

Noorul Haq Qadri booked

LANDI KOTAL (NNI): Former federal minister for religious affairs Noorul Haq Qadri was booked under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) on Sunday. Khyber deputy commissioner issued the order in connection with statements against the institutions that may disturb the law and order situation in the area. The Landi Kotal SHO has been issued order for the arrest of Qadri, however the wanted person is in Saudi Arabia for Hajj.

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# NA passes Finance Bill 23-24 with certain amendments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Sunday passed the Finance Bill 2023-24 with certain amendments in the proposed budgetary measures and the total outlay of Rs 14.48 trillion to achieve macro-economic stability and the set target of a 3.5 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate.

The Finance Bill, moved by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, was passed with majority vote after clause-by-clause reading. The House echoed with desk thumping as the House passed the budget.

The passage of the Finance Bill has successfully brought to an end the budgetary process started on June, 9 with the budget speech of the finance minister at the National Assembly.

The bill now would go to the President for assent who will sign it into a law, and effective from July 1, 2023. Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf put all the amendments proposed by lawmakers Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali, Saira Bano, Nisar Cheema, Zahra Wadood Fatimi, Nawab Sher Waseer, Asiya Azeem, which were rejected with a majority vote; except Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali's amendment, which was included in the bill by the Assembly's approval.

Consequently, the amendment proposed by MQM member Salahuddin was also rejected by the House. In the light of Senate recommendations, the National Assembly also approved the amendments proposed in the Finance Bill 2023-24 by the Finance Minister.

The bill, presented in the House on June 9 by the Finance minister for consideration, got the approval of the National Assembly with certain changes in the figures related to revenue targets and other matters in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Accordingly, the revenue target of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had increased from Rs 9.2 trillion to Rs 9.415 trillion, provincial revenue from Rs 5.276 trillion to Rs5.39 trillion, federal government expenditures from Rs 14.46 trillion to Rs 14.48 trillion, the pension volume from Rs 761 billion to

## No double-pension for gov't employees of grade 17-22: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar clarified on Sunday that there would be no double pension for government employees falling in the category of Grade 17-22. Responding to a point raised by Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshed Ahmed Shah in the National Assembly, the minister explained that the restriction would not apply to government employees below Grade 17, as there were instances where some employees retired after 15-20 years of service and started another job.

The minister stated that if some employees (Grade 17-22) were working on a contract basis after retirement, they would have to choose one pension that suited them, as the policy began from the top.

He emphasized that this was an old issue that should have been resolved earlier, which the incumbent government had started to redress.

Ishaq Dar mentioned that there was no specific timeframe for pen-

sion payments to the dependents of retired employees and widows after their passing. However, this has now been limited to 10 years.

He stressed that such reforms were crucial because the pension budget had reached Rs 800 billion, which was nearly 50 percent less than the current figure a few years back. He warned that without these reforms, it would become unsustainable for the country. Addressing concerns raised by Ghous Bux Khan Mahar of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) regarding the withdrawal of the urea subsidy, the minister stated that the government aimed to promote local fertilizer production and achieve self-sufficiency in this sector. He mentioned that several Pakistani companies were planning to invest over \$200 million in the urea production sector. He assured the House that the challenges faced by the agriculture sector, considered the backbone of the national economy, would be addressed in due course of time through mutual consultation with all stakeholders.

Rs 801 billion, the subsidy volume would stand at Rs1.064 trillion and the grants volume at Rs. 1.405 trillion. As a result of all these measures, improvements would be seen in the budget's deficit, and the fiscal deficit would decrease by Rs 300 billion. Later, the finance minister thanked the lawmakers and the government allies and the staff of supporting departments for the smooth conduct of the special budget session and subsequent passage of the fiscal plan for the year 2023-24.

He expressed confidence that the budgetary measures would help resume the development-journey which faced a complete halt after 2018.

He said the country, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had succeeded in achieving economic stability and started moving towards a consistent path of progress and development,

adding, the process of economic decline has stopped. "Our next goal is to begin the journey of progress for which solid proposals have been given in the budget," he added.

Ishaq Dar explained that yesterday, his statement regarding the special Hajj flights was presented in the media and social media in an incorrect manner, adding all lawmakers were going to perform the religious obligation at their own expenses.

He said the Saudi government had stopped further Hajj flights, but Pakistan requested the Saudi government to allow one flight enabling the lawmakers, participating in the ongoing budget session, to reach the holy land for the Hajj.

The minister announced honorarium equal to three basic salaries for all the government employees deputed to perform the special budget session duties in the Parliament premises.

## Eight killed, several injured in Nawabshah bus collision

NAWABSHAH (INP): At least eight persons were killed and over sixty others were injured in a road accident in Sindh's province of Shaheed Benazirabad in the wee hours of Sunday night.

According to police, the incident occurred near Balochpur Stop in Nawabshah, when two passenger buses collided, leaving eight persons dead on the spot and over 60 injured including children.

The injured have been shifted to the People's Medical University Hospital. Police stated that one bus was travelling from Karachi to Punjab whereas the other was on way to Karachi from Munjab.

Reportedly, the accident happened due to over-speeding. Earlier Last week, at least 13 people, including five women, were killed and 31 others injured when a bus veered off the Islamabad-Lahore Motorway and overturned near Kallar Kahar. The police, in a statement said, driver lost control over the steering apparently due to a 'brake failure'.

## PM asks overseas Pakistanis of malicious propaganda

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has asked overseas Pakistanis to be wary of malicious propaganda and use of disinformation to tarnish image of Pakistan and the state institutions. In a tweet on Sunday, the Prime Minister expressed great pleasure to meet and interact with members of expatriate Pakistani community in France.

The Prime Minister said overseas Pakistanis are making vital contributions to their adopted countries all over the world and their fellow countrymen are proud of their achievements as

proud sons and daughters of the soil.

Shehbaz Sharif said he explained to the overseas Pakistanis 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 said he also outlined the broad contours of the Economic Revival Plan to put the economy back on track through long-term policies.

Shehbaz Sharif said achieving economic self-reliance remains the overriding goal for government.

## Legal committee to pave way for Nawaz's return

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The legal committee was formed on Sunday in line to clear the path for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif's return to the country. According to sources, committee to be headed by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar. The committee also comprised SAPM Ata Tarar, Irfan Qadir, Amjad Pervaiz and other lawyers.

The committee will

make every effort to remove any legal barriers to Nawaz's return to the country. On the other side, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif will hold key meetings today.

Sources stated that the committee will expedite the follow-up of cases against the former premier. It will speed up the legal work for the dissolution of cases against Nawaz Sharif and its disqualification to

remove legal barriers in his return to the country.

The development came after the federal government passed an amendment bill in the Election Act 2017, abolishing the lifetime disqualification of lawmakers under Article 62 (1) (f). The National Assembly passed an amendment bill in the Election Act 2017 today, abolishing the lifetime disqualification of lawmakers under Article 62 (1) (f).

## Khawaja Asif opposes Chairman Senate Salaries, Allowance, Privileges Bill

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Sunday urged the House not to support the Chairman Senate Salaries, Allowance and Privileges Bill passed by the Senate recently as the country could not afford such incentives in the prevailing economic situation.

Speaking in the National Assembly after passage of federal budget for fiscal year 2023-24, the minister said, he has great respect for senators and the Senate as he had started his political career from the Senate. However, the people and business community are in immense difficulties due to the prevailing financial crisis, he said. He said the salary of MNA stood at Rs 168,000 per month which was lower than a federal secretary.

He said such privilege in the current financial circumstance could not be afforded. Lauding the Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and his entire finance teams, he said that a balanced budget was presented

despite of critical situation.

He expressed the hope that a new era of economic stability would start soon. The minister also clarified that neither the government was bearing expenditure nor giving any special facility for members of the National Assembly for performing Hajj. Even ordinary people were also part of the special flight to carry pilgrims to Saudi Arabia, he added.

**Only Imran responsible for all May 9 tragic incidents: Kh Asif:** Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that the mastermind, planner and inventor of the May-9 incident was only Imran Khan. Addressing a dinner reception, given in his honour by members of the Cantt Board Sialkot, he regretted that it was former prime minister and Pakistan Theerak-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman who challenged the state writ and the state institutions. He said the state is like a mother to its citizens, but this person ended that relationship in lust for

power. He said the lesson he (Imran Khan) imparted to his party activists, and the planning he done, resulted in attacks on memorials of martyrs and military installations and the defense assets, saying that political workers were incited by their leader to attack the state and its institutions.

Kh Asif said what happened on May 9, no one should doubt that its mastermind, planner and its creator was the PTI chairman alone. He said that during the last 14 months, this person (Imran Khan) did not even once ask to meet or sit down with politicians to solve the national problems. He only expressed his desire to talk to the military leadership. The defence minister said Pakistan Army is the guarantor of country's defence and integrity. He said that power was taken away from politicians many times in the past; power was taken away from Nawaz Sharif three times, while Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged, but no one challenged the state writ.

# The Frontier Post

Alvi departs for Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (NNI): President Dr Arif Alvi has departed for Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj. According to details, family members of Dr Arif Alvi are also accompanying the president. In the absence of Dr Alvi, Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani has assumed the duties of acting president of Pakistan. The Cabinet Division has issued a notification of his appointment as the acting president of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar speaks during a session of the National Assembly on Sunday.

## NA passes bill allowing ECP to unilaterally announce election dates

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly here on Sunday passed a bill seeking amendments to the Elections Act 2017, aimed at empowering the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to announce poll dates unilaterally. The bill was moved by Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar.

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf presented the bill for voting which was passed with a majority.

The amendments also empower the ECP to make modifications to the election program as necessary.

The proposed amendment in

Section 57(1) suggested that the commission shall announce the date or dates of the general elections by notification in the official gazette and shall call upon the constituencies to elect their representatives.

The proposed amendment in Section 58 (1) suggested, notwithstanding anything contained in Section 57, the commission may, at any time, after the issuance of notification under sub-section (1) of that section, make such alterations in the elections programme announced in that notification for the different stages of the election or may issue a fresh election programme with the

fresh poll date (s) as may, in its opinion to be recorded in writing, be necessary for the purposes of this Act.

Meanwhile, the bill approved also included an amendment to Section 232 (Qualifications and Disqualifications) of the Election Act, 2017.

As per the proposed amendment, disqualification of the lawmaker will be considered for 5 years where the tenure of the punishment is not specified in the constitution.

The disqualification of the person will be considered for five years on the orders of the Supreme Court or high courts.

## Marriyum lashes out at PTI for demanding Ishaq Dar's resignation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Sunday that it was strange that those who ruined the national economy were crying over signs of restoration of agreement signed by themselves with International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In a statement, the minister said that on May 9, they burned the country, attacked military and private properties, desecrated the memorials of martyrs and now they were preparing to damage the economic interests of the country again.

"Arsonsits, conspirators and enemies of the country have started cry-

ing again as they heard the news that the agreement with the IMF is being restored", she maintained.

Marriyum said that the previous regime signed the IMF agreement on strict terms, violated it and then suspended the agreement, then hatched conspiracies against the country and the agreement. The minister said that questions should be asked to those who were crying over the agreement and why did they sign the agreement with the IMF. She said it was ironic that those who were shouting about the agreement, themselves had signed the agreement with the IMF.

"Not only did they violate and sus-

pend this agreement, but they conspired to make the country default", she added. The minister said that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during his tenure had stabilized the country's economy, but "the foreign agent" shook the foundations of the economy and the country had to seek the IMF's support. "Nawaz Sharif is the only leader whose government completed the IMF program and also put the country on the path of development", she remarked. Taking a jibe on Imran Khan, she said the person who used to claim that he would prefer to die instead of seeking IMF assistance, why did he knock the door of the IMF.

## Russian mercenaries return to bases after challenge to Putin's authority

ROSTOV-ON-DON/VORONEZH (Reuters): Heavily armed Russian mercenaries withdrew from the southern Russian city of Rostov overnight under a deal that halted their rapid advance on Moscow but left unanswered questions about President Vladimir Putin's grip on power. Ending their mutiny, fighters of the Wagner group headed back to their bases in return for guarantees for their safety. Their leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, will move to Belarus under the deal mediated by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken suggested the turmoil in Russia might not be over and could take months to play out, while Italy's foreign minister said it had shattered the "myth" of Russian unity.

Putin has not made public comments since the deal was struck to de-escalate the crisis.

State television released excerpts on Sunday of an interview in which Putin said he was giving top priority to the conflict in Ukraine. However the interview appeared to have been recorded before the mutiny and he made no reference to Saturday's events. State television also said Putin would attend a meeting of Russia's Security Council this coming week, without elaborating.

Prigozhin, 62, was seen leaving the district military headquarters in Rostov - hundreds of miles south of Moscow - late on Saturday in a sport utility vehicle. His whereabouts on Sunday were not known. Prigozhin, a former Putin ally and ex-convict whose forces have fought the bloodiest battles of the 16-month war in Ukraine, said his decision to advance on Moscow was intended to remove corrupt and incompetent Russian commanders he blames for botching the war.

Western leaders have expressed concern over the turmoil in Russia,

## China expresses support for Russia after aborted mutiny

BEIJING (Reuters): China supports Russia in maintaining its national stability, the Chinese foreign ministry said on Sunday, a day after an aborted mutiny by the Wagner group of heavily armed mercenaries.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko held talks in Beijing on "international" issues on Sunday following the most serious challenge to President Vladimir Putin's grip on power since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

"The Chinese side expressed support for the efforts of the leadership of the Russian Federation to stabilise the situation in the country in connection with the events of June 24 and confirmed its interest in strengthening the cohesion and further prosperity of Russia," the Russian foreign ministry said. China's foreign ministry initially said only that Rudenko had exchanged views with China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang on Sino-

Russian relations as well as "international and regional issues of common concern". It later said China supports Russia in maintaining its national stability and that the recent escalation in tensions in Russia was Russia's "internal affairs".

It was unclear when Rudenko arrived in Beijing, or whether his visit to China, a key ally of Russia, was in response to the apparent rebellion led by mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin.

The mutiny was aborted on Saturday in a deal that spared Prigozhin and his mercenaries from facing criminal charges in return for Prigozhin pulling his fighters back to base and moving to Belarus.

China earlier made no comment on the rebellion that Putin said threatened Russia's very existence while Western leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden said they were closely monitoring the situation.

which has the world's largest nuclear arsenal. "We've seen more cracks emerge in the Russian facade. It is too soon to tell exactly where they go, and when they get there. But certainly, we have all sorts of new questions that Putin is going to have to address in the weeks and months ahead," Blinken told NBC's "Meet the Press" program on Sunday.

Blinken also said the United States remained focused on "resolutely and relentlessly" helping Ukraine to defend itself and recover territory seized by Russia over the past 16 months. China, a key ally of Putin, made no initial public reference to the turmoil, eventually saying after talks with a visiting senior

Russian diplomat on Sunday that it supported Russia's efforts to maintain its national stability. After capturing Rostov - the main rear logistical hub for Russia's invasion of Ukraine - the mercenaries raced hundreds of miles north on Saturday, in what Prigozhin called a "march for justice", transporting tanks and armoured trucks and smashing through barricades set up to stop them, before the deal to withdraw was reached. Videos shared on social media from Rostov overnight purportedly showed the mercenaries withdrawing in a convoy of armoured vehicles, tanks and coaches to the sound of cheers, chants of "Wagner" and celebratory gunfire from residents.





## Railways to run three special trains on Eid-ul-Azha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has announced to run three special trains to facilitate the passengers on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

According to a notification issued by Pakistan Railways, the first Eid Train will depart from Quetta to Peshawar on Monday. The second train, departing from Karachi to Lahore, will start its journey on Tuesday while the third Special Eid Train will run from Lahore for Karachi on July 03 after Eid-ul-Azha.

This has been a regular feature for Pakistan Railways to announce special trains operation on the occasion of Eid to provide a comfortable and convenient travel facility to the general public who are visiting their native towns to celebrate the festival with their families and relatives.

## Two member gang involved in house robberies busted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two member gang involved in house robberies in the jurisdiction of Taxila police station here on Sunday.

According to police spokesman, police have also recovered stolen amount Rs 25,000, 06 mobile phones and stolen motorcycle from their possession. During the crack-down, Police have arrested the gang who were identified as Abid and Wajid. Police have registered separate cases against both of them and started further investigation.

### COURT NOTICE

IN the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal No. 116/13 Institution 29/11/2022. Date of hearing, 24/7/2023. Ahmed Shah VS Rehmat Ullah Khan etc. Notice to No 2. Abdullah son of Mohamad Ayub resident of Shalbandi tehsel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 24/7/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

# Many illegal bus stands in Karachi were abolished

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Many illegal bus stands in Karachi were abolished through the operations of the Transport Department, as per the special instructions of the Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon.

The Transport Department has taken action and removed illegal bus stands at Taj Complex, Saddar, Rainbow Centre, and Sagheer Hussain Shaheed Road in Karachi. The Transport Department, following the special instructions of Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, took action against transporters who were charging extra fare during the occasion of Eid in various districts. Fines were imposed on them for their unfair practices. The Transport Department took actions in various districts including Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, Benazirabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Thatta, Badin, Tharparkar, Umakot, Sanghar, Nowshero Feroze, Ghotki, Khairpur, Jacobabad, Shikarpur, and Dadu.

The officials of the Transport Department also confiscated the extra fare collected by the transporters and returned it to the passengers. A total of 489 vehicles were inspected by the Transport Department, and necessary actions were taken based on passengers' complaints.

Fines totaling up to 147,000 rupees were imposed on individuals who were found guilty of charging extra fare. Additionally, the Transport Department refunded a sum of 323,000 rupees, which was the amount collected as extra fare from the passengers.

In a statement, Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon expressed the Sindh government's commitment to providing various forms of relief to the people. He emphasized that those who cause inconvenience to passengers will not be granted forgiveness. Secretary of Transport, Saleem Rajput, has announced that the campaign against the collection of extra fares will persist even after Eid.

Meanwhile, Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has expressed regret over the loss of human lives following the bus accident near Nawabshah.

Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has instructed the relevant authorities to submit a report regarding accident.

Sharjeel Inam Memon has instructed the district administration of Shaheed Benazirabad to ensure the provision of all necessary medical facilities to the injured. Additionally, he has issued instructions to the transport department to collaborate with the motorway police in taking joint actions to prevent accidents.

In his statement, Sharjeel Inam Memon expressed his condolences and stated that the accident has brought immense sorrow and shock due to the loss of human lives. He emphasized that, during this hour of sorrow, we stand in solidarity with the bereaved families and share in their grief.

He stated that comprehensive medical facilities are being provided to the injured, and a report has been sought from the authorities regarding the accident. He emphasized that strict action will be taken against anyone found to be negligent.

## Lahore's first 'Diplomatic Enclave' to be established in CBD soon

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), an authority working on modern urbanisation and vertical expansion, has decided to establish a first-ever 'Diplomatic Enclave', which will help showcase a unique approach in the cultural and diplomatic 'Residencia' while exhibiting the architectural legacy of the province of Punjab. Various construction and real estate experts told APP that after construction of 'Diplomatic Enclave', the CBD project would become more significant.

The CBD officials said that many other countries had shown interest in establishing

or shifting their existing consulates to the Business District. In this connection, the PCBDDA has moved a summary to the Punjab government (Board of Revenue) for approval, they said.

Meanwhile, there is a plan to shift the US Consulate General, located on the Empress Road near the Lahore Press Club, to the Central Business District (CBD) also, as the diplomats concerned, in a meeting, showed interest in purchasing a piece of land in the area, the sources added. Earlier, during 2016, the Punjab government had offered the US authorities a chunk of land in the LDA City Housing Scheme for shifting its consulate there, but the plan did not materialise.

## Netherlands envoy attends MoU signing ceremony

LAHORE (APP): Netherlands Ambassador in Pakistan Henny da Vries attended a ceremony, held here for signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the SBP Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy and the Almarah Foundation for imparting hockey training to orphan children during the next 10 years. Hockey Olympian Khawaja Junaid, Chairperson Almarah Foundation Sophiya Warraich, and DIG Police Mehboob Aslam Lillah,

were also present at the ceremony, according to a press release, issued on Sunday.

Former IGP Punjab Tahir Raza, Olympians Shahbaz Senior, Khalid Bashir, philanthropists and a large number of hockey players and enthusiasts attended the event. Henny da Vries said sports was a binding force among societies, and it was admirable that young children would be groomed under the eye of great hockey players.



KARACHI: Policemen removing illegal sacrificial animals sellers from footpath in Korangi area.

# Butchers get ready to do roaring business on Eid

LAHORE (APP): Butchers, whether trained or untrained, have made all arrangements to do a roaring business on Eidul Azha in the provincial metropolis.

Under sizzling heat, the expert butchers are not only in short supply, but they are also charging advance exorbitant amounts in the city. They are deemed as a rare commodity especially on the first day of Eidul Azha, as they get innumerable orders despite demanding exorbitant charges for their services.

Experienced butchers are charging as high as Rs15,000 to Rs 20,000 for the first day of Eid for slaughtering a cow, as most of the wealthy people prefer sacrifice on the first day of Eid.

"For a cow or buffalo, they are demanding Rs15,000-18,000, which is extremely a high rate and out-of-reach for a salaried class or a white-collar person," Muneebur Rehman, a resident of Thokar Niaz Baig, told APP. He said experienced butchers were demanding Rs10,000 for slaughtering a sheep or a goat. The sacrificial animals are not cheap these days, and butchers too are expensive, Muneeb said.

He argue that those who can afford to buy a cow for Rs150,000 can easily afford spending another Rs18,000 to 20,000," he said, adding that it had forced most people to book their butchers for the second day of Eid for the sake of affordability. In posh areas including Bahria Town, DHA, Lahore Cantt., the services of professional butchers had been hired on advance payments.

Khan Muhammad, a butcher from Mozang area here with his two sons Hamza and Usama, told APP that his service package for sacrificial animals includes slaughtering of animal, peeling of skin without any cut while chopping the meat into pieces. Khan said that they have set different rates for cow, goat and camel slaughtering, adding they are charging Rs 6,000-8,000 to slaughter a goat or sheep, Rs 12,000-18,000 for a bull or calf, and Rs 18,000-20,000 for a camel depending upon the locality. They are offering two options to the clients for slaughtering of animals - first is to slaughter the animal at the doorsteps of the client on higher rates and the second is that rate would be reduced if the customer brings the sacrificial

animal at their shops.

Rauf Ahmad, another professional butcher from Ichhra, said that Eidul Azha provided them with an opportunity to earn handsome amount by slaughtering as many animals as they could. The trend of staying at shops had proved beneficial for most of butchers as it saved time, he added.

After smelling lucrative charges of slaughtering sacrificial animals, a large number of jobless youth, untrained and seasonal butchers had sprung into action, Rauf added. They have even set up makeshift booking stalls at important locations, with a view to engage the innocent people, they are offering 50 per cent less rates compared with the professional butchers.

More than 90 per cent non-professionals would be operating on Eid, Raziq Muhammad an elderly butcher from Anarkali, associated with the profession for the last 25 years, told APP. Besides, he said that many labourers, who were unable to find work due to Eid activities these days, had also engaged themselves temporarily in this profession, to earn their livelihood.

## India's belligerence designs, unmatched war-crimes reach climax in IIOJK

LAHORE (APP): Experts on Sunday termed India's belligerence as the biggest threat to peace and stability in the region, which is creating war hysteria and deflecting the world attention from serious human rights and war crime situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

They said the dire political and human rights situation in the occupied territory had left India exposed at the international level.

Lauding the sacrifices of people living at the Line of control (LoC), experts said that Kashmiris had been braving the brunt of firing at the LoC with the utmost courage. On June 24, the Indian Army, in a display of usual inhuman approach towards innocent Kashmiris, opened indiscriminate fire on a group of shepherds in Sattwal sector,

the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. "In sequel to Indian Army unprovoked firing today, while adopting an inhuman approach towards innocent Kashmiris at Sattwal sector, one more civilian embraced shahadat while another was critically injured. (Total two martyred and one critically injured)," ISPR statement said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwarul Haq condemned the Indian forces' unprovoked firing in the Sattwal sector of the Line of Control. In a statement issued here, he regrettably noted that on the one hand, the Indian forces had been committing war crimes in Kashmir, while on the other, they had been brazenly violating the ceasefire agreement by targeting innocent civilians along the LoC.

He said that despite Indian shelling, Kashmiri people living near LoC stand shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Army in their fight to defend the country's territorial integrity. The AJK PM also hailed the supreme sacrifices rendered by the Pakistani forces. He also paid homage to those who embraced martyrdom and directed the authorities concerned to provide the best medical facilities for the injured in the incident. He also appealed to the United Nations, Security Council and international organisations to take notice of India's naked aggression.

The Foreign Office (FO), in this connection, summoned the Indian charge d'affaires to register Pakistan's protest and condemn the incident. "It was underscored that such senseless acts were in clear violation of the 2003 ceasefire understanding, reaffirmed in February 2021. It was further underscored that targeting of civilians was 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," the FO said in the release.

Earlier, last month, Indian troops shot dead a

26 JUNE  
2023

The International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

Life is a  
PRECIOUS GIFT OF GOD

Let us make a pledge today that we will protect our nation from narcotics and will continue our efforts and struggle to eradicate this menace from our country.

One Nation - One Destination  
Drug Free Pakistan

Helpline  
1415

ANTI NARCOTICS FORCE  
PAKISTAN

PIDUJ802T-D

MESSAGE BY  
DIRECTOR GENERAL  
ANTI NARCOTICS FORCE

Major General  
Muhammad Aneeq Ur Rehman Malik,  
HI (M) DIRECTOR GENERAL  
ANTI NARCOTICS FORCE (Pakistan)

Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) being the premier Drug Law Enforcement Agency reiterates its resolve and commitment to eliminate the menace of drugs from the country. Our efforts against supply and proliferation of drugs remain un-flinched wherein our end endeavours are unwavering to apprehend and bring to book the perpetrators of drug trafficking. At the same time, our efforts towards raising awareness among all segments of citizenry through multi-dimensional campaigns are an important facet.

To make our efforts more meaningful, today on International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, I feel honored in saying that Pakistan is a flag-bearer of international counter-narcotics efforts. Through diligent and sustained efforts, Pakistan is maintaining Poppy Free Status since 2001.

While adroitly marshaling the available resources and creating synergy with other state organs and international partners, ANF remains unrelenting against menace of drugs in all its manifestations. However, the global dimension of the menace asks for more collaboration, cooperation and coordination between nations and international organizations.

As Director General ANF Pakistan, I assure our nation and international community of our strong resolve, unwavering commitment and invariant will against drug trafficking and abuse.

I also appreciate the efforts of all ranks of Anti-Narcotics Force and sister LEAs who are committed day and night to eliminate this menace from our motherland.

I also pay homage to the "Shuhada of ANF", who had laid their lives for the noble cause. While drawing inspiration from them, we pledge our nation that ANF is ready to offer any sacrifice for the fulfillment of its sacred mission of achieving a drug free society.

One Nation-One Destination  
Drug Free Pakistan





# Relief Department unveils Monsoon Contingency Plan to mitigate disasters impact

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday unveiled the Monsoon Contingency Plan 2023, a comprehensive strategy aimed at minimizing disaster risks and facilitating a coordinated and timely response. Under the supervision of Relief Department the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has actively engaged district administration, provincial and federal line departments, as well as humanitarian partners in developing this plan, incorporating valuable lessons learned from previous incidents.

The primary objective is to mitigate the impact of disasters and safeguard the lives and livelihoods of the people residing in the

province.

According to the Monsoon Plan 2023, ten districts, including Chitral Upper, Chitral Lower, Swat, DI Khan, Tank, Charsadda, Nowshera, Kohistan Upper, Shangla, and Dir Upper, are identified as very highly prone. Additionally, six other districts, Malakand, Dir Lower, Tor Ghar, Kohistan Lower, Kolai Palas Kohistan, and Peshawar, are classified as high risk.

Floods have been an ongoing issue, particularly in lowland areas, resulting in waterborne diseases, loss of human and livestock life, and damage to infrastructure.

The Monsoon Plan 2023 addresses this concern through a comprehensive flood risk management approach that encompasses prevention, mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, and recovery

measures.

Prevention measures focus on discouraging construction in current and future flood-prone areas, adapting future developments to flood risks, and promoting appropriate land-use and agricultural practices.

Mitigation strategies include structural and non-structural measures aimed at reducing the likelihood and impact of floods in specific locations. Preparedness efforts aim to educate the population about flood risks and provide guidance on appropriate actions during a flood.

Emergency response plans are being developed to ensure a swift and effective response in the event of a flood. Furthermore, the plan incorporates recovery and lessons learned components to minimize the social and economic impacts on

affected communities and facilitate their return to normalcy.

The PDMA has actively promoted the Contingency Planning process as a preparedness measure for natural hazards, particularly during the monsoon season.

The Monsoon Plan 2023 builds upon the lessons learned from past flood events, such as the catastrophic floods of 2010, heavy monsoon rainfalls of 2011, flash floods in 2012, and subsequent disasters.

By conducting risk and vulnerability assessments, the plan aims to strengthen preparedness and response capacities while identifying and addressing gaps and challenges.

Key outcomes expected from the Monsoon Plan 2023 include raising awareness and building capacity for effective response, anticipating and allocating

necessary resources based on threat perception, developing integrated planning capacities, and addressing gaps through preparatory measures.

Abdul Basit, Secretary Relief Department, emphasized that disaster risk reduction and management are integral to development and require continuous assessment of vulnerabilities and risks. Contingency planning plays a vital role in defining preparedness mechanisms, deployment strategies, and resource utilization before an emergency response is needed.

The Relief is committed to effectively implementing the Monsoon Plan 2023 by considering the recommendations and expertise of all stakeholders involved. This endeavor reflects a shared vision of protecting lives, preserving infrastructure, and minimizing the impact

of floods on communities residing in flood-prone areas.

Abdul Basit further said PDMA KP has already dispatched relief and necessary items to all District Administrations and concerned line departments. Additionally, other essential items can be provided during times of need.

The Relief Department is also conducting mock drills and exercises across the province to enhance preparedness and response capabilities.

Janat Gul Afridi, Director General of PDMA, stated that the Monsoon Contingency Plan for 2023 focuses on mitigating the potential impact of floods, building on the lessons learned from previous years' events. It includes the implementation of improved early warning systems, streamlined evac-

uation procedures, and enhanced communication channels.

Moreover, the plan places significant emphasis on community engagement to ensure their active participation in disaster preparedness. By involving and empowering the community, the plan aims to enhance resilience and response capabilities, fostering a collaborative approach to tackle the challenges posed by monsoon-related disasters.

Spokesperson Relief Department Taimur Ali said contingency plan focuses on planning for the upcoming Monsoon 2023 hazards

to identify and analyze related risks for not just their humanitarian impacts but also the associated adverse effects on private and public infrastructure and to define the roles and responsibilities of diverse stakeholders for prepared-

ness and response.

Gender integration in policies, plan and strategies is important to align priority groups as per needs to allocate resources and make strategic framework for the vulnerable groups including Women, children, persons with disabilities, transgender and minorities.

PDMA has installed flood Early Warning System (EWS) in the upper catchment areas on Seven (07) critical points 5 rivers and 2 nallahs to monitor the water level and generate early warning intimation in order to protect the human losses.

This Early Warning System analyzes existing data with previous flash flood historical data and upon reaching a dangerous level the system generates alert signals. PDMA-PEOC remains active round the clock (24/7) with free of cost Emergency Helpline 1700.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of North Waziristan led by Chief of Waziristan Malik Nasrullah meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali meeting at Governor's House.

## KKKUK's budget approved

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Senate meeting of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak was held at the Governor House Peshawar under the chairmanship of the Caretaker Provincial Minister for Higher Education and Law Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser on Sunday.

20 million surplus budget of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak was presented in the Senate meeting.

The Senate approved a surplus budget of 622 million for Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak. Caretaker Provincial Minister Justice Retired Irshad Qaiser said that the priority of the universities should be to provide the best facilities to the students and teach them skills along with the degree that can benefit them and make Pakistan proud around the world.

She appreciated the budget of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak and said that all universities should try to bring their budget to surplus and eliminate the deficit so that they can become financially independent.

## Excise police recover hashish

PESHAWAR: (APP): Excise Police Peshawar Region on Sunday foiled to smuggle 16,800 grams of hashish and arrested three persons, including two women.

On a tip off, under the supervision of the Excise and Taxation Officer Narcotics Control and the Circle Officer Peshawar Region, Excise Police Peshawar Region intercepted a car with registration number LE 7594 at the H-Gol Chowk.

During the search of the vehicle, 16,800 grams of hashish were recovered.

The three suspects, identified as Muhammad Sher son of Spin Gul, Roz Bibi (wife of Spin Gul), and Nasreen (daughter of Spin Gul), residents of Akakhel Bari, were arrested.

A case has been filed at the Excise Police Station Peshawar Region for further inspection and legal proceedings.

Ehsanullah, the Secretary of the Excise Department, Akmal Khan Khattak, Director General Excise, and Aftabuddin, Director Narcotics Control, praised the recent operation and commended the efforts of the team.

## City Traffic plan issued for Eidul Azha

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan presided over a high level meeting at Traffic Headquarters Gulbahar and issued a traffic plan for Eid-ul-Adha by deputing more than 1000 traffic Police Officers to perform duties.

Under the traffic plan, more than 1,000 traffic police officers will perform their duties, said Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan told media men. He informed that 4 SPs and 10 DSPs will per-

form duty on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, the holidays of the officers and personnel have been canceled to provide travel facilities to the citizens. Traffic officers and officials should keep the roads leading to the markets in other areas including Ring Road and Kala Maweshi Mandi clear, said the Chief Traffic Officer. Do not allow anyone to set up illegal cattle markets while legal action is taken against the culprits.

Citizens visiting markets for Eid shopping should not face any travel difficulties.

Traffic officials should keep the roads completely clear on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha and not neglect their duties. Departmental action will be taken against officers and officials who are negligent in duty, he added.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, keep a close eye on over speeding and one-wheeling, Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan said.

## Two incident of target killing condemned

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Minority Right Forum Pakistan Radesh Singh Tony has condemned and asked the government to take immediate action in this connection by protecting the minorities.

In a statement, Radesh Singh Tony said that the incident of target killing on Terlok Singh in Peshawar on Saturday in which Terlok Singh was injured while in another incident

the target killers shot and killed Manmohan Singh while returning home in a rickshaw.

He demanded of the government to ensure security to the minorities and arrest the target killers involved in targeting the minorities.

"The terrorists are wreaking havoc everywhere, minorities in Pakistan are not safe at all," Radesh Singh Tony said.

Minorities should be protected and murderers should be arrested and severely punished, Radesh Singh Tony said.

Earlier, a case of Manmohan Singh's murder was registered in CTD Police Station. Provisions of 7ATA and 302 have been mentioned in the case. Manmohan Singh was killed in Guldara while in another incident a Sikh was also injured in firing.

## ANF-Agriculture University hold seminar

PESHAWAR (APP): Campus Coordination Committee (CCC) in collaboration with Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sunday held a seminar in connection with the World Anti-Drug Awareness Day here.

Vice Chancellor of Agriculture University Peshawar Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht and Regional Commander ANF under the leadership of Bri. Abdul Manan graced the occasion as guests. An awareness walk and seminar against addiction was also held.

Vice Chancellor of

Islamia College University Peshawar Prof. Dr. Gul Majeed Khan, Vice Chancellor of University of Engineering and Technology Professor Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Deputy Director of ANFKP Malik Wajid Yousuf along with University of Peshawar, Khyber Medical University, Officials and students of colleges, Khyber Dental College, Forest College and other colleges and institutes especially participated in large numbers.

Anti-narcotics awareness walk led by Vice Chancellor

Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht and Regional Commander ANFKP Brig. Abdul Manan started from PUTA Hall of Peshawar University and ended at Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Hall. During this, the participants carried various anti-drug banners.

Speaking at the seminar, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Gul Majeed Khan, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain and Regional Director Brigadier Abdul Manan said that the awareness campaign against drugs is the need of the hour, drug epidemic.

## Minister to visit Radio Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Information, Public Relations, Auqaf, Haj, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhail will visit Radio Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar Center on Monday, and will make a detailed inspection of its various sections.

Station Director Ghulam Hussain Ghazi will brief him of the reforms and the future plan of action. The Minister will also inaugurate new weekly program Pakhtunkhwa Online as chief guest and answer live calls. Prof Dr Abasin Yousafzai and Hina Rauf will host the program.

## ASJ rejects bail plea

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Additional Session Judge (ASJ) Aftab Iqbal has rejected bail of alleged culprit involved on murder of Taif Khan Advocate.

According to prosecution, Sadaf Khan has alleged killed his brother named Taif Khan advocate while burnt him with the vehicle over financial dispute while complainant counsel Qaiser Zaman advocate appeared before the court.

A month earlier the alleged culprit was arrested from the premises of court following rejection of his interim bail.

However, the alleged murderer approached session court against his arrest.

ASJ Peshawar Aftab Iqbal rejected bail petition and ordered to be kept behind bars after conclusion of arguments.

## District admin active

PESHAWAR (APP): While carrying out operations in different areas of the city, wholesalers and low-weight bread sellers were arrested, the district administration said.

Operations will be conducted in Kohat Road, Bara Road, Hayatabad and LRH Colony, District Administration said. However, despite tall claimed by the district administration, it failed to remove the encroachment as the vendor and contractors are using roads as parking areas, creating constant road blockade near Lady Ready Hospital, Mian road in front of Peshawar High Court where most of the vehicles parked on the road, which the officials of the traffic police guessing.

When asked by a vendor at the parking of motor cars and other vehicles on the road, the contractor informed APP that we are giving money to the concerned quarters for using roads as parking areas.

In another attempt, the canteen manager has been arrested for the poor hygiene conditions in the canteen of LRH Colony, the district administration said. Most of the bakers who sell self-made expensive and low-weight bread in different areas of the city have been arrested, the district administration said.

## KPT&GC for appointment of CEO

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the 7th board of directors of Pakhtunkhwa Transmission and Grid Company (KPT&GC) was held under the chairmanship of Chairman Board Secretary Energy and Power KP Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah and decided to appoint any experienced senior officer with relevant field related to energy sector for the appointment of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transmission and Grid Company (KPT&GC) established for the first time in the history of the province to run the electricity transmission system in Pakhtunkhwa in a better way.

Provincial government had already sanctioned funds of Rs. 96 million for the establishment of the new company, from which the building has been selected for the appointment of emergency staff and the establishment of the office. It was also approved to hire the services of a chartered accountant for the preparation of the rules and regulations of the new company, said a hand out issued here on Sunday

The company's acting



CEO - cum - Special Secretary Tashfeen Haider, Additional Secretary Energy Abdul Haseeb Khan, CEO PEDO Engr. Naeem Khan, Advisor Energy Engr. Tala Muhammad and other board members of Finance Department, Senior Chief Officer Planning Arbab Faiz Muhammad, Deputy Secretary Energy Ijaz Khan also participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, the issues related to the power transmission system with the federal institutions NEPRA and NTDC and further process of establishment of newly company were discussed.

Moreover, important issues regarding the inclusion of the electricity generated from the ongoing energy projects in the province in the new system were also highlighted.

Similarly, with the sup-

port of World Bank, the company it was also approved to issue an announcement soon by the institution regarding the establishment and formation of its administrative structure.

In the meeting, the procedure for appointing any experienced officer on deputation basis as CEO of the company and staff appointments was also considered.

The chairman board Secretary Power Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah termed the establishment of the transmission company as a milestone towards the improvement of the electricity system of the province and reiterated his commitment that KP Transmission and Grid Company will soon transmit the cheap electricity generated from the completed projects of PEDO through its new system.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali talking to media.

## ANP condemned target killing incident in City

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP) has expressed concern over the increase of target killing and terrorist attacks incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and demanded immediate action against those involved in such crime.

The killing of Manmohan Singh in Peshawar is very alarming and condemnable, Provincial President ANP Amil Wali Khan said in a statement issued here Sunday. Dayal Singh was killed in Ramadan, how long these unknown persons will remain unknown, Amil Wali Khan questioned.

Attacks on members of the minority community in a city like Peshawar are giving an impression, Peshawar is not safe, Amil Wali Khan said. Unfortunately, even today, legal action is not being taken against those

people who were accomplices of terrorists, Provincial President ANP said.

He condemned the attack on Engineer Amir Makam in Shangla. Thankfully, the provincial president of PML-N was safe in the attack, but how long will this series end, Provincial President ANP questioned. Everyone of KP including people, Police, Politicians, Army have sacrificed in the war against terrorism, Amil Wali Khan said.

Today once again our land is being pushed into the fire of terrorism, "Amil Wali Khan said, adding, "We demand that strict action be taken against those who bring back the terrorists." Instead of political dramas, the protection of people's life and property should be the first priority, which is unfortunately not the case, Amil Wali Khan said.

## CCPO takes notice of Monmohhan Singh murder

PESHAWAR (APP): The CCPO Syed Ashfaq Anwar's notice of the tragic incident of Manmohan Singh's murder in Peshawar and visited the scene of Manmohan Singh's murder, met the leaders of the Sikh community and assured them of all possible measures for their protection.

Few suspects and suspicious persons have been arrested, said CCPO Syed Ashfaq Anwar. A special team has been formed under the leadership of SSP Operation Haroon Rashid Khan to trace the anti-social elements involved in the incident, CCPO said.

Protection of life and property of Peshawar citizens and minority community will be ensured in every possible way, said CCPO Syed Ashfaq Anwar. The people of Peshawar and the Police are on the same page and the tricks of the terrorists will be thwarted, CCPO Syed Ashfaq Anwar.



PESHAWAR: Abaseen Yousafzai addressing to participants of Pashto Literature.





## In brief

### Fire erupts in Astore forest

ASTORE (INP): Fire in Astore forests burned thousands of trees covering vast stretches of land on Saturday night. According to sources, a major fire erupted in the forest of Astore district in Gilgit Baltistan set ablaze around 3,000 trees. The locals are extinguishing the fire on their own as the fire is getting intensified by every passing moment. However, the authorities are yet clueless about the origin of fire either it was natural or an act of arson. The fire has sent shock and terror waves in the area and resident seems concerned about their surroundings.

### Five suspected robbers held

WAH CANTT (INP): Police arrested five members of a robbers' gang involved in robberies and street crimes and recovered looted booty and weapons worth millions of rupees from their possession on Sunday. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Ghulam Asghar Chandia told media that a team of Taxila Police led by SHO Sarmad Ilyas on a tip-off raided the hideout of the outlaws and arrested five gangsters involved in robberies and street crimes. The accused arrested were identified as Aabid and Wajid. Police has also recovered cash Rs 25 thousand, six snatched mobile phones and one motorcycle from their possession. He told "during the preliminary interrogation, the outlaws have confessed their involvement in robberies and street crimes in commercial and residential areas of the twin cities of Taxila and Wah Cantonment."

### Thief crushed to death, 2 hurt

MULTAN (APP): A thief was crushed to death while two others sustained injuries in a collision between motorcycle and speeding tractor trolley near Sultan Colony Chak No 1-R on Sunday. According to police sources, three thieves stole away a sacrificial goat and escaped from the scene on motorcycle when local people attempted to capture them. All of a sudden, a speeding tractor trolley collided with the motorcycle in which 30-year old Shafique s/o Abdul Aziz died on the spot while 30-year old Iqbal s/o Nazar Hussain and 25-year old Nadir s/o Ghulam Haider sustained serious injuries. Rescue 1122 officials reached the spot and shifted the body and the injured to District Headquarters Hospital Muzaffargarh. However, Sanawan police have started the investigation into the incident. Police said that the criminals were already involved in various cases of cattle theft, police sources added.

### 8 animal dealers deprived of Rs3m

FAISALABAD (APP): Unidentified robbers deprived eight animal dealers of Rs3.3 million. A police spokesman said here on Sunday that animal dealer Muhammad Faizan of Ghulam Muhammad Abad Faisalabad, along with his seven co-workers, was carrying animals in a truck No FSD-193, for sale in cattle market Mallo Mor Jhang, when three armed men intercepted them near Churagh Abad Interchange on Jhang Road. The robbers snatched Rs 3.3 million in cash and mobile-phones from the animal dealers at gunpoint and fled the scene along with booty. The police registered a case against the accused and started investigation, he added.

# 'Uplift works halted by PTI restarted in KP by PML-N govt'

SWAT (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister, Engr Amir Muqam here Sunday said that Pakistan Muslim League (N) strongly believed in the country's uniformed development process and has restarted work on projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Swat after it was halted by the PTI government.

Addressing a public gathering after inauguration of the Passport Office at Khwazakhela in Upper Swat, Engr Amir Muqam said that work on the gas projects started by PMLN Govt in 2017 at Swat, had been halted by the previous government, thus PTI made great injustice with people.

He said the PMLN has restarted work on all halted gas projects in Swat to provide the much needed relief to the people.

During Govt of former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, he said that passport offices were established in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that five new passport offices at Pathan Lower Kohistan, Chakdara Lower Dir, Sheringal Upper Dir, Shergarh Mardan and Khawzakhela Swat was another gift of PMLN Govt for people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Engr Amir Muqam said that political opponents could not mislead people of Swat any more as these ele-

ments were completed fail to address their problems during nine years long rule of PTI.

He said that Khwazakhela road, gas projects at Charbagh, Manglawar and Nawaz Sharif Kidney Hospital Swat were completed by the PMLN Govt benefiting millions of people.

Engr Amir Muqam said that feasibility studies for Bisham-Khwazakhela expressway has been completed, adding after completion it would change destiny of people of Malakand division including Swat and Shangla. He said this mega project was approved by the Nawaz Sharif Govt and the present government has restarted work on its feasibility.

The Prime Minister's Adviser said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar deserved full credit and appreciation for exempting erstwhile Fata and Pata including Malakand division from taxes for another one year, thus provided the much needed relief to people.

He said political and economic development was not possible without former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

He said Nawaz Sharif would soon come to Pakistan and lead election campaign of his party.

PMLN has strong roots

in masses and would form government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the basis of its performance and record development works.

He said his party after coming into power would bring down price hike, inflation and provide relief to masses.

Amir Muqam said that Rs20 billion relief were provided to people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under free flour package during Ramadan.

He said that senior parliamentarian Shahgee Gul Afridi has merged his party and joined PMLN along with his parliamentarians and supporters and expressed full confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and PMLN Quaid Nawaz Sharif.

He said PMLN leadership had stood with people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Swat in all difficult situation whether it was floods, terrorism or earthquakes and helped them out of all crisis.

He said people of Upper Swat would now get passports at their doorsteps and would not go to Mingora any more.

On this occasion, the people raised full throated slogans in favor of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, PMLN Quaid Nawaz Sharif and Engr Amir Muqam.



SWAT: Adviser to Prime Minister Engr. Amir Muqam offering dua after inauguration of Passport Office at Khwazakhela.

## Hand grenade explosions in Bannu claim one life

BANNU (INP): At least one person was killed, and 12 others were left injured following a series of hand grenade explosions that occurred in Bannu during the early hours of Sunday.

According to the police, the incident took place when two hand grenades were hurled at the residence of local resident Ziaur Rahman late last night.

As a result of the explosions, one individual tragically lost their life, while 11 others, including women and children, sustained injuries.

Swift action was taken by the authorities, who promptly transported the injured victims and the deceased individual to the district headquarters hospital.

## Mother of two tortured to death by in-laws

MURIDKE (INP): A mother of two children was allegedly tortured to death by her in-laws over some domestic issue in Muridke, police said on Sunday.

The deceased identified as Iqra belonged to Gujranwala, and she had been married off to Adil Abbas eight years ago in Muridke.

Iqra's brother Mubashir told the police in his statement that quarrels used to take place between the couple after the marriage.

"Adil Abbas, his mother and other members of the family tortured Iqra to death over some domestic issue," he alleged.

The body of the deceased was shifted to Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital for post-mortem.

The family of the girl protested and demanded justice from the Punjab inspector general of police. Sadr police launched investigations into the incident.

## Blind murder case solved

MULTAN (INP): Multan police investigation wing has solved a blind murder case within two weeks and arrested two accused in the crime on Sunday.

According to a police spokesman, a resident of Khudadaad Colony Abdul Sattar submitted a complaint with Muzaffarabad police on June 12 that his 26-year-old son Abdul Ghaffar had been missed for the last 15 days.

Later on he told his son dead body was found from the street of Al-Rehman Hospital.

The police registered case number 1208/23 under section 302/34 against unknown outlaws and started the investigations.

The Central Police Officer Mansoor-ul-Haq Rana formed a special team under the supervision of Superintendent of Police Cantt Capt (ret'd) Qazi Ali Raza to arrest the criminals.

The police investigation wing using the latest techniques of investigations arrested two accused Atiq and Nadir.

The spokesperson said "The arrested criminals have confessed that they had a dispute with the deceased Abdul Ghaffar over some issues and they kidnapped him and tortured him to death. However, further investigations were underway from the criminals".

# Three-day NYS draws students

QUETTA (APP): A three-day National Youth Summit (NYS) was organized here in which a large number of students belonging to Balochistan province and different districts of Pakistan participated.

The event was arranged under the theme "Harnessing Youth Potential for Resilient Future, Navigating Challenges, Driving Change" at the Balochistan University of Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS), said a press release issued here on Sunday.

On the occasion, different speakers including Balochistan Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs Khaliq Hazara, Ishaq Jamali secretary of Sports, Babar Yousafzai coordinator to CM Balochistan, Nawabzada Jamal Raisani coordinator of Youth Affairs, Hamna Malik project manager, Balochistan chief SMEDA, Sanaullah Baloch MPA, Abdullah Gul President Tehreek e Jawanan e Pakistan, Senator Kabir Muhammad Shahi, Yasmeen Lehri for-

mer MPA and Romina Khurshid Alam SAPM & Convener SDGs Task Force, expressed their views.

They informed that events of the NYS would be organized across the province and hailed the holding of National Games in the province after a gap of 19 years.

Terming the youth as an asset of Pakistan, they further stressed that students should focus on their studies and learn various educational skills for the betterment of their future.

# FIA nabs notorious human trafficker

FAISALABAD (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in Faisalabad has apprehended a highly sought-after human trafficker accused of being involved in over 30 cases of illegal transportation of individuals to foreign countries.

The suspect, identified as Tahir Nadeem, allegedly defrauded countless citizens by exploiting them through fraudulent activities and false promises of overseas employment.

His illicit operations primarily focused on unlawfully sending individuals to various countries including Europe, Canada, and others.

During the arrest, authorities managed to seize a substantial amount of evidence against the

accused.

This included 25 Pakistani passports, counterfeit bank seals, counterfeit visas, checkbooks, stamp papers, and checks from different countries.

Tahir Nadeem had been charged in 14 cases by the FIA in the Faisalabad circle alone.

Additionally, he faced an additional 16 fraud cases registered against him in various police stations across the city. Due to the severity of the charges brought against him, the accused had already been declared a fugitive by the court.

In an effort to combat human trafficking, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Human

Trafficking and Smuggling Wing (AHS) have arrested over 20 human traffickers from different parts of Punjab following the Greece boat tragedy.

FIA has launched three separate inquiries to investigate the incident.

Further, Azad Kashmir police have apprehended 11 human smugglers across various areas of the region while registering cases against 26 suspects.

The main accused involved in human trafficking was apprehended by the police from Mirpur Charhoi tehsil, located in the city of Mirpur.

It was learned that the suspect received Rs3.6 million to perform the illicit job.

# Seven held in various police crackdowns

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police during various crackdowns on Sunday, nabbed seven members of a motorcycle lifter gang and recovered stolen motorcycles, 27

sacks of stolen wheat, and other valuables from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, the city police under the supervision of the Sub-divisional Police Officer (SDPO) City Circle

Hafiz Muhammad Adnan striving hard to ensure a crime-free society through a special crackdown against criminals continued in the area on a daily basis.

The police traced a three-member bike lifter gang involved in several robbery and dacoity cases and arrested its three members namely Sami Ullah, Abdul Rauf, and Sheikh Qanoon.

The police have also

recovered 15 stolen motorcycles from their possession while further investigation is in process.

In another action, the police arrested the accused namely Muhammad Yousaf, Muhammad Yousif, and Muhammad Aslam besides recovering 27 sacks of stolen wheat.

Another accused namely Nemat Ullah was arrested and stolen households were recovered from him.

# Two arrested in blind murder case

MULTAN (APP): Police solved a blind murder case within two weeks and arrested two accused in the crime here on Sunday.

According to a police spokesman, Abdul Sattar, a resident of Khudadaad Colony reported to Muzaffarabad police on June 12 that his 26-year-old son Abdul Ghaffar was missing for the last 15 days.

He informed police that the body of his son was recovered from the street of Al-Rehman Hospital. The police registered case number 1208/23 under section 302/34 against unknown outlaws and started the investigations.

The Central Police Officer Mansoor-ul-Haq Rana while taking notice of the incident, formed a special team under the supervision of Superintendent of Police (SP) Cantt Capt (ret'd) Qazi Ali Raza to

arrest the criminals. The police team while using the latest techniques of investigations, arrested two accused Atiq and Nadir.

"The arrested criminals have confessed that they had a dispute with the deceased Abdul Ghaffar over some issues and they kidnapped him and tortured him to death. However, further investigations were underway from the criminals," the spokesman added.

# 34 'criminals' arrested

SARGODHA (APP): The police have arrested 34 alleged criminals during an ongoing crackdown across the district, according to a release issued here on Sunday.

A spokesman said that teams of different police stations conducted raids and arrested three proclaimed offenders, who were wanted to police in different cases of dacoity, robbery, theft and other crimes. The teams

arrested two court absconders, seven drug-peddlers and nine illegal weapon holders, besides recovering 100-litre liquor, 410-gram hashish, seven pistols and bullets.

Meanwhile, the police arrested eight kite-sellers with kites and chemical-coated string, one gambler with stake money while four others were held for decanting liquified petroleum gas (LPG) illegally.

The arrested alleged criminals were identified as Aslam, Akram, Inaam, Waqar, Wasim, Wasif, Wajid, Wakeel, Mujeeb, Muneeb, Nouman, Suleman, Asif, Aqeel, Naveed, Kamran, Kaleem, Saleem, Bilal, Basit, Bashir, Naem, Nouman, Suleman, Ali, Ghafaar, Ghafoor and others.

Separate cases were registered with police stations concerned.

# Team of experts inspect trout fish farms in Kaghan

KAGHAN (APP): Director General Fisheries Khushro Kalim Sunday visited various fish farms in Kaghan valley along with representative of JICA Authority Himamatsuyashi, Deputy Director of Fisheries Mansehra District Faheem Akhtar Khan and others.

During the visit DG Fisheries and experts inspected the farms with respect to controlling possi-

ble threat of different diseases to trout fish. Research team also collected samples of sick fishes in the Kaghan farms for further investigation. During the visit DG Fisheries assured to introduce new trout breeds to the fish farms with technical and modern machinery support from JICA Authority.

Japanese researcher Himamatsuyashi also col-

lected samples of fish in the farms for further research.

The Director General Fisheries Khushro Kalim thanked the Japanese research expert for providing technical support and introducing a new trout breed and directed the Deputy Director Fisheries District Mansehra to fully cooperate with JICA consultant for trout fish healthy breeding in Kaghan farms.

# IG FC held Jirga with local elders



F.P. Report

DIR: Keeping in view the local traditions, Frontier Corps North organized a jirga in district Dir, attended by Inspector General Frontier Corps North, Major General Noor Wali Khan, officials from the district administration, local elders, Ulema and youth.

During the jirga, special dua was offered in remembrance of the martyrs of Dir district. Major General Noor Wali Khan paid tribute to the martyrs for their invaluable sacrifices and said that Dir is a land known for its brave and hospitable people.

The restoration of peace in the area is the result of

the collective sacrifices made by the local population and the security forces. During the jirga, elders, scholars and youth provided various suggestions pertaining to development, peace and stability, reiterating their commitment to safeguarding peace alongside the district administration and security forces.

# Commissioner rewards cops over good performance

SIALKOT (APP): Commissioner Gujranwala Division Naveed Haider Shirazi distributed appreciation shields among the police officers here on Sunday over their good performance during free flour distribution process, wheat procurement campaign, sports competitions organisation and maintenance of peace during the past months.

He also attended a luncheon, given in recognition of services of police officers in the district. Regional Police Officer Gujranwala Division Dr Haider Ashraf, Deputy Commissioner Sialkot Adnan Mehmood Awan, District Police Officer Hasan Iqbal, Additional Deputy Commissioner

Revenue Muhammad Iqbal along with Assistant Commissioners and SDPOs of all four tehsils participated.

The commissioner also visited the Sports Arena, constructed by the district administration under the sublime flyover and reviewed the sports activities there and met players. He it was an initiative of Deputy Commissioner Adnan Mehmood Awan to attract the youth towards positive activities.

The commissioner also reviewed the ongoing work for the renovation of Sialkot wall in Chowk Allama Iqbal.

Deputy Commissioner Adnan Mehmood Awan briefed the Commissioner Gujranwala that Sialkot

wall has been decorated with portraits of proud and brave martyrs of Pakistan Army.

He said that the wall of Sialkot was a mirror of acknowledgment of the services of martyrs of Pakistan.

The work on the project will be completed soon.

DC chairs District Women Protection Committee meeting

Deputy Commissioner Sialkot Adnan Mehmood Awan chaired the first meeting of the District Women Protection Committee, here on Sunday.

He told the meeting that the Punjab Protection of Women Amendment Act for Anti-Violence 2022 had been passed.





## Pope offers prayers to family of ‘Vatican girl’ who went missing 40 years ago

VATICAN CITY (Reuters): Pope Francis on Sunday offered prayers and solidarity to the family of a Vatican schoolgirl who went missing 40 years ago in one of Italy's most enduring mysteries.

Emanuela Orlandi, the 15-year-old daughter of a Vatican usher, failed to return home on June 22, 1983, after a music lesson in central Rome.

The case has drawn renewed worldwide attention following the release of the Netflix series "Vatican Girl" late last year.

Referring to the 40th anniversary of the disappearance, Francis said he wanted "to express once again my closeness to her family, especially her mother, assuring my prayers". Delivering his Angelus message, Francis addressed crowds in St Peter's Square including Orlandi's brother Pietro, who has long campaigned for the Vatican to shed light on the mystery.

Pietro Orlandi was standing with a group of supporters holding up photographs and banners that called for "truth" and "justice". He welcomed the pope's remarks, calling them "a positive signal" and "a good step forward", in comments to Italian news agency ANSA.



Foul play has long been suspected in the Orlandi case, and this year both Vatican and Italian investigators have reopened investigations into it, with possible new leads.

Theories about Orlandi's disappearance have run the gamut from speculation it was linked to a plot to kill Pope John Paul II, to suggestions that she was kidnapped by the Rome underworld, to accusations she was

the victim of a priestly paedophile group.

Earlier this year, Pietro Orlandi played an audio tape on Italian television from an alleged gangster who said girls were brought into the Vatican to be molested and that John Paul II knew about it.

In April, Pope Francis called the allegations "offensive and unfounded insinuations".

## Greece votes with conservative premier favourite to win

ATHENS (AFP/APP): Greek voters head to the polls again Sunday in an election where conservative front-runner Kyriakos Mitsotakis is seeking a second term and an absolute parliamentary majority to form a "stable government".

The 55-year-old Harvard graduate, who steered Greece from the coronavirus pandemic back to two consecutive years of strong growth, had already scored a thumping win in an election just a month ago. But having fallen short of five seats in parliament to be able to form a single-party government, Mitsotakis chose to ask 9.8 million Greek voters back to the ballot boxes. Mitsotakis, who hails from one of Greece's most influential political families, had trounced his next nearest rival, former leftist prime minister Alexis Tsipras, by more than 20 percentage points in the last vote. As election rules this time round would accord up to 50 bonus seats to the winner of the vote, Mitsotakis's New Democracy party is widely projected to emerge victorious.

The main danger facing him would be a larger no-show rate at the polls

because of the perceived foregone outcome. Urging his supporters to turn up at the polls, he has warned of the possibility of a third election if he fails to get a majority.

"I hope we don't have to meet again in early August," he told Skai TV hours before a campaigning blackout began Saturday, adding that "this is no joke". "All the gains we have made must be consolidated and continued," he said. Mitsotakis beat Tsipras in a landslide victory in 2019 to take Greece's top job on a vow to end a decade of economic crisis.

That election was the first in the EU nation's post-bailout era, at a time when businesses and workers alike were ailing under the burden of heavy taxes imposed by Tsipras's Syriza party to build a budget surplus demanded by international creditors.

Over the next four years, tax burdens were eased, and while the Covid-19 pandemic wiped out Greece's vital tourism revenues, the country has since bounced back strongly with growth of 8.3 percent in 2021 and 5.9 percent in 2022. That was helped in part by over 57 billion

euros (\$62 billion) dished out by the government to cushion the impact of the health crisis and inflation.

Analysts note, however, that Mitsotakis had licence to spend under the EU's more relaxed pandemic-era rules. Mitsotakis has played up Greece's newfound economic health, underlining that on his watch, his conservatives have cut 50 taxes while increasing national output by 29 billion euros and overseeing the largest infrastructure upgrades since 1975.

The message appeared to have gone down well with voters weary of Greece's debt years, when headlines were awash with job losses, rising payments and companies going bankrupt. Maria Frangi, a 40-year-old lawyer, called New Democracy the "party that managed to put Greece back on the international scene, and with its economic achievements, turning it into a real player in the EU". Tsipras, whose call for wage hikes has so far failed to garner momentum, has warned against giving Mitsotakis a "blank cheque" to carry out a "hidden agenda" of policies unwinding social benefit policies.

## Japanese civic groups further oppose plan to dump nuke wastewater into sea

TOKYO (Xinhua): Multiple civic groups in Japan have continued to oppose the country's plan of dumping nuclear-contaminated wastewater from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean, exhorting the government to take the long-term impact into account to avoid entailing endless trouble to future generations.

"The problems regarding nuclear-contaminated water and the health hazards of radiation may further show their impact after a century, the situation 500 years or even 1,000 years later must be taken into consideration before judging whether the wastewater can be discharged into the sea," said Yoshitaka Ikarashi, the Japanese representative of the Somei Platform, or the Japan-China common market promotion association.

Also a resident of Iwaki city in southeastern Fukushima prefecture, he made the remarks during his recent speech at Meiji Gakuin University. He has been involved in volunteer activities for disaster relief and reconstruction in the

prefecture after the devastating earthquake in 2011.

When referring to the water-dumping plan, Ikarashi mentioned a Japanese saying that "one cannot do things well if he only considers the immediate," citing carpenters building temples in ancient Japan as an example.

In order not to be blamed by future generations, the carpenters would think ahead and will strive to leave a building that can stand the test, according to him, stressing that the century-long impact from now must be taken into consideration regarding the nuclear-contaminated water. "The sea is the common property of the world and Japan cannot make decisions alone," said Ikarashi, adding it is premature to make judgments as the possible future hazards of nuclear-contaminated water containing radioactive materials have not been verified.

He added that the current treatment methods of the relevant parties are also not doing their best to protect the marine environment and human health, the

viewpoint of which was echoed by other local experts. Hideyuki Ban, co-director of the Tokyo-based Citizens' Nuclear Information Center, told Xinhua in an interview that in order to prevent pollution of the marine environment, countries should use the most practicable methods at their disposal in accordance with their capabilities. The nuclear expert believes there are other ways of treating contaminated water, such as cement solidification, that are more practical than dumping it into the sea.

According to Ban, the power plant in Fukushima has stored more than 1.3 million tons of nuclear-contaminated water, which will continue to increase in the future, and according to the plant's operator Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the discharge is planned to continue for more than 30 years. If fish and shellfish are contaminated, it will ultimately affect the health of humans at the top of the food chain.

The expert pointed out that TEPCO only assessed the uniform spread of

radioactive material in the sea. "In fact, the ocean terrain is undulating, and the complex ocean currents do not flow in only one direction. It is not surprising that high concentrations of radioactive substances appear in the process," he said. Masanobu Sakamoto, president of the national federation of fisheries cooperatives known as JF Zengyoren on Thursday met with Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yasutoshi Nishimura, and handed over to the latter a petition stating the federation's unchanged opposition to the discharge plan.

The president called the planned discharge of nuclear-contaminated water "a matter of life and death" for the fishing industry, and opposed the authorities' decision to start the discharge without the full consent of the fishing industry. Ikarashi also questioned the end date of the water discharge, noting that Japan does not have the final treatment technology for decommissioned nuclear reactors, while the schedule for completing the disposal of waste reactors is completely unclear.

GUATEMALA CITY (AFP/APP): Guatemalans vote Sunday for a president that some hope, but few expect, will finally solve the problems of crushing poverty, violence and corruption in the Central American country.

Two popular candidates were disqualified in electoral tribunal decisions widely deemed questionable, leaving a dictator's daughter, a former first lady and a UN diplomat as the frontrunners in a crowded field of 22 candidates.

The country of 17.6 million is one of the poorest in Latin America, a reality that has, along with high rates of violent crime, compelled hundreds of thousands to risk the perilous migrant journey north toward the "American dream." Rights groups have expressed increasing concern over perceived efforts to crack down on prosecutors and journalists, in an apparent bid by the government to protect a corrupt system benefiting those in power.

Under outgoing conservative leader Alejandro Giammattei, several former prosecutors from the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), a UN-backed entity closed by the government in 2019, have been arrested or forced into exile. Earlier this month, the founder of a newspaper critical of the government was sentenced to six years in prison on charges of money laundering, a move decried by press freedom groups. The newspaper founded by Jose Ruben Zamora has been forced to close, and several of its journalists have fled the country. "All the candidates are the same and only come to rob (the people). I still don't know if I'm going to vote," street vendor Nestor Figueroa told AFP in the capital Guatemala City.

Guatemalans are asking for "a stop to all the excesses that we now see in terms of corruption," said political analyst Renzo Rosal. But despite the "deep reforms" promised by this year's presidential candidates, Rosal said he remains doubtful much will change after the elections.

In the latest poll by the Prensa Libre newspaper, center-left candidate Sandra Torres -- the ex-wife of deceased former leftist president Alvaro Colom -- was leading the race with 21.3 percent, fol-

lowed by centrist career diplomat Edmond Mulet with 13.4 percent.

In third place, with 9.1 percent, is right-winger Zury Rios, daughter of former military strongman Efraim Rios Montt.

All three oppose legalizing abortion and same-sex marriage in a staunchly Catholic country, and have vowed to crack down on violence and corruption.

The current polling suggests a high possibility that the election will go to a runoff on August 20, with no single candidate likely to obtain the 50-percent minimum share of votes required to win in the first round.

Two popular candidates -- former poll favorite Carlos Pineda and Thelma Cabrera -- had their candidacies invalidated by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) in decisions their supporters have claimed amount to political sidelining. According to the Prensa Libre poll, distrust in the TSE is high, with more than one in ten respondents saying they intended to cast a blank vote in protest.

Some 9.4 million Guatemalans are eligible to cast a vote. Guatemala is

one of the most unequal countries in Latin America, according to the World Bank.

More than half its inhabitants live in poverty and half of all children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, according to the United Nations.

Insecurity is another major election issue. Guatemala's homicide rate is 17.3 per 100,000 inhabitants -- about three times the world average, according to the UN.

In 2022 there were 4,274 murders, half of them attributed to drug trafficking gangs.

Torres and Rios have both evoked the tactics of President Nayib Bukele in neighboring El Salvador in his controversial "war" on gangs which has won him adoration at home but opprobrium abroad over rights concerns. Polling stations open at 7:00 am (1300 GMT) and close 11 hours later, with the first results expected within hours. Also up for election are 160 members of Congress, 340 mayors and 20 delegates to the Central American Parliament. Guatemala does not allow successive presidential terms, and voting is not mandatory.

## Aircraft used for ‘death flights’ returns to Argentina



BUENOS AIRES (AFP/APP): A cargo plane used by military henchmen during Argentina's "dirty war" to fly leftists over the ocean and push them to their deaths has been brought back to the country, where it may go on display in a museum on the horrors of dictatorship.

The Belfast-built Skyvan PA-51 cargo plane landed in Buenos Aires on Saturday, AFP confirmed, after sleuths traced it to the United States, where for much of the last decade it had been ferrying skydivers with few aware of its gruesome history.

An official ceremony on Monday will mark the plane's return, amid a push to exhibit it at the Museum of Memory dedicated to victims of the rightist military regime that convulsed the country from 1976 until 1983. Flight records and other documentation show that a military crew took the aircraft up on the night of December 14, 1977.

Among those aboard, bound and drugged, were three members of the Mothers of the Plaza de

Mayo, a group that protested the disappearance of their children by the military, two French nuns and seven other people.

All were shoved out the door of the aircraft into Atlantic waters. "The plane is something dark for us, but having found and identified it, we cannot allow it to continue flying," Mabel Careaga, one of the promoters of the repatriation of the aircraft that belonged to the Naval Prefecture, told AFP. Careaga is the daughter of Esther Ballestrino, who was thrown into the ocean from the plane, along with the other founders of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo.

He's now serving life in prison. A survivor of the Navy Mechanics School, journalist Miriam Lewin, helped launch the campaign to comb military flight records to reveal the history of the "death flights." The premise, she said, was "if there were 'death flights,' there had to be airplanes." The group located six aircraft mentioned by former navy officer Adolfo Scilingo, the first to admit having participated in the "death flights."

In 2005, Scilingo was convicted in Spain for crimes against humanity and is serving a 30-year jail term. Three of the aircraft were in Argentina but beyond salvage.

the support of the government but some human rights organizations object, saying it's too gruesome.

"The airplane is part of the story, which is painful, but it has to be told as it was," De Vicenti said.

All the victims of that flight were singled out by a former sailor, Alfredo Astiz, who infiltrated the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo. He's now serving life in prison. A survivor of the Navy Mechanics School, journalist Miriam Lewin, helped launch the campaign to comb military flight records to reveal the history of the "death flights."

The premise, she said, was "if there were 'death flights,' there had to be airplanes." The group located six aircraft mentioned by former navy officer Adolfo Scilingo, the first to admit having participated in the "death flights."

In 2005, Scilingo was convicted in Spain for crimes against humanity and is serving a 30-year jail term. Three of the aircraft were in Argentina but beyond salvage.

"Of the other three, the most accessible was in Miami. Another paradoxically was in the hands of the British armed forces and the last was in Luxembourg," Lewin said.

The Florida plane was the Skyvan PA-51 that operated that fateful December 14, 1977, flight. In 2007, it was used to transport mail between Fort Lauderdale and the Bahamas.

Commercial pilot and film director Enrique Pineyro studied the flight logs and found 10 to 15 suspicious entries. He took the records to prosecutors.

"The aircraft is... six, seven meters (20 to 23 feet) long. There, they piled up all the bodies half anesthetized with pentothal," Pineyro told AFP.

"It is an appalling thing. When you look at that box, that plane, you say: 'My God, what this must have been like.'"

Some 30,000 people disappeared during the Argentine military's "dirty war" against leftist subversion. The Skyvan aircraft made some 200 unexplained night-time flights between 1976 and 1978, according to Naval Prefecture records.

Military officials sought to obliterate all trace of those taken on the flights.

But that December 1977 night, strong winds blew the bodies of five of the victims to the shoreline.

Forensic specialists determined they had suffered fractures corresponding to falls from a great height. The bodies were buried in a common grave south of Buenos Aires but exhumed and positively identified in 2005.

## India slams UNGA's anti-terror resolution after rejection of its self-serving proposals

UNITED NATIONS (APP): India has angrily denounced and disassociated itself from a United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for unity to tackle new emerging terrorist threats, after failing in its bid to incorporate into the text some self-centred proposals designed to showcase New Delhi's anti-terror activities.

The Indian action came on Friday evening as the 193-member Assembly concluded its 8th biannual review process of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS), with the adoption of the resolution that involved months of negotiations in which Pakistan played an active role. The review process was co-facilitated by the ambassadors of Canada and Tunisia.

India was pushing for the inclusion into the resolution of the so-called 'Delhi Declaration' adopted by the 15-member UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee's special meetings held in India in October 2022 as well as the outcome of the conference on "No Money for Terror" -- documents which were not negotiated by ALL member countries. As such the Indian proposals were not included in the final resolution, a move that enraged India.

The Delhi Declaration focused on three main areas: unmanned aerial systems, terrorist financ-

ing, and information and communications technologies.

After the setback, an irate Indian Ambassador, Ruchira Kamboj, took the floor to vent her feelings, targeting the co-facilitators as well as Pakistan -- without naming it.

"It was deeply disappointing to note that the co-facilitators of the ... Strategy not only disregarded the strong support and trust offered by my delegation to their efforts since the beginning, but also that they acted in a non-transparent, non-consultative, and partial manner, making an exception to accommodate the concern of one delegation while completing ignoring the contribution and concerns of my delegation," she said.

"The Co-Facilitators have chosen a path to put my delegation in a difficult situation forcing us to accept an outcome which the wider membership does not deserve," the Indian envoy said, adding, "They have left us with no option but to disassociate with this document altogether."

A veteran European diplomat expressed his "deep" disappointment over India's action, saying the move reflected New Delhi's bid to impose its will on member states.

"It showed the prioritization of their narrow political agenda over the broader global effort to

combat terrorism," the diplomat said in an interview with APP UN correspondent.

On its part, Pakistan took the position that documents, including the Delhi Declaration, which were not negotiated by a wider membership, should not become a part of the General Assembly resolution, which is adopted by consensus.

"This principled position was widely understood and accepted as well," a Pakistani diplomat said. Pakistan, he added, had also succeeded in retaining references to "foreign occupation", and "conflict resolution" in the context of root causes of terrorism and Islamophobia.

The GCTS is a special global tool designed to enhance efforts at the national, regional, and international levels to combat terrorism.

It consists of four pillars: (i) addressing the conditions that contribute to terrorism, (ii) preventing and combating terrorism, (iii) building states' capacity to fight terrorism and strengthening the role of the UN system in this regard, and (iv) ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.

Last week, Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram said his country has been at the forefront of the fight against terrorism and has rendered

innumerable sacrifices of more than 80,000 lives. "Spoilers in our neighbourhood continue to target us," he added. The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, must address situations of prolonged, unresolved conflicts and foreign occupation. "There is a continued campaign to portray struggles for self-determination and national liberation as terrorism in order to justify the oppression of people under foreign occupation," he added. It is critical to clearly define terrorism and distinguish it from legitimate struggles for national liberation and self-determination. The GA resolution condemned terrorism, underscoring the importance of the road map adopted in 2006 in view of emerging new threats and evolving trends after States detailed their national counter-terrorism measures and highlighted the importance of international cooperation.

Unanimously adopting the text, the Assembly called on member states to unite against terrorism and violent extremism. They reaffirmed the Global Strategy's four pillars and encouraged member states to develop programs enhancing dialogue among civilizations and interreligious and intercultural understanding and respect as important counter-terrorism cooperation elements.



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# Wagner armed mutiny and lesson for the world

Recently, Wagner Chief Yevgeny Prigozhin told the media that he had ordered his mercenaries to halt their march on Moscow to avoid shedding Russian blood, while vanguard troops were left just 200 km away from the Russian capital. According to the Russian warlord, his private military has turned its columns around and going back to field camps. The latest development came after Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko negotiated with the mercenary boss to stop Wagner's troop movement. Yevgeny Prigozhin accepted Lukashenko's offer to halt the Wagner group's advance to de-escalate the tensions. Earlier, the Warger group took control of a Southern Military District Rostov-on-Don and thousands of group mercenaries were en route to Moscow to topple the Russian military leadership.

The geopolitical and Security situation has deteriorated sharply in the European parts of the Russian Federation over the past few days after the powerful Russian private militia, the Wagner Group announced its disobedience to the Russian Federation and turned its guns toward Kremlin amid ongoing war with Kiyv. The internal armed mutiny and chaos not only caused significant challenges for Moscow but cast grave peace and security concerns in the entire Eurasia region. There are grave concerns in the global community regarding the safety and security of Kemlin's Nuclear Arsenal and heavily loaded nuclear missiles of multiple ranges set on diverse targets in Europe and North America, the accidental use of those Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) along with scenarios involving taking their control by the non-state actors including the Wagner mercenary group, transnational terrorists as well as Chechen fighters, who presumably have pro-Russia sentiments but pursue entirely different agenda from that of Moscow. Presently, there is a state of emergency, and security forces are on high alert across Russia although road blockade had been removed and the ground defense taken by the Russian military had been eased in Moscow, and other cities after the Wagner Chief called off his military campaign against Kremlin.

The reports suggest that the brawl was in the making over the past months between the Wagner boss and the Russian Ministry of Defense and senior military establishment over certain issues. Yevgeny was annoyed by the misconduct and inappropriate dealing of Russian Defense Minister, Sergey Shoigu and Senior Army General, Valery Gerasimov, whom he accused of rank incompetence and of denying Wagner ammunition and support in its battles in Ukraine. The US Intelligence Community (IC) and Putin was aware of the possible coup from his close ally commonly known as Cheff. Currently, serious doubts, insecurity, and uncertainty prevail across Russia, Putin himself is unsure about the future events in his country as well as the reaction of Russia's enemies including Ukraine, NATO, and the United States. The White House, the Pentagon, and Capitol Hills are being briefed about the recent armed mutiny in Russia, the current situation in that country, and its effects on the security and survival of the Russian Federation. Western strategists are also mulling over future scenarios, Putin's grip over the country, and state institutions, political, economic, and security challenges confronting the Russian Federation as well as the scopes and opportunities to use those events to the West's advantage.

In fact, private militaries, security, and lobbying firms are the modern versions of old-aged warlordism, crusader armies, a band of pirates, and religious Jihadist groups who work for money, religious or political motives and blindly obey their owner, commander, cleric, and Political henchman but their actions never enhance the security of a state or political/military objectives of a nation. Rather, such mercenary groups are like pawns, all time available to the highest bidders to hire for rent or otherwise to accomplish the illegal task. Founding or hiring a mercenary group is similar to digging a ditch for oneself and such armed groups had always ended up in their tussle against their creators as LTTE fought back against India, TTP stung back Pakistan, Houthi separated their ways from Iran while Wagner Group attempted to invade Moscow. Meanwhile, the time is not far when Blackwater/Zee raises its concerns against its handlers sitting in Pentagon and Langley any time in the future. Therefore, nations around the globe must resist keeping private armies for the purpose of undertaking illegal businesses and crimes against humanity as snakes always bite their handler in the end.

### Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



# How the West Bank is slowly being annexed

Yossi Mekeberg

In the frenzied roller-coaster ride that Israelis have been taken on by their government over the past six months, one could easily miss, in the blink of an eye, yet another of those crazy decisions that are so detrimental to the country's existence and well-being.

As is to be expected, much attention has been paid to the coalition government's deliberate sabotage of the country's democratic system. As a consequence, its approach to the Occupied Palestinian Territories has become a secondary issue — erroneously and dangerously so.

Bearing in mind the composition of the coalition, the extreme views held by key Cabinet ministers regarding a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and its repulsive attitude to Palestinians both as a people and as individual human beings, such neglect is at one's own peril. This is particularly true if it is on the part of the international community, which still claims to have an interest in a peace agreement based on a two-state solution.

Last Sunday the Israeli Cabinet approved a resolution designed to speed up the process of approval for construction projects in Israel's illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank. It is not as if the Israeli government all of a sudden has recognized the need to remove red tape when it comes to the construction industry. As any developer inside Israel could tell you, especially in the towns and villages where Palestinians live, obtaining any kind of building permission involves a truly circuitous route.

Nevertheless, for decades the settlers have been the most pampered portion of Israeli society, enjoying disproportionately generous resources when it comes to creating

infrastructure, education, health systems, and security. The latest decision is yet another example of the preferential treatment these unlawful settlers are receiving from the government.

These benefits are being disbursed at the expense of other segments of the Israeli population, but even more deviously with the clear aim of guaranteeing that any two-state solution ends up dead and buried, and that Israel will eventually annex, if not the entire West Bank, at least a large part of it.

In the early days of the current government, it did not seem that those within it that are representatives of the settlers, including Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, who themselves reside in two of the more ideologically extreme settlements, were in any hurry to advance the settlements agenda as much they were on a mission to weaken the judicial system.

Yet this should not catch us off guard, because for them there is a clear link between the two issues.

A weaker Supreme Court is one that will be unable to prevent settlers from illegally grabbing more Palestinian land, harassing and terrorizing Palestinian civilians, and normalizing what is already the settlers' version of a lawless Wild West where they have free rein to do as they please.

The intention of last Sunday's resolution is made even more clear by the fact that it gives Smotrich, who in addition to being finance minister also serves as a minister in the Defense Ministry, power over one stage of the planning-approval process. I cannot imagine him rejecting many, if any, applications to construct more houses in settlements, while continuing to put pressure on the government to forcibly dis-

place Palestinian families from Khan Al-Aham and Masafer Yatta in the West Bank, or from Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem.

This decision is aimed at accelerating the expansion of settlements and the settler population, but this time on steroids. Only last week, Israel approved 4,560 new housing units in Jewish settlements, and another 3,000 are expected to be approved very soon.

It is not only the number of housing units but also their locations that are intended to ensure that should a Palestinian state become a reality — something that, by now, is widely considered to be only a remote possibility — it will not be a contiguous territory.

This is in addition to the current Israeli government's legalization of many of the outposts that were regarded as illegal even under Israeli law because they were built without government approval.

But whatever name they might be given, all Israeli settlements in the West Bank are regarded as illegal under international law, and by international consensus as representing the biggest obstacle to reaching a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

At this point in the history of the conflict there are no political or social forces in Israel strong enough to even advance an agenda that opposes the expansion of settlements, let alone drive it to the heart of the country's political discourse. Therefore, the response from the international community is crucial — but it remains weak and uncommitted to taking concrete steps to contain the phenomenon.

In response to the Israeli government's announcement of the acceleration of the settlement process, the US State

Department released a statement declaring that “the United States is deeply troubled” by the Israeli government's decision and the “administrative” changes to Israel's judiciary that will expedite the process. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has stated that he is “alarmed” by these developments and reiterated that the settlements are “a flagrant violation of international law.”

In other words, the international community as a whole is deeply troubled by the expansion of settlements and their illegality. Nevertheless, these expressions of concern or condemnation have become a routine, almost Pavlovian reaction to yet another escalation of the settlements project, but it is a reaction with very few teeth, to the point that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians take such declarations seriously — and quite probably, neither do those who make them.

To some extent, an ultra-right-wing government such as the one now in power in Israel will thrive on defying the international community, especially if doing so has no concrete consequences.

It is about time that it dawned on the international community, especially those who would like to see an end to the expansion of the settlements, that the people currently calling the shots in the Israeli government have the clear objective of annexing the West Bank, and they are far from shy about shouting it from the rooftops.

In the face of uninterested public opinion in Israel, and an incompetent international community, it is not surprising that the settlement movement feels that its ultimate goal of annexation is getting closer. Meanwhile, the international community, through its lack of a meaningful response, is contributing to this scenario becoming reality.

# Saudi-French relations: the sky is the limit

Faisal J. Abbas

Friday marks the end of a remarkable two weeks in the context of Saudi-French relations. Ties between the two nations have been reignited and rejuvenated and are now well on the way to reaching their full potential.

Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir aptly described what happened as a “quantum leap” in Saudi-French relations. During an interview with Arab News en Français in Paris, he said the leap was being fueled by two “young leaders who have visions and ambitions and the courage to move their countries to a better level,” in reference to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and French President Emmanuel Macron. “This is the coming together of many different elements,” added Al-Jubeir.

This quantum leap could be seen through the high-level participation at Vision Golfe 2023 — organized by the French Ministry for the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty — and the two countries' political alignment on several regional and international files. They signed 24 memorandums of understanding at the France-Saudi Investment Forum.

There was a fantastic presentation at this week's Expo 2030 reception, in which Saudi ministers and architects, including Khalid Al-Falih and Princess Reema bint Bandar, made a fitting case for why Saudi Arabia should be allowed to host Expo 2030 in Riyadh. Pride was the overwhelming emotion when the Saudis explained in great detail the fabulous changes that are taking place in the Kingdom and how the world should come to Saudi Arabia.

At the Paris Air Show, Saudi-French relations really did take to the skies. Saudi Arabia's budget airline flynas was a major player, ordering 30 aircraft worth \$3.73 billion from aerospace manufacturer Airbus. Airbus also signed an investment agreement worth more than 25 billion riyals (\$6.7 billion) to build military and civilian helicopters in Saudi Arabia with a local defense company.

Finally, the crown prince himself led the Saudi delegation at the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact.

It was indeed a remarkable fortnight.

But what exactly does this quantum leap in Saudi-French relations entail and how did it come about? First, we need to understand that it was not a sudden success or a surprise.

This is instead a multifaceted relationship that has been in the works for years.

Culturally, as described in a column for

this newspaper by Saudi Culture Minister Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan, we are celebrating “five golden years of Saudi-French cultural cooperation.” He wrote: “Over the past five years there have been qualitative transfers in our cultural cooperation, thanks to the Saudi and French leaders' shared commitment and recognition of the importance of this cooperation to continue strengthening our bilateral partnership. Saudi Vision 2030 has opened vast opportunities and we are working with partners globally to leverage these opportunities.”

Like Saudi Arabia, France is as concerned with mutually beneficial opportunities in the future as it is about history and culture. In fact, at Vision Golfe 2023, Saudi Industry and Mineral Resources Minister Bandar Alkhoraief outlined 12 sectors in which French companies are welcome and can contribute.

It was thus no surprise that, at the Saudi-French Investment Forum that was also held this week, the French minister of foreign trade described Saudi Arabia as France's leading trade partner in the region.

Politically, there is a clear alignment on many regional and international issues.

Two examples are the need for a peaceful solution in Ukraine and the need for stability in the Middle East, where Riyadh and Paris perhaps see eye to eye on almost every topic.

Lebanon is the only possible exception, since Riyadh has signaled many times that it must solve its own problems and the Kingdom has steered away from backing a particular candidate for the vacant presidential seat.

Apart from that, it seems like the sky is clear. Who knows what this partnership can go on to achieve, with all the changes, reforms and opportunities emerging in the new Saudi Arabia?

In another three years, Saudi Arabia and France will be celebrating 100 years of diplomatic relations.

As Saudi Investment Minister Al-Falih said: “Many of Saudi Arabia's achievements in Vision 2030 will have the fingerprints of Saudi-French partnerships.”

Throughout the past two weeks, the French got a taste of what it means to work and partner with Saudi Arabia.

And thanks to the spectacular show put on at the Grand Palais Ephemere for the Expo 2030 reception, and the presence of Saudi astronauts Ali Alqarni and Rayanah Barnawi, who just returned from Earth orbit, it seems that at least when it comes to the Saudi-French relationship, the sky is literally the limit.

# The politics, economics and science of climate change

Ajmal Shams

Climate change is one of the most daunting challenges of our times. It is undoubtedly an existential threat to human survival on the planet. Despite large-scale efforts over the past few decades, awareness on the subject is still limited, and hampered by political, economic, social and cultural considerations.

Former US Vice President Al Gore's documentary film “An Inconvenient Truth,” released in 2006, was the first major effort by a politician to present to a global audience the calamities of global warming and the need for preventive measures by the entire world.

Every summer, the loss of precious lives to heat waves in some parts of the world offers us a fresh reminder of the looming climate crisis, which is still awaiting an effective response by us all. About 100 people reportedly died from blistering heat in India in the past few days alone, and the deaths of hundreds worldwide every summer go unreported.

Despite sufficient scientific evidence about the risks, climate change and global warming are still subject to political, economic and sociocultural squabbling. The politicization of climate change is an unfortunate reality that must be addressed as a moral obligation. In this context, it is important to evaluate the degree to which time is still on our side; Gore's documentary told us almost 20 years ago that we were essentially sitting on a ticking time bomb in terms of the urgency of the climate crisis.

Science provides the foundation for climate knowledge and climate action, with all other relevant domains built upon it. It is scientists and climate experts who tell us the truth about the issue and the corrective measures the global community must take to avert a climate catastrophe.

But there is no doubt that without political will at the very highest levels of governments, and social awareness throughout societies, the fight against climate change will lose its meaning. It is time we realized that the issue of climate

change should not be treated as science for the sake of science. Instead, it should be viewed as a real, common threat to the entire human race requiring joint, and urgent, global action.

When it comes to addressing climate change, there are certainly reasons to be pessimistic as well as optimistic. But it would be best to adopt a more realistic and pragmatic approach. On the political side, it will be difficult to convey the message of which developments are environmentally friendly and which are not, and which we need to restrict.

It will be especially challenging for the developing economies of the world to be more selective in their options for economic growth and development, simply because they are latecomers to the process. Such countries can rightly argue that most of the damage to the environment has already been done by the more advanced economies of the world, and so placing restrictions on the pace of development in the devel-

oping world, especially on those industrial activities that produce greenhouse gases, would be unfair.

Yet, environmental catastrophes caused by climate change are universal and developing countries are often the most vulnerable to such disasters. Secondly, climate change threatens collective destruction and so warrants a joint response by the entire world, regardless of individual levels of development or geographic location.

On the positive side, significant achievements have been made, especially over the three decades since the establishment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. This has led to annual gatherings of the Conference of the Parties (COP28 will take place this year in Dubai), a supreme decision-making body representing all states that have signed up to the convention.

These COP gatherings helped establish the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris

Agreement, which were major milestones in the development of a collective response to climate change. The latter has legally binding status.

Yet there is still a long way to go in terms of all countries abiding by their climate commitments, which is what we need if we are to make a tangible impact. Recently the World Bank decided that all of its future financing would be aligned with the Paris Agreement, which was another significant development in the fight against climate change.

On the social and cultural side, developed and developing nations need to do more to raise awareness of climate change in mainstream society via educational curricula. Climate is currently included under the overall umbrella of the environment. However, there is a need to treat climate change as a separate and dedicated subject, to help increase awareness about it across a wider spectrum of society, from the general public to officials, professionals, scientists and government leaders.

Climate change could be gradually incorporated into education systems as a compulsory subject. It is an issue that requires action from every part of society if we are to make a real difference, and proper education is therefore a prerequisite to changing the public mindset. Tackling climate change is not just about big decisions by governments; everyone's actions count and everyone has a role to play as responsible members of society.

Lastly, given the significance of climate change to human survival, the international community must establish new ways to recognize and reward individuals that make remarkable contributions to the fight against climate change. The annual COP meetings offer an excellent opportunity to celebrate such notable figures.

Climate change is no ordinary human challenge, and the response requires a mix of scientific, political, governance, economic, social and cultural tools. Isolated responses will not be effective in achieving positive results in the climate struggle.



# Three scenarios for an unlikely breakthrough on Syria

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

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 Türkiye 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 Türkiye 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

handles 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 stressed

**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 Türkiye 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 Türkiye 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 Türkiye, 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, Türkiye does not trust the PYD, believing that the group will renege on its promises when it has the chance.**

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 Türkiye-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.

For this deal to happen, the US should intervene and clinch a bargain with Türkiye, 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, Türkiye 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.

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# The migrant burden grows heavy so the world must act

Hafed Al-Ghwel

There has been a significant decline for some time across the Arab world in support of migrants and refugees. The trend has accelerated in recent years, worsening the plight of desperate populations fleeing the effects of sustained regional and global shocks that continue to cause more displacement.

This erosion of support can be attributed to the prolonged nature of displacements, coupled with severe economic crises in a number of host countries; which have exacerbated hostilities displayed toward migrants by desperate communities, often at the urging of opportunistic politicians.

Pushed to the edge, unable to return home or eke out a decent living in host countries, many migrants turn to risky sea crossings on flimsy, overloaded boats, resulting in disasters that barely provoke outrage any more, even when bodies begin washing up on shores.

According to the International Organization for Migration, deaths on migrant routes across the Middle East and North Africa have reached their highest levels since 2017. And the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reports that the MENA region continues to face significant challenges in terms of migration and displacement.

In light of a number of alarming developments and rising death tolls, it is therefore crucial to examine the underlying factors that are contributing to the declining support for migrants and refugees in the Arab world, and to explore potential solutions that might alleviate the burden on host communities, provide sanctuary to those that need it, and counteract negative attitudes toward these vulnerable populations.

As the migrant crisis continues to worsen around the globe, it is difficult to separate the effects of dwindling international aid from the ways in which the situation grows more dire

dwindling external support.

Meanwhile, public attitudes toward migrants in host countries have grown increasingly strained, as evidenced by the growing resentment in countries such as Türkiye. The devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake there in February intensified these tensions. In the aftermath of an official response to the earthquake widely perceived as inadequate, Turkish nationals expressed resentment over the \$40 billion spent by their government since 2011 to host Syrians.

In Lebanon, the massive devaluation of the country's currency over the past few years, combined with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, have led to unprecedented levels of poverty that disproportionately affect refugee and migrant populations and the poorer communities that host them.

Severe financial problems in these countries and others have exacerbated the negative attitudes among the public toward migrants and refugees. In Lebanon, the economic crisis has left 90 percent of Syrian refugees living in extreme poverty, and 93 percent of Palestinian refugees in poverty.

In Jordan, 80 percent of displaced Syrians live in poverty made worse by the rising cost of basic necessities. Coupled with reduced opportunities for earning a living, this is fueling rising tensions between host communities and migrant populations.

Furthermore, the international organizations that provide assistance to refugees are facing funding shortfalls, leading to cuts in essential programs designed to expand access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

As the funding continues to dry up, it fuels a sense of abandonment and additional despair among refugees, further exacerbating their sense of vulnerability and susceptibility to exploitation and abuse.

Several factors have

other countries and provide greater support to host nations, in tandem with increasing their own commitments to resettle refugees.

If anti-migrant animosity becomes palatable to the public, and politically tenable, the potential consequences could be far-reaching and devastating. Host communities will not only become more hostile toward migrants, rising social tensions could easily lead to violent clashes. Unchecked, this could result in state-sanctioned xenophobia, further increasing the vulnerability of desperate people and undermining the social cohesion and stability of host countries, especially if the plight of migrants is co-opted into, or used to fuel, partisan politics.

Given the complex and multifaceted nature of the migrant crisis in the Arab world, there is a pressing need for innovative strategies to alleviate the burdens on host communities. This requires a rethinking of conventional approaches to humanitarian assistance and development aid, with a fresh focus on promoting self-reliance and resilience among both refugees and host communities.

Such strategies might include the creation of economic zones that provide employment opportunities for both groups, as well as investments in local infrastructure and services that benefit all residents.

Addressing the root causes of displacement is also essential in efforts to achieve a sustainable and equitable solution to the migrant crisis. This entails tackling the political, economic and social drivers of forced migration, such as conflict, climate change, and underdevelopment.

By addressing these underlying issues, the international community can work toward creating the conditions necessary for the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of refugees to their home countries, or facilitate their integration into host societies.

**As pressure continues to mount on displaced populations in the Arab world, it is incumbent on the international community to devise more effective strategies to help alleviate the burden on host communities, offer sanctuary to individuals fleeing violence or persecution, and mitigate anti-migrant animosity. Addressing this complex issue necessitates a multifaceted approach that transcends mere Band-Aid solutions and engages with the underlying drivers of migration and displacement. The best time to target these drivers of migration was yesterday; the next best time is now. The global response so far leaves a lot to be desired, however, as the political will and prioritization are simply not there.**

with each passing year. The ameliorating effects of international aid have waned in recent years as donors face competing priorities at home or abroad, resulting in diminished funding and reduced capacities for absorbing the growing stream of migrants and refugees experiencing protracted displacement.

Consequently, the reductions in aid and other tailored incentives for host countries have led to unprecedented shortfalls in global refugee response efforts, which some experts have condemned as bordering on intentional negligence. In the Arab region in particular, the International Organization for Migration has warned that a decline in aid to host countries potentially amplifies negative anti-migrant, anti-refugee sentiment, which can easily create the sort of conditions that lead to tragedies such as the recent migrant boat disaster off the coast of Greece.

Should the international community fail to muster adequate responses in a timely manner to this now emerging crisis, we are likely to see more deaths, more inhuman detentions, more forced repatriations and the rapid growth of people-smuggling networks connected to transnational criminal elements.

It is fairly evident that the effects of reduced aid on host countries and refugees are multifaceted and far-reaching. Countries that are already strained and struggling as a result of their own economic and social challenges find themselves left to shoulder the burden of supporting large refugee populations with limited resources and

contributed to this decline in aid. Competing global crises, including the pandemic, climate change, the war in Ukraine, and sustained unrest in other parts of the world, have diverted resources and attention from a brewing migrant crisis that disproportionately affects the Arab region. Furthermore, donor fatigue and shifting priorities among international powers have also played a role in the reduction of aid to the region.

As pressure continues to mount on displaced populations in the Arab world, it is incumbent on the international community to devise more effective strategies to help alleviate the burden on host communities, offer sanctuary to individuals fleeing violence or persecution, and mitigate anti-migrant animosity.

Addressing this complex issue necessitates a multifaceted approach that transcends mere Band-Aid solutions and engages with the underlying drivers of migration and displacement. The best time to target these drivers of migration was yesterday; the next best time is now. The global response so far leaves a lot to be desired, however, as the political will and prioritization are simply not there.

We should not wait until anti-migrant animosity becomes mainstream, turning the desperate into defenseless scapegoats for a cascade of ills in host countries. The international community should ensure that its interventions do not prioritize the needs of refugees over host communities, which could fuel anti-refugee sentiment. At the same time, they should facilitate resettlement to

Potential solutions that prioritize the needs of both refugees and host communities include the establishment of comprehensive frameworks for burden-sharing and responsibility-sharing among states, as well as the development of regional and global partnerships that promote cooperation and solidarity in addressing the migrant crisis.

Additionally, efforts to foster social cohesion and counter anti-migrant sentiments through inclusive policies, public awareness campaigns and the promotion of intercultural dialogue can help to create more welcoming and supportive environments for migrants and refugees.

In conclusion, the declining support for migrants and refugees in the Arab world, exacerbated by economic crises, international negligence, and rising hostilities, necessitates a highly engaged and multifaceted global approach that focuses on alleviating the burdens on host communities, providing sanctuary, and mitigating anti-migrant sentiment.

It is imperative that major actors acknowledge the urgency of the situation and increase their support and commitment to efforts to resolving, or at least tempering, this crisis before it is too late.

By adopting innovative strategies, addressing the root causes of displacement, and prioritizing the needs of both refugees and host communities, the international community can work together to forge a more equitable and sustainable path forward, creating space for the world to collaborate on other complex challenges.

# A ‘third way’ of moderate Muslim politics exists & should be encouraged

Usama Hasan and Matt Godwin

Millions watched last month as the UK's King Charles was crowned by the archbishop of Canterbury in a ceremony steeped in Christian tradition but attended by leaders of other faiths, who played prominent roles in the day's events. Less than a week later, Archbishop Justin Welby was generating headlines again, this time for criticizing the government's policies toward migrants from his place in the House of Lords.

As we argue in a new report released this week, faith plays a role in politics and public life in many countries. Hinduism in India, Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Judaism in Israel remain sources of both unity and division. And for the world's more than 50 Muslim-majority countries, Islam has often been entwined with politics. Far from being static, countries where Islam is the largest religion have experienced immense change in their systems of government and the formal role played by Islam. However, for too long, Islamists have dominated the political discourse.

Representing a theologically warped and troubling ideology, Islamists believe that it is an obligation for Muslims to reestablish a clerocracy reminiscent of the rule of the Prophet in the early years of the faith. Overlooking centuries of pluralism and political evolution in Muslim polities, their extremist interpretation is now systemic in the Islamic Republic's Iran and Afghanistan under the Taliban, while terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda, Daesh and others attack and seek to replace the state throughout the Middle East and Africa.

We make the case that confronting these ideologies needs to go beyond the battlefield, to the battle for ideas. Moderate Muslims are by the far the majority in every country, yet Islamists have for too long dominated Muslim thinking in politics. We argue that moderate Muslim voices must be strengthened and empowered as a "third way" between a secularism not in keeping with

Muslim-majority states and violent Islamism.

Understanding where and how to recognize and support moderate Muslims requires understanding political variation in Muslim-majority countries and we offer a new framework to consider dynamic change in these nations. Egypt, for instance, under-

**The country's feared religious police, the Mutawa, was reformed in 2016 into an institution with more moderate leadership and more of an advisory, rather than a disciplinary, role. The current Hajj season reminds us that, in 2021, the authorities removed the requirement for women to be accompanied by a male guardian (mahram) for the pilgrimage to Makkah. Before that, in 2019, the Saudi-sponsored Muslim World League announced the historic Makkah Charter, after a conference attended by 1,200 Islamic scholars from 139 countries. Prominent participants and speakers at the conference hailed from 27 different Muslim groups and schools of thought, including Sunni and Shi'ite. The Makkah Charter calls for religious dialogue, pluralism, partnership and cooperation. Furthermore, it rejects ethnic or religious supremacy, affirming human fraternity and equality. It also promotes ethical global development, protection of the environment and cultural and civilizational dialogue. The impact of the Makkah Charter has been extensive. It was adopted unanimously by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 2020, meaning that it is recommended for use in religious, cultural and educational institutions in OIC countries. The charter has also been launched and promoted in the US, continental Europe and, this year, in London, where extremist groups attempted but failed to discourage British Muslim communities from engaging with it.**

went a transformation from Islamic nationalism to Islamism and then back again in the last decade. In neighboring Tunisia, it went from Islamic nationalism to a secular republic. In Pakistan, the country has long oscillated between secular republicanism and Islamist thinking.

Many other countries, including in the Gulf region, have been working to modernize their states and societies, reducing the role of religious institutions such as the religious police, as well as encouraging the participation of women in

business and public life. While many observers in the West continue to view some Muslim-majority countries, especially in the Middle East, as "backward," they have failed to take into account social and theological reforms. For example, the ongoing social reforms in Saudi Arabia have been champi-

oned by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after listening to the Saudi public, especially women, and by encouraging jurisprudential deliberations by Saudi religious scholars. The country's feared religious police, the Mutawa, was reformed in 2016 into an institution with more moderate leadership and more of an advisory, rather than a disciplinary, role. The current Hajj season reminds us that, in 2021, the authorities removed the requirement for women to be accompanied by a male guardian

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We argue that transformations such as these are leading many Muslim states on a pragmatic path toward what former US President Barack Obama called "civil religion," wherein state institutions are largely secular, but where people of faith are able to participate in public life informed and inspired by their religious values. As they move toward more pluralistic societies, Muslim-majority states should not have to make a false choice between secularism and Islamism, but can take a third way where Islam remains a fundamentally important part of politics and public life.

The reelection of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Türkiye reflects the shifting contours in Muslim-majority states. A country that once embraced a vehement secularism has now been led by an Islamist for more than two decades. As opposition parties in the country reflect on the recent election, they should turn away from the desire to exclude faith wholesale from public life and recognize the legitimate participation of moderate Muslims. Indeed, inclusion is probably the best approach to contesting Islamist thinking.

Next year marks the centenary of the official abolition of the Ottoman Empire, the world's last caliphate. Islamists will use this occasion to lament the end of a theocratic state, albeit a largely secular one, and to call for the return to rule of those who they think know the mind of God. Religion will always be important in Muslim-majority countries, as it is in many non-Muslim states, and the best way to confront violent Islamism is to recognize and support moderate Muslims in politics.

The impact of the Makkah Charter has been extensive. It was adopted unanimously by the Organization of Islamic





# PIDE research highlights significance of inter-ethnic marriages in Pakistan

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) new research highlighted the significance of inter-ethnic marriages in Pakistan, a country with a diverse ethnic spectrum.

The research findings from the PIDE BASICS 1 survey indicate that such marriages play a crucial role in promoting assimilation, social cohesion, and stability, thereby blurring tensions arising from ethnic differences, said a press release here on Sunday.

Language, closely tied to ethnic background, has a profound impact on personal identities, which can sometimes be divisive and undermine unity within the larger identity.

The survey employed a new approach to measure ethnic exogamy and

homogamy by asking respondents three questions related to the ethnic backgrounds of their parents and the language spoken in their everyday lives.

The results revealed that only a small proportion (1.5%) of marriages in Pakistan are ethnically exogamous, indicating a strong trend of intra-ethnic marriages.

However, slight variations exist among different languages, with Urdu, Potohari, Brahui, and Brushaski showing slightly higher rates of exogamy. Additionally, gender differences were observed in languages such as Urdu, Shina, and Kashmiri.

The study also examined the language preferences of children in families with different ethnic backgrounds and found that when parents share the same ethnicity, 92.3% of

children spoke the same language as their parents.

However, children of exogamous parents exhibited a mixed pattern, with some languages influenced more by the mother's language and others by the father's language. These findings shed light on the role of inter-ethnic marriages and language dynamics in Pakistan's social fabric.

According to a press release issued from the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr. Durre Nayab said while describing the details of the PIDE BASICS Notes 8 that the latest research findings revealed that to capture the prevalence of ethnic exogamy, or homogamy, in Pakistan, the PIDE BASICS 1 survey asked questions in a new way to give a better insight into the issue.

In most surveys, language is captured by asking the respondents about the language they speak, and the response to this question is taken as representing their ethnic background. This is misleading, and the results of the BASICS survey confirm this distortion in interpretation. PIDE Pro VC said that in her latest PIDE Notes 8 that looking at the trends of language homogamy and exogamy by region, province, age, education, and income.

We see in the findings of the study that only 1.5% of the marriages in Pakistan are ethnically exogamous. Ethnic exogamy is more prevalent in urban Pakistan (1.9%) than in rural but only by a very small margin. Among the provinces, Balochistan shows the highest proportion of language exogamy (4.1%), and Punjab is the lowest (0.9%).



ISLAMABAD: Women busy in purchasing fruits at H-9 weekly bazaar.

## Pakistan's export of broken rice increased

SHANGHAI (INP): A B2B webinar on the promotion of Pakistani rice to China was jointly held here by the Consulate General of Pakistan in Shanghai, and the Pakistan Trade and Development Authority.

Nawab Ali Rahoojo, Deputy Consul of the Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai addressed the session. He highlighted the potential of Pakistani rice in Chinese market, according to Gwadar Pro.

According to Chinese customs data, Pakistan's exports of rice to China in 2021 and 2022 amounted to US\$399 million and US\$455 million, respectively.

Pakistan's export of broken rice to China has increased substantially, reaching US\$48 million in 2019 and reaching US\$243 million in 2022, aligning with the overall increase in the use of broken rice in China.

China's high-end rice consumption market is expected to reach Rmb60 billion, which is close to US\$9 billion by 2023.

The Consul General, Mr. Hussain Haider, noted that Chinese rice is not only used for direct consumption but also for industrial production, such as making rice wine or rice noodles, and other value-added products, providing opportunities for Pakistani enterprises.

The Consul General is confident that Pakistani milled rice, especially Basmati, renowned in the world for its unique aroma and nutritional content, has huge potential to enter Shanghai and other Chinese metropolises.

The Consul General also welcomed Chinese companies to visit the upcoming 1st International Food and Agriculture Expo in Karachi in August to experience more Pakistani-friendly products on-site and interact with local and international buyers.

Twelve Pakistani vendors eligible to export rice to China presented themselves to twelve Chinese importers.

They highlighted the popularity of Pakistani rice in the Chinese market by sharing their rich experience of working with Chinese companies to grow their existing business and explore new opportunities.

Pakistani rice exporters, who faced challenges last year due to floods and uncertain natural disasters, are expected to significantly increase their exports this year.

# IAP delegation apprises CCPO industrialists' issues

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of industrialists headed by President of Industrialist Association Peshawar Malik Imran Ishaq held an important meeting with Chief City Police Officer (CCPO) Syed Ashfaq Anwar at Malik Saad Shaheed Police Line Peshawar and apprised the senior police officer regarding industrialists' issues.

The delegation of industrialists consisted of the association vice president Mohiy-ud-Din, Executive members Riaz Arshad and Sherbaz Bilour and member IAP Hashim Afridi. Malik Imran Ishaq, the association president congratulated Syed Ashfaq Anwar on his new responsibility as CCPO Peshawar and welcomed his appointment to an important position.

The meeting was informed that the Provincial Finance Minister was briefed and taken into confidence on the proposal of the IGP, after which the Finance Minister assured that resources and funds to the police would be ensured for setting up a dedicated police station for Industrial Estate Hayatabad.

After a detailed discus-



sion on various issues regarding Industrial Estate Hayatabad Peshawar, CCPO Peshawar Syed Ashfaq Anwar assured the delegation of industrialists that the services of the police department will be available to the business community at around the clock and all possible facilities will be provided for the development of business and industries.

Ashfaq Anwar, the CCPO Peshawar said that the establishment of a dedicated police station in the industrial zone is dire need of the hour, assuring that immediate steps will be taken in this regard and he will himself monitor progress on setting up a dedicated police station in industrial estate and all resources will be mobilized and utilized in this regard.

CCPO Syed Ashfaq Anwar said that the Industrial Estate Police Outpost will be manned by 20 additional permanent

police personnel for their presence in the outpost and at the roadblocks.

The Senior Police Officer on the occasion directed the patrol police in the Industrial Estate in two regular shifts and for hi-tech surveillance through modern policing tools, Industrial Estate Hayatabad will be included in the Safe City Project, apart from the residential area of Hayatabad.

Malik Imran Ishaq while speaking on the occasion thanked the CCPO for paying keen attention to the problems of the industrialists. The IAP president expressed full gratitude for taking serious note on the business community issues and hoped that CCPO will play his important role in establishment of a dedicated police station in Industrial Estate Hayatabad as well as maintaining law and order, security, and protection of industrialists in Peshawar.

# Govt needs to resolve issues of traders: PIAF

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Fahimur Rehman Saigol, along with PIAF EC members Mudassar Masood, Malik Khalid, Chaudhary Wajid, Zeeshan Sohail, Sheikh Sajjad, Azhar Khan, Secretary PIAF Abdul Saboor and other market representatives visited several city's several markets and major commercial hubs, including Baden Road, Cooper Road and adjacent markets and met officials of organizations there. During this visit, Fahimur Rahman also inaugurated Light Makers, a shop owned by Nadim Saeed and Mian Shehbaz on Biden Road and prayed for the development of their business.

During the door-to-door meeting with businessmen, Chairman PIAF said that the manifesto of PIAF is to

solve the problems of the business community on a priority basis. The business community is facing problems like unannounced load shedding, parking, over-billing, departmental proceedings and expensive electricity and gas in the markets. The government should solve the above problems on a priority basis in consultation with the traders. PIAF's mission is to create a stable economy and prosperous business community.

Fahimur Rahman said that business community was facing tough challenges because of limited business. In this context, he sought attention of the government for formulation of regional, provincial and central level task force, and formulation of sector wise regional policies which would help the government address the problems confronted by

exporters. He asked the government to appreciate the role of trade, industry and exporters, providing mass employment to the jobless population of the country.

The Chairman PIAF suggested that One Window Operation should be introduced for the replacing the lengthy procedures that involve interaction of manufacturers with various agencies. The government agencies were harassing the trade and industry every day and Social Security, EOBI and other taxes should be merged and deducted at the source.

He called for promoting industrialization and enhancing exports through lowering cost of production, paying early refunds to solve liquidity crunch and relaxing import policy for industrial raw material.

# Pak-China to promote Pakistani pharmaceutical development

BEIJING (INP): Pak-China collaboration has enhanced recently to promote Pakistani pharmaceutical development.

"China has equalized or surpassed the developed nations' pharma standards over a period of time. With 30 years of experience in cooperation with China, our progress is accompanied by the dividend of the development of China's pharmaceutical industry," said Waheed Ahmed, Chief Executive of Shaigan Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd at the CPHI & PMEC China held last week, according to Gwadar Pro.

As Asia's leading pharmaceutical show for trad-

ing, knowledge sharing and networking, CPHI & PMEC China spans all industry sectors along the pharmaceutical supply chain including APIs, excipients, finished dosage, natural exacts, biopharma & CDMOs, animal health & feed, medical supplies, etc.

Waheed, who has been attending the expo since 1995, noted that CPHI China is becoming more and more informative due to the major R&D work being carried out in China.

China, Pakistan's largest trading partner and the largest producer of API, attaches importance to investing in chemical labs and training scientists. China's key technologies are developing rapidly, and the quality of pharmaceutical and mechanical products is reliable, he explained.

"This time I am exploring future technologies and newly developed products, especially in biosimilars and new drug delivery systems," Waheed mentioned, "meeting my over 15 collaborative partners who are all old friends at the expo and witnessing their growth is always a pleasure and opportunity to tap new business range."

At the expo, Jack, head of a pharmaceutical packaging machinery manufac-

turing enterprise integrating R & D, production and sales service told Gwadar Pro that Pakistan has a huge pharmaceutical market of 250 million people, making it one of the most promising pharmaceutical consumer markets.

The industry has grown rapidly in recent years and its production capacity has greatly increased, as can be told from the fact that the equipment they provide has been upgraded from small and low speed machinery to large and high speed machinery.

"We provide guidance on the use and maintenance of the entire production line to help Pakistan master advanced packaging technology," Jack added that, "Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry has a good foundation for cooperation with China. We are in the process of selecting local partners in Pakistan for further cooperation."

According to the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan, the Pakistani pharmaceuticals industry plays a prominent role in the domestic market.

The value of the sector was estimated at \$3.29 billion, growing in double digits in the last five years. Although Pakistan has established itself progressively

as a manufacturing platform for pharmaceuticals, the country remains a small player in the global scenario.

A significant untapped export potential exists in the exports of pharmaceuticals from Pakistan. Huang Hong, who supplies raw materials and pharmaceutical equipment to Pakistan, said that Pakistan is encouraging the pharmaceutical industry to gain a foothold at home, which is also the direction of his efforts. They are turning to technical cooperation to boost exports from Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry.

Learning from China's experience has driven his company to expand export range to South Asia, Asia Pacific, Central Asia, Africa, Waheed said, adding that they are also collaborating with China in the high-tech pharmaceutical RND sector to develop more affordable products.

The 20th Pharma Asia is scheduled to be held in Karachi in September. Waheed welcomed the participation of Chinese pharmaceutical companies in the expo to learn more about the situation of the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan and the investment environment and advantages in the country.

# Business leader alleges IMF of promoting poverty

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said on Sunday that the IMF, World Bank and other such institutions are promoting poverty and inequality in the world.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that their aim was to increase the wealth and influence of Western countries by robbing the poor countries of their resources, he added.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that because of the tactics of these institutions, five percent of the world's population has occupied eighty percent of the resources.

The majority of the richest people in the world belong to a Western power, and the IMF is adopting every legal and illegal tactic to increase their wealth, he observed.

The business leader said that at present more than seventy countries, including Pakistan, are unable to pay their debts.

Self-interested elites who can sell the country's assets but cannot reduce spending control most of these countries.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that dozens of countries have been ruined by the IMF's policies and have been forced to abandon national integrity and interests. The ability of such coun-

tries to compete in the international market is lost, the economy falls, inflation increases and people's lives become more difficult.

In these situations, rich transfer their resources while intelligent people leave their countries and go to Western countries to increase speed of their development, which is a serious brain drain issue.

IMF has never stopped any country from corruption and spending spree, but has always victimized the common people.

This institution has never brought any country out of crisis, but has worsened their situation, so the sooner the country gets rid of it, the better it is.

# Severe power breakdowns hit trade, industry

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) on Sunday called for formulating a reform strategy on an emergency basis, taking urgent measures as severe power suspension has been hitting the trade and industry due to electricity shortfall of around 6,500MW, as demand has reached almost 30,500 MW whereas supply was just over 24,000MW.

Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that the government's inability, ill planning and financial woes have multiplied the

miseries of the trade and industry who are facing unscheduled power loadshedding across the country, in addition to higher electricity bills, as they are paying heavy electricity bills of up to Rs50 per unit including surcharges and other taxes.

Mian Anjum Nisar asked the authorities to take quick action, taking notice of forced loadshedding in the industry because of non-availability of fuel, technical faults, failure in purchasing of fuel and maintenance of the power plants, leading to crunch of thousands of megawatts across the country.

While addressing a meeting of the business community, convened to discuss the loadshedding issue, he said that all the

major industrial cities of the country are facing unannounced electricity loadshedding due to which the production activities are badly suffering. He said that rural areas are also reportedly facing severe loadshedding at a time when the mercury is on the rise and this situation is making the life of common man more miserable.

Mian Anjum expressed concern over long power outages and stressed the need to rectify technical faults immediately.

The BMP Chairman also called for urgent measures not only to improve the economic situation but also to overcome the power shortage.

He condemned the government plan to raise base tariff between Rs4 to Rs5

per unit from next fiscal year. He said that the main reason for the huge shortfall was massive rise in demand owing to scorching heat, less supply of RLNG and other fuels to generation plants and limited capacity of plants to purchase fuel as government is not clearing their due energy costs.

He said that the country's forex woes are unlikely to allow the government to take a prompt decision for purchase of three additional cargoes of LNG on spot whose price is around \$ 13.4 MMBTU in the international market.

He noted that during April 2023 to September 2023 terminal capacity for additional 2-3 LNG cargoes per month is available at Terminal-2, while spot

LNG prices are currently at \$ 13.4 MMBTU (\$ 43 million per cargo).

Accordingly, the PLL had suggested that power sector be requested to analyse the possible savings with respect to power generation based on imported additional LNG through replacement of any other fuel.

However, Power Division did not respond to the PLL on its proposal within a specific time due to which the country lost the chance to purchase LNG at cheap rates.

He called upon the government to take urgent measures to curb the rising power loadshedding as it will badly hit the business and industrial activities.

He said that the country has an installed capacity of

electricity of over 39,000 MW, but currently the system is producing 23000 MW of electricity, which shows the inefficient performance of the power sector.

He said that Pakistan's energy sector has been facing great losses and distortions in the distribution sector for years, costing the national exchequer billions of rupees annually.

He said that the unannounced prolonged load shedding in Industrial Areas would bring economic activity to a grinding halt and to bring the industrial sector out of mire; the government would have to take measures on war footing to end the power outages.

He said that due to long power outages, industrial production is at the lowest

and if the situation remains the same, industrial units would left no option but to close down their operations.

He said that defiantly there was a shortage of electricity in neighbouring countries as well but they have given priority to the industrial sector. He said that the government would have to reset its priorities to cope with this crisis like situation.

He said that the government would have to conduct a detailed study of various industrial sectors to finalise load shedding schedule for them.

He urged the Prime Minister to direct the concerned authorities to ensure continuous supply of electricity to the industrial areas as the ongoing situation

was not only putting a negative impact on overall economy but was also causing unemployment in the country.

He said that the acute power shortage was also discouraging any new local and foreign investment and now all the foreign investors preferred to shift their investments to the neighboring countries at a time when almost all the countries of the world were striving to attract new investments.

FPCCI former president also stressed for bringing drastic improvement in the performance of power companies as uninterrupted supply of electricity to businesses and industries is the key requirement to ensure better growth of economy.





## In brief

## Anderson promises 'more aggression'

LONDON (AFP): Veteran fast bowler James Anderson on Saturday vowed England would be "more positive, more aggressive, more entertaining" when they look to level the Ashes series at Lord's next week. Australia won the opening Test at Edgbaston by two wickets after England skipper Ben Stokes had declared his team's first innings at 393 for eight. Some critics said that decision allowed Australia to keep a foot in the door of the match which they then gratefully exploited. "I think we'll go more positive, more aggressive, more entertaining," said 40-year-old Anderson who endured a tough first Test in which he took just one wicket. "We want to try and make sure people go home happy as they did each day at Edgbaston." He added: "Just because we're 1-0 down I don't think we'll try anything different. I think we showed enough last week to show we can win the next four if we keep playing like that and iron a few things out. We'll go exactly the same." Anderson was speaking at the London Stadium where he threw out the ceremonial first pitch in the baseball game between the Chicago Cubs and St Louis Cardinals. Australia rival Nathan Lyon also shared the occasion. Off-spinner Lyon said throwing the first pitch was the first time he had picked up a ball since leaving Birmingham. "It was an absolutely incredible Test win and to be able to play a part in that was extremely special," the 35-year-old said. "It is going to go down as one of the best Test matches I've played in. The mood has changed. There's a lot of work we need to do. We feel like we can still get a lot better, and we need to get a lot better if we want to compete against England and the brand of cricket they're playing."

## Han clinches first Asian Tour win

SEOUL (Agencies): US golfer Seungsu Han clinched his first Asian Tour title at the Kolon Korea Open on Sunday, winning by six shots after leading from the opening round. The 36-year-old finished the final round with an even-par 71 for a tournament total of six-under-par 278 at the Woo Jeong Hills Country Club. "This is such a great honour," said Han, who was born in Incheon, South Korea, but moved to the United States when he was 13. "I first started playing in Korea when I was 13, so the Korea Open means a lot to me," he said. "I think it is the best tournament in Korea." Han was trailed by South Korea's Kang Kyung-nam, who also carded a final-round 71 to finish second. He said the tournament was "tremendously challenging" because he was struggling with foot and throat pains, adding that he tried to avoid looking at the scoreboard. "It was about being mentally strong and my putting was great, I holed some long ones," he said. Han's dominance was unexpected, even though he has some notable victories under his belt. He won the 2017 Casio World Open, one of Japan's biggest events, and three years later claimed the LG Signature Players Championship on the Korean PGA Tour. Sunday's win also meant Han secured one of the two spots on offer in this year's Open Championship at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, with Kang claiming the other.

## Ireland's World Cup hopes ended by heavy loss against Sri Lanka

## McMullen's 136 helps Scotland reach Super Six



BULAWAYO (Agencies): Brandon McMullen's powerhouse 136 led Scotland to the Super Six stage of the World Cup Qualifier with a 76-run win over Oman.

McMullen registered the highest total in the tournament as Doug Watson's side reached 320 all out, with Bilal Khan taking five wickets. Only Naseem Khushi was able to make a significant score in Oman's chase, but he was caught on 69 by Chris McBride.

The Scots finish Group B against Sri Lanka on Tuesday (08:00 BST). Like Scotland, Sri Lanka have three wins from three and beat Ireland by 133 runs on Sunday.

McBride fell lbw for Scotland in the first over, but McMullen's 136, including three sixes, gave the Scots the momentum they needed, with captain Richie Berrington contributing 60. McMullen was eventually caught by Kashyap Prajapati, with Berrington run out by Jatinder Singh, but Mark Watt's 25 helped Scotland past 300 late on.

McMullen took the first Oman wicket as Prajapati went for 12 with Jatinder Singh then bowled for 14 by Adrian Neill. Leask bowled Zeeshan Masood for eight. Watt dismissed Aqib Ilyas for 31 and Mohammad Nadeem went lbw in the first of five wickets taken by Chris Greaves, which also included top scorer Khushi. Shoaib Khan was caught for 36 by McMullen as Oman struggled to make inroads to their 321 target and ended on 244-9.

McMullen 'just tried to keep it simple'

Afterwards, player of the match McMullen told Sky Sports: "It was a great day and a great way to finish. Our bowlers were clinical, and [Greaves] finished it off incredibly well. "I just tried to keep it as simple as possible and do it my way. I played my own game. I can't give you those secrets yet. "We just need to play our best cricket and be more disciplined with the bat and ball. That's basically it. Score more than Sri Lanka, that's what [Matthew] Crossy always says."

## Four players suspended after fiery US-Mexico soccer game

LAS VEGAS (Agencies): Four players involved in the heated soccer match between the US Men's National Team (USMNT) and Mexico have been handed suspensions, following the game's aggressive nature and contentious crowd behaviour.

The match, which took place last week at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, was marred by pushing, shoving, and discriminatory chants from the spectators, resulting in the contest being cut short by about four minutes. Concacaf, the governing body for soccer in North and Central America, announced the suspensions on Friday, citing "on-field player misconduct" as the reason.

César Montes from Mexico and Weston McKennie from the USMNT, whose shirt was torn during a scuffle, received the harshest penalties, with both players being suspended for four games. Gerardo Arteaga from Mexico and Sergiño Dest from the USMNT were each handed three-game suspensions. The suspensions include an automatic one-game ban and must be served during Concacaf national team competitions. Tensions reached a boiling point just before the 70-minute mark when Montes kicked out at Folarin Balogun, resulting in a red card. Shortly afterwards, McKennie was also sent off for his involvement in the ensuing altercation. Fifteen minutes later, another scuffle between Arteaga and Dest led to both players receiving straight red cards for pushing each other.

## Hughes runs 9.83 to break Christie's 30-year 100m record



NEW YORK (Agencies): Zharnel Hughes has broken Linford Christie's British men's 100m record, which had stood for 30 years, by clocking 9.83 seconds in New York.

The 27-year-old took 0.04 secs off the previous mark of 9.87, which Christie set at the World Championships in 1993.

Hughes said he was looking forward to "seeing him, shaking his hand and telling him that this is long overdue".

Hughes' new record is the fastest time in the world this year, and the second fastest ever by a European athlete. Only Italy's Marcell Jacobs, who ran 9.80 to win Olympic gold in Tokyo in 2021, has run faster.

Hughes, who won European 200m gold and 100m silver last year, beat Jamaica's Ackeem Blake (9.93) to clinch victory at the New York Grand Prix on Saturday. On breaking Christie's record, he said: "I always give respect to Linford. He always supports me every time I'm in

BULAWAYO (Agencies): Ireland's lingering hopes of qualifying for the World Cup are over after they suffered a 133-run defeat by Sri Lanka in Zimbabwe.

Wanindu Hasaranga made it 16 wickets from three qualifiers with 5-79 as Group B leaders Sri Lanka moved through to the Super Six stage. It was a third loss from three games in what has been a disappointing qualifier tournament for the Irish side. They lost to Oman and Scotland in their opening group matches. That left Ireland needing to beat the Sri Lankans on Sunday to maintain any chance of progressing.

However, all they have to play for now is aiming to avoid finishing bottom of Group B by beating current basement side United Arab Emirates when they meet in their last match on Tuesday.

A late rally by Ireland's bowlers, led by Mark Adair with 4-46 and Barry McCarthy who took 3-56, gave them an outside chance as they bowled the Sri Lankans out for 325.

They began their response in a positive fashion with Andy McBride hitting a few early fours but Hasaranga in particular proved too strong with the ball to condemn Ireland to their seventh consecutive ODI defeat.

Curtis Campher posted 39 runs and Harry Tector delivered 33 but the side led by Andrew Balbirnie never really looked like successfully chasing down their opponents' total.

The leading three from each group at the qualifier tournament will advance to the Super Six stage, with the top two from the 10-team competition progressing to the World Cup in India later this year.



BULAWAYO: Lahiru Kumara celebrates with teammates after dismissing Paul Stirling.

## Arteta wants stronger Arsenal squad to challenge Man City

LONDON (AFP): Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta believes the Gunners have to strengthen in the transfer market if they are to topple Manchester City as Premier League champions next season.

Arteta's men topped the table for much of last season, but faltered down the stretch after suffering injuries to key players.

City went on to seal their fourth Premier League title in five years and complete the treble by winning the FA Cup and Champions League.

Both clubs are reportedly in a bidding war for West Ham captain Declan Rice, while Arsenal are also set to land Kai Havertz from Chelsea.

"That is our ambition," Arteta told Marca on his hopes of winning the title.

"We know the difficulty: it's the best league in the world and next season is going to be the toughest league in Premier League history.

"Why? It already was last year. I've been here for 22 years and I've never seen a competitive level like that. So much quality, so much organisation, so many resources, so many good coaches

"That's the level and to win the Premier League you have to be the best. That's why you have to strengthen."

Few expected Arsenal to even pose a title challenge having finished out with the top four for the previous six seasons.

But Arteta admitted he is still hurting after leading the Premier League most of the way from August through the April.

"To this day, it still hurts me deep inside not to have won the Premier League after 10 months of fighting with City," he added.

"There were three or four injuries to important players and from then on, everything got complicated. When we had the full team, we were consistent. As soon as problems came, it wasn't enough for us.

"Our opponent was the best team in the world, the best squad in the world, the best coach in the world.

"We had no choice but to accept it and shake hands with the champion."

## Messi recalls 'massive disappointment' of PSG Champions League woes

PARIS (Agencies): Lionel Messi has called his start at former club Paris Saint-Germain "very tough", dubbing two successive failed Champions League bids a "massive disappointment".

"I came to Paris because I liked the club, because I had friends in the dressing room... it seemed easier for me to adapt rather than another destination I could have gone to," Messi told beIN Sports in an interview broadcast Sunday.

"In reality, it was a very tough adaptation, much harder than I expected... with a new gameplan, new teammates, a new city."

"I arrived late, I didn't have a pre-season. The start was difficult for me,

my family."

Messi, 36, signed for PSG in the summer of 2021 after 17 seasons at Barcelona, but will now head Stateside to Inter Miami in the MLS after quitting the French capital.

Messi's first season, during which he scored 11 goals in 34 games for PSG, was made harder after he contracted Covid during the winter break back in Argentina, meaning he was sidelined for a month.

"It took me time to refind my physical form," he admitted, adding that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar -- which Messi won with Argentina -- also took its toll.

"It's not an excuse but the World Cup played a big role. Some came back

later than others, some were injured, like Neymar.

"I think, generally, the level of Ligue 1 and the Champions League was affected by the World Cup."

Messi admitted that Champions League losses to Real Madrid in 2022 and Bayern Munich this season were a "massive disappointment".

There were even sections of PSG fans who turned on Messi, whistling at him from the stands.

"In the beginning, it was great, I received a lot of encouragement... but later on a part of the Parisian fanbase treated me differently. The majority treated me well, but there was a rupture with a part of the public," he acknowledged.

## Alcaraz wins Queen's to lift first title on grass

LONDON (Agencies): Carlos Alcaraz won his first title on grass and regained the world number one ranking with an impressive victory over Alex de Minaur in the Queen's final.

Alcaraz's 6-4 6-4 triumph means he moves above Novak Djokovic in the rankings and will be the top men's seed at Wimbledon, which starts on 3 July. The Spaniard, 20, who was playing only his third grass-court tournament, has won five titles this season.

He will now set his sights on a Queen's-Wimbledon double.

There were questions about Alcaraz's ability on grass at the start of the week but he answered those in style, becoming a crowd favourite with his attacking style of play and boyish smile.

"I've watched this tournament since I started playing tennis," he said. "It is special for me to play here and seeing my name on the trophy surrounded by the great champions is amazing."

"It helps a lot to be top seed at Wimbledon. It's amazing. It wouldn't be possible without the support of the people through the whole week."

"I started the tournament not really well, I had to adapt my movement a bit on grass, but it's been an amazing week and end-



ing with a lot of energy and on a high."

Alcaraz demonstrates grass-court ability

De Minaur, 24, was seeking to become the first Australian winner at Queen's since Lleyton Hewitt secured his fourth title in 2006.

The in-form world number 18, who beat Andy Murray in the first round, tested Alcaraz throughout with his pace and agility around the court. He had the first break point at 4-3 but the top seed shut that chance down instantly with a 137mph ace.

A De Minaur forehand error gave Alcaraz his own break-point opportunity in the next game and the Spaniard roared with delight when the Australian sent another forehand long.

Alcaraz demonstrated his ability on grass with a well-judged drop shot, a deft volley at the net, a

thumping forehand winner and a huge ace as he wrapped up the first set in style. The Spaniard, who made the fourth round at Wimbledon last year before losing to Jannik Sinner, called for the physio at the end of the set to receive help with a right quad issue.

With Alcaraz fit to continue, the pair went toe to toe in the second set, and the Spaniard acknowledged De Minaur's tenacity with a handshake at the net after the Australian came out on top of one mesmerising rally. But De Minaur's standards slipped in the next game and a double fault handed Alcaraz the crucial break.

From there, Alcaraz's victory looked inevitable and he clinched the title with his first championship point when De Minaur sent a return of serve out of play.

## Reigning champion Francesco Bagnaia wins Dutch Grand Prix

ASSEN (Agencies): Italy's Francesco Bagnaia won the Dutch Grand Prix to extend his lead in the MotoGP championship.

The 26-year-old defending champion controlled Sunday's race at the Assen circuit for a fourth win of the season.

Compatriot and fellow Ducati rider Marco Bezzecchi was second and Spain's Aleix Espargaro

completed the podium.

South Africa's Brad Binder was penalised for exceeding track limits on the final lap and demoted from third to fourth after the race.

Binder, 27, was penalised for the same rule infringement on Saturday, dropping from third to fifth in the sprint race which was won by 24-year-old Bezzecchi.

It was a cruel blow for

the KTM rider, who lit up Sunday's race, jumping from the second row to take the lead into the opening corner ahead of pole-sitter Bezzecchi.

Bagnaia also got in front of Bezzecchi off the line and quickly made it past Binder, after which his lead was never seriously tested.

The Italian increased his lead in the championship standings to 35 points over

Spain's Jorge Martin, who finished fifth. Bezzecchi is third in the season standings and Binder fourth.

Six-time MotoGP champion Marc Marquez was declared unfit to race after it was confirmed he had sustained two broken ribs and a broken thumb in a fall during qualifying.

Earlier on Sunday, Great Britain's Jake Dixon, 27, produced a



stunning display to win his first-ever race in the

Moto2 championship.

The British Grand Prix is

next up at Silverstone on Sunday, 6 August.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 314,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 314,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 478,300 cusecs. According to data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1475.13 feet and was 77.13 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 250,000 cusecs and 149,900 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1164.05 feet, which was 114.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 73,500 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 189,600, 146,600, 82,500 and 32,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 71,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 57,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### AIOU unveils admission plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has issued an action plan for the admissions of Autumn Semester 2023 for the convenience and guidance of students as per the direction of the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. According to the AIOU, Information Counters will be set up to provide information related to admissions to students in all regional offices including the main campus of the university. Facilitation Centers are also being activated in regional offices to guide students. AIOU will also set up Prospectus sale points across the country to facilitate the students at the nearest places to their residences. Admissions for the first phase of Semester Autumn 2023 will commence from July 15, while the admissions for the second phase will start from September 1 across the country. The programs offered in the first phase include Matric (General), Matric (Dars e Nizami), Matric (Open Courses), FA (General), FA (Dars e Nizami), FA (Open Courses), I.Com, middle tech, certificate courses BS, MBA, MPhil/MS and PhD programs.

### PES finalizes plan to help citizens

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Emergency Service (PES) has finalized arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha and directed all its wings to remain on high alert in all tehsils of the district during the Eid holidays. The Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi's Emergency Ambulance, Rescue Motorbike Service, and Fire Service would remain on high alert throughout the district to assist the citizens in emergencies during Eid-ul-Azha holidays, said the Rescue-1122 spokesperson, Muhammad Usman Gujjar. He informed that District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 had directed the officials concerned to utilize all available resources to provide help to the victims of emergencies. Emergency service posts had been set up at cattle markets where trained emergency paramedical staff was available to ensure emergency assistance in case of any emergency, he added. "If there is flash flooding during Eid holidays, Rescue-1122 will be ready to better deal with emergencies in all districts," he said. In Rawalpindi, special duties of rescue personnel had been deployed in control rooms, emergency rescue stations, emergency ambulances, fire tenders, rescue and recovery vehicles, special vehicles.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme in a group photo with the delegation of Yemen's Social Fund for Development.

## BISP becomes an agent of change in Pakistan: Shazia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Ms. Shazia Marri has said that BISP has become an agent of change in Pakistan.

She was talking to a delegation of Yemen's Social Fund for Development Sunday. A 23-member delegation of Yemen's Social Fund for Development was on a 5-day visit to Pakistan to gain insights into the successful Social Protection Model of the BISP. This visit was planned and organized with the cooperation of the World Bank. The WB representatives also accompanied the delegation.

Ms. Marri said that BISP was an effective vehicle of social safety for low-income segments of society that is supporting women's family heads by providing directed cash assistance to

them. This is the best and most practical method of women's empowerment and their financial autonomy, she continued.

Our survey and registration process has encouraged women with low-income households and living in remote areas to register themselves and their families with the NADRA, the Minister said and highlighted that Benazir Taleemi Wazaif is a reason for the increased school enrollment at primary and secondary levels, as stipend under Benazir Taleemi Wazaif are given to girls and boys only if they are attending school with over 70 percent attendance.

The Chairperson also informed the Yemeni delegation that BISP is moving towards initiatives, such as Adaptive Social Protection and Digital and Financial Literacy for Beneficiaries and a program for adolescent girls.

She welcomed the delegation of Yemen in

Pakistan and appreciated the WB for organizing this visit hoping that in the future more such visits will be planned so that maximum benefit can be reaped by exchange of ideas and learning from the experiences of each other.

She reiterated that Pakistan and Yemen are two brotherly countries and have always stood with each other in hours of need. The Deputy Managing Director of Yemen's Fund for Social Development, Mr. Wasem Qaid said that this was a unique opportunity to visit Pakistan and study for 5-days such a successful model of social protection, and found BISP a fantastic model for helping low-income groups. He noted that when he discussed the idea of studying social welfare models of some developing countries, the instant response of the WB was that the BISP is the best model for such a study.

## 'No one allowed to collect hides of sacrificial animals without NOC'

RAWALPINDI (APP): The district administration would not allow anyone to collect hides of sacrificial animals without permission and a NOC from the relevant authorities as per the directive of the Punjab government. DC Office had announced that the applications for collecting hides of sacrificial animals would be received till June 20 and after the deadline otherwise, no application would be entertained. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration would not allow anyone to collect hides without prior permission of the authorities concerned as the Punjab government had imposed a ban on the collection of hides without NoC on Eid ul Azha.

## Skyrocketing prices of animals forces people towards 'Ijtamai Qurbani'

RAWALPINDI (APP): The record increase in prices of sacrificial animals is being witnessed across the country and the trend of 'Ijtamai Qurbani' is becoming popular under which the citizens are arranging for the religious obligation of 'Ijtamai Qurbani'. Due to skyrocketing prices of sacrificial animals, most of people are giving preference to the collective Qurbani ritual instead of sacrificing animals individually on Eid ul Azha. This was revealed in a survey of the cattle market conducted by this scribe. The residents of various localities have arranged for combined sacrifices with the cooperation of various religious and social organizations including local madrassas and mosques. A large number of people have also arranged for combined qurbani with their relatives and friends.

"It is better to take part in the collective Qurbani arranged by a nearby madrassa or mosque during these hard times of inflation, and we will do so because we will have to spend only Rs 25,000 to Rs 30,000 for a share and its affordable," said a local resident Faisal.

The prevailing economic crunch leading to limited incomes and livelihood amid steady increases in animal prices in recent years has led to the trend of collective sacrifices, another citizen Altaf said.

The prices of the sacrificial animals have further increased this year as compared to the last year owing to an increase in transportation charges and other associated expenses.

The prices of bulls in the market have increased from Rs50,000 to Rs150,000 per animal as compared to last year while the price of A category bull has increased from Rs100,000 to Rs200,000 and onwards and the price of B category bull has increased from Rs50,000 to Rs100,000 and

prices of C category has surged from Rs40,000 to Rs70,000. The prices of goats and sheep have also increased by up to 50 per cent.

The price of A category goat/sheep has increased from Rs30,000 to Rs50,000. Prices of B category has increased from Rs20,000 to Rs30,000 and C category to Rs15,000 and above. The price of a goat and sheep in the cattle market was witnessed from Rs 60,000 to Rs 130,000 while the prices of bull were recorded from Rs 250,000 to Rs 350,000.

Meanwhile, as Eid day was drawing near the sale of sacrificial animals was gaining momentum.

Rawalpindi district administration had set up temporary cattle markets at 11 different places in the district in connection with Eid ul Azha.

According to a district administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi had finalized all the arrangements.

Five cattle markets were established in Rawalpindi city, two in Gujjar Khan, two in Taxila, and one each in Kallar Syedan and Kahuta.

Bhatta Chowk near Koh-e-Noor Mills, Misrial, Gulistan Colony, Dhok Hassu, Kalyal village markets are for Rawalpindi city, he added.

A cattle market was established at Mandra Stop Ground and Gulyana Road near Slaughter in Tehsil Gujjar Khan. Similarly, cattle markets were also established in Taxila near Sharif Hospital, G.T Road Wah Cantt and HIT near Sunday Bazaar Timber Market, he added.

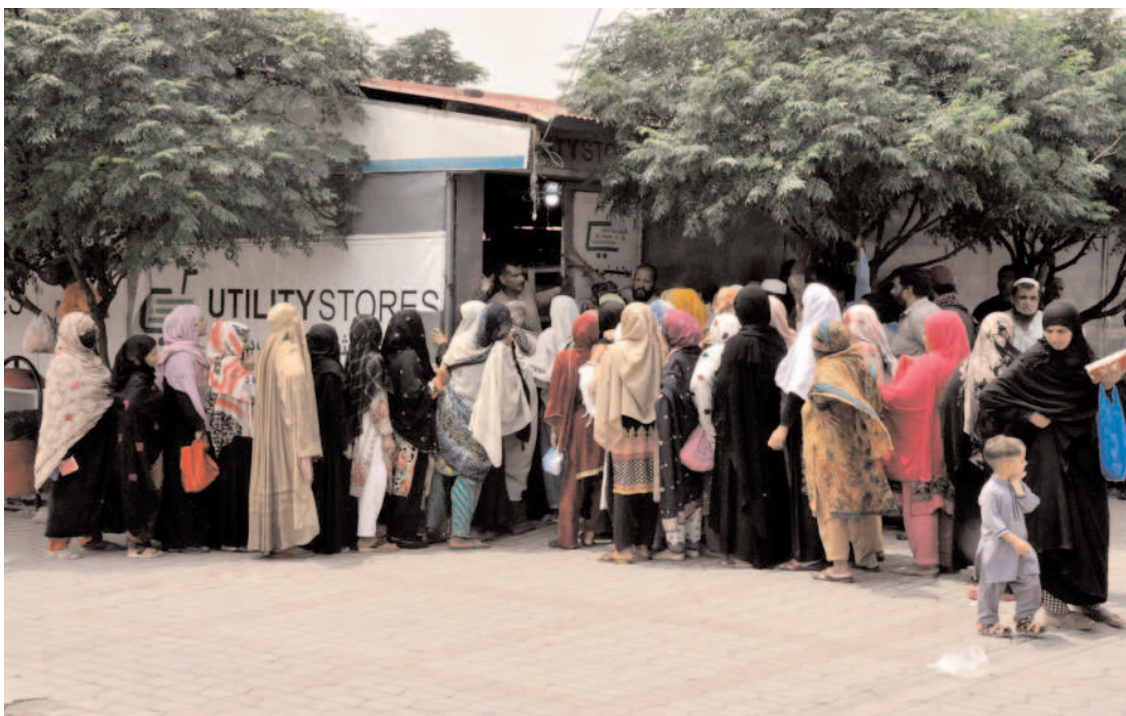
A temporary cattle market was set up in connection with Eid-ul-Azha at cattle market established on Kalar Syedan near Mangal Bypass.

A temporary cattle market had also been set up at Sakhi Sabzwari Chowk near KRL Check Post in Kahuta.

in the face of a demanding economic scenario. Representatives from various political parties actively participated in the budget debate, including 30 lawmakers from PML-N, 29 from PPP, ten from PTI, five from MMAP, three from BNP, two each from GDA and MQMP, and one each from PML, JUI-F, BAP, and two independent lawmakers.

In total, the NA convened for more than 59 hours over the course of 13 sittings held between June 9 and June 25. The House adopted four resolutions during the session, including condemnation of a political party and its chairman's actions on May 9, the transfer of development project funds executed under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program to the non-lapsable account (NLA) at the end of the fiscal year 2022-23, the commemoration of the 70th birth anniversary of the late Shaheed Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto, paying homage to her significant role in the struggle for democracy, and recognition and gratitude towards international and civil society organizations, as well as the Pakistani diaspora, for their contributions to addressing climate change-related issues. Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif delivered policy statements after the US-India joint communiqué. Throughout the sessions, lawmakers raised approximately 62 points of order, discussing matters concerning foreign affairs, judiciary, agriculture, governance, gas and electricity, law and order, climate change, and agricultural concerns. Moreover, the National Assembly approved 133 demands for grants, with no cut motions moved on 97 of them. The House passed the Finance Bill 2023, incorporating specific amendments to the proposed budgetary measures, amounting to a total outlay of Rs 14.48 trillion, aiming to achieve macroeconomic stability and a targeted 3.5% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate.

On June 25, during the session, Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar moved the Finance Bill, which received majority approval after a clause-by-clause reading.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of women in a queue to purchase subsidized flour at Utility store H-9 weekly bazaar in Federal Capital Territory.

## 'School on Wheels' – a much needed project to boost child literacy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Having a high percentage of youth among its population – almost 64% below the age of 30 – Pakistan is blessed to have these numbers, which if utilized properly and given the right direction and platform can put the country on the path of development and prosperity in a matter of years.

Provision of quality education is the prerequisite for a country to produce leaders in different fields, the department in which Pakistan needs to work hard. With an overall literacy rate of almost 63%, the data shows that it is higher in urban areas (76%) as compared to rural areas (51%), prompting the need to concentrate more on the latter which lacks basic educational infrastructure.

Keeping in view this important issue, the federal coalition government led by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) launched a project named 'School on Wheels' which has been highly praised for providing education to children whose parents are unable to send them to schools. The initiative would increase the literacy rate in Pakistan, particularly in rural areas. The project also aims to offer equal educational opportunities to children with mobile libraries, which would promote a reading culture among them.

Talking to APP, Deputy Director Research and Development Federal Directorate of Education Muhammad Nadim, who is also looking after the project "School on Wheels" said, initially, the mobile school project consisted of two buses which were providing primary-level education to children, especially between ages 3-5 of the rural areas including Tarnol and Nilore sectors of Islamabad Capital Territory. He said five more buses were being prepared whose work was in the final stages and hopefully these buses would start function-

ing just after Eid ul Adha.

Moreover, a Memorandum of Understanding was in pipeline with the British Council under which around 20 more state-of-the-art buses would be provided to the Federal Education Ministry to decrease the number of out-of-school children, he added. Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain during his visit to a foreign country closely monitored this project and planned it for Pakistan.

In addition to mobile libraries, meals are also being provided to the students enrolled in mobile classrooms, fostering a culture of reading and nourishment. The bright-colored buses are decorated with balloons and windows painted with alphabets and cartoons. The inside of the mobile classrooms is bright and clean, its interior filled with images of alphabets, numbers, days of the week and pictures of fruit and animals. Children are seen sitting on colorful chairs inside the bus as teachers use an interactive whiteboard for teaching.

Muhammad Nadim further explained that some private organizations like "Right to Play" were also providing support to the government to make the project successful.

These NGOs provide free teachers besides helping in discipline-related issues, he said, adding, the buses roam specifically in rural areas where no school was nearer particularly attracting minor children for education.

"The buses are focusing on rural areas where schools are far away and minor children are unable to go to schools. After providing basic education, the students will be shifted to nearby schools for proper education", the deputy director mentioned.

He was of the view that children were taking special interest in these

schools, particularly afghan refugees living in suburbs of the federal capital territory. Nadim said each bus would be equipped with computers, desks, whiteboards, Smart Boards, LCDs, ACs and Washroom.

"I am a daily wageer and always wanted my children to get education, but cannot afford sending them to school. This initiative of the government has provided me an opportunity to get my kids educated and that too on my doorstep," said Jamal Ahmed, a father of four children and a resident of Nilore area.

He said his younger son now waits for the bus and gets ready early in the morning, adding this initiative would help many poor people like him to fulfill their dream of educating their children.

It is to mention here that the project was launched by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in February 2023. The government has a plan to increase the number of buses and expand the project to the rest of the country. "My son was always very fond of learning new things but my resources were not allowing me to get him enrolled in a school. But, now teachers come to our vicinity regularly on a bus and my son goes there with sheer excitement and joy," said Munawar Khan, a resident of Tarnol.

Pakistan spends only 2% of its GDP on education which is quite lower than other countries. Norway and Chile spend the highest percentage of their GDP on education, 6.6, followed by Israel and New Zealand 6.2, the United Kingdom 6.1, and the United States 6.0. Despite all the efforts made by the government to increase the literacy rate and bring more children into schools, there was still a lot needed to required for the provision of quality education and better infrastructure particularly in far-flung areas of the country.



17 alleged criminal arrested

BALKH (Agencies): The police of Balkh arrested 17 people on charges of robbery, social misbehavior, taking bribes, and forging documents in the province. These people were arrested by the police officers of Balkh and Nahri Shahi, during last week, the Balkh police department said in a statement. According to Balkh police, 9 people were arrested on charges of robbery, 4 people on social misbehavior, 2 on taking bribes, and other two people on forging identity cards.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Hajj 07, 1444 — Monday, June 26, 2023

More historic sites discovered

BAGHLAN (Agencies): Local cultural officials of Baghlan say that 10 more historical sites have been discovered by the archaeologists in that province. The professional delegation of Information and Culture of Baghlan has discovered 10 historical sites in Tala and Barfak districts, which date back to the Islamic and Kushan eras, said official Zabiullah Sadat. The archaeologists of the department strive to collect more data about the newly discovered historic sites, he added.

Kabul wants good relations with world: Islamic Emirate leader

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Islamic Emirate's Leader, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, in a message on the arrival of Eid-al Adha, said that the Islamic Emirate wants good political and economic relations with the world, "especially with Islamic countries, and has fulfilled its responsibility in this regard."

The message was released by the Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid.

"Just as we do not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, in the same way we do not allow others to interfere in our internal affairs," Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada said in a letter published on Mujahid's Twitter.

In the economic sector, he said, the "prediction of the country's economic collapse and crisis has been

proven wrong."

According to Akhundzada, the economic collapse was prevented as a result of the Islamic Emirate's "wise measures, sincerity and transparency."

He also referred to the drugs issue, saying that the cultivation of poppy has been eradicated in the country and that "farmers are looking for alternatives, and legal cultivation is expanding."

"Meanwhile, ban has imposed on production, trafficking and use of all kinds of drugs and now, many citizens, specially the youth are saved from this harm," Mawlawi Akhundzada said.

Regarding the rights of women, he claimed that concrete measures have been taken to save women from many traditional oppressions, including

forced marriages and their Sharia rights have been protected.

"Moreover, necessary steps have been taken for the betterment of women as half of the society in order to provide them with a comfortable and prosperous life according to the Islamic Sharia," he said.

"The negative aspects of the past 20-year occupation related to women's Hijab and misguidance will end soon."

There was no mention of education of Afghan girls and women in the message.

Mawlawi Akhundzada also said he strongly condemns "Israel's brutal act on Palestinian women, children and defenceless Muslims" and asked other countries to "do their duty in order to prevent this great human crime and cruel atrocities."

Religious clerics call for reopening of girls' schools

KABUL (TOLOnews): Some religious clerics in Parwan province asked the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools for girls above the sixth grade.

These religious clerics stressed the need for modern science education in addition to religious instruction during the opening ceremony of a religious school.

"We ask the Islamic Emirate government to let girls get an education in accordance with Sharia law," said Nasrullah Urfan, a religious cleric.

"As a citizen, I ask the



Islamic Emirate to open schools across Afghanistan," said Ehsan, a religious cleric.

Meanwhile, the head of the education department of Parwan said that after the Islamic Emirate came to power they built 47 religious schools in Parwan.

"Following the arrival of the Islamic Emirate, we created 47 new madrassas, which are rural madrassas," said Mohammad Hassan Haqqani, director of Parwan's education department.

In the meantime, a woman in Parwan spent close to \$30,000 to build a madrasa (religious school) that can house at least 1,000 male and female students simultaneously.

"\$30,000 has been spent, and it can house about 1,000 male and female students in three shifts," said Abdul Kabir Danish, another resident of Parwan. There were 63 religious schools in Parwan province during the previous government.

Kabul's exports to Islamabad total's \$600m

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACC) says the country's exports to Pakistan totalled \$600 million in the first six months of this year.

According to members of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, the bulk of exported goods included carpets, dried fruits, and precious and semi-precious stones.

With the arrival of the fresh fruit season, the volume of exports will increase, officials said.

"In six months [this year], we exported to Pakistan worth \$600 million," said Khan Jan Alokozay, a member of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

Abdul Jabbar Safi, head of the Union of Industrialists, also said that the volume of Afghanistan's exports to the three countries of Pakistan, India and China is higher this year.

Meanwhile, industry and commerce ministry officials said that last year they exported goods worth \$1.2 billion to Pakistan.

Abdul Salam Jawad Akhundzadah, a spokesman for the ministry, said that this year trade between the two countries was positive and they are hoping to expand trade ties with Pakistan even further.

Forest fire destroyed at least ten acres of land

KUNAR (Agencies): Local officials of Kunar say that a forest fire destroyed tens of acres of land in the Dara-I Pech District of the province so far.

14 hectares and 80 acres of forest were destroyed in this fire, said Ehsanullah, an official at the disaster management department of the Kunar.

The fire breakout on Saturday in the forests of Sundari and Karangul Kunar district and destroyed 14 hectares and 80 acres of forest and cattle in the province, he added.

Meanwhile, hundreds of youths from the region have reached the site to control the fire, but the fire has not been completely controlled so far.

The main cause of the fire has not yet been determined, the strong wind and high temperature in the region have caused the fire to reach many areas.

China's envoy to UN calls for sanctions against IEA to be lifted

KABUL (Agencies): Zhang Jun, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has said the United States and the West should lift sanctions against the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) as soon as possible.

He has also called for Afghanistan to join regional economic and trade cooperation bodies.

Zhang stressed the need for dialogue and interaction with Kabul. He also raised the issue of funding shortfalls for Afghanistan and said the UN's budget plan for the humanitarian crisis was \$3.2 billion but only 9% of this had so far been funded.

On the issue of sanctions, he said: "In order to promote dialogue and interaction, it is necessary for



the sanctions committee of the Security Council to create a package of exemption arrangements for the international trips of officials of the caretaker government

of Afghanistan. Sanctions imposed on officials of the Islamic Emirate by the UN Security Council should be adjusted or canceled in a timely manner according

to the development of the situation."

He also asked for the immediate release of Afghanistan's frozen foreign reserves by the US.

200 children contracted diarrhea

PUL-I-ALAM (Pajhwok): At least 200 children have been infected with diarrhea and one of the children lost his life to the disease in central Logar last week, an official said on Sunday.

Safiullah Sulaimankhel, an official of the public health department, told Pajhwok Afghan News 200 children infected with infectious diseases had been brought to the provincial hospital for treatment in the past one week.

He said: "Awe the weather is getting warm, the number of children suffering diarrhea has been increased by 30 percent. He urged families to pay serious attention to cleanliness so that children did not get infected with such diseases.

Sherbaz, a resident of the Altamor area of Pul-i-Alam city, told Pajhwok that hundreds of children in the province have been infected with diarrhea due to the warm weather.

"Three children of mine have been infected with diarrhea and are currently under treatment at the provincial hospital. We requested the government to increase facilities for treating patients in hospitals," he added.

Atal Wazir, a resident of Baraki Barak district of Logar, told Pajhwok that children in many houses were infected with this disease and hundreds of them were admitted to hospital.

Fahimullah Lodin, a spokesman for the public health department, told Pajhwok the incidence of diarrhea among children surged by 30 percent compared to the last three months. He said efforts were being made to provide necessary facilities for the children suffering from diarrhea in hospitals.

He added the families of sick children should also take into account the health guidelines seriously.

Vendors at women's market in Balkh complain of poor business

BALKH (TOLOnews): Female shopkeepers at the only women's market in Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of Balkh, expressed concerns about a drop in sales. The market is named "Khadija al Kubra" and located in the provincial capital city.

"As we are on the eve of Eid al-Adha, we urge women to come here to shop because we are selling good quality products," said Rohina, a journalist. "The products and materials which we have is particularly for the girls, and it is between 15 to 20 percent discounted compared to other markets," said Khatira Halemi, a shopkeeper. "They can easily test the clothes on themselves. The materials which they cannot purchase from the men, they can purchase from us here," said Liza Sadaat, a resident of Mazar-e-Sharif.

This comes as the department of industry and commerce of Balkh said that programs are underway to facilitate markets for female shopkeepers.



"This market has established and we will make further efforts for its improvement and expansion so the market can make

hence an environment is paved for the women to feel comfortable," said Naseer Ahmad Niazi, deputy head of the department.

Six people killed, four injured in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): China, Russia and Brazil last week asked the international community to remove sanctions on Afghanistan and the US to unfreeze the country's assets.

The United Nations envoy and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) last week said it will be "nearly impossible" for the international community to recognize the Taliban government as long as restrictions on women and girls remain in place in Afghanistan.

But Afghan officials say they have met all the conditions for recognition of their government by the international community.

**Casualties**  
Six people were killed and four others were injured in separate incidents of violence across the country last week.

Unidentified gunmen killed one person in Parwan, one person in Sari Pul, three people in Badghis and one child in Jawzjan and injured his mother.

A man shot and injured three people with a traditional rifle in Parwan.

In the previous week, four people were killed and nine others were injured in different incidents across the country.

Before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of civilians, insurgents and security forces would get killed and

wounded in violent incidents.

**UNSC meeting**  
Last week, the United Nations Security Council held a special meeting that insisted on continuous humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and asked the caretaker government to do away with restrictions on women and girls.

The powerful body once again emphasized on the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

China's representative in the meeting emphasized on interaction with the caretaker government and asked the UNSC sanctions committee to take Taliban leaders off the sanctions list for better interaction with the Islamic Emirate.

Representatives of China, Russia and Brazil asked the US to unfreeze Afghanistan central bank's assets and called on other countries to remove sanctions to improve the economic situation of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan on Thursday welcomed some parts of the United Nations General Secretary's special envoy's statement, saying the Islamic Emirate (IE) was committed to international norms and obligations that were not in contrary to Islamic Sharia and Afghan cultural values.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a statement said: "We welcome some parts of the statement by the Special Repres-

entative of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Security Council, which acknowledged positive changes in Afghanistan, such as effective ban on drugs, macroeconomic stability, prevention from corruption, access of girls to education in some areas, regular revenue collection, payment of salaries, significant improvement in security and concerted efforts against Daesh."

The press release also said Roza Otunbayeva in her statement attempted to reflect the complicated realities of Afghanistan in contrast to the recent report of the Sanctions Committee monitoring team and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, which was full of errors and designed to reflect political agendas of some actors.

The United Nations envoy to the country and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has said it will be "nearly impossible" for the international community to recognize the Taliban government as long as restrictions on women and girls remain in place in Afghanistan.

Roza Otunbayeva told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that the new rulers had asked to be recognized by the UN and its member nations, "but at the same time, they act against the key values expressed in the United Nations Charter".

She said the economy "remains stable" with inflation down and exchange rates steady – due in part to a reduction in high level corruption.

**UN Special Coordinator and Independent Assessor visit**

Last week, UN Special Coordinator and Independent Assessor Feridun Hadi Sinirlioglu met with senior officials of the caretaker government in Kabul.

The officials told Sinirlioglu the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan had neutral position in international rivalries and politics and would never take sides and desired positive interaction with the world in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

They asked the US to unfreeze Afghanistan's foreign reserves. They said Daesh was not active in Afghanistan and the group might have limited albeit hidden supporters. They said showing Daesh a big threat was tantamount to propagating for it.

Feridun said he held talks with various UN member countries and felt that the international community was eager to improve engagement with the Islamic Emirate as the war had ended, peace and stability returned, corruption eradicated and important achievements had been made, especially in the field of security.

**Inclusive government, interaction**

US President Joe Biden

and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had stressed the need for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

Both leaders discussed Afghanistan situation in addition to other issues during a meeting, White House in a statement said.

"The leaders emphasized the importance of formation of an inclusive political structure and called on the Taliban to respect the human rights of all Afghans, including women and girls, and to respect freedom of movement," the statement said.

Biden and Modi also reiterated their strong support for a peaceful, secure, and stable Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the US State Department said the recognition of the current regime of Afghanistan depended on the behavior of the Taliban leaders towards Afghan women.

Vedant Patel, the deputy spokesperson for the State Department, told a press conference that if Taliban authorities do not respect women's rights, they will not only make Afghanistan fall behind but also undermine the international legitimacy of this country.

Patel said that the US has several tools to hold the Taliban accountable for their treatment of women and girls, which is a crucial part of their stated desire for international acceptance and legitimacy.

"Until they allow half of

their population the same rights, benefits and access as the other men have, they are holding Afghanistan's future back and they continue to stand in the way of their desire for international acceptance and legitimacy," Patel said.

The United Nations envoy to the country and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has said it will be "nearly impossible" for the international community to recognise the Taliban government as long as restrictions on women and girls remain in place in Afghanistan.

Roza Otunbayeva told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that the new rulers had asked to be recognized by the UN and its member nations, "but at the same time, they act against the key values expressed in the UN Charter".

Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said to avoid humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, international interaction with the country was important, but asked the caretaker Afghan government to respond positively to the international community's demands.

Recently the deputy spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in an interview with Pajhwok had asked the world to be realistic as the Islamic Emirate had fulfilled all conditions for recognition and was ready to interact

with the world.

However, he said they would not tolerate interference in Afghanistan's internal matters and pressure to change policies.

**Criticism, reactions of Islamic Emirate**

Last week, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) said the Islamic Emirate was facing increasing challenges to its authority primarily from Daesh and various resistance groups.

In its quarterly report, the US watchdog said the UNSC in February 2023 warned that Afghanistan remained the primary source of terrorist threat for central and south Asia, with several terrorist groups including Al Qaeda, Taliban and IS-K enjoying "a greater freedom of movement" in Afghanistan owing to the absence of an effective Taliban security strategy.

However, Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid rejected the SIGAR report as propaganda, saying the Afghans lived in complete peace and no one was allowed to use Afghanistan's soil against others. The SIGAR report claimed Daesh continued its campaign against the Islamic Emirate and remained the most serious threat to the Taliban's rule, with an estimated strength of between 1000 and 3000 fighters.

The report said the

Islamic Emirate's takeover reportedly emboldened the Taliban and its affiliated groups to step up attacks against Pakistan while using Afghanistan a base of operation.

Also, UN Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett in his report on human rights in Afghanistan to the 53rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva said: "Grave, systematic and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid."

However, the caretaker government in reaction accused the United Nations and western countries of spreading propaganda against it.

Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, tweeted that the UN, western institutions and governments had launched a propaganda against IEA.

He wrote: "Richard Bennett's report on the situation in Afghanistan is a part of this propaganda."

**Humanitarian aid**  
The Netherlands has announced a 25 million euro donation to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund for 2023 and the European Union has pledged 12 million euros to support the most vulnerable people in Afghanistan in areas of livelihood and food.



# Asad Mehmood calls for review of FATA merger

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Communication, Asad Mehmood, on Sunday urged the government to thoroughly review the merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in light of the ongoing challenges faced by the region. Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, the minister emphasized the need to ascertain the desires of the people of FATA through a referendum. Minister Mehmood highlighted that although progress has been observed in the FATA areas, it is crucial to obtain firsthand information about the issues faced by the local population. He urged government officials to personally visit the area and assess the ground realities to gain a comprehensive understanding. Regarding the ongoing discussions about appointments within Pakistan Post, the minister clarified that the matter is currently under review by the committee. He assured the House that details of the findings will be shared once the committee concludes its deliberations. He emphasized the need to avoid exploiting this issue for political gain and highlighted discrepancies in the appointment of division personnel.

He said that if it is proven that an individual from one division has been appointed to another division, as claimed by a Member of the National Assembly, he would resign from his position. Proudly highlighting the achievements of the Pakistan Post, the minister emphasized the organization's remarkable progress under the diligent efforts of its officers. Notably, Pakistan Post has successfully overcome financial deficits and received international recognition for its accomplishments. Minister Mehmood also emphasized the expansion of road networks and motorways throughout the country, resulting in improved connectivity for the citizens. The Minister revealed that approximately 50 new projects have been included in the current Public Sector Development Program (PSDP), showcasing the government's commitment to national development. He disclosed that over the past year, around 2,000 contract employees have been regularized without any discrimination, demonstrating the government's dedication to providing equitable employment opportunities.

## Blinken says Russia turmoil shows 'cracks' in Putin's power

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The unprecedented challenge to Russian President Vladimir Putin by Wagner fighters has exposed fresh "cracks" in the strength of his leadership that may take weeks or months to play out, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Sunday. Blinken and members of the U.S. Congress said in a series of television interviews that the turmoil in Russia has weakened Putin in ways that could aid Ukraine's counteroffensive against Russian forces within its territory while benefiting Russia's neighbors, including Poland and the Baltic states. "I don't think we've seen the final act," Blinken said on ABC's "This Week" program after an aborted mutiny by forces led by Yevgeny Prigozhin. Blinken said tensions that sparked the action had

been growing for months and added that the threat of internal turmoil could affect Moscow's military capabilities in Ukraine. "We've seen more cracks emerge in the Russian facade. It is too soon to tell exactly where they go, and when they get there. But certainly, we have all sorts of new questions that Putin is going to have to address in the weeks and months ahead," Blinken told NBC's "Meet the Press" program. Blinken described the turmoil as an "internal matter" for Putin. "Our focus is resolutely and relentlessly on Ukraine, making sure that it has what it needs to defend itself and to take back territory that Russia seized," Blinken said. U.S. officials expect to learn more in coming days and weeks about the events that unfolded in Russia, including details of the deal with Prigozhin mediated by

## 27-member AJK cabinet sworn-in

MUZAFFARABAD (NNI): A 27-member cabinet of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has taken oath at a special ceremony hosted in the state metropolis on Sunday. AJK President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry administered the oath to the newly inducted ministers. The ministers who took oath on the occasion included Sardar Muhammad Hussain Khan, Aamir Abdul Ghaffar Lone, Sardar Mir Akbar Khan, Dewan Ali Khan Chughtai, Abdul Waheed, Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Muhammad Ahmad Raza Qadri, Chaudhry Muhammad Rashid, Abdul Majid Khan, Raja Muhammad Siddique, Chaudhry Muhammad Akbar Ibrahim, Javed Iqbal Badhanvi, Syed Bazal Ali

Naqvi, Sardar Muhammad Javed Ayub, Sardar Aamir Altaf, Azhar Sadiq, Nisar Ansar, Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, Muhammad Akmal Sargala, Zafar Iqbal Malik, Faheem Akhtar, Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Javed Butt, Muhammad Asim Sharif, Chaudhry Aamir Yasin, Qasim Majeed, and Zia Qamar. Senior Minister Col (ret'd) Waqar Ahmad Noor and Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore also participated in the ceremony. In the ceremony, fatiha was also offered for the deceased sister of the President, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry.

## SC hearing on military trials of civilians: PM, IM and DM hire lawyers

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Prime Minister of Pakistan has got the services of former Law Minister Farogh Naseem in the case against the trial of civilians in the military courts. The Supreme Court of Pakistan's seven-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial will hear case against the proceedings of military courts. The apex court has already issued notices to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif, all four provinces, Attorney General for Pakistan and Chairman PTI. In the upcoming hearing of the case, Farogh Naseem will appear before the larger bench on behalf of Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif, while Irfan Qadir will represent Defense Minister Khawaja Asif and senior lawyer Shah Khawar appear on behalf of Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, a private television channel reported Sunday. Earlier, a seven-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar

Ata Bandial, conducted hearing of the petitions challenging trial of civilians in military courts. As the hearing resumed at 1:30pm, Latif Khosa advanced his argument on behalf of petitioner Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan. Latif Khosa said the formation commanders during their meeting had decided to try the perpetrators of May 9 attacks in military courts. A declaration to the effect was also issued which was posted on ISPR website too. He maintained that the declaration was against Article 10-A of the Constitution of Pakistan. Mr Khosa also read out the declaration in court. Mr Khosa said as per formation commanders they had irrefutable evidence against May 9 perpetrators. The ATCs were requested to transfer cases of civilians to army courts. Mr Khosa added that he was not against punishing the May 9 culprits but he did not want the civilians to be tried in military courts. He continued that a colonel or a brigadier had to hear cases in military courts against civilians and it was likely that he would not go against the decisions made in the corps commanders' meetings. When asked whether the army act was challenged by any bench, Mr Khosa said he did not know in which court the Act could be challenged. The Supreme Court sought the record of all those arrested in the country post-May 9, when violent protests broke out in the country following the arrest of the PTI chairman. The SC bench also refused to grant a stay order on the decision to conduct trials of civilians in the military courts. CJP Bandial said that the apex court would first hear arguments from the attorney general on this matter. Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial had reconstituted a seven-member bench hearing appeals against trial of civilians in military courts after senior judges Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Tariq Masood recused themselves from hearing the case.

## Amir Muqam's police convoy meets road accident

SWAT (APP): The police convoy escorting Engr Amir Muqam, adviser to the Prime Minister, has met a road accident here Sunday. Police said that a pickup of police escorting the vehicle of Engr Amir Muqam has overturned on road after the Prime Minister's adviser was returning from Khwazakhela where he inaugurated a Passport Office. Few policemen sustained minor injuries and were rushed to hospital. Amir Muqam remained unhurt. Amir Muqam immediately came out of his vehicle and inquired after the health of injured policemen.

## 'Pre-monsoon rains reduce extreme heatwave'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Sunday said the pre-monsoon rains were likely to reduce the current extreme heatwave. In a series of tweets, the federal minister said according to the advisory of the Pakistan Meteorological Department, pre-monsoon rains were predicted across the country from June 25 to June 30. Senator Rehman said between June 25 and 30, strong winds, thunderstorms, and heavy rain were expected in various cities of Punjab, including Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Under the influence of this system, wind, thunder and heavy rains were likely to occur in various cities of Balochistan, South Punjab and Sindh between June 26 and June 29, she added. In case of heavy rains, she said there was a risk of urban flooding in urban areas while floods and landslides were feared in hilly areas. All concerned and local bodies have been instructed to be alert and tourists to be cautious, she added. The Minister urged that citizens were requested to stay away from weak infrastructure, electric poles, and rivers during strong winds and rains to avoid any untoward incident.

## Lightning kills 9 people in Punjab

LAHORE (NNI): Nine people were killed and six injured in six separate incidents after being struck by lightning in Narowal and Sheikhpura districts. The incidents occurred after heavy rain coupled with a powerful thunderstorm pummeled the province on Sunday. According to the rescue officials, a lightning incident occurred in Mauza Ratanpur of Changowali village, Narowal district, in which four people died and four other persons were injured including two children. They were shifted to a nearby public sector hospital where the condition of one victim is said critical. In another incident of lightning that struck at Bhagatpura of Pasrur tehsil in which a youth identified as Hafiz Waqar aged 14 died on the spot. Her mother and aunty also suffered injuries. In a separate incident in Pasrur, a youth namely Kashif Ali aged 17 became the prey of lightning when he was working in the fields.



NAWABSHAH: Two passenger coaches are heavily damaged after they collided head-on while passengers depart in a van in Nawabshah.

## Huge crowds circle Kaaba as Haj begins in Saudi heat

MAKKAH (Agencies): Vast crowds of robed Muslim pilgrims walked solemn circles around the Kaaba, the black cube at Makkah's Grand Mosque, on Sunday as the biggest Haj pilgrimage in several years began in the heat of the Saudi summer. Islam's holiest site is expected to host more than two million worshippers from 160 countries during the annual rites that could break attendance records, with 1.6 million foreigners already there by late Friday. "This year, we will witness the largest Haj pilgrimage in history," if things go according to plan, predicted an official with the Saudi Ministry of Haj and Ummrah. "The numbers will exceed 2.5 million pilgrims," added the official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak with the press. The Haj began early on Sunday with the "tawaf" — the circumambulation of the Kaaba, the large cubic structure draped in black cloth with gold trimmings that millions of Muslims pray towards every day. "I am living the most beautiful days of my life," said Abdel-Azim, a 65-year-old Egyptian, as he performed the ritual. "The dream has come true," added the retiree, who had saved up for 20 years to pay the \$6,000 fee to take part. The Haj is one of the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken at least once by all Muslims with the means. A series of rites are completed over four days in Makkah and its surroundings in the west of oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday night, pilgrims will start moving to Mina, about five kilometres (three miles) from the Grand Mosque, ahead of the Haj's climax at Mount Arafat, where the Prophet Mohammed is believed to have delivered his final sermon. Mina, the world's largest tent city, readied to receive the influx of pilgrims on Sunday, with food supplies brought in and security forces deployed around the area. Outside the Grand Mosque, thousands prayed on colorful carpets that adorned the pavement, with male pilgrims wearing simple white robes. The area was dotted with ambulances, mobile clinics, and fire trucks. The Haj poses a considerable security challenge and has seen several disasters over the years, including a 2015 stampede that killed up to 2,300 people. There have been no major incidents since, and catastrophe was the last thing on pilgrims' minds. "I cannot describe my feelings," said 25-year-old Indonesian student Yusuf Burhan. "This is a great blessing. I never imagined that I would perform the Haj this year." This year's summer timing for the Haj, which follows the lunar calendar, will test the endurance of worshippers during the mostly outdoor ritual. Carrying white umbrellas to shield themselves from the scorching sun, policemen in the mountainous city have conducted foot patrols and set up checkpoints to inspect Haj permits. Others splashed water on pilgrims as temperatures climbed towards 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit).

Thousands of paramedics were on standby inside the Grand Mosque. Saudi authorities said more than 32,000 health workers will be on hand to treat cases of heatstroke, dehydration, and exhaustion. The Haj, with its hefty fees, makes billions of dollars a year for Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, which is trying to diversify its economy beyond fossil fuels. This year's will be the biggest since 2019, before the Covid pandemic, when about 2.5 million people took part. Only 10,000 were allowed in 2020, at the height of the global outbreak, rising to nearly 59,000 in 2021. Last year's cap of one million has been removed. Saudi businessman Samir Al-Zafni said all his hotels in Makkah and Madinah are at full capacity until the first week of July. "This year there is not a single vacant bed in our group of 67 hotels," he told AFP. The Haj also demonstrates social reforms in the deeply conservative country. This year's pilgrimage will be the biggest since Saudi Arabia scrapped rules in 2021 that banned women who weren't accompanied by a male relative. Leaving the Grand Mosque after evening prayers on Friday, Ramot Ali from Niger struggled to describe the feeling of performing Haj for the first time, saying simply that "I am very happy".

## Indian government orders Manipur state chief to 'work harder' to end violence

MUMBAI (Reuters): India's federal government on Sunday ordered the chief minister of Manipur state to "work harder" to restore peace as violence between ethnic groups has not subsided for over 50 days despite a heavy security presence. "I have been advised by the home minister to work harder towards restoring lasting peace in Manipur," said N. Biren Singh, chief minister of the northeastern state after he was summoned to New Delhi for talks with Home Minister Amit Shah. Shah and Singh both belong to the same

political party. At least 80 people have been killed and more than 40,000 forced to flee their homes after clashes broke out in Manipur on May 3 between rival ethnic groups. Violence between members of the Kuki ethnic group, who mostly live in the hills, and Meiteis, the dominant community in the lowlands, erupted as a result of resentment over economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education reserved for hill people. Several rounds of peace talks between the groups have failed and

sporadic incidents of violence and arson continue to deepen the crisis in the state governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political party. Human rights groups say Modi's government and party have failed to do more to end ethnic tensions. "I have been asked to further open channels of communication with all the stakeholders so that we are able to bring permanent peace in the state," Singh said. Manipur's government on Sunday extended the state's internet ban for five more days until June 30.

## Russian jets said to step up strikes on Syrian rebel enclave

AMMAN (Reuters): Russian jets bombed villages and towns near the northwestern Syrian city of Idlib on Sunday, killing at least nine civilians and wounding dozens in a major flare-up of violence in the country's last opposition stronghold, witnesses and rescuers said. War planes flying at high altitude, which tracking centres said were Russian Sukhoi jets, dropped bombs on a vegetable market in Jisr al-Shughour while it was crowded with shoppers ahead of the Muslim Eid feast, leaving at least nine dead and 30 injured, the Western-backed White Helmets emergency response group said. Witnesses and rescuers said jets also hit villages in the mountainous Jabal al-Zawya region and the western outskirts of Idlib city, which fall within a buffer zone carved out by Russia and Turkey that ended major fighting nearly five years ago. No immediate comment was available from Russia or its allies in the Syrian army, whose artillery pounded rebel areas in the countryside west of Aleppo. During past outbreaks of fighting, Damascus and Russia have said they only target insurgent groups and deny indiscriminate attacks on civilians. More than 4 million people live in the densely populated opposition-held northwest along the Turkish border. Most were driven there by successive Russian-led campaigns that regained territory seized by rebels. Damascus has in recent rounds of Russian-brokered talks with Ankara demanded that Turkey withdraw a formidable military presence in the last foothold of the Syrian rebellion. Turkish troops based in the region have held back Russia and Damascus from a final assault to wrest back control of the enclave.