, 1,000 participants were women from different provinces. The exam was held for three days.

"In the exam, 1,500 participants were men and 1,000 of them were girls, there were 2,500 students," said Mohammad Rahim Qalandar, head of the Public Health department.

"The Islamic Emirate has allowed that if you miss your exam in a province, you can take an exam in another province," said Nazer Ahmad Durani, head of Nangarhar's Institute of Health Sciences Association.

Several participants in this exam said they want authorities to consider transparency and to announce the results of the exam early.

"We call on officials to be transparent and to announce the results soon," said Noor Ahmad, a participant.

"Its exact date is not known. It is known to you that the process is time-consuming, sometimes technical problems occur, and our effort is ongoing to announce it as soon as possible," said Mohammad Ullah Rasoli, an official of the Ministry of Public Health.

The Ministry of Public Health holds an annual exam to issue government educational certificates for graduates of private educational institutions of health sciences in different provinces.

Historical sites on focus of foreign and domestic tourists' attention

BALKH (Agencies): The historical and ancient sites of Afghanistan's Balkh province have attracted the attention of foreign and domestic tourists more than ever nowadays.

Foreign tourists say that Afghanistan, especially Balkh province has many undiscovered places and that is why they want to visit this province.

Beside the historical and ancient sites of Balkh province, the small museum of Hazrat Ali's Shrine is one of other places where foreign tourists visit.

According to local officials, the domestic and foreign tourists visit the ancient and historical sites of Balkh, in Dawlatabad and Dihdadi districts of this province.

During their visit to Shrine of Hazrat Ali's Museum, they said that Afghanistan is full of tourist attractions and people are more interested in traveling to this country and to come to this country for pilgrimage and tourism.

"If the government pay more attention, we have many interested Iranians who want to come to Afghanistan for pilgrimage and tourism," said Azghar Mohammadi, an Iranian tourist.

Tourists also say that contrary to their previous views over Afghanistan, they have now found that the people of this country are hospitable, kind, and there is complete security.

"It is not a bad country from the point of view of being a tourist, it has good natural scenery, good sight-seeing places because Afghanistan and Iran was once one country, its history, culture and civilization are not much different from Iran," said Ali Jawad, another Iranian tourist.

Simultaneously, the officials at Shrine of Hazrat Ali Museum say that 50 foreign tourists have visited this museum since the beginning of the year.

According to them, this number shows the interest of foreign tourists in this province. "From the beginning of this year until now, we have registered about 50 tourists who have visited the Roza Mubarak," said Qayoum Ansari, the head of the museum.

The Museum of Hazrat Ali shrine was established in the seventies, where more than 1400 items of ancient artifacts have been showcased to the viewers.

Meanwhile, the lack of a standard museum in Balkh province is one of the most important challenges in the preservation of the ancient and historical works, which the province cultural experts have been complaining about for years.

Kabir: IEA committed to inclusivity in governance

KABUL (Agencies): Maw-lavi Abdul Kabir, political deputy and acting prime minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, said in a meeting with the United Nations special coordinator for Afghanistan that the IEA is committed to inclusive governance and in the current system, people from every ethnic group and province work posts, in both low and senior positions.

During the meeting that took place on Friday, Abdul Kabir also said that the government is trying to appoint more experts and people committed to the country.

He emphasized that the IEA seeks positive engagement with the world in an atmosphere of mutual respect and has a neutral position in global rivalries and will never take one side against the other.

On the other hand, the United Nations Special



Coordinator for Afghanistan Feridun Sinirlioglu said that the international community wants to have good relations with the Islamic Emirate and he is trying to strengthen the relations between Afghanistan and the international community, according to a

statement released by the PM's office.

Sinirlioglu acknowledged that the Islamic Emirate has made significant progress in the fields of security, fighting corruption and eradicating drugs, which the whole world has welcomed and closely

monitors these activities.

Earlier, the UN official had met with acting ministers of the interior and foreign affairs of the country, and told them that the international community has concerns that the rulers of Afghanistan should not ignore.

Tailors says sales down as eid approaches

KABUL (TOLOnews): On the eve of Eid Al-Adha, some tailors and fabric sellers complain that financial conditions are not good, and sales are low in the capital.

They said that due to economic challenges and unemployment, their work is in a bad condition.

It has been 35 years since Burhanullah worked in a tailor shop and he is the only breadwinner of his family. He considers the economic challenges of the country's citizens to be the reason for his decreased sales. "Compared with last year, work has changed. Afghan clothes are mostly used...the economic condition of people is not good," said Burhan.

"In the past, we had so much work and many customers, but right now most of our customers have gone out of the country," said Jamaluddin, a tailor.

Meanwhile, in the other corner of Kabul, some fabric sellers and clothes are also concerned about the bad conditions.

"Our work is not good because people are not interested in shopping these days," said Abdul Fatah, a clothes seller.

"Before people had work and jobs and had money and came with their families for shopping, but now, compared with the previous government our work is not good," said Abdul



Fahim, a fabric seller.

Usually, every year with the arrival of Eid al-Adha, many people in the country enthusiastically buy clothes, but this year, due to the poverty and challenges in the country, they cannot celebrate Eid this way.

EU allocates 12 million euros for aid to Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The European Union has announced it has allocated 12 million euros in support of vulnerable Afghans.

Support includes assistance to ensure sustainable food production, climate-smart agriculture and resilient infrastructure, community-based employment, income-generation and savings opportunities, and market-oriented business development, the EU said in a statement.

"In Afghanistan, millions go hungry while climate change is expected to exacerbate the situation for many Afghans, especially women. The European Union - together with its partners - stands by the Afghan people. Investment into sustainable food production, climate-smart agriculture and resilient infrastructure makes a real difference to the lives of Afghans today and in the future", said Raffaella Iodice, EU Chargée d'Affaires at the EU Delegation to Afghanistan.

Over a 36-month period, the program targets rural, underserved areas



of northern, central highlands and western Afghanistan. Altogether, the action will directly benefit over 70,000 individuals (of which 62% are women) and close to 500,000 household members across seven provinces, including Bamyan, Baghlan, Samangan, Badakhshan,

Takhar, Herat and Farah.

The community-based and market-oriented interventions will ensure that beneficiaries remain autonomous and act more sustainably, while also helping them to adapt to and recover from future shocks more swiftly, the EU said.

Women's integrated services and facilities center to be established

KABUL (Khaama Press): UNHCR and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in collaboration with the Afghanistan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) are partnering to establish a women's integrated services and facilities center in Kabul.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the integrated facilities center will support women-run businesses, training programs and will also provide financial support for female entrepreneurs.

UNHCR in a tweet on Friday said the initiative was launched in collaboration with UNODC and AWCCI, aimed at supporting women-run businesses, training programs and more.

The center will also support internally displaced people and Afghan refugees who have returned to the country, the organization



said.

The business center for Afghan women will be established following the series of bans imposed by the Taliban regime restricting women and girls from having social and political engagements in Afghanistan for the past nearly two years.

A considerable number of businesswomen and

female entrepreneurs have been forced to stay at home since the Taliban seized power in August 2021.

Meanwhile, a group of Afghan women entrepreneurs created a local market exclusively for women in Faizabad city of northeastern Badakhshan province, aimed at improving the economic well-being of needy families.

Daesh fighters do not exist openly

KABUL (Agencies): The Acting Interior Minister, Khalifa Sirajuddin Haqqani

met with UN Special Coordinator and Independent Inspector Feridun Sinirlioglu.

Feridun Sinirlioglu said: The international community wants good relations with Afghanistan. After the last 40 years, security has been strengthened, and progress has been made in the fight against corruption and drugs. There should be coordination between Afghanistan and the world in the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism.

"Afghanistan was one of the first countries to become a member of the UN after its establishment, and the seat of Afghanistan is one of the first seats of the United Nations" he added.

Meanwhile, Sinirlioglu called human rights the fundamental rights of all people and said that the concerns of the United Nations should be taken into account.

Haqqani welcomed the guests and called their arrival a good move, and said: "The world's interaction with Afghanistan is under the shadow of the last 20 years of occupation, and in a way, it is the continuation of the politics of that era, which we do not consider useful".

Traffic accident in Northern Baghlan kills 2, injures 21 others

BAGHLAN (Khaama Press): A traffic accident in Afghanistan's Northern Baghlan province claimed two lives and injured 21 others, the Taliban provin-

cial officials said. Shir Ahmad Burhani, spokesperson of the Taliban security command for Baghlan province said the horrific incident took place

as a passenger bus collided with a truck around 4:00 am in the Dushi district of the province. Burhani further added the driver and conductor of the bus (Model

580) died, and at least 21 travelers sustained injuries.

The wounded passengers have been transferred to the provincial hospital of Baghlan with the help of local people, according to sources.

While expressing condolences to the families of the victims, Burhani said the passenger bus was on its way from Mazar-e-Sharif to Kabul but did not provide further details about the causes of the accident.

Recently, traffic accidents have unprecedentedly increased in the different provinces, particularly on highways, resulting in the death and injury of scores of people.

Experts have linked road incidents to careless driving, over-speeding, failing to abide by traffic rules, poorly maintained vehicles, and cracked roads all over the country.



Canadian legislation to help humanitarian aid to Afghans receives royal assent



KABUL (Agencies): Canadian government announced that a legislation to facilitate humanitarian aid to Afghanistan has received royal assent and is now in effect. The authorization regime provides for a wider range of activities, including health services, education, assisting individuals in earning a livelihood, promoting human rights, and conducting immigration activities like the resettlement and the safe passage of refugees.

"Canada's commitment to the people of Afghanis-

tan did not end with the fall of Kabul. Whether providing aid or welcoming refugees, we are there for vulnerable Afghans," Marco Mendicino, Canadian Minister of Public Safety, said.

"This legislation ensures we can keep making good on our commitment, while respecting Canadian law and standing strong against terrorism," he added.

Harjit S. Sajjan, Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, said: "Millions

of people in Afghanistan are facing a terrible humanitarian disaster. We have also witnessed the steady deterioration of democracy, human rights, education and health in the country. The Royal Assent of C-41 means that urgent help will continue to reach those who need it most and that Afghans can restart to build a better future for themselves."

According to the UN, a total of 28.8 million people (two thirds of the Afghan population) need humanitarian assistance in 2023, an increase of 18% since 2022.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar addressing during National Assembly session.

Plots' allotment reference Accountability court acquits Nawaz

LAHORE (Agencies): An accountability court of Lahore on Saturday acquitted former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz head Nawaz Sharif in the plots' allotment reference case.

Accountability Judge Rao Abdul Jabbar announced the verdict after hearing arguments from the PML-N supreme's legal team. Nawaz Sharif's lawyer Advocate Qazi Misbah argued that the anti-graft watchdog

had filed the reference against his client on the basis of malice. "Nawaz Sharif has no role in the allotment of plots," the lawyer said further. He added that a case cannot even be made under the new law.

The development came after the accountability court had returned the reference against the former prime minister and several others to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The reference was

returned by the court in accordance with the amendments made to the NAB laws.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had alleged that the former premier illegally allotted 54 plots each measuring one-kanal situated in Block-H, Johar Town when he was chief minister of Punjab. It alleged the accused caused a loss of Rs143m to the national exchequer through the allotment of the land.

Qureshi's bail extended

LAHORE (PPI) Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi's bail in a terrorism case was on Saturday extended till July 10 without proceedings.

The former minister appeared in the anti-terrorism court along with his lawyer, Ali Bukhari. Qureshi's bail was extended as ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas has been transferred, and the new judge has not assumed charge yet. Earlier on Friday, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) granted bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Asad Umar in the case pertaining to vandalism and violence on May 9.

Fawad skips indictment

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A district and session court in federal capital on Saturday put off indictment of former information minister Fawad Chaudhry in the sedition case after accepting his exemption plea on medical grounds.

As Additional Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra resumed hearing to frame charges against the former PTI leader, his lawyer informed that Mr Chaudhry could not appear before court due to illness. The lawyer said his client got sick from change in weather and sought exemption from his appearance. At which, the judge remarked whether the former minister had been hit by heatstroke. "If Fawad Chaudhry is indicted, he can take a long leave after that," he remarked.

Later, the judge accepted the exemption plea and ordered Mr Chaudhry to appear before the court on July 7 for indictment. Earlier, the court had fixed June 24 to frame charges against the former information minister in the case registered against him for his alleged threatening remarks against the officials of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Police have invoked Sections 153-A (promotion of enmity between groups), 506 (criminal intimidation), 505 (statement conducting to public mischief), and 124-A (sedition) of the Pakistan Penal Code against Fawad over his speech.

Warrant for Azhar issued

ISLAMABAD (PPI): An accountability court in Lahore on Saturday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI leaders Hammad Azhar, Mian Aslam Iqbal, Hassaan Niazi and others in connection with two new cases the police registered against them.

ATC Judge Abhar Gul Khan issued the arrest warrants after police requested for the same. The police prayed the court for the warrants and the accused were in hiding to avoid arrest.

Repeated interpretation of law gives birth to disputes, remarks CJP

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial has maintained that the repeated interpretation of the law gives birth to disputes. Delivering a speech at a symposium in Islamabad on Saturday, Justice Bandial said it was fundamentally important to strengthen regulatory institutions in the country as he stressed the need for sustainable policies to promote business prosperity and facilitate investors.

The CJP underscored the need for the authorities to establish a "requisite environment" for progress, emphasizing that certain crucial elements must be in place to facilitate the desired growth and development. "Don't surprise a businessman if you want business to thrive in this country. And particularly the tax regime that must be reliable and consistent because you cannot cut the tree if you are basically looking for the fruit," he said.

He remarked that ensuring a level-playing field for investors, highlighting that industries with monopolies deter big investors from competing. He further stressed the need for shareholder protection, citing experiences of winding up petitions faced by majority shareholders. The CJP also called for safeguards for minori-

ty shareholders and addressed the need to curb dishonesty by management and majority shareholders. "We need protection for the minority shareholder. And then the small shareholder on the stock exchange also," he added.

In addition, he emphasised the significance of revenue authorities as another beneficiary, urging the need to instill integrity in the system. He acknowledged that within the corporate system, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has a regulatory role, while outside the corporate system, there is a responsibility to influence policy and raise awareness to government entities and departments about potential disruptions to the environment.

"Do you know if you look back into history, our governments used to prepare five-year economic plans, that was because it provided certainty. Today we don't do that. And because we deal with such issues and consider different options available to solve a problem, he told the gathering. The CJP highlighted the significance of regulatory bodies and constitutional bodies during his address. "I mean the Election Commission of Pakistan is a constitutional body. We have to as courts of law support the

ECP," he added.

He also stressed importance of learning new tech and artificial intelligence. "I am not good at IT. So I can maybe operate the computer but that's about all. I believe AI is excellent but I haven't ventured into it but some of my younger colleagues are doing it. So we need to build capacity," the top judge said. The CJP also mentioned the underutilisation of services by another constitutional body that holds jurisdiction across the country, including provinces and the federation.

He specifically highlighted the importance of strengthening the auditor general of Pakistan to enable independent account checks for accountability purposes. He pointed out that delayed discovery of financial irregularities often occurs, highlighting the need for skilled personnel in regulatory bodies, courts, and other institutions, rather than solely relying on numbers to assess capacity. "We have to make him [AGP] strong so that he can go and check the accounts on his own because whenever you have an issue about accountability it goes into the accounts," Justice Bandial said that disputes arise due to repeated interpretations of the law.

Shahzad, Zulfi decline to appear before NAB

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Special Assistant to former prime minister (SAPM) Imran Khan Shahzad Akbar and ex-federal minister Zulfi Bukhari have submitted their replies to the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) notices in 190 million pounds financial scandal in writing, expressing their inability to appear before the Bureau.

In his reply, Akbar has again shown his inability to appear before the NAB team in person. He has said that he has already conveyed to the Bureau thrice that he is ready to record his statement via a video link. "I even showed willingness to record my statement at Pakistan's high commission in the UK," he has said, adding, "Even now I am ready to record my statement via a video link."

He has further said that he no

more lives in Pakistan. "Legally, I am a UK resident. I learnt about the NAB's notice through media," he has said, adding, "Since there are threats to my life, I cannot share my address in the UK."

Former special assistant has asked the NAB to send notices to him on his e-mail address. He has also mentioned raid on his brother's home in Pakistan and his subsequent arrest. Akbar goes on to say that the NCA has never sent money to Pakistani government. "NCA has already made it clear in its press release that it is a civil settlement and not a crime," he has said, adding, "The NAB had been investigating the 1 Hyde Park Palace even prior to that." Hassan Nawaz, former premier Nawaz Sharif's son, had purchased the residence in 2007 in lieu of 10.5 million

pounds, and then sold it to Ahmad Ali Riaz Malik in 2016 in lieu of 42 million pounds. "The house was sold at double rates in 2016 because at that time Nawaz was the country's prime minister," he has said, adding, "NAB is asked to tell what is the status of that inquiry."

Similarly, former federal minister Zulfi Bukhari, in his written reply to the NAB's notice, has also shown his inability to appear before the investigation team in person. He has said that presently he is living abroad in connection with some business engagements. "I learnt about the NAB's notice only today. But since I am not in Pakistan, therefore, I be given another date for my case's hearing," Zulfi has said. He has also asked the NAB to provide him copy of the inquiry report.

CWDP clears 29 development projects

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Saturday cleared 28 development projects worth Rs 309.14 billion. The CDWP met under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, said a press release.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Ministry, members Planning Commission and representatives from the various ministries. The forum principally approved the Program for Flood Response Through Reconstruction of Education Facilities in Sindh, assisted by JICA worth Rs 1.566.628 million Establishment of One Stop Service Center for Special Economic Zones worth Rs698 million.

The meeting also approved the Modernization of Academic & Research Facilities for Students at MUET, Jamshoro worth Rs2000.368 million, Immediate Needs for Artistic Innovation and Technology Integration at Aror University of Art, Architecture, Design & Heritage Sindh worth Rs964.305; Up-Gradation & Improvement of People Nursing School, Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences, Jamshoro worth Rs786.149 million.

The CDWP also approved the Up-Gradation of HPT Rawat Transmitting Station by Installing A 1000 Kw

DRM-Enabled Medium Wave Transmitter Under Foreign Funded Grant worth Rs 4,000.000 million; the Establishment of Polytechnic Institute for Boys at Skardu (Baltistan Region) worth Rs 978.929 million, Infrastructure Development of Islamabad Techno polis worth Rs 7,338.000 million; Construction of Audit House, Lahore worth Rs 1,997.675 million; Women on wheels worth Rs4,476.170 million.

The meeting approved the Construction of the Interchange on Lahore-Karachi Motorway (M-3) at Bucheki-Nankana Road in the Name of Rai Mansab Ali Khan Kharal worth Rs 1,332.605 million; construction of Lundianwala Interchange on Lahore-Abdul Hakeem Motorway (M-3) worth Rs 1706.688 million; construction of Road from More Khunda to Habo By Bala, District Nankana Sahib worth Rs5,680.358 million and dualization of road from Chistian to Chak no 46/3R via Dahrnawala (41.154 km) including two-lane Link Road from Dahrnawala to Chak 175m (4.859 km) worth Rs8,962.000 million.

Rehabilitation and Special Repair of Track Maintenance Machinery worth Rs5,532.157 million construction of Road from Main Duki Road to Kharsang via Baghaw and Shinklaiz Sanjavi District Ziarat worth Rs1,501.566 million and dualization of the road from

Larkano to Lakhi worth Rs4,925.462 million also approved by the CDWP.

The construction of Sunni Gar Dam (revised) Rs5,114.782 million; establishment of the Institute of Sports worth Rs 2100.836 million, challenges faced to address the Out of School Children OOSC worth Rs 25000 million and Strengthening of the University of Narowal (revised) worth Rs 3522.785 million was also approved.

The forum referred several projects to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for approval which includes Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project, KP-HCIP, (revised Health Component) worth Rs24,224.921 million, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Investment & Institutional Support Project worth Rs11,0700.000 million; PC-I for Construction of Abdul khel- Dhakki-Kallurkot Road; D.I Khan Development Package worth Rs14-.257.294 million; I Khan Road Development Package Construction of Road from Isa Khel – Lakki Marwat Road, worth Rs13,825.600 million, construction of Harnai to Sibi Road via Spin Tangi District Sibi worth Rs 19,092.984 million; Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme worth Rs 17500.030 million and Prime Minister High-Tech Skills Training & Global Skills worth Rs 19,330.00 million.

Miftah says goodbye to PML-N

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Former finance minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz stalwart Miftah Ismail on Saturday left the PML-N and resigned from all posts of the party. Miftah sent his resignation to PML-N Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal.

In a letter written to the PML-N secretary general, Miftah stated: "Given the upcoming reorganisation of the party structure, I think it's time for me to make official what is already true and move on. I, therefore, tender my resignation as General Secretary of PML-N Sindh and also resign from all party committees."

He thanked party supreme Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for entrusting him with responsibilities in the party and in the government as well. He also expressed his gratitude to other party leaders including Ahsan Iqbal, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Khawaja Asif, Ayaz Sadiq and Pervaiz Rashid for being kind to him. He said though he won't be active anymore in electoral politics, but he shared a keen desire to see a socially just and economically stable and well-governed Pakistan.

The development comes amid reports that party chief organizer Maryam Nawaz has decided to remove Miftah from his party position. Miftah has lately been vocal against the government's economic handling. He was critical of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's dealing with the IMF and his management of other economic issues. Miftah, Khaqan Abbasi and PPP deserter Mustafa Khokhar have been taking part in a series of debates being held under the concept of 'Reimagining Pakistan'.

A group of disgruntled politicians belonging to the country's ruling coalition kicked off a nationwide debate called "Reimagining Pakistan", taking up a wide range of issues for discussion while expressing regret they were not adequately addressed since independence. The initiative to launch the national debate over the country's outstanding problems by some dissatisfied politicians also led to media speculation that a new political party was about to be launched ahead of the general elections which are scheduled later this year. Ismail, however, had denied any such plan was in the offing.

Pakistan, Turkey produce 5th-Generation fighter jets

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The beginning of a new era in Pakistan's air defence has started as the country has stepped into the field of production of 5th generation stealth fighter jets with the help of the Turkish Aerospace Industries.

Pakistan will jointly develop 5th generation air superiority fighter jet with Turkey as Pakistan has become part of the Turkish 5th Generation Stealth Space Industry Programme and it will develop state-of-the-art twin-engine 5th generation aircraft in collaboration with Turkey. According to sources, the Turkish Aerospace Industry started the 5th generation aircraft (TAI KAAN) production programme in 2010.

Turkish "TFX" aircraft taxied for the first time this year. The first official flight of the TFX aircraft is expected to be made by the end of this year. The first 5th generation aircraft will be inducted into the Pakistan Air Force in 2030. The Turkish Aerospace Industry's "TFX Stealth Aircraft" will use US-made General Electric F-110 engines. Sources said Pakistan also has the option of British-made Rolls

Royce engine in case of objection from America. The Turkish company is also working with Britain's Rolls-Royce to develop a new engine.

The Pak-Turk 5th generation aircraft will be 21 meters long and its wingspan will be up to 14 meters. The take-off weight of the aircraft will be 27,215 kilogram. According to sources, the maximum speed of the aircraft is 1.8 Mach while the combat range will be 1,100 km. Air-to-ground cruise missiles will also be installed on the aircraft along with air-to-air BVR missiles.

The aircraft's advanced cockpit with modern Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar will enable it to engage the enemy in air combat as per modern tactical requirements. Pakistan Air Force will use twin-engine fighter jets in the form of TFX aircraft after a long time. Pakistan will start joint production with Turkey not only of 5th generation stealth fighter jets but also of unmanned aerial platforms.

In the recent visit of Turkish Air Force Chief General Attila Gulan to

Pakistan, concrete progress was made regarding the joint production of 5th generation aircraft and unmanned aerial platforms. Over the past few years, Pakistan and Turkey came into one platform to work on defence projects, including drone development and helicopter procurement.

Last year, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) signed a contract with Pakistan National Engineering and Science Commission (NESCOM) to create military drones. Pakistan Air Force is eager to update its equipment. It has requested the US to upgrade its F-16 fleet numerous times but America has declined. The Turkish government just got its F-16 fighter plane upgraded locally. Temel Kotil, CEO of Turkish Aerospace Industries, confirmed that "Pakistan is seen as a potential country capable of locally assembling the TAI KAAN from a kit form. It caters to its requirements as a replacement for American F-16 fighter jets". In 2019, the TAI opened its first flight office in Pakistan at the National Science and Technology Park.

Kundi seeks joint role of Judiciary, Parliament

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said the swift and transparent justice system leads a country towards progress and development.

He stated this while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the High Court Bar Association, Dera held here in a private marriage hall wherein he also administered the oath of the newly elected cabinet of the association including its President Malik Hidayat Ullah Malana and General Secretary Waqar Alam. The

state minister said, "A transparent judicial system leads the nations towards development."

He said the Judiciary and the Parliament had to play a joint role in the restoration of public confidence in the judicial system. Faisal Kundi, who is also Central Information Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), said that his party always remained a supporter of a strong and stable judicial system having public confidence in it.

He was of the view that today the country needs a swift and transparent justice system, adding, the judiciary in the world was

rapidly moving forward with the help of innovation and technology and the same pattern should be followed in Pakistan. He said the role and unity of the judiciary and the Parliament was important, adding, the PPP has always strengthened the bar and the bench as it was a must for the country's development.

Kundi said "The lawyers and judges of our soil played an important role in the country's history and we should be proud of them." He expressed the hope that the new lawyers would also follow their footprints.

All conditions for IMF agreement met: Dar

(Continued from Page 1)

dividends were subject to a 15% tax, and there was no tax on bonus shares. However, as part of the federal budget for the new fiscal year, the government has proposed a 10% tax on bonus shares and 15% on cash dividends. "The tax on bonus shares will not be paid by the companies but the shareholders," he added.

"These measures aim to promote equity and ensure that individuals and companies contribute their fair share to national development." In an effort to address excessive electricity consumption and promote energy conservation, the government imposed an additional duty on fans that consumed excessive electricity. On recommendations of the stakeholders, he

said the government has revised the timeline for tax implementation and provided a relaxation period of six months, allowing manufacturers sufficient time to comply with it. The proposed tax on fans would now be implemented from January 1, 2024, instead of the previously scheduled date of July 1, 2023.

In an effort to resolve tax-related disputes, the finance minister expressed regret over the existence of tax-related cases worth Rs 3.2 trillion at various levels. To tackle this issue, the government has decided to strengthen the Alternate Dispute Resolution Committees (ADRCs). A committee headed by a retired judge from the High Court or Supreme Court, along with representation from tax authorities and taxpayers would

be established to swiftly resolve tax-related cases, given the current backlog of more than 62,000 cases pending in different courts.

Ishaq Dar said the budget focused on public welfare and combating inflation, with a strong emphasis on addressing the needs of the common man and curbing excessive spending. A significant allocation of Rs 24 billion had been made for essential food items in utility stores for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2023.

For the fiscal year 2023-24, he said, a Rs 5 billion Ramadan package and a Rs 30 billion Prime Minister's package, utilizing scorecards, had been introduced to further support public welfare initiatives. He said the Benazir Income Support Programme was aimed at providing financial

assistance to low-income individuals and had received an increased budget allocation of Rs 466 billion for the upcoming fiscal year, considering recommendations of the lawmakers.

"The government takes pride in the performance of the armed forces and prioritizes defense. As recommended by the Senate, funds will be released in a timely manner to fulfill all the requirements of the Pakistani armed forces," he added. In light of climate change concerns, he said the federal government had allocated Rs 30 billion and planned to collaborate with provinces to formulate better policies.

Other measures included an increase in the minimum pension fixing it at Rs12,000 and a minimum monthly wage from Rs 25,000 to Rs 32,000 within the Islamabad Capital

Territory (ICT). He said the deposit limit of the Pensioners Benefit Account had been suggested to increase from Rs5 million to Rs 7.5 million. The minister said the government had passed on the maximum benefit of the reduced petroleum prices in the international market to the consumers and it would continue with the same spirit in the coming days. To encourage overseas Pakistanis to send maximum foreign remittances to the country, the minister said the government had devised a scheme amounting to Rs 80 billion to reward them and extend maximum facilities. He said sufficient funds had been allocated for the development of merged districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said funds amounting to Rs30

billion had been earmarked for the conversion of agricultural tube wells to solar energy, following the directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He said the government intended to implement the Contributory Biometric Fund for federal employees, ensuring that government employees from grades 17 to 22 were eligible for only one pension, besides outlining certain provisions for pension allowances.

He expressed confidence in Pakistan's economy and its ability to cope with difficult situations, citing past achievements. "In 2017, Pakistan was the 24th largest economy in the world, and the country will regain that position. The time is not far when Pakistan will become part of the G20," he concluded.