

Pilgrims gathered in Mina

MAKKAH (Agencies): Around three million pilgrims have gathered in Mina to start the Hajj rituals. The pilgrims will remain in the tent valley on Monday) and tonight, and later head to Mount Arafat. Most of Pakistani pilgrims will prefer going to Arafat by train, as for the first time in the history, around 63 percent Pakistanis have been allotted tents near train route.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 160

Regd. No. 241

ZIL HAJJ 08 1444 -- TUESDAY, JUNE 27 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

08 PAGES

PRICE. 30



MAKKAH: After circling the Kaaba, Islam's holiest site, and converging on a vast tent camp in the nearby desert, the pilgrims engage in a day and night of prayer.

## SBP jacks up key rate to record high of 22%

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Following withdrawal of its guidance on imports, the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on Monday decided to jack up the policy rate by 100bps to 22% in an emergency meeting days after it had announced no change in the interest rate.

Since January 2022, the central bank has raised rates by a total of 1,250bps. In a statement, the MPC explained the contest of the emergency meeting as in the last meeting on June 12 it had decided not to jack up the policy rate. Back then it had viewed it as appropriate to achieve the objective of price stability "barring any unexpected domestic and external shocks".

However, the SBP said that it has now decided to increase the interest rate because of "two important domestic developments" that have "slightly deteriorated inflation outlook and which could potentially increase pressure on the already stressed external

account".

"First, there are certain upward revisions in taxes, duties and PDL rate in FY24 budget as approved by the National Assembly on June 25. Second, the SBP, on June 23, withdrew its general guidance for commercial banks on prioritisation of imports," the MPC said. It added that the withdrawal of the guideline on imports was "necessary" due to the ongoing negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but has "increased the upside risks to the inflation outlook".

"The committee views that additional tax measures are likely to contribute to inflation both directly and indirectly, while the relaxation in imports may exert pressures in the foreign exchange market. The latter may result in higher-than-earlier anticipated exchange rate pass-through to domestic prices," it further added.

"With this background, the MPC convened an emergency meeting to respond to these developments. The MPC decided to

raise the policy rate by 100 bps to 22 per cent, effective 27th June 2023," said the central bank. It added the decision was "necessary to keep real interest rate firmly in the positive territory on a forward-looking basis".

The central bank also believes that the decision would help "anchor inflation expectations" and "support bringing down inflation towards the medium-term target of 5-7% by the end of FY25".

"The MPC views that today's decision — along with the expected completion of the ongoing IMF program and the government adhering to the target of generating a primary surplus in FY24 would help in addressing external sector vulnerabilities and reduce economic uncertainty. The committee reiterated that it would continue to carefully monitor evolving economic developments and stands ready, if necessary, to take appropriate action to achieve the objective of price stability over the medium term," the SBP said.

## Sanjrani accords approval to Finance Bill

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Sadiq Sanjrani has accorded approval to Finance Bill 2023. It was approved by the National Assembly yesterday. Having a total outlay of 14.48 trillion rupees, the budget 2023-24 focuses on economic stability, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as curbing inflationary pressures.

Meanwhile, Chairman Senate and Acting President of Pakistan Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday announced signing Election Act Amendment Bill shortly.

Taking to social media, he wrote, "Due to the absence of President Arif Alvi, the government is likely to have a big break in making the Election Act Amendment Bill an Act of Parliament." Chairman Senator Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday reached the President House where he assumed the charge as Acting President of Pakistan due to absence of President Arif Alvi.

Sanjrani said that the government is likely to get a major breakthrough in making the Election Act Amendment Bill an Act of Parliament. It is likely to be signed by Sadiq Sanjrani as the Acting President of the country and it will be implemented immediately. After being signed by the Acting President Sadiq Sanjrani soon, the Election Act Bill will become an Act of Parliament.

## FIA again arrests Pervaiz Elahi

LAHORE (PPI): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has again arrested former Punjab chief minister and PTI President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in a money laundering case on Monday.

Pervaiz has been taken into custody from outside the Camp Jail. The FIA has already registered a case against his third wife Saira Anwar, who, the Agency alleges, has committed corruption of billions of rupees and then laundered the money abroad. The FIA officials have said that former chief minister will be presented in court today.

Just a day ago, the ex-chief minister was granted bail in the money laundering case. Earlier on Monday, Federal Investigation Agency's anti-money laundering team had arrested former Punjab chief minister and PTI President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi's gunman Chaudhry Muhammad Zaman, who also worked as Pervaiz's cash boy. Zaman was allegedly also the business partner of ex-chief minister's wife Sara Anwar. Police had also arrested Zaman in February 2023 when he was allegedly supplying wine to Sara. The FIA has said it has obtained important evidence by conducting the forensic of Zaman's cellphone.

sion. I cannot hear this case," Justice Shah told them. The petitions in question were filed by former CJP Jawwad S. Khawaja, Aitzaz Ahsan, Karamat Ali, and PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Khawaja, who filed the petition through his counsel Advocate Khawaja Ahmad, requested the top court to declare the trial of civilians by military courts unconstitutional. The former CJP pleaded that Section 2(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the Pakistan Army Act were inconsistent with the fundamental rights conferred by the Constitution and therefore void, and should be struck down.

As an interim measure, all proceedings against civilians based on the sections should be suspended or, in the alternative, any military court should be restrained from passing a final order in any case against civilians based on the sections, the petition stated. Before this petition, five members of civil society from different cities, through their counsel Faisal Siddiqi, sought as illegal the trial of civilians in the military courts in connection with the violence in the country of May 9.

Likewise, Ahsan, who has also served as a former law minister and also spearheaded the 2007 lawyers' movement, explained that the primary purpose of his petition was to ensure that none of the thousands of civilians who have admittedly been arrested for allegedly having partaken in the May 9 violence and being nominated for trial be tried by military courts.

## Military trials of civilians: SC bench dissolved again

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court bench (SC) hearing a set of pleas challenging the military trials of civilians stood dissolved for a second time on Monday as Justice Mansoor Ali Shah recused himself from hearing the case after the government raised objections.

Originally, a nine-bench bench had been formed to hear the case. However, moments after the first hearing began, Justice Qazi Faez Isa had said he did not consider the SC bench "a proper court", with Justice Sardar Tariq Masood also endorsing his point of view.

Subsequently, a seven-member bench, comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Shah, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yawha Afridi, Justice Sayyed Ma-zahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha Malik was formed to hear the case. The petitions challenging military trials of civilians were filed by former CJP Jawwad S. Khawaja, Aitzaz Ahsan, Karamat Ali, and PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

At the outset of today's hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan came to the rostrum and relayed the government's objections to Justice Shah's inclusion in the bench as one of the petitioners, ex-CJP Khawaja, was related to him. "One of the petitioners is Justice Shah's relative. Therefore, it may affect his conduct," AGP Awan said. However, CJP Bandial interjected and said, "The bench will not

be made according to your whims." Expressing his anger, the CJP said that the government "should not mock the judiciary".

He asked on what basis the government was objecting to Justice Shah's presence on the bench. "Are you objecting to the conflict of interest or bias?" he asked. "We have always shown restraint. We didn't punish those flouting court directives," Justice Bandial said, adding that implementing the court's directives was a "moral responsibility". He said that ex-CJP Khawaja was not a political person.

"You are a lawyer of great character and reputation. There is a whole series of objections regarding the bench being raised repeatedly," Justice Bandial said. Talking about the elections suo motu case, the CJP said that there was a discussion about whether the majority or the minority verdict stood. "You are making the bench controversial again," he told the AGP. This prompted Awan to state that personally he had no objections to Justice Shah's presence on the bench.

For his part, Justice Shah stated that he had highlighted the fact that one of the petitioners was his relative at the very first hearing and asked those with objections come forward. At the same time, however, the judge also recused himself from hearing the case. The lawyers present during the hearing urged the judge to reconsider, saying that the case concerned fundamental rights.

"Try and understand, this is [a] judge's own deci-

# The Frontier Post

## Afridi's remand denied

ISLAMABAD (INP): An anti-terrorism court on Monday denied the police physical remand of PTI stalwart Shehryar Afridi in the case related to attacks on GHQ during the May 9 violence that erupted following the arrest of PTI supreme Imran Khan. Under tight security, Mr. Shehryar Afridi was presented before ATC Judge Hamid Hussain, who presided over the hearing of both the police's remand plea and the PTI leader's bail plea.

## Lt Gen among 3 sacked after May 9 riots: DG ISPR

### F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army dismissed three offices including a Lt General from the service while action has been taken against three Major Generals and seven Brigadiers over May 9 riots, revealed Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Major General Ahmad Sharif in a media briefing.

Maj Gen Sharif revealed that the army had completed its process of "self-accountability", saying that two comprehensive inquiries — led by major generals — were conducted into violent events that took place at army garrisons on May 9.

"After a deliberate accountability process, keeping the requests of in-court of inquiries in view, disciplinary proceedings were initiated against those who failed to keep the security and honour of garrisons, military installations, Jinnah House and General Headquarters intact. "Three officers, including a lieutenant-general, have been removed from their jobs. Strict disciplinary proceedings against 15 officers, including three major generals and seven brigadiers, have been completed," he added.

The DG ISPR said that these penalties showed that accountability in the Pakistan Army was carried out with discrimination. He said the granddaughter and son-in-law of a four-star general were also undergoing the process of accountability.

He announced the Pak Army believes that the responsible and facilitators of the May 9 tragedy will not be pardoned and the people who will create hurdles in the process will also not be tolerated and will be punished under the Constitution of Pakistan. Maj Gen Sharif said the families of martyrs and all ranks of the army are raising questions over the May 9 incidents and the desecration of martyrs' monuments in many parts of the country during the riots.

"The May 9 incidents have proved that what the enemy of Pakistan couldn't do was done by these miscreants," he added. The DG ISPR further said that the May 9 incidents are "highly condemnable, a black chapter in Pakistan's history and a big conspiracy against the country".

Speaking about the protests that broke out following Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan's arrest, DG ISPR Maj Gen Chaudhry

said that evidence related to the May 9 incidents has been collected as an investigation into the violence is underway. He said that the Pakistan Army is eliminating the terrorists from the country on a daily basis. "The families of the martyrs are hurt and they are asking tough questions as to when will the people involved [in the May 9 incidents] be brought to justice," he added.

"All the ranks within the army are asking why they should sacrifice their lives if the memorials of the martyrs are being desecrated like this." Expressing regret over the May 9 mayhem, the DG ISPR said the planning of the violent incidents was done several months ago. "The people were manipulated by this outrageous narrative," he added.

Maj Gen Chaudhry also said that the operation against terrorism is going smoothly. "A poisonous propaganda is being spread against Pakistan forces. False propaganda has been carried out for political purposes and lust for power," he said, adding that the nation cannot be separated from the army and there is complete coordination and transparency in the army's decision-making.

"As many as 95 officers and jawans [soldiers] lost their lives. However, the successful war against terrorism will continue until all terrorists are eliminated," said the chief military spokesperson. He added that the Pakistan Army will continue to make sacrifices for the defence of the country and the welfare of the people.

He stressed that the May 9 events will not be forgotten and those involved will not be forgiven. "All the people involved will be punished under the Constitution and law," he assured. He announced the Pak Army believes that the responsible and facilitators of the May 9 tragedy will not be pardoned and the people who will create hurdles in the process will also not tolerate it and they will be punished under the Constitution of Pakistan.

Major General Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry said they will not spare anyone and for this reason, a process of investigation from the daughter, a wife, and a son-in-law of some three-star and two-star generals is also continuing right now. The ISPR Director General also condemned the May 9 attacks on military installations as it was a big conspiracy against the state



and said Major General ranked officers held two inquiries on the incident.

About the security laps at the corps commander's house, GHQ, and other military locations, he clarified that there was a plan of the enemy to get an immediate response from the army to do politics on such damage but it was foiled. He said it was unexpected that a political party made an attack on its own army. The masterminds of the May 9 tragedy were directly those who brainwashed people to attack the institutions with petrol bombs.

For halting these incidents in future, it is necessary to take action against the responsible persons in any case, the ISPR director general said adding that the families of martyrs are questioning to Army Chief about their sacrifices for the country and the army. During the press conference, the ISPR director general also played some video messages of martyrs' family members who condemned the May 9 tragedy.

He said the stability of a state is based on confidence among the general public, government and army. Pakistan has main danger from inside anarchy and May 9 was its peak. He added that if the way of inside anarchy will not be stopped, it will open a door to outside anarchy. To a query about holding negotiations with the political segment for political stability in the country, he said they respect all political parties and only want that they sit at a table and solve the issues. Answering a question about controlled journalism in Pakistan, he said the Pak army believes in responsible journalism with positive criticism.

## Imran, wife not to appear before NAB

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were summoned by the National Accountability Bureau today in separate cases. However, both the husband and wife will not appear before the bureau.

Lawyers will submit written replies on behalf of both Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi. The NAB had summoned the PTI chairman in the Toshakhana case today. Bushra Bibi had been summoned in the £190 million Al-Qadir Trust case.

The NAB had once again summoned both husband and wife after they failed to appear on earlier notices on June 23. The bureau had dispatched notices to Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi. The bureau had issued a summons notice to Imran Khan to appear in the Toshakhana inquiry on June 23 after he failed to comply with similar notices sent earlier. The former prime minister was also instructed to bring along the relevant record. In the notice issued by the NAB, it was said that the PTI chairman had been issued a notice for Wednesday, but he failed to appear.

## Court orders arrest of Gill

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A District and Sessions Court of Islamabad on Monday started process of declaring PTI leader Shabbaz Gill proclaimed offender in an alleged sedition case.

Gill is accused of inciting masses to revolt against the institutions. Additional District and Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas also directed the FIA to immediately arrest Gill.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal addressing at Karachi Shipyard.

## 20 die in Punjab rain-related incidents

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: At least 20 people died in rain-related incidents in Punjab over the last 24 hours, Rescue 1122 said in a statement issued on Monday afternoon. The statement, issued by provincial emergency service spokesperson Farooq Ahmed, attributed the deaths to electrocution, drowning and lightning.

It stated that five people died in Narowal and two in Sheikhupura after they were struck by lightning. Meanwhile, seven people drowned in the province and six deaths occurred due to electrocution. According to the statement, 10 people were injured in incidents of wall and roof collapse in Lahore, three in Chiniot and one in Sheikhupura. Separately, seven people sustained injuries after they were hit by lightning.

Sixty-one cases of electrocution were referred to hospi-

tals across the province of which 54 were provided immediate medical aid, the statement added. Meanwhile, journalist and author Raza Ahmad Rumi shared pictures of flooded roads, which he said were of Lahore's Garden Town. The pictures showed people wading through knee-high water on roads. "Clear signs of a failed model of urban development, thoughtless infrastructure and dysfunctional municipal governance," Rumi commented on the situation.

Similarly, digital rights activist Nighat Dad also shared a video of Lahore's Captain Mubeen Shaheed Underpass where a vehicle was seen submerged in water up till the roof. "Does anyone know how many underpasses we have in Lahore and what is the local government's work plan around monsoon and urban flooding?" asked Dad. In view of the rain situation, traffic police in Lahore deployed

additional wardens on busy roads and thoroughfares in low-lying areas of the city. Fork lifters were also deployed at various spots, a statement issued by City Traffic Officer (CTO) Mustansir Feroz said.

The CTO asked the people to practice caution during the rain, drive carefully, stay away from electric installations and poles and avoid unnecessary travel. Taking notice of the situation in Lahore, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the provincial government and district administration to take immediate steps for draining the standing water. "Make arrangements for draining the water within 24 hours," a statement issued by the PML-N quoted him as saying. He also directed the authorities to mobilise teams from all relevant institutions in the rainy situation and constantly monitor the situation and take administrative measures.









# State-of-the-art Command & Control Centre established for Redzone security

PESHAWAR (APP): Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat formally inaugurated the “Command & Control Centre” established for the security of Redzone at the Central Police Office (CPO) here on Monday.

Upon his arrival, he was received by the Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan. A smart contingent of police presented a guard of honour to the guest.

The chief guest laid a floral wreath on the Yadgar-e- Shuhada-e-Police and offered Fateha. The chief guest was given a special briefing about the newly established Center.

It merits mention here that the newly established

Center is the first of its kind in the country which is fully equipped with the latest modern gadgetries.

The basic purpose of the Centre was to ensure security to the installation situated in the Redzone as well as to make an integrated automatic system of the entry of the Registered Employees.

The system has four main salient features which consist of vehicle identification, pedestrian identification, visitor identification and the latest modern communication system. Moreover, state-of-the-art cameras and other latest communication tools have been installed in this system.

Likewise, facial identification, Automatic identifica-

tion vehicle number plates (ANPR), Under Automate System (UAS) of vehicle checking and vehicle intrusion and detection camera have also been installed due to which vehicle checking, wanted people's identification and, wanted vehicle identification carried out.

Similarly, an alarm is being generated on entry of suspicious persons and vehicles in the Redzone and all field officers are promptly informed through a communication system to arrest the suspicious person and vehicle.

Likewise, road blockers, tyre burst and turn style gates have been installed to deny forced entry of any vehicles and person into the

Redzone. This is the first phase of a highly guarded security system established for security from Central Prison gate Peshawar, Police lines main gate, Civil Secretariat, Governor House, Chief Minister House and Secretariat and other important buildings.

One of the features of the Command and Control Center is that it can make prompt and easy access to all field commanders as well as improve the operational capabilities of the police to tackle Emergency and crisis situations.

The chief guest expressed full confidence in the newly established latest security system and appreciated the KP police efforts in this regard.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali meeting with a representative delegation of Sikh community at Governor's House.

## POWA demands to grant special allowance

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prosecution Officers Welfare Association (POWA) requested Secretary Home and Tribal Department for granting special allowance equal to one initial Basic Pay of Basic Pay Scale to existing drawing allowance to all the prosecution officers and extension of utility allowance to all supporting staff of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prosecution Department Staff, on Monday.

According to press release issued by POWA stated that the Prosecution like that Judiciary and Police is the most important segment of the Criminal Justice System, perform their duties side by side for the dispensation of Justice, are appointed through competitive process, possess same qualifications, with

similar duty hours and working days but are drawing meager Salaries and Allowances.

That the pay, allowances and other perks and privileges of both the segments working in the same system is at higher side than that of similarly placed Prosecution Officers, which has created disparity in salaries and is violative of the spirit of Article 38 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Recently the public Prosecution Punjab and Balochistan have extended special allowance to their respective Officers and Supporting staff at the rates mentioned in the notifications. That such disparity in pay and allowances has created chaos amongst all the Prosecution Officers and Officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and requesting the cabinet to take up the

case with quarter concerned for extension of subject special Allowance at earliest.

POWA are also urging to call for pin drop strike, however, the cabinet decided to approach your good office for moving a summary for extension of subject Allowance at the analogy of Balochistan Public Prosecution at earliest in order to remove such disparity in Pay and Allowances. In view of the above it is requested that a summary/case may kindly be moved for extension to grant special allowance equal to one initial basic pay of basic pay scale in addition to existing drawing allowance to all the prosecution officers and extension of Utility Allowance to the supporting staff of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prosecution at the analogy of Balochistan prosecution department.

## Governor assures protection of minorities communities

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali on Monday met with a representative delegation of the Sikh community here and assured protection of the lives and properties of minority communities.

Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information and Religious Affairs Feroz Jamal Shah Kaka Khel was also present during the meeting.

The Sikh community appealed to Governor for the protection of their community.

They also requested the caretaker provincial government to revive the Peshawar Safe City project and provision of Police security to Sikh community traders.

Speaking on the occasion the governor said that the Sikh community's love for Pakistan is not hidden from anyone.

He assured that the protection of all minorities including the Sikh community will be ensured.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali talking to a delegation from PK-82 Suhail Abad.

## EPI KP launches measles vaccination campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken proactive measures to curb the spread of measles disease by initiating a vaccination campaign in 135 Union Councils across 14 districts identified as outbreak hotspots, said a press release issued here on Monday.

Commencing last week and running until June 27th, the campaign aims to administer vaccinations to a total of 896,000 children aged between 6 months and 5 years. The EPI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, based on their data, reports 22 deaths linked to measles, with samples collected and sent to the National Institute of Health in Islamabad for further investigation.

The results from the National Institute of Health indicate that out of the test-

ed cases, 13 were confirmed to be positive for measles, while the remaining cases were attributed to other diseases. Within the past 9 days, the EPI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has successfully vaccinated 762,711 children across the 14 districts, including D.I. Khan, Charsadda, North Wazir, Bajaur, Peshawar, Hangu, Kohat, Mardan, Karak, Dir Lower, Dir Upper, Haripur, Nowshera, and Tank. Of these children, 376,343 were male and 386,368 were female.

The Director of EPI KP, in a statement, emphasized the presence of 1,844 basic health units throughout the province and the efforts made by EPI KP to conduct special campaigns to reach every unvaccinated child.

The Director highlighted that the 13 children who tested positive for measles

were not vaccinated due to their parents' refusal and failed to receive timely vaccinations during the designated vaccination periods.

The Director of EPI KP urged all parents to cooperate for the bright future of their children and encouraged them to vaccinate against the 12 dangerous diseases.

Additionally, the Director emphasized that parents who refuse vaccination not only put their own children at risk but also endanger the health of children living in their neighborhoods and among their relatives.

EPI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains committed to ensuring the well-being of children in the region and will continue to take necessary steps to control the spread of measles and other preventable diseases.

## Magistrate nominates DSP as IO

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Judicial Magistrate Peshawar Shafiq-ul-Aman nominated Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) circle as Inquiry Officer (IO) to probe two persons injured during 9th May incidents allegedly in policemen firing while adjourned further hearing till 7th July, on Monday.

The injured persons named Waqas and Yasir has filed two separate petition seeking placement of responsibility of firing in which they were injured. The counsel Muhammad Inam Yousafzai appear before Judicial Magistrate on behalf of petitioners.

The plea had made Minister of Interior, Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Peshawar and policemen whom opened firing on protestors as liable for the incident.

The counsel argued that First Information Report (FIR) no: 433 is fabricated and accused nominated in the case for political victimization at Khan Razaq police station while injured person complaint didn't made part of the record.

Judicial Magistrate Peshawar Shafiq-ul-Aman nominated DSP circle as Inquiry Officer to probe the matter and adjourned further hearing till 7th July.

## PDMA releases Rs.150m

PESHAWAR (APP): On the directives of the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) released an amount of Rs.150 million for combating emergency situation during monsoon and other emergencies in the province, said a press release issued on Monday.

According to Secretary Relief, KP Abdul Basit, the amount has been released in head of relief to the district administrations of 8 districts in order to combat monsoon and emergency situations.

Out of the fund Rs.40 million has been released to the district administration of Bannu, followed by Rs.30 million to Buner and Rs.20 million each for districts Chitral and Lakki Marwat respectively.

Similarly, an amount of Rs.15 million has also been released to the district administration of Kohat followed by Rs.10 million each to Hangu and Dir Upper and Rs.5 million for district Kohistan. Other districts of the province have already been issued the funds in this regard.

## Power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Pesco on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Rahman baba Grid Station on 27th June from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Subsequently, the consumers of 11KV Musa Zai, Beri Bagh, Barki, Ring Road, Main Umar Baba, SIDB and Hazar Khawani-2 feeders will face inconvenience.

## PIC attain category one hospital position in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar Institute of Cardiology, the sole cardiac hospital in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, has attained yet another accolade to get Category One hospital position.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission has designated PIC as the first official Category One hospital, granting a regular license in a formal licensing ceremony.

PIC received a full-fledged license following a thorough evaluation of various hospitals in the province, conducted by the Health Care Commission.

PIC's spokesperson Riffat Anjum on Monday said that the Health Care

Commission took measures to streamline and license hospitals, assessing them against predetermined standards.

Peshawar Institute of Cardiology was recognized for its adherence to the Health Care Commission's specified standards in providing standardized treatment, patient care, emergency services, and patient safety, among other facilities. This achievement highlights PIC's commitment to meeting the commission's standards.

During the inauguration ceremony, Dr. Niamat Shah, the Director of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology, expressed his pride for this prestigious

recognition.

He credited the tireless efforts and dedication of the entire staff of PIC for this achievement.

Dr. Shah emphasized that PIC is dedicated to providing quality treatment to patients from Pakistan, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that PIC will continue to strive for excellence, aiming to become a source of pride for the province by earning more national and international honors.

It is worth mentioning here that Peshawar Institute of Cardiology has earned the distinction of being Pakistan's first government hospital to obtain ISO certification.



PESHAWAR: A large number of people purchasing sacrificial animals at Ring Road Cattle Market.

## Trade of sacrificial animals gains momentum after heavy downpour

PESHAWAR (APP): Like other provinces, the trade of sacrificial animals have also increased in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where all cattle markets are flooded with cows, buffalos, sheep, goats and camels on Eidul Azha.

The last night's heavy rains in Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera districts have turned the weather relatively pleasant on Monday, resultantly faithful thronged to cattle markets to purchase a suitable sacrificial animal to perform Eidul Azha, the second Muslim ritual that commemorates the supreme sacrifices of great Prophets Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and his son Hazrat Ismail (AS) on upcoming Thursday.

The businessmen of Punjab and Sindh provinces besides domestic traders have brought their stock in large number to the lucrative market of Peshawar to earn maximum capital.

A cattle market survey

conducted by this scribe on Monday revealed that prices of small animals including goats and sheep were very high compare to large animals these days.

The last night rains have created problems for buyers and traders. It was also found that the visitors were more in number than buyers as most of salaries class came to the markets to have an idea about the prices, however traders are expecting that the sale of cattle will speedup eve of Eid.

“Since last Saturday, I have sold 15 goats out of 40 available with me in Kala Kala market. The buyers mostly comes to markets to take idea about the prices and then returned empty hands last weeks,” said Mosa Khan, a cattle trader in Pachagai road. He said dealers economically suffer if stock was not sold on Eid.

He said the trade of animals have now picked up momentum after the rains and people are visiting to

markets in large number.

“I bought a goat on Rs50,000 due to pleasant weather and reasonable prices in market today,” Waheed Zaman, a buyer said when asked at Lala Kalli cattle market near Peshawar.

Waheed said that trend of collective “Qurbani” has increased due to skyrocketing prices of sacrificial animals on the eve of Eidul Azha.

Apart from domestic traders, inter-provincial businessmen dealing in cattle heads are bringing their stocks to Peshawar to got high prices in the wake of Eidul Azha.

“I have so far brought 12 trucks of cattle each from Sahiwal and my brother will send five more trucks to Peshawar shortly due to it's high demands,” Ibrahim Khan, an inter-provincial exporter of Nowshera said.

“I refused an offer of Rs. 250,000 for my ox ‘Qalanadar’ last Sunday as

I was demanding Rs. 275,000 for it,” he added.

Livestock and Dairy Development Department spokesman told APP that hundreds of thousands of cattle are being sacrificed only in the province on Eidul Azha.

He said KP have no choice but to import cattle from the Punjab to ensure availability of sacrificial animals on reasonable rates to people,” adding that around 70 to 75 percent cattle are being brought from Punjab for Eid.

He suggested a tripartite-export agreement between Pakistan, India and Afghanistan to meet people requirements of beef, milk and sacrificial animals.

The spokesman said that special checkpoints were established with the assistance of provincial government at various places on highways connecting KP with ex FATA to control the menace of cattle smuggling to Afghanistan.

## Drug abuse: Authorities asked to launch awareness drive

PESHAWAR (INP): Anti-drug awareness seminar speakers jointly viewed that an awareness campaign against drugs is the need of the hour as drugs are spreading very fast among the youth. According to the press statement on Monday, the Campus Coordination Committee of the Agriculture University of Peshawar in collaboration with Anti-Narcotics Force Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organised an awareness seminar and walk in connection with International Day against drugs.

Anti-narcotics awareness walk led by Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Jehan Bakht and Regional Commander ANF KP Brigadier Abdul Manan which started from PUTA Hall of Peshawar University and

ended at Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Hall. Addressing the seminar, VC Prof Jehan Bakht and other guests said that they feared an increase in the number of drug addicts shortly if pragmatic and preventive measures were not taken.

The speakers noted that people resort to drugs to get temporary relief from stress and other ailments that lead them to destruction, adding that youngsters are seen openly taking various drugs which needs attention of the parents, teachers and society. They stressed on parents and civil society play an imperative role to identify such people and bring them on the right path by educating and by consulting doctors.

They also called for holding public awareness

campaigns from time to time about addiction and sensitization of the youth about its adverse effects on mental and physical health and Islamic point of view.

The events were attended by the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of the University Prof Dr Jehan Bakht, Regional Commander ANF KP Brigadier Abdul Manan, VC Islamia College University Peshawar Prof Dr Gul Majid Khan, VC University of Engineering and Technology Prof Dr Iftikhar Hussain, Deputy Director ANF KP Malik Wajid Yusuf, officials and students including University of Peshawar, Khyber Medical University, Khyber Medical College, Khyber Dental College, Forest College and other colleges and institutes.

## 3 days Pashto literary festival concludes

PESHAWAR (APP): The three days pashto literary festival was concluded here Monday at Nishtar Hall where participants emphasized the need for scholarly research on various aspects of the language.

The festival was aimed to foster intellectual discourse amongst the Pashto-speaking community while

encouraging them to continue celebrating their rich cultural heritage. Prominent Pashto poets, researchers and scholars participated in 3 days long event.

The participants highlighted the importance of Pashto literature and emphasized the need for scholarly research on its various aspects.

Commander Peshawar Corps, Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat graced the occasion as Chief Guest and also had an interactive session with the participants. Later on, Corps Commander visited the art gallery where he was briefed by students of Pukhtoonkwa College of Arts, Abdul Wali Khan University.





## In brief

### Three inmates released F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: District and Sessions (D&SJ) Dir Lower Phul Bibi made a detailed visit to the District Jail Timergara along with Senior Civil Judge Muhammad Ilyas and inspected the various sections of the jail, especially the juvenile and women sections. D&SJ inspected the anchor, store, she also inquired about the problems from the prisoners, no complaint was received against the jail authorities, later the honorable judge released 3 prisoners involved in minor crimes on the occasion of Eidul Azha. Issued orders which were immediately released, the judge expressed satisfaction over all the facilities provided to the prisoners in the jail.

### Excise arrests two smugglers F.P. Report

MARDAN: Excise Mardan region has arrested two alleged smugglers while recovered huge of 48000 grams (48 kg) hashish while case was registered against them, on Monday. According to details Aftab ul din Director Narcotics Control under the supervision of Dawood Shah Excise and Taxation Officer Narcotics Control and Syed Naveed Jamal Circle Officer Mardan Region under the supervision of Muhammad Riaz SHO Police Station Excise Mardan Region. Muhammad Farooq and Fayaz Khan Sub Inspector along with others. On a tip-off, officers stopped a vehicle number LEE 8047 on Mardan Charsadda Road and recovered 48000 grams (48 kg) of hashish from the vehicle. He was arrested on the spot and a case was registered in Mardan Region Excise Police Station for further investigation and legal action.

### Hamza condoles with Tarar family F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Former Chief Minister Punjab and leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Mian Hamza Shahbaz Sharif arrived in village Kolo Tarar at residence of former Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar and ex-Parliamentary Secretary Mian Afzal Hussain Tarar to expressed his condolence over demise of Mian Nasir Hussain Tarar, real brother of Saira Afzal Tarar and only son of Mian Afzal Hussain Tarar. Mian Hamza Shahbaz Sharif recited Fatihah for the soul of deceased Mian Nasir Hussain Tarar and pray may Allah be bestow high rank in Jannat-ul-Firdous. He expressed his sympathies with whole bereaved family. District president Muslim League (N) Hafizabad Chaudhry Muhammad Bukhsh Tarar, Mian Mumtaz Hussain Tarar, Chaudhry Muhammad Irfan Tarar, Chaudhry Babar Hayat Tarar, Muhammad Waqas Tarar, Muzaffar Hussain Tarar and other workers of PMLN were also present on the occasion.

### 2 women burned in acid attack

MIANWALAI (INP): Two women were scorched when a woman hurled acid on them here in Wandhi Ghand Walai Mohallah of Mianwali on Monday. According to details, accused Parveen Bibi was desirous of wedding of her daughters with son of a relative woman. However, the youth rejecting the proposal entered in a wedding with another girl. Annoyed over rejecting the proposal of daughters, Parveen Bibi threw acid at two women due to which they received burn wounds.



QUETTA: A man selecting and buying sacrificial bull in Mandi for Eidul Azha.

## Asif: Pak paying price of Khan's wrong decisions

### F.P. Report

SIALKOT: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif has said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was the mastermind, planner and inventor of all May 9 incidents.

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 Tehreek-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 (PTI chief) imparted to his party activists, and the planning he done, resulted in attacks on memorials of martyrs and military instal-

lations and the defense assets, saying that political workers were incited by their leader to attack the state and its institutions. Khawaja 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, the PTI chief did not even once asked 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. Rather, they waited for elections for years and came to power with the power of vote, he added.

Kh Asif said that the PTI chief did not speak truth before coming into power or after getting power. He said that today, the whole of Pakistan was paying the price of this person's wrong decisions.

If this person had not resigned from the assemblies, and not dissolved the KP and Punjab Assemblies, neither he nor his party would have confronted the current challenges. He said "we are thankful to Allah for honoring us and giving us the government for the last 14 months. "We are trying to fix the economic and moral ruins that we inherited," he added.

## Eid cleanliness plan finalized

### F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim has instructed the concerned authorities to immediately finalize all necessary arrangements including monitoring of livestock markets, timely disposal of animal carcasses on the occasion of Eidul Azha 2023 and ensure the implementation of the plans made in this regard.

He was addressing a meeting held in his office in Mardan to review the arrangements regarding Eidul Azha. Additional Commissioner Mardan Naem Akhtar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mardan Samiur Rehman, ADC Swabi Gohar Ali, all Tehsil Municipal Administration Officers of Mardan and Swabi, Water Supply and Sanitation Company Mardan, representatives of Local Government Department and other relevant officials participated in the meeting.

On this occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mardan and Swabi presented a comprehensive report to the Commissioner Mardan on the preparations made for various matters on the occasion of Eidul Azha in both districts and briefed him about government cattle markets in both districts and other measures to be taken. The Additional Deputy Commissioners said that camps of the concerned departments have been set up in the registered cattle markets by the TMAs while all the concerned departments have finalized the contingency plans.

Apart from this, the district administration, police and TMAs will take legal action against the illegal cattle markets. He further said that arrangements have been made by the Livestock Department to vaccinate the animals for protection from virus at the entry and exit points of the cattle markets. In addition, mobile teams will spray/vaccinate the sacrificial animals in different areas so that sacrificial animals can be protected from any kind of germs/diseases. Water Sanitation Services Company and TMAs have selected points for disposal of animal waste after sacrifice.

Commissioner Mardan Yusuf Rahim instructed the concerned staff to clean up and identify all the waste at the main points in time and finalize all the plans to remove it from there. He directed the Water Supply and Sanitation Company to extend the duration of its complaint cell to 24 hours during Eid so that the complaints of the citizens can be redressed in time. Commissioner Mardan was told that on the occasion of Eidul Azha, the holidays of Health Department, TMAs and Water and Sanitation Services Company, Rescue 1122 staff have been canceled.

# JI says judicial system collapsed to disseminate justice

### F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) chief Sirajul Haq has said that the existing judicial system has completely failed in providing easy and cheap justice to the people in Pakistan. He said that the establishment of peace was the sole responsibility of the state. He expressed these views while addressing a grand jirga at Ghanam Shah area of Jandol, the home town of Sirajul Haq, as chief guest here on Saturday after a settlement of the enmity between the families of Babar Jan and Mohammad Anwar. The parties hugged each other and vowed to live like brothers in future. The jirga succeeded to end the enmity after eight years.

The former Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shaukatullah, former MPAs Izazul Mulk Afkari, Haji Bahadar Khan and other members of the jirga also addressed the gathering. Sirajul Haq said that the Gujjar community and the Sadaat tribe had an important role in the establishment of peace and brotherhood in the area. "It is the responsibility of the state and local leaders to find a sustainable solution to the conflicts between rivals", Siraj said and lauded the jirga's efforts for resolving the old enmity. He said that thousands of cases were pending in the courts, while on the other hand; long-standing con-

flicts were being resolved through the Jirgas of elders in Pukhtun society. He said the British government in the past had tried to degrade the jirga system in Pukhtun tribal areas despite its important role in conflict resolution. He demanded the government to give legal status to the jirgas through parliamentary legislation.

**Contractors demanded release of funds:** The government contractors' association senior leader Qari Azizud Din demanded of the government to take practical steps for releasing funds meant for development projects.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara he said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and its departments had millions of rupees to pay to the contractors for their work. Qari Aziz said that Malakand division had been the worst affected region of militancy, natural disasters and military operations, so the government should declare it a tax-free zone for the next 20 years.

He said that due to unavailability of funds the contractors had stopped work on the ongoing development projects like the Timergara city beautification, Talash bypass road and several link roads in the district. He said that the projects would remain incomplete if the government failed to release adequate funds for them.

**Govt employees demand action against**

**bank official for not releasing salaries:**

Government employees having their accounts in the main Timergara branch of the Bank of Khyber (BoK) at Alamzeb Shaheed Chowk on Monday demanded Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer BoK Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to take action against the bank manager for his failure to punch salaries of government employees on June 23 as per directives of the provincial government and notification from the finance department in view of Eid ul Azha.

Hayatullah, Jangir Khan, Hameeda Begum, Shakeela and others said they visited the bank again and again and returned disappointed from the bank as their salaries were yet to be paid by the bank officials. "It is only two days to Eid now and I am yet to purchase a sacrificial animal because I could not receive my salary from the BoK Timergara Shaheed Chowk branch", Ziaullah, a government employee said.

Dozens of government employees returned disappointed from the BoK Shaheed Chowk Timergara branch as the bank was yet to punch salaries of government employees in gross violation of the provincial government orders to issue salaries on June 23. "The salaries of government employees would be released by today", said an official of the bank.

## Paramedical Association announces sit-in on July 12

### F.P. Report

MARDAN: Paramedical Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here on Monday set July 10 as deadline for fulfillment of their demands, otherwise, they would not only boycott of their duties but also stage a protest sit-in in provincial capital Peshawar on 12th July.

The Paramedical Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial president Sharafat Ullah Yousafzai, senior vice president Anwar Khan, Additional general secretary Shams-ul-Taj along with other office-bearers and leaders and members of the association expressed their demands in a press conference held in the building of Mardan press club.

Speaking to journalists on the occasion, president of the Paramedical Association KPK Sharafat Ullah Yousafzai claimed that Paramedics had been performing their duties in the front line so that to serve people in every testing time. Despite of that their genuine and dues rights and demands had not been fulfilled so far. He

alleged that the anti-paramedical staff's policies introduced by Nowsheraan Barki, the blue-eyed person of the last PTI provincial government, was still going on as the incumbent acting provincial government had maintained those policies which they considered as sheer injustice with them.

Other Paramedical association leaders who spoke on the occasion, blamed that the interim provincial government didn't take any practical steps to fulfill their demands despite of their promises that they made with them soon after coming in power. They alleged that the paramedical officer was ignored and instead the most junior doctor was appointed on seat of medical faculty controller which they considered sheer injustice with them as well.

Besides, they made other demands including promotion of employees, regularization of employees in merged districts and solution to their problem of salaries, upgradation of employees of MTI hospitals and immediate release of salaries of paramedical staff of Swabi and Banu

districts. They deplored that the employees were facing severe financial difficulties due to non-availability of their salaries, adding that they were forced to commit suicide.

They claimed that they themselves were against strike, boycott of duties and protest agitation. They also reminded that they performed duties as front liner and served people during covid-19 as well as in other natural calamities. They also claimed that took back their decision of boycott of polio-campaign as goodwill justice on the request of provincial health minister few days back when the said minister promised that their demands would be fulfilled soon.

They lamented that the Paramedical staff now was forced to begin protest agitation so that to press the government for fulfillment of their demands. They threatened that they would start boycotting of their services in all small and big hospitals of KPK province from July 12 of next month and would stage protest sit-in in Peshawar if their demands were not fulfilled till 10th July.

## CPO directs crackdown against criminals

### F.P. Report

MULTAN: City Police Officer (CPO) Multan Mansoor-ul-Haq Rana said that elimination of criminal elements and especially drug dealers from Multan district is the first priority.

According to details, On the instructions of CPO Multan Mansoor Ul Haq Rana, SHO Mumtaz continue operations against liquor sellers, 02 liquor sellers arrested, 210 liters of indigenous liquor recovered. Multan police station Mumtazabad arrested the accused liquor sellers Muhammad Shan and Sher Wali Jan and recovered a huge quantity of liquor.

Police recovered 210 liters of liquor from the accused liquor sellers. Police also recovered liquor during checking through blockade from Duniyapur Bypass and BCG Chowk. Cases were registered against the arrested accused in Mumtazabad police station and the police started action. Under the supervision of SP Cantt Division Qazi Ali Raza under the leadership of SDPO Mumtazabad Qulb Sajjad SHO Police Station Mumtazabad Abdul Rahman

Gul along with his team recovered liquor.

**Commissioner commits for digitizing to move towards paperless operations:** Like the paperless office system of Punjab province, the Commissioner Multan office has also been started to be linked to the integrated model. Commissioner Engineer Aamir Khattak while addressing the training session said that in future Chief Secretary Punjab, Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab will be sent in the form of letter or summary e-file and no paper will be sent.

He said that digitalization of the office system is the need of the hour. Amir Khattak directed all the officers to adopt e-filing and office automation system for office affairs and abandon the old system of files. Officers also send their leave application through e-filing system. He said that e-filing system will save time and speed up the handling of government affairs while digitization will also introduce transparency system in all sectors.

Commissioner said that a timeline will be set for file processing in the e-filing system. In the training session of

the e-filing system, Super Trainer PITB Abdul Rauf said that by eliminating the old system of files, e-filing will be implemented in all administrative departments and administrative offices.

Office automation system is being introduced. Now all correspondence, summary and noting will be through e-filing, while the record system of files from diary and dispatch will also be connected to e-filing system.

### Elderly woman dies

CHINIOT (INP): An elderly woman died after an over speeding mini-truck hit her in suburbs of Chiniot city on Monday. Rescue sources said that a pedestrian elderly woman Balqees Bibi was ran over by a reckless driven mini-truck.

The elderly lady died on the spot in the accident and the driver responsible fled the scene. The body was shifted to hospital for post-mortem. The police impounded the vehicle and after registering a case against the driver at large started raids for his arrest.

## High transmission line stolen due to load shedding

### F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Taking advantage of the long load shedding of electricity on Doaba Amba Dher Feeder area of Charsadda, thieves stole the wires of the high transmission line due to which hundreds of houses of village Manzore were plunged into darkness.

Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) authorities have turned a blind eye to the long load shedding and low voltage of electric-

ity for several days. The residents of the area have demanded the WAPDA authorities to take steps to restore electricity and take actions against those who steal high transmission lines.

Otherwise the people of the area will approach the court with protest. Thieves have stolen several 11,000 voltage wires from several electric poles of the high transmission line approved in the village of Ambadhir Feeder in Doaba sub-division and

have caused a loss of lakhs of rupees to the national exchequer, but the WAPDA officials are not missing out.

They are neither taking steps to restore electricity nor taking actions against the thieves due to which the residents of the area are very angry. The residents of the area have demanded the Chief Executive PESCO and other top officials to take steps to restore electricity to the village and take actions against those stealing wires.





## Myanmar burns \$446m worth of seized drugs



BANGKOK (AP): The authorities in Myanmar destroyed more than \$446 million worth of illegal drugs seized from around the country to mark an annual international anti-drug trafficking day on Monday, police said. The drug burn came as UN experts warned of increases in the production of opium, heroin and methamphetamine in Myanmar, with exports threatening to expand markets in South and Southeast Asia.

Myanmar has a long history of drug production linked to political and economic insecurity caused by decades of armed conflict. The country is a major producer and exporter of methamphetamine and the world's second-largest opium and heroin producer after Afghanistan, despite repeated attempts to promote alternative legal crops among poor farmers. In the country's largest city, Yangon, a pile of seized drugs and precursor chemicals worth \$207 million was incinerated. The destroyed drugs included opium, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana,

kratom, ketamine and crystal meth, also known as ice.

The burn coincided with the UN's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Authorities also destroyed drugs in the central city of Mandalay and in Taunggyi, the capital of eastern Shan state, both closer to the main drug production and distribution areas. Last year, authorities burned a total of more than \$642 million worth of seized drugs. Experts have warned that violent political unrest in Myanmar following the military takeover two years ago - which is now akin to a civil war between the military government and its pro-democracy opponents - has caused an increase in drug production.

The production of opium in Myanmar has flourished since the military's seizure of power, with the cultivation of poppies up by a third in the past year as eradication efforts have dropped off and the faltering economy has pushed more people toward the drug trade, according to a

report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime earlier this year. Estimates of opium production were 400 metric tons (440 tons) in 2020, rising slightly in 2021, and then spiking in 2022 to an estimated 790 metric tons (870 tons), according to the report. The UN agency has also warned of a huge increase in recent years in the production of methamphetamine, driving down prices and reaching markets through new smuggling routes. The military government says some ethnic armed organizations that control large swaths of remote territory produce illicit drugs to fund their insurgencies and do not cooperate in the country's peace process as they do not wish to relinquish the benefits they gain from the drug trade. Historically, some rebel ethnic groups have also used drug profits to fund their struggle for greater autonomy from the central government. Most of the opium and heroin exported by Myanmar, along with methamphetamine, goes to other countries in Southeast Asia and China.

## North Koreans march in anti-US rallies

SEOUL (AP): Tens of thousands of North Koreans marched in anti-US rallies over the weekend, pledging "merciless" revenge against "US imperialists," as the country marked the 73rd anniversary of the start of the Korean War, state media said Monday. More than 120,000 people participated in mass rallies in the nation's capital, North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said.

While the 1950-53 conflict was triggered by a North Korean surprise attack, the demonstrators mobilized in Pyongyang promoted their government's version of events and accused the United States of provoking the war and leaving Koreans with "wounds ... that can never be healed." Meanwhile in South Korea, a North Korean defector-turned-activist said he flew balloons carrying some 200,000 anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets and COVID-19 medical supplies across the border, continuing his yearslong campaigns that have often triggered angry responses from the North. Photos sent by Park Sang-hak showed a placard with a picture of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and a message that highlighted how his grandfather, Kim Il Sung, was responsible for starting the

Korean War. The North has not commented on Park's latest ballooning stint. North Korea is extremely sensitive about any outside attempt to undermine Kim's leadership and weaken his absolute control over the country's 26 million people.

At the rallies, North Koreans also expressed pride in Kim's expanding nuclear weapons and missile programs, insisting their country now has the "strongest absolute weapon to punish the US imperialists and the war deterrence for self-defense which no enemy dare provoke." Photos published by the North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper showed a stadium packed with likely tens of thousands of people in COVID-19 masks, raising their fists in the air and holding signs that read: "Let's eradicate US imperialist invaders" and "The entire US mainland is within our striking range." The rallies came amid heightened tensions in the region, as the pace of North Korean weapons demonstrations and the United States' joint military exercises with South Korea have both intensified in a cycle of tit-for-tat. Since the start of 2022, North Korea has test-fired around 100 missiles of various ranges as Kim attempts to display a dual ability to conduct nuclear

strikes on both the US mainland and South Korea. The North is also speeding up efforts to launch its first military reconnaissance satellite into orbit, following a failed first attempt in May.

There are signs that North Korea is planning a huge military parade in Pyongyang where it would likely showcase its new military hardware. Recent commercial satellite images have shown troop and vehicle movements and the building of structures suggestive of preparations for a parade, likely for the July 27 anniversary of the Korean War armistice agreement. Lee Sung Joon, a spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a briefing that the South's military was closely analyzing the North's presumed parade preparations but did not provide specific details. At a military parade in February, Kim and his daughter took center stage and his military rolled out what appeared to be a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, which was likely the same system the country flight-tested for the first time in April. If perfected, the weapon would give Kim a more mobile and harder-to-detect weapon to target the continental United States.

## Australia announces \$74m package to Ukraine

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia, one of the biggest non-NATO contributors to Ukraine, is to send an additional 70 military vehicles to Ukraine as part of its latest military assistance package for the country. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced the 110 million Australian dollars (\$73.5m) package on Monday and told reporters the plan had been under consideration before the weekend's tumult in Russia.

The package will include 28 M113 armoured vehicles, 14 special operations vehicles, 28 medium trucks and 14 trailers as well as an additional supply of 105mm artillery ammunition. "Australia is unwavering in our resolve to condemn and oppose Russia's actions and to help Ukraine achieve victory," Albanese said. Defence Minister Richard Marles said he was "proud" of the additional support Australia was offering. "We expect this to be a protracted conflict, and so we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes," he told reporters. The package, which did not include the Hawkei light armoured patrol vehicles or more Bushmaster infantry vehicles requested by Kyiv, comes as Ukraine continues a counteroffensive to push Russian forces from areas they have occupied in the east of the country. Serhiy Cherevatyi, a spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command, said the military advanced at least 600 metres (1,970 ft) over the previous day near Bakhmut, a city taken by Wagner forces in May after months of fighting. The Russian defence ministry said there had been at least 10 attacks in that area, which they repelled.

Australia will also extend duty-free access for goods imported from Ukraine for a further 12 months to support its recovery and trade opportunities, the statement said. The additional commitments take Australia's total contribution to support Ukraine to 790 million Australian dollars (\$529m), just more than three-quarters of it in military assistance. There will, however, be an extra 10 million Australian dollars (\$6.7m) for the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, a United Nations-led fund to meet the urgent needs of millions of Ukrainian civilians caught up in the conflict. Foreign Minister Penny Wong said supporting Ukraine was important because the principle that a "large country cannot simply change the borders of another country matters to us all". She said that was something she had stressed to counterparts in the Pacific and Southeast Asia, according to the Age newspaper.

## Police fire tear gas at Opp after vote

FREETOWN (Agencies): Police in Sierra Leone have fired tear gas at the main opposition party's headquarters in the capital Freetown as voters await the results of a fiercely fought general election. The opposition's presidential candidate Samura Kamara of All People's Congress (APC) said on Twitter that live bullets had been fired at his office inside the party headquarters.

The Reuters news agency also reported that one person - a woman - was found severely wounded and without a pulse at the opposition party headquarters. Yvonne Aki-Sawyer, a prominent APC member bidding for a second term as Freetown mayor, tweeted photos from inside the building showing people taking cover on the floor. "I am in the APC Party office and we are under fire," she wrote. In a statement, police said members of the APC had paraded through Freetown, "announcing to the public that they had won" the election. They attracted "a huge crowd" of supporters outside the headquarters, who "started harassing passers-by", the force said.

"When the situation became unbearable, the police had to fire tear gas canisters so as to disperse the crowd which was harassing people on the road," it added.

## Iraq's new budget may hamper more than it helps

BAGHDAD (Agencies): The Iraqi Council of Representatives passed the 2023, 2024 and 2025 federal budgets on June 12, nearly eight months after Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani's new government was formed. This year's budget is Iraq's largest at 198.9 trillion Iraqi dinars, about \$153bn based on the official exchange rate. The 2024 and 2025 budgets will be the same unless the cabinet requests any changes and Parliament approves them.

For the first time, the government took advantage of 2019's financial management law, which allows for up to a three-year budget. Iraq has not only been slow at passing budgets, but three out of the past nine years also saw no budget passed at all - in 2014, 2020, 2022. Although there is only half a year left to spend the 2023 budget, there is the reassurance that the next two years will be covered, guaranteeing the government a budget until the next federal elections in late 2025 and for provincial council elections scheduled for this year. The federal budget also allows the government to fund local investment projects and hire hundreds of thousands of public sector employees, which reflects positively on the prime minister and his governing coalition and increases their electability in both upcoming elections.

However, Iraq's economy and budget rely heavily on oil, which puts both in a precarious position. Nearly all state revenue is from oil sales. In 2022, Iraq earned a record \$115.6bn from oil, but it is a volatile commodity. Iraq is not in control of the global oil market, and it is not a relevant decision-maker in OPEC despite being the second-largest member in terms of production. This leaves Iraq vulnerable to the precarity of oil markets and the decision-making of other

OPEC members regarding output, especially since this budget is based on an ambitious oil price of \$70 a barrel. If the price dips, it risks unleashing a cascade of economic woes and public anger. The budget calls for more than half a million Iraqis to be hired this year. It is not the first budget to include massive public sector hiring. Iraq is a country that already struggles with an overburdened public sector of at least 4.5 million employees.

Government offices are overcrowded and disorganised, slowing bureaucracy down further. Big hiring this year will also burden future governments with pensions. If the government wants to add even more jobs in 2024 and 2025, it just needs Parliament to vote on it, so it is possible that even more jobs will be added in the next two years. Iraq's social contract, like many states in the region, is premised on public sector hiring, with citizens expecting a public sector job the moment they graduate from university. The right to a job is enshrined in Article 22 of Iraq's 2005 constitution, and while it does not specify the type of job, it is a common belief that it means a government position. The public sector has grown fourfold since 2003, and now salaries constitute more than a quarter of the 2023 budget. Iraq's political elite, which formed after the removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003, operates as though the country can still afford this set-up, and it does so for political gain. Most of its members had been exiled or based in the Kurdish region of Iraq and used patronage networks to build ties and legitimacy with the people in the new Iraqi state. So millions of Iraqis were hired for the public sector, something they were accustomed to but with a new political patron to be grateful to.

Whether for electability or out of a

belief in the right to a public sector job, even independent candidates and members of new political parties advocate for public sector hiring. Even the reformist political movement that emerged after the 2019 October protests is disinterested in pursuing unpopular economic reforms, no matter how important they may be. Two reforms often discussed by experts and rejected by the public are curbing public sector hiring and implementing more stringent taxation. The protests, which took place from October 2019 to March 2020, called for economic opportunity, an end to corruption and political reforms. They resulted in early elections and a new electoral law but no systemic change to the political system itself. To complicate matters further, protesters continue demanding employment and, in some instances, these protests are attended by the handful of independent MPs. Infrastructure spending is a focus in the new budget, which allocates development and reconstruction funds in particular areas. Like the Sinjar and Nineveh Plain reconstruction fund of 50 billion dinars (\$38m) to reconstruct areas that were destroyed in the fight against ISIL (ISIS), there are also 100 billion dinars (\$76m) allocated to the Baghdad municipal government for service projects in Karkh, the west bank of the Tigris, where the Darwish Bridge will be built, streets paved, and public spaces and parks rehabilitated. Seventy-five billion dinars (\$57m) are allocated for revitalizing marshes spread across two southern governorates. In addition, there is a reconstruction fund for the poorest provinces with 500 billion dinars (\$381m) aimed at improving services, such as infrastructure and access to healthcare, electricity and educational services.

## Belarus leader purported mediation in Kremlin crisis

MOSCOW (Agencies): Nearly three years ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin stood by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko in his hour of need, backing Europe's longest-running dictator as he faced a wave of street protests. Now Lukashenko appears to have come through for Putin, if we are to believe what the Kremlin and the Belarusian presidential press service tell us.

A quick recap: A major crisis shook the foundations of the Russian state, as forces loyal to Wagner mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin marched toward Moscow. Then, an abrupt reversal happened - Prigozhin called off their advance, claiming his mercenaries had come within 124 miles of the capital but were turning around to avoid spilling Russian blood. According to the Belarusian presidential press service, the decision followed an unexpected intervention by Lukashenko himself. The supposed deal struck with Prigozhin would see the Wagner boss leave for Belarus; a criminal case against the mercenary boss would be dropped; and Wagner fighters would be folded into formal military

structures by signing contracts with the Russian ministry of defense. But those, it's worth emphasizing, are only the bare outlines of the deal. Prigozhin - whereabouts currently unknown - has not commented on the supposed agreement. And the Kremlin and Belarusian account of Lukashenko's mediation appear to stretch credibility.

"You will probably ask me - why Lukashenko?" Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said. "The fact is that Alexander Grigoryevich (Lukashenko) has known Prigozhin personally for a long time, for about 20 years. And it was his personal proposal, which was agreed with President Putin. We are grateful to the President of Belarus for these efforts." Those efforts, Peskov claimed, "managed to resolve this situation without further losses, without increasing the level of tension." Still, Lukashenko's apparent intercession raises more questions than it answers. For starters, Lukashenko is clearly seen as the junior partner in the relationship with Putin. And Belarus depends on Russia for aid: At the height of Lukashenko's confrontation with protesters, Putin

came through with a loan of \$1.5 billion. And Belarus has been a springboard for Russian military operations in Ukraine, something that has isolated Lukashenko further from the West and triggered new sanctions on the country's economy.

So what's to gain here for Lukashenko? It seems difficult to envision Prigozhin happily harvesting potatoes alongside the Belarusian leader, a former collective farm boss. And why was Putin - who until this weekend, was the reliable arbiter of elite disputes in Russia - unable to cut that deal himself? Delegating Lukashenko to resolve the crisis further damages Putin's image as a decisive man of action. The initial details we have, it seems, do not completely add up. And adding to that uncertainty are other questions: What will happen to the Wagner "brand"? Will Prigozhin's foot soldiers be compliant and let themselves be absorbed into the Russian military? Will they still have loyalty to their boss? And what about Wagner forces operating elsewhere in the world, from Africa to the Middle East? Prigozhin - if and when he surfaces - may give us some clues.

## Counting begins in Guatemala after divisive presidential poll

CGUATEMALA CITY (Agencies): Counting is under way in Guatemala after a hotly contested presidential election dominated by concerns over corruption and the cost of living, with the polls expected to go into a second round run-off in August. Entry to polling stations closed with preliminary results expected from 9:30pm (03:30 GMT).

Many Guatemalans expressed disappointment with the options for president after the authorities excluded three opposition candidates. A large number of null ballots were expected, and experts said it could depress turnout. Former first lady Sandra Torres, from the National Unity of Hope (UNE) party, is tipped to win the first round but is expected to fall short of the 50 percent plus one vote needed for an outright victory in the contest, the fairness of which has come under international scrutiny. The 67-year-old businesswoman has unsuccessfully sought the presidency twice before. She is allied with the current legislature's governing Vamos (Let's Go) party. Torres finished second in the previous two presidential elections, but she and her party faced accusations of corruption

and illegal campaign financing. She has denied the accusations and campaigned on a promise to bolster social programmes to address poverty throughout the country.

She is up against more than 20 other candidates, including Edmond Mulet, a career diplomat, and Zury Rios, daughter of the late dictator Efraim Rios Montt. Jose Luis Sanz, an investigative journalist with the El Faro digital media outlet, told Al Jazeera many Guatemalans had found it "hard to find" a candidate who was likely to bring the change they were hoping for. Julio Valenzuela, a 40-year-old audio producer, said he wanted a leader who would stick to their campaign promises. "What we Guatemalans hope is that everything they have promised is fulfilled... We want them (politicians) to deliver and not only with the urban area but also in the interior," he said as he cast his vote. Mulet, 72, with the centrist Cabal (Spot On) party, is campaigning on pledges to bolster the economy and invest in healthcare, education, and security.

His campaign has been beset by accusations he was involved in an illegal child adoption operation in the 1980s, when thousands of

infants and children were taken from their families and put up for adoption abroad. Mulet has adamantly denied having any part in the scheme. Rios, 55, whose Valor (Valour) party was also part of the previous governing legislative coalition, was allowed to compete in the elections after the Constitutional Court ruled in May that a rule barring the family members of those who took power in a coup from running for office should not apply to her. She has campaigned on a tough-on-crime agenda. The race to succeed conservative President Alejandro Giammattei, who is limited by law to one term, has been overshadowed by a court ruling to block four candidates from the ballot including the early frontrunner, businessman Carlos Pineda. The United States and the European Union criticised the exclusion of Pineda, who called the decision "electoral fraud". Approximately 9.2 million Guatemalans are eligible to cast their ballots to elect the country's next president and vice president, as well as 160 representatives in the Congress. Hundreds of local positions are also up for grabs, as are 20 seats in the Central American Parliament.

## US officials see weakened Putin

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The unprecedented challenge to Russian President Vladimir Putin by Wagner Group fighters has exposed "cracks" in the strength of his leadership that may take weeks or months to play out, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said, as Russia ally China says it supports Moscow in "protecting national stability". In a series of television interviews, Blinken and members of the United States Congress said that turmoil in Russia has weakened Putin in ways that could aid Ukraine's counteroffensive against Russian forces within its territory while benefiting Russia's neighbours, including Poland and the Baltic states.

"I don't think we've seen the final act," Blinken said on ABC's This Week news programme after an aborted mutiny by forces led by Wagner Group founder Yevgeny Prigozhin. Blinken said tensions that sparked the action had been growing for months and added the threat of "internal matter" could affect Moscow's military capabilities in Ukraine. "We've seen more cracks emerge in the Russian façade. 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 said. US officials expect to learn more soon about the events that unfolded in Russia, including details of the deal with Prigozhin mediated by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko that led Wagner fighters to return to their bases. Forces led by Prigozhin, a former Putin ally and ex-convict, have fought the bloodiest of battles in Russia's 16-month war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, China - which has maintained close ties with Putin since the Ukraine operation was launched - called the revolt an "internal affair" and expressed support for Putin's government.

This came after China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang met Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko in Beijing. According to Al Jazeera's Yulia Shapovalova, Russians are continuing to support Putin as "he controlled the situation" but "many admit the mutiny has dealt a blow to President Putin's reputation". "Others say that Prigozhin is obviously a player in Vladimir Putin's political system and all he has - the funds, human resources, all the weapons - all that comes from the state and he totally depends on Vladimir Putin, despite his rivalry with the Ministry of Defence," Shapovalova said, reporting from Moscow.

## Australian court dismisses Russia bid

CANBERRA (Agencies): An Australian court has rejected a Russian claim to stop its eviction from a site in Canberra where it has been blocked from building its new embassy. The government introduced new legislation on June 15 to end the Russian lease on the land, which is about 400 metres (437 yards) from Parliament House, after intelligence agencies warned the location was a risk to national security.

Russia, which took out the lease in 2008 but had not completed any buildings there, then launched a last-ditch legal bid to try and stop its eviction, and a

man was seen squatting at the site. On Monday, High Court Justice Jayne Jagot described Russia's challenge on constitutional grounds to the law terminating the lease as "weak" and "difficult to understand". The squatter, who Russia's lawyer Elliot Hyde said was a security guard, was seen leaving the fenced-off compound soon afterwards, and was then driven away in a vehicle with diplomatic licence plates. "The court has made clear that there is no legal basis for a Russian presence to continue on the site at this time," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told

reporters. "We expect the Russian Federation to act in accordance with the court's ruling."

Russia bought the lease to the land from the Australian government in 2008, and secured approval to build its new embassy there in 2011. The Russian Embassy did not immediately respond to the decision. Previously, Russia has accused Australia of "Russophobic hysteria" for cancelling the lease. The current Russian embassy is the former Soviet embassy in the Canberra suburb of Griffith and its operations are unaffected.



The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI  
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at  
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,  
Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001  
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

# FATA merger and intent of tribesmen

FEDERAL Minister for Communication, Asad Mehmood has 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 Federal Minister emphasized the need to ascertain the desires of the people of FATA through a referendum and stressed government officials personally visit the area and assess the ground realities to gain a comprehensive understanding. Minister was of the view that although FATA has progressed however firsthand information is vital to assess the nature and volume of problems faced by the people in most disadvantaged regions in the country.

The newly merged districts of KP, formerly known as Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) had met a hapless fate since the creation of the country. The people of the area were largely ignored by the past governments because of its far-flung geographical location, and peculiar governance system under British rule coupled with tribal customs and traditions. Undoubtedly, the people of the erstwhile FATA (Federal Administered Tribal Area) had faced multiple economic, social, and law and order issues for the past seven decades, due to the absence of a regular political and governance system in the region. All successive governments shed away from their responsibility throughout history rather than most improvised region was used as a base camp during the Afghan jihad in the 1980s. Later, this ungoverned region served as a terrorism hub in the early 21st century and tribesmen suffered utmost hardship and cruelties at the hands of the terrorists and endured losses in the wake of the Counterterrorism operations of the Security Forces.

After clearing of erstwhile FATA from miscreants and terrorist infrastructure through the successful operation Zarb-e-Azb, the government of Pakistan moved toward mainstreaming FATA in November 2015 by constituting a FATA Reforms Committee, while subsequently, various legislative, administrative, and fiscal measures were adopted to merge the region in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in the following years. The federal government has approved an annual 3% share under the Federal Divisible Pool of the NFC award to implement a 10 years development plan to bring the backward region at par with the rest of the country. Unfortunately, the FATA merger could not resolve the problems of local tribesmen and their issues persisted in one or the other way. There are continuous complaints regarding the no-disbursement of a 3% share to implement the FATA development plan and multiple development projects face delays in their completion, while the absence of essential government infrastructure, educational, and health facilities as well as the re-emergence of terrorists groups in the area cast serious concerns among the masses regarding the future of their coming generations.

A large faction of the FATA population intends to maintain a separate identity and oppose the FATA merger into the KP. Local Tribesmen wanted to remain intact with their culture, and elders are desirous of playing a role in administrative and judicial affairs through the jirga system. Multiple petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court seeking the annulment of the FATA merger and requesting the creation of a new province. Meanwhile, local political and ethnic groups fear the continuation of their economic discrimination and resource exploitation in the case of the FATA merger with Peshawar. At the time, thousands of Afghan refugees have illegally procured Pakistani Identity Cards and are residing in Erstwhile FATA while hundreds of Pakistani tribesmen are living across the Pak-Afghan borders. Apparently, those issues would be further complicated if not handled carefully in consultation with the local leaders and tribal elders.

The Federal government and national institutions must calibrate consciously and resolve this issue amicably according to the need and desires of the people of Erstwhile FATA as our enemies across the Pak-Afghan border and the other side of Wagha are equally ready to exploit the situation and subvert patriotic tribesmen against the country through agents provocateur and local anti-state groups. At times, an important and delicate responsibility rests with the Political leadership to consider the genuine need of their people and work toward that 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.



# Cause for celebration in states that suffered Wagner’s brutality

Baria Alamuddin

YEVGENY Prigozhin was one of Vladimir Putin's closest confidants from the earliest days of his presidency, which makes the developments of the past days profoundly damaging for the president's authority. Far from the rejuvenated Soviet empire Putin aspired to on the eve of his Ukraine invasion, Russia today resembles a diminished and chronically unstable banana republic.

As recently as a decade ago, post-Soviet Russia wielded little diplomatic influence in the Middle East and Africa. Moscow's current dominant position across these areas had been wholly due to Prigozhin's Wagner mercenary organization. Wagner came wading in to shore up Iran's Revolutionary Guard in Syria, enabling the Damascus regime to re-trench itself throughout much of western Syria as Wagner planes reduced entire cities and regions to bones and rubble. Wagner likewise came bloodily marching into the Libyan morass. There were even fears in Lebanon of Moscow and Wagner exploiting the political chaos to leverage the establishment of additional Mediterranean military bases.

In recompense for Wagner's services, the revenue-hungry Prigozhin frequently negotiated control of oil reserves, and mines for precious minerals and resources. In Central African Republic Wagner received unrestricted logging rights and control over gold mines. Gold was also the key prize in Sudan, where Wagner sided with the paramilitary leader Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, fueling the bloodshed there with weapons funneled through the

Darfur region. Across West Africa, Wagner unleashed a major propaganda campaign against French and Western influence, facilitating the group's maneuverings to become the power-broker of choice. In the guise of waging an anti-militancy campaign alongside the Malian army, Wagner is culpable in the indiscriminate murder of hundreds of civilians, making the security situation infinitely worse.

Putin also appointed Prigozhin to run massive cyber-troll farms, spreading disinformation, undermining democratic processes and staging cyberattacks against critical infrastructure. Some experts believe that these activities at the time of the 2016 US presidential election played a significant role in swinging the vote in favor of Donald Trump. In the Ukraine conflict, however, Prigozhin massively overplayed his hand. After the cream of his elite forces were butchered in the Bakhmut meat grinder, tens of thousands of convicts were thrown into the mix as cannon fodder. As the death toll soared, it was widely assumed that Prigozhin's foul-mouthed attacks on the Ministry of Defense had Putin's tacit approval, including threats that "those who don't give us ammunition will be eaten alive in hell."

Nevertheless, after Prigozhin occupied the key city of Rostov and deployed his tanks toward Moscow, Putin denounced him as a traitor who had delivered "a stab in the back to our troops and the people of Russia." With Prigozhin now to be exiled in Belarus, it is inconceivable that Wagner can survive as an independent entity. Fighters whose loyalty

isn't in question are likely to be subsumed within the moribund control of Moscow's myriad security apparatuses. Having witnessed the monster he created marching upon the gates of Moscow, Putin is unlikely to repeat the mistake of allowing any ally or paramilitary movement to enjoy such autonomy.

Although Prigozhin has gained messianic popularity among nationalist Russians frustrated with the failures of conventional military leaders, the seizure of tens of millions of dollars of Wagner funds, and severance of his official connections, appear to render him a spent force. Given the unaccountable tendency of Kremlin critics to carelessly fall out of upper windows, or come into contact with fatal toxins, how long will Prigozhin even be allowed to remain alive, exiled in a state that has become an appendage of Mother Russia? The events of the past few days not only constituted a real-time diminution of Russia's global prestige, but also exposed the Wagner mercenaries as dangerous and unpredictable liabilities. Consequently, Bashar Assad in Syria, Khalifa Haftar in Libya, Dagalo in Sudan, and all the other dictators and warlords who relied on Wagner for military muscle will be nervously wondering what this means for them. Distracted as he is with a losing war in Ukraine, would Putin even desire to retain fingers in so many pies in these unstable and problematic locations? A sanctions-encumbered Iran can't secure Syria on its own, so the status quo there could quickly unravel.

When paramilitary armies are allowed to

mushroom to a size at which they can outgun the regular army, it is difficult to envisage any happy ending. Such militias are originally created to compensate for glaring weaknesses or lack of ideological zeal within the army, but their establishment exacerbates the underlying problems by further undermining the army's prestige and monopoly over the use of force - so the logical end-point for such movements is to confront and ultimately forcibly replace the army. In Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen we have exactly this scenario, with massive Iran-backed militias. Iraq's Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi has nearly doubled in size to about 230,000 fighters in the past couple of years, with a significantly expanded \$2.7 billion budget and large parts of the economy under its control - making Iraq truly a militia state. Developments in Russia have remarkable parallels with events in Sudan, where the army and an armed-to-the-teeth paramilitary organization embarked upon war against each other, at catastrophic cost to the country.

When militia movements are allowed to recruit tens of thousands of fighters and deploy multimillion-dollar budgets, their commanders will never be satisfied with being an uncouth appendage of the army; they will always seek to convert paramilitary muscle and ill-gotten wealth into supreme political power. Such entities will continue to act as a murderous sword wielded over our heads until - as with Prigozhin - menaces such as Hassan Nasrallah, Dagalo, Esmail Qaani and Qais Al-Khazali are consigned to irrelevant and ignominious exile.

Arab News

# Problem with a Kremlin critic’s call to support Wagner mutiny

Aleksandr Smirnov

WAGNER mercenary group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin's mutiny against the Russian military came as a shock to much of the world, but it was not necessarily a surprise. Prigozhin has long been considered a volatile and uncontrollable asset in Putin's ongoing conflict with Ukraine. The Russian opposition has regularly criticized Wagner's actions, and those of its leader, over the past year and a half. However, the weekend's fast-moving events have prompted a shift in the views of opposition politicians and political analysts who previously anticipated Prigozhin's potential to disrupt the country through armed violence.

Many opposition politicians and political scientists had predicted Prigozhin to be the element of Putin's Russia that was bound to set off a major structural shift, most likely with the use of armed violence. Yet as soon as this scenario became a real prospect, with Wagner's forces controlling a military command center in the south and headed toward Moscow on Saturday, many liberal-leaning Russian political figures seemed to have taken a cautious approach to the unraveling events. One widely recognized member of the Russian opposition did

claiming that Prigozhin echoed the very ideas that the Russian anti-war movement has been espousing since Feb. 24, 2022. On the surface level, this may seem a logical conclusion on Khodorkovsky's part - yet there are a number of fallacies in his statements. First of these inconsistencies is the stance that Khodorkovsky had taken toward Prigozhin in the last year and a half, which oscillated between scorn and disgust. Of course, people are capable of changing their views when it is proven that their initial beliefs were false. However, Prigozhin has done virtually nothing to disprove Khodorkovsky's initial opinion of him. Moreover, Wagner's leader has been known in the past to utilize standpoints more

closely associated with the Russian opposition for his own gain. Before he announced this weekend's "march," his use of the opposition's key talking points was widely disregarded as trolling. What changed? Does the mere fact that Prigozhin set out on an insurrection suddenly prove that he is no longer a stranger to the anti-Putin opposition? It's worth remembering that Prigozhin has so far not said anything resembling a direct criticism of the Russian president. Second, it is clear that Khodorkovsky spoke too soon. His tweet may have been heavily influenced by its author's emotional reaction to current events. But there's no reason that Khodorkovsky's post couldn't have waited until the situation was clearer. The main issue lies in the fact that Khodorkovsky appears to be attempting to align himself with a revolutionary movement, positioning himself for a role in shaping Russia's future decision-making process. Whether Prigozhin would have succeeded in seizing power or a democratic government emerged, Khodorkovsky seeks to present himself as someone who supported the "initial rebellion."

Unless there is something that we don't know (and it is very doubtful that

there is), Prigozhin has no obligations to Khodorkovsky, making it highly unlikely that the Kremlin critic's support would have been rewarded if the "march" were to have succeeded. Khodorkovsky is exceptionally smart and perhaps he could have anticipated that Prigozhin's enterprise was bound to fail. Yet his willingness to support an armed revolt in Russia was designed to gain him some extra popularity points among those anti-Putinists who wish to achieve regime change via an armed rebellion. The third point is not so much a fallacy in Khodorkovsky's statement as it is a projection of the future of his platform. Any revolution from the past 200 years has had a very similar structure: a revolutionary-minded, politicized minority enlists the help of current regime functionaries, not the revolutionaries, to carry out their actions. The key aspect here is the direction of this alliance. The functionaries of the current regime join forces with the revolutionaries, not the other way around. This pattern has endured due to the gradual accumulation of a following by the revolutionary minority, which undermines the existing regime. Eventually, the regime's elites realize that their own preservation hinges on supporting the

# We can count the devastated buildings in Kyiv

Olha Zaiarna

IN Kyiv, the silence of another summer evening is broken by the loud, piercing sound of an air raid warning. The alert app on our mobile phone sends out a warning to take cover, and Telegram channels inform us that the air defence system is operating, so we need to be careful.

Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, the people of Ukraine have been living in a state of constant watchfulness, adjusting their lives to the lack of sleep and psychological consequences of terror from above.

The chaos within Russia over the past few days makes the question of what comes next for Ukraine even more important. Yes, there have been many stories of Ukrainians' resilience and cooperation in the face of disaster. But this ugly war has caused us heavy losses, tearing at the fabric of society. A large number of people have experienced traumatic events and suffer from PTSD. Traditional patriarchal family structures have been unexpectedly and irrevocably changed, with women and men adopting new social roles. The displacement of communities has broken many pre-existing social ties, making many professional, social and family activities impossible. Reintegration questions over housing and services have exacerbated tensions and undermined social cohesion. There is a lot of talk now about the reconstruction and restoration of Ukraine, with international attention focusing on military support, physical infrastructure and private investment. But this should not only be about healing physical wounds but also psychological and emotional ones. Cohesive societies are more resilient to shocks, and rebuilding psychological bridges is equally vital to resisting and overcoming the Russian invasion in the long term.

This is where civil society organisations (CSOs) come into the picture. A vast network of mostly small organisations is holding Ukrainian society together. CSOs and informal networks of volunteers have provided the first line of response for both those who have remained in their communities and those who have been displaced. Conflict reduction organisations have provided the second line of assistance, and the broader mediation community has developed local, combined approaches to stitch together the altered and broken social ties that worked in peacetime. Over the past nine years, Ukrainian civil society has gained considerable experience in the integration of internally

displaced persons into host communities, and in the psychological and physical rehabilitation of veterans. It has become expert in rapid volunteer cooperation. State authorities are able to organise logistics for humanitarian aid, for instance, but much of the knowledge about how to distribute it effectively and equitably lies with Ukrainian NGOs. They are ready and motivated to help.

Take the Mariupol-based women's organisation, Berehynia, which has been helping people affected by the war since 2015. Years of work on developing its approach to dangerous situations has allowed it to save the lives of many people by evacuating them from the city under fire. It developed step-by-step action plan for dealing with dangerous situations, and was able to evacuate people as safely as possible after the full-scale invasion. It developed a mechanism for rapid coordination with local communities in other regions of Ukraine, local governments and communities abroad, including in Poland, where people were taken for temporary residence. It saved many lives when Mariupol came under fire.

The strength of such organisations is their local knowledge, connections and legitimacy with communities. They provide not only material support, but also social, psychological and public support, which are no less necessary. But the scale of the displacement calls for close cooperation with different levels of government and the international community. Ukraine's decentralisation reforms since 2014 have transferred power to local communities. This has allowed groups such as International Alert, where I work, to interact more effectively with local authorities and NGOs and to get resources to communities that need them. In conversations with civil society representatives, I often hear that this has been a positive change, although one that is not yet complete. In order to increase the impact and align any support with the national recovery plan of Ukraine, we are calling on the international community to turn its attention to rebuilding the social infrastructure of Ukraine, as well as repairing the physical damage. This means ensuring CSOs are fully supported, resourced and strengthened.

Postwar recovery and reconstruction is a central demand of the Ukrainian population, a dream that follows the victory. But rebuilding Ukraine's social infrastructure and supporting civil society is essential for a sustainable, long-term recovery.

The Moscow Times



# The race for Balkan influence amid Serbia-Kosovo tensions

WITH Recep Tayyip Erdogan securing another five years in power, the Turkish president is seeking to increase Turkiye's influence in the Balkans - a region that was part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries. Spiking tensions in northern Kosovo present such an opportunity. Although southeastern Europe remains firmly in America's geopolitical orbit, Ankara likely aims to start playing the role of mediator in disputes between Belgrade and Pristina.

The situation in Kosovo near the Serbian border, where ethnic Serbs make up the majority of the population, escalated on May 26, when the Albanian-dominated Kosovo police special forces, known as ROSU, seized four municipality buildings in the area, aiming to help newly elected ethnic Albanian mayors take office. The Serb population overwhelmingly boycotted elections on April 23, so while the votes were free and fair, the results did not reflect the wishes of the majority in the region. ROSU's actions infuriated the US and - despite being Kosovo's major backer - Washington expelled Pristina from American-led military exercises in Europe. Instead, US troops held joint military drills with the Serbian army near the town of Bujanovac, not far from Kosovo. Quite aware that he cannot count on full Western support,

Nikola Mikovic

Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti may start looking for alternative partners, hoping to improve Pristina's positions in the international arena. Could Turkiye be one of them?

Ankara has deployed about 500 Turkish commandos to northern Kosovo in response to a NATO request for troops to help quell the unrest. They have already started patrolling the Serb-dominated municipalities in the north. More importantly, Turkiye is expected to soon take over the command of the US-dominated NATO mission in Kosovo. But even though Ankara is traditionally seen as an ally of Balkan Muslims, including Albanians, that does not necessarily mean Erdogan will side with Kurti against the ethnic Serb majority in northern Kosovo. However, the Kosovar prime minister's recent meeting with the Turkish ambassador to Pristina undoubtedly represents his attempt to gain Ankara's support amid his confrontation with the US. It is no secret Turkiye aims to become one of the most influential foreign actors in the Balkans. It already plays an important "peace-making" role in various conflicts, from Syria through Libya to Ukraine, where Ankara's mediation led to the grain deal signed between Moscow and Kyiv. Since the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina did not lead to an easing of tensions in northern

Kosovo, Erdogan sees a window of opportunity for Ankara to mediate the conflict. Even though Turkiye unreservedly supports Kosovo's 2008 unilaterally declared independence from Serbia, Erdogan seems to be opting for a constructive, balanced approach, which also implies respect for Serbian interests in the region. Belgrade - as well as EU members Spain, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Cyprus - sees Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia, which is why Turkiye is attempting to balance its strong economic ties with the southeastern European nation with its historic and cultural ties with Kosovo Albanians.

In 2013, when Erdogan was prime minister, his statement that "Kosovo is Turkiye, and Turkiye is Kosovo" drew strong criticism in Belgrade. Ten years later, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic sees Erdogan as an actor who can "help preserve stability in northern Kosovo," and also as a "true friend" of Serbia. Indeed, despite different views on the status of Kosovo, relations between Belgrade and Ankara have significantly improved over the past decade. Serbian citizens can travel to Turkiye without passports, while Ankara continues strengthening its economic presence in the Balkan nation. Around 3,300 Turkish companies are operating in Serbia, 21 of which are factories. Further, the

total trade exchange between Serbia and Turkiye reached almost &euro;2.5 billion (\$2.7 billion) in 2022, while the trade volume between Turkiye and Kosovo was much lower, accounting for \$696 million. Belgrade and Ankara - despite Turkiye being a NATO member and Serbia remaining militarily neutral - are also expected to increase military cooperation, especially after Erdogan reportedly promised to provide the landlocked Balkan nation with Bayraktar drones. However, the Kosovo Security Force has already received five Turkish-made drones, which means that Turkiye likely aims to benefit by selling weapons to both sides. An increased Turkish military presence in Kosovo will undoubtedly help Ankara strengthen its positions in the region, especially now that the West is preoccupied with the war in Ukraine. At the same time, it will help Erdogan portray himself as an ascendant, impartial partner for both Belgrade and Pristina. But given that the US, with its Kosovo-based Camp Bondsteel - the largest and most expensive foreign military base built by America in Europe since the Vietnam War - remains the major foreign power operating in the Balkans, Turkiye is unlikely to be in a position to pursue a completely independent foreign policy in the region. Instead, Ankara will almost certainly have to carefully coordinate most of its moves with Washington.

# Putin didn't know what to do

Samantha de Bendern

Putin to allow him to live - for now. In the days leading to Wagner's rebellion, Prigozhin multiplied his harangues against the defence establishment, but

gests he still has a role to play. In Belarus, he will be safely out of Putin's way but close enough to be of use. It is unlikely that Alexander Lukashenko, the Belarusian dictator, played a significant role in the deal

**The fact that Prigozhin is still alive indicates that whatever he holds over Putin is so damaging, and so well protected by unseen allies, that it is safer for Putin to allow him to live - for now.**

was careful to spare Putin. After the president's address to the nation, in which he firmly came down on the side of the military, Prigozhin's gloves came off. This suggests that until the last minute Prigozhin was unsure who Putin would back and that he expected political support from the top. This never materialised, either from politicians or top army brass. This is a defeat for Prigozhin. Moreover, his escape smoked out any traitors in Putin's entourage. In this sense, Putin comes out stronger in the short term.

There are two factors Putin will have to contend with if he is to consolidate this small victory. In a dictatorship that likes to pretend to be a democracy, the fractures within the regime that this rebellion revealed will have to be dealt with through tighter repression and even more control of the media. A whipping up of patriotic frenzy and a few - preferably foreign - scapegoats would wrap things up nicely. Prigozhin's 25,000 men, who were prepared to march against the regular army, will also need to be managed. Add to these the approximately 32,000 demobilised ex-Wagner troops who were put on standby through Prigozhin's networks when the rebellion began, and the Russian state now has to deal with close to 60,000 angry men with combat experience, some of whom are still armed and most of whom have criminal backgrounds. Some, particularly those who feel betrayed by Prigozhin, may be lured into the regular army. The others will pose a threat to the social order unless they are brought under control through fear or violence. The future looks bleak.

At the time of writing, Wagner posters are being torn down throughout Russia. But the fact that Prigozhin is still alive sug-

cut between Prigozhin and Putin. Russian sources argue that Aleksey Dyumin, the governor of Tula oblast where Prigozhin's army stopped, and Nikolai Patrushev, the powerful head of the Russian security council, were the chief negotiators. Dyumin is a former Putin bodyguard and viewed by many as a potential successor to Putin who incarnates loyalty, youth and fresh blood. Lukashenko will have obediently done what his master ordered as the frontman for the negotiations, thus preserving Putin and his protege from being tainted by association with Prigozhin. If he really does end up in Belarus, Prigozhin may be the catalyst to finally drag Belarusian men into the war without Lukashenko having to send his regular army, something he has resisted in spite of pressure from Putin. Imagine a Wagner group re-registered in Minsk, able to recruit Belarusian convicts or otherwise coerce Belarusian men into the war. The number of men may not be enough to make serious incursions into Ukraine but would force the Ukrainians to reinforce their northern border, thus taking away men from the frontlines in the east and south.

While a successful rebellion would have served Ukraine, at least in the short term, it is now likely that a humiliated but rebooted Putin will renew attacks with more intensity. If round one of Prigozhin v the Russian establishment went to Prigozhin on Saturday morning, Putin had made a comeback by the afternoon. Dog eats dog but while they hold each other by the tail, neither has a clear advantage. Either way, Ukraine will need even more western support as Russia teeters on the brink between chaos and absolute dictatorship.

The Guardian

# Turning to ancient wisdom in today's China

Mario Cavolo

**HAVING lived in China for more than two decades, I know Chinese households rely on ancient Chinese wisdom to make their daily lives better. Even though the fundamentals of household life have seen little change through the centuries, societal and economic transformation has been happening rapidly in Chinese households over the past decades, presenting a genuine challenge to each of us as individuals to not lose sight of what matters most, to remain on the path of goodness.**

It is in the teachings of ancient writings that we humans often find the right answers to the many problems we face in this modern age. In the West, we find the writings of the ancient Greeks including Socrates, the theology in hundreds of historical texts, in the Bible and in the works of the Stoic masters such as The Meditations by Marcus Aurelius. In today's China, on the other hand, the need to discover moral teachings often rooted in the three main cultural influences of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism is greater than ever and provides much needed guidance on how to achieve a harmonious and balanced life and country.

While every country needs sound economics and industry to thrive, the needs and interests of individual households and their future remain to this day the core of a stable, successful society. There is a reason the ancient writings are filled with warnings against straying from morals and ethics, which are essential guidelines for us in this modern age. In China, it has not been forgotten that what matters most are the needs of the families, and this is often supported by the teachings found in

ancient Chinese wisdom. For example, unlike certain Western countries, people in China are not encouraged by their government nor the media to waste too much of their time and energy in engaging in divisive, political topics, the vast majority of which are a distraction beyond their control.

In China, the application of democratic principles truly means "for the people" and while external geopolitical matters do have a big impact on Chinese society, they are for the most part in the purview of and part of the responsibility of the government, while their own personal interests lie, as they should, much closer to home. Families and individuals are much more pragmatic and sensible in their daily lives, concerned with their own personal journey and practical matters. In China today, people have also become increasingly aware of environmental concerns and sustainability. For example, they are against the mindless, unnecessary use of plastics.

To think of such mundane things is to cultivate mindfulness, and such mindfulness often comes from embracing ancient wisdom which encourages higher self-awareness. In turn, parents pass these principles on to their children who are the future of the world. Even the famous story of the Monkey King from the classic Journey to the West is regarded as part of China's ancient wisdom and cultural heritage. While it may not fall under the category of philosophical or moral teachings like the works of Confucius, Laozi, Zhuangzi and Mozi, Journey to the West holds a significant place in Chinese literature and folklore. The

Monkey King story embodies values and themes deeply ingrained in Chinese culture, such as perseverance, courage, loyalty and the quest for enlightenment. The story of this beloved classic explores the journey of self-discovery, spiritual growth, and overcoming obstacles. All of those ideals must sound familiar to people around the world, because they too have been following a variety of ancient writings, scriptures and philosophies.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from individual family households, we find the government, a massive apparatus with massive responsibilities, encouraging and embracing ancient Chinese wisdom. Where do a country's leaders find the proper character, vision and strength to effectively lead their country, especially when their country is home to 1.4 billion souls? To answer this question, one has to turn to The Governing Principles of Ancient China, compiled by order of Emperor Tang Taizong of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), considered by many to be the golden age in Chinese history. This body of work is actually a compilation of previous Chinese classics including, for example, Liao Fan's Four Lessons on the law of cause and effect. According to this magnificent Tang Dynasty compilation of ancient texts, leaders were encouraged to take proper care of the people, be cautious, avoid disharmony in society, distinguish between good and evil, and develop virtue and integrity. Realizing such wisdom was gifted to humankind more than a millennium ago, we appreciate how the significance of their message remains ever so valuable today.

The China Daily

# Wagner rebellion revealed Putin's weakness

Maksym Skrypchenko

ON June 24, Moscow was put under a state of emergency for the first time since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. And while the Ukrainian army has demonstrated the ability to strike into Russian territory, it was not Kyiv's troops that threatened the Russian capital - it was an internal Russian force.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, a former ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin and the head of the Wagner private military group, withdrew his troops from the front line in Ukraine and led them across the border into Russia, launching what he called a "march of justice" to Moscow. He declared that, with the help of his 25,000-strong militia, he wanted to oust the leadership of the defence ministry, which he has accused of large-scale corruption and being responsible for various setbacks in the war. This defiance followed the decision by the Russian defence ministry to force all mercenaries to take up official contracts with the army, which would have put an end to Prigozhin's successful mercenary project. Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) also opened a criminal investigation against him and called for his arrest.

Within hours of Prigozhin announcing that he had "taken over" Rostov-on-Don, a southern Russian city across the border with Ukraine, and sent a convoy towards Moscow, Putin declared in a televised speech that his actions amounted to "armed mutiny" and that "big ambitions and personal interests led to treason". After Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko intervened, mediating between Moscow and the mercenary commander, the latter decided to withdraw his forces to avoid "shedding Russian blood". These events marked a significant escalation in the longstanding feud between Prigozhin and the Russian military top brass over resources and decision-making in the Russo-Ukrainian war. They also constituted the most severe domestic crisis Putin has seen in recent years. And he has only himself to blame for it: Prigozhin is his creation. He established the Wagner mercenary group to serve in the Kremlin's various foreign adventures, part of its geopolitical expansionist agenda in the Middle East and Africa. It also played a key role in the

Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year.

Putin has not only empowered Prigozhin and others like him that have challenged official state institutions, but has also fed their "big ambitions" by refusing to name a clear successor for the Russian presidency. This power void has motivated figures like Prigozhin to step forward and stake their claims. The resulting dynamics of power and ambition are stirring unrest in the country which can have serious consequences for Putin's regime, as the events on Saturday demonstrated. The war in Ukraine has only exacerbated the situation as it has given space for these political actors to build their public reputation and popularity. Initially, Prigozhin was particularly successful in attracting the support of the "war party" - those in Russia who not only cheered the invasion of Ukraine but also pushed for more decisive military action. His rhetoric mirrored their resentment of the Russian defence ministry and the army leadership, mirroring their criticism of these institutions' flaws and inefficiencies. The Kremlin allowed these verbal attacks to continue, perhaps seeing their utility in diverting public blame for any setbacks on the battlefield from Putin, the commander-in-chief, to the army's top brass.

Prigozhin took advantage of the space he was given and over the past year, he broadened his appeal, drawing in a wider section of Russian society. This fuelled public speculation about his political ambitions. In the past few months, he became more active, conducting meetings with civilians, fighters and relatives of those killed in the war; he visited large Russian cities, commented on political developments, and criticised the state authorities. His actions suggest that he was not merely trying to put in his bid for the unofficial position of Putin's successor; rather he was striving to preserve his own life by building a high-level profile and expanding his popularity among the general public. Likely, he was hoping that those who resented his empowerment and wanted to get rid of him would fear the public outrage any attempt on his life would generate. The silence of the Kremlin over his

public spat with the defence ministry emboldened Prigozhin to the point where he took it upon himself to punish military officers who he perceived as trying to sabotage him. Earlier this month, Wagner fighters captured the 72nd Motorized Rifle Brigade's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Roman Venevinit, and later released an interrogation video of him in which he appeared to admit that he ordered his troops to fire on a Wagner convoy. Eventually, Prigozhin seems to have overstepped, as the Kremlin decided to side with the defence ministry. Putin himself stated publicly that he backed the order issued for all mercenaries to sign contracts with the ministry. This display of presidential disfavour likely motivated Prigozhin's decision to escalate by directly threatening Moscow.

The events of the past two days have certainly caused a lot of alarm in the Kremlin. First, Putin faced a high-profile figure who controls his own militia and openly rebelled against him. Second, the mercenary forces marched with ease into Rostov-on-Don and then reached within a few hundred kilometres of the Russian capital, demonstrating just how incapable the president is of securing Russian territory. This weakness was also revealed in late May and early June when a combat group consisting of the "Russian Volunteer Corps" and "Freedom of Russia Legion", two Russian volunteer factions, started launching attacks on Russia's Belgorod region. They even managed to occupy and hold territory in an attempt to create a demilitarised zone. This brazen act sparked outrage among many Russian politicians and media experts, who clamoured for immediate retaliation. Yet Putin remained conspicuously silent on the matter. This uncharacteristic reticence left even his most loyal supporters puzzled; some voiced their confusion on state TV, questioning the lack of a clear plan and echoing the call for retribution. Before his recent escalation, Prigozhin proposed sending his mercenaries to secure Belgorod, but he was turned down. Instead, another political actor with a military force loyal to him - Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov - stepped in.

After a June 12 meeting between

Adam Delimkhanov, a member of the state Duma who is close to Kadyrov, Vyacheslav Gladkov, the governor of the Belgorod Region, and representatives from the defence ministry and the Federal Guard Service, it was decided that Kadyrov's Akhmat forces would be tasked with defending the region. That Putin cannot rely on the army to secure Russian territory does not bode well for the internal stability of the country. Putting territory outside of Chechnya under the control of Kadyrov's forces may stir local resentment and is certainly not a reasonable solution given what just happened with another private militia. Prigozhin's rebellion, though brief, will likely have a lasting impact on Putin's regime. For one, it has shattered the illusion of invincibility surrounding his rule and publicly humiliated him. This is likely to provoke a strong response from Putin, a former KGB agent and FSB chief, whose opponents have often faced assassination attempts - many of them successful. After enduring such a significant humiliation, it seems unlikely that Putin would opt to imprison Prigozhin. There is a considerable risk that he could be liberated from prison, given his newfound popularity among Russians and his authority among prisoners. Therefore, Putin will likely "play it safe" and have Prigozhin eliminated. But that would not change the fact that the rebellion demonstrated Putin's weakness to all - the Russian people, the Russian elites, and foreign allies and adversaries. This may embolden others within the elite to challenge his leadership or the political status quo. Kadyrov has so far shown his unreserved loyalty to the Russian president, but there is no guarantee that he may not use his forces to extract concessions from him in the future. Importantly, this upheaval may change the way China, the Kremlin's most important ally right now, sees Putin. A perception of weakness by Beijing may make Chinese policy towards Russia far less accommodating and far more assertive in the near future. Indeed, Prigozhin, Putin's Frankenstein monster, has managed to do so much damage in just two days that his creator may struggle for years to fix it.

Aljazeera

# America's global status undermined by its domestic political polarization

Ray Hanania

MUCH of what is happening in the world today is a direct result of the US political system collapsing into chaos. The country is deeply polarized and most Americans have gravitated to one of two extreme political sides, with few asserting a moderate, centrist view.

Angry discourses are exhibited by elected officials from the president down. Senators, governors and even local legislators have thrown themselves into heated and angry public diatribes in which there is no real discussion of the issue, only bullying of other people's viewpoints. Former President Donald Trump's weakness when he was in office was his inability to take the high ground. Instead, he always chased the petty provocations from a biased mainstream news media, detouring him from some of his innovative programs and policies.

President Joe Biden, on the other hand, seems lost. He was once a sharp-witted political leader, but age has undermined that edge. And yet, despite that, he manages to protect his son, the controversial lobbyist Hunter Biden, who exploited his father's clout to achieve financial heights. Put all that together and you create a clear perception of deterioration, which raises comparisons with the fall of the Roman Empire - but at a

faster pace.

The Roman Empire can trace its roots back to 753 B.C. and it collapsed the best part of 1,000 years later in the fifth century A.D. America may still have hundreds more years to go before a true comparison can be made, but it has never been closer to losing its position as the so-called leader of the free world than it is today. America has long been the leader of a tight-knit geopolitical power balance known as "the West." The power of the West has had much to do with the imposing authority of its news media, which for many years dictated perceptions across the globe. But a combination of the rise of the internet and social media, which has given every citizen the potential for an equal voice to world leaders, and a consolidation of the media that has seen it consumed by giant corporations with agendas other than chasing truth and fairness have undermined the foundations of the West's ivory tower.

You cannot continue to be the leader of any world if your society erodes and your leadership is divided, indecisive and weak. Nor can you lead when the media you once touted as a powerful weapon of truth has been turned into an instrument of weaponized political partisanship, driven more by profits than principles. Free speech is

dead in America and has been replaced by "loud speech." America has never been weaker in its relatively brief history than it is today. For example, Russian leader Vladimir Putin would never have invaded Ukraine if he believed that the West would have forcefully confronted him, meeting aggression with aggression. Instead, the response to Putin by Biden and the West was weak. That weakness was an invitation for Putin to pursue his aggressive goals, which are clearly intended to lead his country back to the old Soviet power structure that his predecessors abandoned in the hope of moving toward capitalism.

American influence in South America, Asia and Africa is also fading fast. The North Atlantic alliance that America leads is also not really a true alliance anymore, as NATO members break from its solidarity on many issues. Israel's government has, over the past two decades, been dominated by right-wing fanatics, but that fanaticism has soared to even greater heights over the past year, again as a result of Biden's wishy-washy policies toward Israel and the Middle East.

Trump opened the door to this US collapse when he traded in America's principles of fairness to pursue a new Middle East strategy





## CDNS to launch four Shariah compliant product

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday reiterated firm resolve of the government to implement Shariah Compliant financial system to promote and encourage interest-free Islamic banking and finance in the country.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the Shariah Compliant products by the Central Directorate of National Saving (CDNS), the minister said the directorate has designed and introduced Shariah-compliant investment and saving scheme which would be formally launched by July 1, 2023.

In a first, the minister

said the CDNS has launched four investment and saving products based on one-year, three-year and five-year terms, besides initiating saving account facility, adding that it is a flexible scheme with monthly profit and to withdraw principle amount that would encourage savings and ensure full returns.

Ishaq Dar informed that soon after assuming the charge as finance minister, he had directed the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) to withdraw their petitions against the decision of the Federal Shariah Court in which the Court had ordered to implement

interest-free banking and financing system in the country.

Meanwhile, a high power steering committee headed by the Governor SBP was formed to find ways and means to promote Shariah-compliant financial system in the country. The committee was comprised of other prominent scholars and experts from the banking and finance sectors.

He said during the last tenure of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government, a committee was also constituted, which had taken several steps and produced positive results as due to these efforts, the spread of Islamic banking

grew by 21 percent, adding that the balance sheets of banks with Shariah Compliant finance products witnessed a remarkable increase.

The minister said the government had recently promised to introduce Islamic finance products, adding in this regard all the concerned departments of the Ministry of Finance and other attached departments worked hard to materialize the commitment.

Besides, all the commitments made in the federal budget 2023-24 would be fulfilled one by one to achieve sustainable economic growth and social prosperity in the country, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addresses launching ceremony of Sarwa Islamic Savings Products by National Savings at Finance Division.

### PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 1,371 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,371.78 points on Monday, a positive change of 3.42 percent, closing at 41,437.10 points against 40,065.32 points the previous day.

A total of 226,821,151 shares were traded during the day as compared to 136,899,866 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.7,010 billion against Rs. 3,372 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 327 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 269 of them recorded gains and 43 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 15 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 26,220,940 shares at Rs.1.12 per share; Fauji Fert Bin with 13,147,500 shares at Rs.11.61 per share and Sui North Gas with 12,503,829 shares at Rs.40.54 per share.

Pak Tobacco witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.43.66 per share price, closing at Rs.692.51, whereas the runner-up was Colgate Palm with an Rs.40.39 rise in its per share price to Rs.1,138.06.

Pak Service witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.63.00 per share closing at Rs.779.00; followed by Faisal Spinning with Rs.26.25 decline to close at Rs.323.75.

### Gold prices up by Rs800

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 800 and was sold at Rs 215,300 on Monday against its sale at Rs.214,500 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.685 to Rs 184,585 from Rs 186,043 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 169,203 from Rs 168,574. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.50 to Rs2,550 whereas that of ten gram went up by Rs.42.87 to Rs.2,186.21.

### Sustainable economic growth and progress:

## SCCI highlights role of global organizations

#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry stressed the need for building up a close liaison and coordination between government institutions concerned, business community and international development organizations to resolve business community issues under one-window operation.

Ijaz Khan Afridi, the acting president of the SCCI said the International development organisation has played a pivotal role in sustainable economic growth and development of Pakistan.

He, however, said owing to lack of proper coordination and contacts between government relevant institutions, chambers and relevant stakeholders, there were creating hurdles to achieve the sustainable economic development goals and set targets under the global commitments made by Pakistan.

The acting president urged the international organisations to make chambers, business community and relevant stakeholders' consultation to resolve business community difficulties, especially bringing improvement in technical skills of factories workers, labourers and ensure availability of skilled workers in the province.

Ijaz Khan Afridi was talking to UNDP Sector Specialist for Merged Districts Governance Programme Mumraiz Khan and UNDP Field Implementation Specialist for Merged Districts Governance Programme Hammad Muhammad Baig during a meeting held here at SCCI's house on Monday.

The meeting was attended by SCCI secretary general Sajjad Aziz and Coordinator, Research and Development (R&D) Cell of the chamber Ishtiaq Ali and others.

The UNDP representatives briefed the meeting regarding launching of mobile applications under Merged Districts Governance and highlighted its main aims and objectives.

The officials assured the SCCI acting chief to make proper consultation with the business community and relevant stakeholders before launch of the proposed mobile applications, skills training programs and

other initiatives. Ijaz Afridi thanked the UNDP and other partners' development organizations for taking initiatives to resolve the business community issues.

He said international development organizations had played a vital role in sustainable economic growth and progress in the country and assured the extending full support to make all growth and labour-relief driven initiatives of the global development organization.

Meanwhile, the SCCI acting chief expressed grave concern over prolonged electricity and gas loadshedding in the country generally and particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said KP is producing electricity and gas in surplus quantities despite the people, business community and industries deprived of electricity and gas, facing hours-long queues.

The SCCI asked the government to ensure uninterrupted power and gas supply to business hubs and industries to flourish trade and economic activities, otherwise, the business community will compel in protest.

## LCCI, IPO-Pakistan organise awareness session

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), in collaboration with the Intellectual Property Organisation of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan), organised an awareness session on protection and registration of Geographical Indications (GIs), here on Monday.

The event was aimed to emphasise the significance of geographically registering and safeguarding Pakistan's valuable products.

Sharing his views, Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Kashif Anwar highlighted the importance of geographically registering products to preserve their unique characteristics and reputation.

He stressed that the awareness session played a crucial role in educating stakeholders about the value and benefits of GI registration.

Director of

Geographical Indications at IPO-Pakistan, Muhammad Ismail delivered a detailed presentation on GIs.

He emphasized that a GI is a distinctive sign used to identify products originating from a specific geographical area, known for possessing exceptional qualities and reputation.

These products owe their distinctiveness to the interplay of natural and human factors in their place of origin.

GIs can be associated with agricultural, traditional, and industrial products that reflect the identity and heritage of a particular region.

Ismail further explained the various aspects of Intellectual Property and its types, shedding light on the Geographical Indications (Registration and Protection) Act, 2020.

He elucidated the roles of different entities involved in the GI system, includ-

ing the state (Federal Government), registrant, authorized user, and certification body.

The presentation also covered the registration process for GIs and the benefits of GI protection.

Participants were informed that the registration process for a GI does not incur any fees for the registrant, while authorized users are required to pay a nominal fee of Rs. 1000. The registration process typically takes around 3-6 months, and once registered, the protection of a GI is unlimited and can be renewed every 10 years.

He also highlighted that several provinces in Pakistan have already notified their respective GIs. Currently, six GIs have been successfully registered at the national level through IPO-Pakistan.

These include Basmati Rice, Pink Rock Salt,

Hyderabad Bangles, Sargodha Kinnow, Chaunsa Mango, and Sindhri Mango.

The registration of these GIs serves to protect their authenticity and promote their economic value on a national and international scale.

President LCCI Kashif Anwar said that the awareness session proved to be a significant step toward promoting the importance of GI registration and protection in Pakistan.

It enabled stakeholders to gain insights into the benefits of preserving and promoting the unique products associated with specific regions across the country, he said adding that with increased awareness and proactive measures, Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and valuable products can receive the recognition and protection they deserve on both domestic and global platforms.

## Stocks, ruble drop as traders eye Russia after aborted uprising

LONDON (AFP/APP): The ruble reached a 14-month low against the dollar and major equity markets slid Monday after an aborted weekend mutiny in Russia that stoked concerns about stability in the nuclear-armed country.

While the advance by the Wagner mercenary force led by Yevgeny Prigozhin was called off before it reached Moscow, analysts said the rebellion showed President Vladimir Putin's grip on power was more fragile than previously thought.

It also added to unease on trading floors, where investors last week reversed a recent rally in stocks owing to concerns about ever-rising interest rates aimed at fighting stubbornly-high inflation.

The ruble hit 85.37 to the dollar -- a level last seen in April 2022 shortly after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The ruble went on to

recover slightly Monday.

The dollar was down against the euro, pound and haven yen. Gold, also a refuge investment, jumped about half-a-percent in value.

Oil prices rose as Russia is a major producer, but concern about demand owing to the impact of rate rises kept gains limited, while futures for European natural gas jumped.

The revolt came after Prigozhin had railed for months against the Russian military's handling of the war in Ukraine.

But Wagner mercenaries returned to their base Sunday after Putin agreed to allow Prigozhin to avoid treason charges and accept exile in neighbouring Belarus.

However, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the events exposed "real cracks" in Putin's rule.

The agreement halted an escalation of the crisis but

observers warned that markets were susceptible to any further instability in Russia.

"Even though the Prigozhin mutiny may not cause larger market movements directly, this could quickly change depending on how the political situation in Russia unfolds in coming months," Erik Meyersson, at SEB AB, said.

"Markets will likely become more sensitive to internal political matters in Russia."

Investors were also keeping tabs on comments from Federal Reserve officials, hoping for clarity on their monetary policy plans after boss Jerome Powell last week warned interest rates would likely keep rising.

His comments dealt a blow to hopes the bank had come to the end of its tightening cycle, and came as authorities elsewhere announced further hikes.

There is a growing worry among investors that the tightening cycle around the world could hammer the global economy, with the eurozone already in recession.

A survey Monday showed German business sentiment fell more than expected in June, as the clouds gathered over Europe's largest economy, also in recession.

The Ifo institute's confidence barometer, based on a survey of 9,000 companies, fell for the second month in a row.

There is also a focus on China and leaders' support plans for the world's number two economy as its recovery from years of zero-Covid restrictions falters.

Traders were left disappointed by last week's lack of detail on how to kick-start growth, with a market rally sparked by Chinese interest rate cuts running out of steam.

## Unlocking global success: How Pakistani businesses can promote products and services internationally for economic growth

#### Tahir Malik

The Pakistani economy is continuously shrinking due to economic and political crises; Pakistani businesses need to think outside of the box or else they will face survival threats. Currently, there are limited opportunities within the country; on the other hand, Pakistani businesses have a golden opportunity to expand their horizons and tap into international markets in an increasingly interconnected world. By effectively promoting their products and services globally, Pakistani businesses can boost their growth and also make a significant impact on Pakistani and international economies. In this article, we will explore the strategies that Pakistani businesses can employ to promote their offerings internationally and examine the far-reaching economic benefits of such endeavors.

Understanding International Market Dynamics is the first step to global

reach. Before venturing into international markets, Pakistani businesses need to understand the dynamics of their target markets thoroughly. This involves conducting market research, analyzing consumer preferences, studying cultural nuances, and assessing regulatory framework which is very easy in this digital age. Loads of data are available which can help Pakistani businesses gain in-depth insights into the demands and expectations of their prospective international customers, businesses can tailor their products and services to meet global standards and effectively compete in foreign markets.

Constructing a Strong Brand Identity is also vital to the success of international operations. A strong brand identity plays a pivotal role in capturing the attention and trust of international consumers. Pakistani businesses should invest in building a reputable brand that highlights the unique qualities, crafts-

manship, and cultural heritage of their offerings. Many young businesses should learn from examples of companies like Shan Foods which has made a brand name in the spice market, especially in North America. By effectively communicating its brand story and value proposition, Shan Foods differentiated itself from international competitors, especially from India and Bangladesh, and have been able to create a lasting impression in the minds of global customers. Many other businesses should learn from Shan Food's story and focus on building a strong brand identity.

Embracing and utilizing digital marketing strategies correctly is the most crucial step in the make or break of a business in today's age. The digital revolution has opened up new avenues for businesses all over the globe and Pakistani businesses can use this benefit to their advantage to promote their products and

services on a global scale. By leveraging digital marketing platforms, such as social media, search engine optimization, and content marketing, businesses can reach a wider audience and create meaningful connections with potential customers worldwide. With the help of AI, machine learning, cloud computing, and IoT, businesses can now conduct hyper-targeted marketing campaigns worldwide. By analyzing large amounts of data, Pakistani businesses can gain insight into consumer behavior, preferences, and purchasing patterns of the target market. Digital marketing also allows for targeted advertising and personalized communication, increasing the chances of conversion and international business growth. Digital information can lead businesses to deliver personalized and relevant content to specific segments, enhancing customer experiences and more effective marketing campaigns.

Participating in International Trade Exhibitions and Events could be another way Pakistani businesses can land international clients. International trade exhibitions and events provide valuable opportunities for Pakistani businesses to showcase their products and services to a global audience. By participating in such events, businesses can connect with potential buyers, distributors, and partners from different countries. The success of Pink Salt is the current example of how trade exhibitions and events can help a product get global recognition. In recent history, few Pakistani companies used trade exhibitions to promote Pink Salt and its relevant products. These platforms not only facilitated the Pink Salt businesses an opportunity to network but also offered insights into emerging global market trends, fostering innovation and adaptability and now we see many products made of Pink Rock Salt in

the western market.

Forming strategic partnerships and alliances has never been easy. Online platforms such as Amazon, Walmart, and eBay are helping businesses collaborate with international partners, distributors, and retailers in a powerful way that can help Pakistani businesses seeking to expand their global presence. By forging strategic partnerships, businesses can tap into established distribution networks, gain market access, and navigate the complexities of foreign markets. Such collaborations foster knowledge exchange, encourage technology transfer, and contribute to mutual growth and prosperity.

By going global Pakistani businesses can impact the Pakistani and international economy positively. Successful international promotion of Pakistani products will increase exports, resulting in higher foreign exchange earnings for Pakistani businesses. This influx of revenue will

contribute to economic growth, strengthens the national economy, and creates opportunities for further investment and development.

Another benefit for Pakistan will be the creation of jobs and skill development. As more Pakistani businesses will expand globally, they will create new job opportunities domestically which in turn can help the economy in the current crisis. Job creation will not only reduce unemployment rates but will also enhance skill development and improve the overall quality of the workforce. International promotion will stimulate innovation within Pakistani businesses as they adapt to global market demands and competition. To stay competitive, businesses will have to invest in research and development, adopt advanced technologies, and introduce innovative products and services which Pakistan is capable of even today. These advancements can contribute to techno-

logical progress on a national scale and elevate Pakistan's reputation as a hub of innovation.

Ultimately, I would say promoting Pakistani products and services internationally is a pathway to the current economic crisis, unlocking economic growth, job creation, and technological advancement. By understanding international markets, building strong brands, leveraging digital platforms, participating in international events, and forming strategic alliances, Pakistani businesses can expand their global reach and contribute to the growth of Pakistani and international economies. As Pakistani businesses embark on this journey, they not only uplift themselves but also elevate the nation's standing on the global stage.

The writer is an expert senior marketer and business development consultant having an illustrious career of 17 years working for national and international companies.





In brief

**Kipchoge sets sights on Olympic marathon treble**  
K A P T A G A T (AFP/APP): Two months on from his disappointing performance at the Boston marathon, Eliud Kipchoge tells AFP he is determined to keep on writing history -- and secure a third Olympic marathon crown next year. The Kenyan widely regarded as the greatest marathon runner of all time has set himself many challenges in his dazzling career, and remains insatiable despite his two Olympic titles, his world record of 2:01:09 in Berlin in 2022 and an incredible 15 wins in 18 marathons he has entered. He broke the mythical two-hour barrier over the 26.2 mile (42.195 kilometre) distance in Vienna in 2019, with a time of 1:59:40, but the feat was not recognised as an official world record as it was not in open competition. Victory has eluded the 38-year-old in the Boston and New York marathons, which if he won would make him the first man to have all six major titles under his belt. "The priority now is to focus on the Olympics and win a third time. The other (challenges) will come later," Kipchoge says in an interview with AFP at the renowned Kaptagat training camp in Kenya's Rift Valley.

**Craig dies aged 82**  
LONDON (BBC): Craig Brown, the last man to take Scotland to a World Cup finals, has died at the age of 82. The national team's longest-serving manager, he was in charge for 71 games from 1993 to 2001, qualifying for Euro 96 and the 1998 World Cup. He was also on the staff for the 1986 and 1990 finals. Brown managed Preston North End and Motherwell before ending his career at Aberdeen in 2013 and moving into a board position at Pittodrie. "Since 2010 Craig performed the roles of manager, director and ambassador," said Aberdeen chairman Dave Cormack. "Craig was a friend to all of us at the club, and a mentor and confidante to many. "He was one of those rare individuals who was not only effective at what he did but universally loved by all who got to know him. A gentleman who loved his family, friends, and football."

**Luka signs deal at Real Madrid**  
MADRID (BBC): Luka Modric has signed a new one-year deal which will keep him at Real Madrid until the summer of 2024. The Croatia midfielder, whose contract had been set to expire at the Bernabeu, had been linked with a move to Saudi Arabia's Pro League. Modric, 37, has made 488 appearances for Real, winning three La Liga titles and the Champions League five times since arriving from Tottenham in 2012. He also won the Ballon d'Or in 2018 as Croatia reached the World Cup final. Following an announcement of his new contract in the Spanish capital, Modric wrote "Home Sweet Home," on Twitter. He follows Toni Kroos, Dani Ceballos and Nacho Fernandez in extending their contracts with the club this summer and is still regarded as a key player for the 14-time European champions. Real have already completed the high-profile addition of England international Jude Bellingham from Borussia Dortmund this summer to add further competition for places in their midfield.

# Dutch stun West Indies in super over as Zimbabwe demolish USA

HARARE (AFP/APP): Two-time champions West Indies face an almighty task to qualify for the Cricket World Cup after losing to the Netherlands in a thrilling final group game decided by a super over Monday.

Nicholas Pooran's second hundred of the qualifiers propelled West Indies to a commanding 374-6, but Teja Nidamanuru hit 111 in reply and the Dutch needed one from the final ball for victory.

Jason Holder took a brilliant catch to deny Logan van Beek as the scores finished tied, but Van Beek blasted Holder for 30 runs in the super over to set up a remarkable win in Harare.

Van Beek then restricted the West Indies to just eight off five balls as he removed Johnson Charles and Romario Shepherd with successive deliveries to seal an extraordinary triumph.

"I can't really explain it at the moment. We wanted to do something special," said Van Beek.

"I have been playing for a long time. The amount of games I have lost from those situations, it was just satisfying to get across the line." "Now we have a chance to go to the World Cup in India and that is really huge," he added.

Pooran blasted an unbeaten 104 off 65 balls after openers Brandon King (76) and Charles (54) both made half-centuries as the West Indies put together an imposing total batting first.

King and Charles provided a strong platform with a 101-run opening partnership. Shai Hope added 47 in another century stand with Pooran before Keemo Paul smacked a quick-fire 46 not out.

The Netherlands reached 76 without loss to start the chase, but it wasn't until Nidamanuru and captain Scott Edwards (67) came together that they looked in with a chance of actually succeeding. Once they fell in consecutive overs, Van Beek and Aryan Dutt took up the challenge only to falter with five runs needed off the last five balls and with the finish line seemingly in sight.

After failing to close it out off the final delivery from Alzarri Joseph, Van Beek exploded in the super over to leave the West Indies in real danger of missing the World Cup later this year.

"We let ourselves down there," said Hope, the West Indies captain. "We know what we have to do now. It is an unfortunate situation we have put ourselves in."

The Netherlands advance as runners-up of Group A and carry over two points, but the West Indies start with zero and need to beat Scotland, Oman and Sri Lanka with their hopes hanging by a thread.

Hosts Zimbabwe made it four wins from four as they crushed the United States by 304 runs, the second

# England challenge Australia but face uphill task in white-ball series

LONDON (BBC): So near, but so far. Once again between Australia and England, it came down to the crunch moments. We saw those instances of high pressure where the game could sway one way or the other, where one team would stand to gain slight psychological advantages.

And during the women's Test match at Trent Bridge, it was Australia who edged them. From England having the visitors 238-6, only for Annabel Sutherland to smash a century from number eight, to losing four wickets for 15 runs to fall 10 short of first-innings parity. From missing an opportunity to dismiss captain Alyssa Healy first ball in the second innings after taking three wickets for three runs, and for her to go on to make a vital half-century.

And from racing to 55-0 inside 10 overs in the second innings, only for Australia to fight back in ridiculously assertive fashion to take five late wickets on Sunday to firmly dent England's hopes.

By day five, there was still hope, but the outcome felt inevitable purely because of Australia's ruthless tendency to win the small battles that mattered most. They also probably saved at least 50 runs through the magnificence of their fielding.

Ash Gardner did the rest, taking a magnificent 8-66 to skittle England and confirm an 89-run victory - but more significantly, a 4-0 points lead in the multi-format series.

This defeat feels crueler than England's more recent struggles against Australia, especially after Tammy Beaumont's historic double century and Sophie Ecclestone's incredible 10 wickets in the match.

England this time, for the first time since the close Canberra test of January 2022, went toe to toe with Australia - and kept it going for four days.

England almost matched Australia's first-innings 473, they triggered middle-order batting collapses and at times surprised the tourists with their intent with the bat.

So it is not necessarily the skill level that defines

# China's Yin Ruoning wins Women's PGA Championship

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): China's Yin Ruoning sank a 10-foot birdie putt on the final hole on Sunday to win the Women's PGA Championship for her first major title.

The 20-year-old from Shanghai fired a four-under par 67 to finish 72 holes at Baltusrol on eight-under 276 and defeat Japan's Yuka Saso by one stroke.

Yin took the \$1.5 million top prize and became only the second woman from China to win a major title after Feng Shanshan, who captured the 2012 Women's PGA crown.

Saso, a 22-year-old Filipino-born Japanese star who won the 2021 US Women's Open, birdied the par-5 18th to match Yin for the lead at 7-under on the rain-soaked layout at Springfield, New Jersey.

Yin answered by landing her approach 10 feet from the hole and rolled in the tension-packed birdie putt for the victory in the year's second women's major tournament.

"After the tee shot I saw Yuka make an incredible birdie here, I knew I had to

make birdie at this hole to win the championship and I'm glad I did it," Yin said.

An early afternoon storm halted play for almost two hours but after play resumed, Yin birdied the 13th and 14th to grab a share of the lead, parred the next three holes as rivals faltered, and won at the last after hitting every green in regulation in the final two rounds. "For last couple days, my ball striking was perfect," Yin said. "I only missed six greens in four days so I think my ball striking was pretty good."

"My goal for today, just no three-putts. And I did it too. I didn't think too much. Just no three-putts. Because last few days I made five bogeys and four of them were three-putts."

A third-place pack on 278 included Spain's Carlota Ciganda, Sweden's Anna Nordqvist, China's Lin Xiyu, American Megan Khang and Northern Ireland's Stephanie Meadow.

Japan's Ayaka Furue, South Korean Jenny Shin and American Rose Zhang shared eighth on 279.

Yin had joined Feng as the only Chinese women to win an LPGA title when she captured the LA Open in April. Among those unable to match Yin down the stretch was Lin, who shared the lead when the storm struck.

"It's pretty amazing," Lin said of Yin's victory. "She's young and she's so talented. She's definitely really good at dealing with pressure. It's great to see that." Shin and Lin were deadlocked atop the leaderboard when play resumed after the storm but seven others were within two strokes. Lin held the lead alone after Shin made a bogey at the eighth and kept it until Yin birdied the 13th and 14th and Saso made her fourth birdie in six holes at 15 to share the lead on 7-under, although Saso stumbled with a bogey at 16. Lin found water off the tee at the par-5 18th and closed with a bogey to leave Yin alone in the lead.

Saso responded with a tap-in birdie at 18 to share the lead, setting the stage for Yin's closing heroics.

# Travelling fans left in the lurch with World Cup schedule still under wraps

LONDON (Agencies): On Tuesday, the ICC will announce the schedule for the 2023 Men's ODI World Cup. That is exactly 100 days from the start of the 10-team marquee event which will be played in India. It is an unprecedented delay in terms of the announcement of the schedule, which was prepared by the BCCI, the hosting board.

With just about three months before the World Cup gets underway on October 5, how do fans look at this extreme delay in the schedule coming out? We posed that and other concerning questions to three of the biggest tour operators in the game from around the world.

Chris Millard is the managing director of the Barmy Army. Rakesh Patel is the founder of the Bharat Army. Luke Gillian has been following the Australian men's team all

## 16th Special Olympic World Games conclude

KARACHI (APP): The 16th Special Olympic World Games played in Berlin, Germany ended with a spectacular closing ceremony at the Brandenburg Gate on Sunday night. The next Winter Olympic World Games will be held in Italy in 2025, according to a communique issued here on Monday.

At the closing ceremony, the torch of the Games was extinguished and the flag of the Special Olympics was handed over to Italy, the host country of the next games. In the games which lasted for 9 days, about 6,500 athletes from 176 countries took part in the closing ceremony. At the closing ceremony, the athletes enjoyed the musical program.

## SAU to host Talent Hunt Youth Sports Football League

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) TandoJam is finalizing arrangements to host the Football event of Prime Minister's Youth Program-Talent Hunt Youth Sports League for Girls and Boys.

In this connection, the university spokesman informed here on Monday that the trials for the selection of boys and girls' football teams of Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas regions were conducted with the participation of a large number of football lovers.

The Vice Chancellor Sindh Agriculture University Prof. Dr. Fateh Marri, Vice Chancellor Shah Abdul Latif University Dr. Khalil Ahmed Abupoto and Vice Chancellor Government College University Dr. Tayyaba Zareef also visited the university's grounds and witnessed the trial process. The spokesman informed that a total of 650 football players out of 195 girls of Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas divisions have registered themselves online and in person for participation in the trials. After trials, the selected male and female football teams of Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Larkana and Sukkur will participate in Prime Minister's Youth Program-Talent Hunt Youth Sports Football League to be organized under the auspices of Sindh Agriculture University TandoJam, the spokesman informed.

# Russian-born tennis player wins first match as French citizen

PARIS (BBC): Russian-born Varvara Gracheva has won the first match she played since becoming a French citizen.

Gracheva, 22, was born in Moscow but has lived and trained in France for six years. She beat Romanian Jacqueline Cristian 6-2 6-2 at the Bad Homburg Open in Germany on Monday.

World number 43 Gracheva becomes the French women's number two and will represent her new country when Wimbledon starts on 3 July.

She played at the French Open in May but was not listed as French as she had not yet received her French passport. Russian and Belarusian players will be allowed to compete at this year's Wimbledon, but players must abide by strict rules set out by the All England Club.

In 2022, Russian doubles player Natela Dzalamidze competed at Wimbledon after changing her nationality to represent Georgia. Gracheva told the Daily Mail in March that her application to switch nationalities was made before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the same month, Gracheva was beaten in the final of the ATP Open by Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk, who refused to shake her hand.

# Elena Rybakina withdraws from tournament

LONDON (BBC): Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina has withdrawn from the Eastbourne International, sparking concerns over her fitness for this year's Wimbledon. Moscow-born Rybakina, who represents Kazakhstan, won her first Grand Slam title last year, with this year's tournament beginning on 3 July.

The 24-year-old also reached the final of the Australian Open in January.

Rybakina said she is still recovering from a virus that caused her to withdraw from the French Open in June.

"My team and I decided it would be better to recover this week and prepare for Wimbledon," she said.

"I am still recovering from the virus I had in Paris and after Roland Garros it was really tough. "I also picked up another small issue in Berlin." Rybakina lost to Donna Vekic in the last 16 in Germany last week and said she was not 100% physically.

Ranked third in the world, Rybakina had been the top seed for the tournament at Eastbourne and has been replaced by Croatian lucky loser Petra Martic, who will face British number one Katie Boulter in the opening round.

There are three Britons in the women's singles with Jodie Burrage and Harriet Dart playing American Lauren Davis and China's Zhang Shuai respectively.

# PRU awarded hosting of Asia Rugby DIV 1 Championship in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Rugby Union (PRU) has been awarded the esteemed opportunity by the Asia Rugby to host the upcoming Asia Rugby DIV 1 Championship here from July 4 to 8.

The announcement, made by Asia Rugby, comes as a testament to the tremendous success of the tournament hosted by Pakistan last year, showcasing their exceptional organizational capabilities.

The championship promises to be a remarkable showcase of rugby talent and sportsmanship in the region.

Pakistan Rugby Union (PRU) has expressed its delight at being chosen as the host for this prestigious event, emphasizing the confidence that Asia Rugby has placed in their ability to execute such high-profile competitions.

With the confirmation of Lahore as the tournament's venue, the rugby community in Pakistan is eagerly preparing to deliver an outstanding championship experience. Teams from across Asia will battle it out on the field, demonstrating their skills and determination.

The tournament promises to be an exhilarating spectacle, showcasing the sport's growing popularity in Pakistan and the Asian region. Pakistan Rugby, in collaboration with Asia Rugby, is determined to set new standards for hosting sporting events while fostering camaraderie and cultural exchange among participating nations.

Pakistan Rugby and its partners are ready to welcome teams and fans from across Asia, providing them with an unparalleled experience both on and off the field. The upcoming championship is set to leave an indelible mark on Pakistan's sporting landscape, further solidifying the country's position as a vibrant hub for international sporting events.

All eyes are now on Lahore as it prepares to host the Asia Rugby DIV 1 championship, ready to write a new chapter in the annals of rugby history in the region.

# Vingegaard v Pogacar duel headlines Tour de France

BILBAO (AFP/APP): Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard leads the Tour de France out of the Basque port of Bilbao on Saturday on a 21-day adventure crammed with peaks, postcard panoramas and an eye-catching showdown on a massive dormant volcano on the 3,404km route to Paris.

The 30 mountains on the route lend Vingegaard of Jumbo-Visma an edge over two-time champion Tadej Pogacar backed by a reinforced Team UAE squad.

A year ago, Jumbo's collective strength helped the Dane, more resilient on the toughest climbs, outlast the daring Pogacar in a ruthless war of attrition in the mountains.

Pogacar had finished first the year before with Vingegaard second. This promises to be their third heavyweight bout. Pogacar won the Slovenian national championship on Sunday and said it was a good test of his legs ahead of the Tour.

"I'm happy to have succeeded. It was a good test before the Tour. My legs were pretty solid," said Pogacar.

"Now I'm going to rest before heading to Bilbao for the start."

French hope Romain Bardet said: "It will be a beautiful battle, especially if they are both at 100 percent."

"There's a plethora of pretenders following right behind them."

Tour folklore insists the champion is chosen by the Alps, and 13 of this year's 30 mountains are there, with six more in the Pyrenees, five in the Vosges, four in the Massif Central and one each in the Jura and Basque Country. The Tour makes a hilly start over the forested slopes around Bilbao and San Sebastian.

The Spanish Basque Country is a cycling heartland and fervent local fans will be out in force for the Grand Depart. Clever route design has set up what promises to be a swashbuckling struggle over the first three stages in an event televised in 190 countries.

The opener, around the Bilbao back-country, is laced with terrain to tempt the one-day mavericks to go for glory with Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe one to watch.

The 20km descent to the chic coastal resort of San Sebastian on stage two might raise an eyebrow or two after the shocking recent death of Swiss rider Gino Maeder at the Tour of Switzerland.

The peloton enters France on day three and then swings west for two stages through the Pyrenees before heading back up the Atlantic coast.

The vineyards of Bordeaux, on stage seven, serve as an aperitif to the star landmark of this Tour, the magnificent dormant volcano at Puy de Dome. The ascent provides a spectacular view of the dormant domes along central France's tectonic faultline. Neither fans nor vehicles will be allowed on Puy de Dome's stark, steep upper reaches where pretenders will be brutally exposed to the elements.





## In brief

### No power load-management

ISLAMABAD (APP): Spokesperson of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday said that no power load-management was being carried out across the company's regions as generation was available as per the demand. Faults, occurred due to heavy rains, were being cleared, the spokesperson said in a statement issued here. He said over 50 feeders have tripped due to the heavy rains last night resulting power suspension to various localities. IESCO teams started restoration work soon after the rain in various areas, he said. He requested the consumers to register their complaints in their nearby offices or on toll free no 118 for prompt response to their complaints.

### Water inflow jumps to 505,800 cusecs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Water inflow in all major rivers has significantly increased due to shooting up of mercury and torrential rains as on Monday it stood at 505,800 cusecs against outflow of 310,400 cusecs. According to Indus River System Authority (IRSA), water inflow in the River Indus at Tarbela has increased to 269,000 cusecs against outflow of 135,900 cusecs. The water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1481.22 feet and was 83.22 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 269,000 cusecs and 135,900 cusecs respectively. The water inflow in River Jhelum at Mangla dam has surged to 72,300 cusecs against outflow of 10,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1166.70 feet, which was 116.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. Similarly, water inflow in River Kabul at Nowshera has jumped to 74,300 cusecs and in River Chenab at Marala, it was recorded as 65,800 cusecs. The water inflow at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 190,300, 186,700, 115,200 and 76,500 cusecs respectively.

### CTO urges citizens to avoid unnecessary travel

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan here on Monday urged the citizens to avoid unnecessary travel towards Soan bridge as it has been closed for traffic towards Rawalpindi due to land-sliding. He informed all senior CTP officers were present on the spot and trying to regulate traffic. Traffic going to Kutchery from Rawat is being diverted to alternative routes, the CTO said adding, the traffic coming from Kutchery Chowk to Rawat is being allowed in a single line. The Highway Police has been informed about the diversion. Taimoor Khan said. There is heavy traffic pressure on both sides of the road at Soan near High Court. Additional traffic police officers have been deployed to maintain the flow of traffic, the CTO said and informed that all-out efforts were being made to regulate traffic in the circle and traffic diversions were placed to save the citizens from inconvenience. The CTO also requested the citizens to cooperate with the traffic officials striving to regulate traffic load.



ISLAMABAD: Former Senator, Sitara Ayaz, offering Fateha over the sad demise of the aunt of the Acting President, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## PM&DC writes to all Provinces for nomination of admitting iniversities

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pursuant to the decision taken in the 2nd council meeting of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council held on 4th June 2023 at PM&DC Secretariate, Islamabad, Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, has approved the syllabus for MDCAT session 2023 and decided to conduct the National MDCAT-2023 examination on 27th August 2023 at National level through the respective provincial public sector admitting universities. Furthermore, PM&DC is going to open the MDCAT-2023 registration portal in the first week of July 2023 for 15 days in compliance with the minutes of meeting. In this regard PM&DC inked the

letters to all provincial health secretaries followed by federal health secretary requesting them to nominate one provincial level admitting university who will be given the responsibility to conduct the MDCAT-2023 at their respective province on the above-mentioned date as per approved syllabus. Moreover, the letters written to provincial secretaries PM&DC emphasizes the gravity of MDCAT 2023 and requesting to provide the list of cities from each respective provincial government & admitting university where the examination centers will be setup accordingly so that the same list can be uploaded on the official website.

The nomination will enable the conducting

university in timely preparation of question paper, arrangement of venues, appointment of invigilation staff and to meet the deadline of 27th August 2023 for the smooth conduct of MDCAT both at National & International Level.

As more than two hundred thousand students are going to appear in med/dental college admission test (MDCAT) on 27 Aug and due to extreme shortage of time and for the sake for students across the Country, council has adopted the last year syllabus already approved by the Medical & Dental Academic Board, as new board is yet to be constituted by Federal Government and the MDCAT syllabus has been uploaded on PMDC Web site.

## Quality education should not be a privilege

ISLAMABAD (NNI): In order to spread awareness on how an innovative partnership between popular short-video platform TikTok, edtech startup Edkasa and Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) benefited millions in Pakistan, a panel discussion titled 'Quality Education Should Not Be a Privilege' was held at the university in Lahore on June 20th, 2023.

The event showcased the #ExamReady campaign that set higher standards for learning outcomes in the country. The panel saw participation from the #ExamReady team from TikTok, Edkasa and LUMS. A lively discussion ensued on how a unique partnership has paved the way for furthering the cause for quality education in Pakistan.

Dr. Arshad Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of LUMS, while talking about platform learning said: "The phenomenon of platform learning was new to everyone. Our faculty and patterns; TikTok and Edkasa came in with the excitement to explore what can be done when it comes

to online learning. We decided to take some bold steps to ensure the quality of education." Topics such as how the partnership came into being were answered by Zara Basharat Higgs, Head of Public Policy Programs and Partnerships for South Asia at TikTok, who elaborated on the motivation behind the #ExamReady campaign.

Dr Faisal Bari, Dean of the LUMS School of Education, moderated the event and addressed queries on the university's role, and the value it brought to the partnership. Dr Faisal Bari added: "The School of Education was set up to embrace change and work towards reforming education in the local context, one of the ways we believe change can happen in Pakistan is through online learning platforms that can help us engage with students at scale".

Dr. Yasira Waqar, Assistant Professor LUMS School of Education, elaborated on the strict process that was followed while developing the educational videos to ensure quality of education. Annum Sadiq,

Chief Education Officer and co-founder of Edkasa, conveyed how teaching while using short video format has increased engagement and learning with its benefits having reached millions in Pakistan.

The panelists also addressed how such campaigns further the cause of education, improve learning methods and, by extension, outcomes that improve the youth's skillset. During the event, panelists were also informed of the #ExamReady campaign's success. In a short span, the campaign has produced 500-plus educational videos that have garnered over 550 million views on TikTok so far and awarded 20,000+ scholarships. The scholarship program itself has reached 140 districts in Pakistan and 58% of its recipients are from non-urban locations.

Nearly 40% of the recipients are women and the campaign has covered a wide demographic in a short while, meeting goals such as removing barriers to education, female inclusion, and lowering cost of access.

## ANF arranges awareness activities to observe Intl day against drug abuse

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan on Monday celebrated International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking throughout the country with enthusiasm by arranging exceptional drug demand reduction/awareness activities.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF organized "Anti-Drug Campaigns" in connection with International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in the federal capital, all provincial capitals and other small and big cities of the country with an aim to create mass awareness against the harms of illicit drugs. In this respect, a special drug awareness walk was held at F-9 Park, Islamabad. People from different walks of life participated in the event, which mostly included government officers/officials, celebrities, NGOs, media persons, students, teachers, ANF youth ambassadors and civil society members.

As per special instructions of DG ANF Major General Muhammad Aneeq-Ur-Rehman Malik, HI (M), the awareness campaigns at each station was designed with a special focus on youth. Efforts were made to

attract the maximum participation of students, teachers and parents at one venue, so as to propagate their roles in their respective capacities. In order to make it a persuasive drive, effective positioning of ANF Youth Ambassadors was ensured, so as to make approving influence in conveying the message to their age-mates.

Respective Regional Directorate Commanders of ANF and selected public representatives made awareness addresses/talks at the terminal-point at respective stations. Drug Awareness pamphlets were also distributed amongst the participants of the walks and passersby citizens. Special arrangements were also made to distribute awareness brochures at drug infested sites of different cities. It is pertinent to mention here that ANF has increased its efforts towards drug demand reduction activities. The present ANF drug demand reduction strategy focuses on youth, with an aim that children must be nurtured and protected from drug use and other risky behavior to ensure that they grow up as healthy, productive members of society.

### Police recover cache of arms, ammunition

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police in an operation recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from a car and arrested two accused, said a police spokesman on Monday.

He informed that Taxila police during snap-checking recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from a suspected car and arrested two accused namely Taqos Khan and Akhtar.

He said SHO Taxila Police Station along with a police party managed to recover 10 pistols, one 8mm rifle, ammunition and other items from the possession of the accused arrested. He informed that a case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent Police, Potohar said that other members of the gang would also be sent behind bars. The SP appreciated DSP Taxila Circle, SHO Taxila and the police party for netting the accused.

### Tyre pyrolysis plant fined Rs18.6m

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Environmental Protection Tribunal on Monday fined a tyre pyrolysis plant in Islamabad Rs18.6 million for causing environmental pollution. The tribunal fined Fazal-e-Rabi Plant of Sangiani and ordered the plant owner to submit the amount to the national exchequer within 15 days.

"The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) filed a complaint with the tribunal, stating that no permission was taken before the establishment of the plant," the written order said. "The EPA and the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered to stop environmental pollution. The orders of EPA and the IHC were not implemented," it added. "The Member Inspection IHC, EPA and Assistant Commissioner (AC) had submitted reports. The Sadr AC sealed the plant on October 6, 2022, on the order of the tribunal. It was sealed on October 20 on public complaints about its de-sealing," it stated. "A case was registered against the owner and employees of the plant at Tarnol police station. The plant owner clearly violated the orders of the IHC. The plant owner himself or through counsel did not attend any of the hearings of the tribunal.

## BISP resumes cash disbursement after break due to heat wave conditions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) has resumed cash disbursement to the beneficiaries of the Benazir Kafaalat from Monday which was earlier suspended for two days due to extreme heat wave conditions. According to the Spokesman, the cash disbursement process will continue from June 26 to June 28.

These cash disbursement will remain closed during the Eid-ul-Azha holidays and again resume from July 03.

These cash disbursement of Rs. 9000/- each to nine million families is continued across the country.

The mothers of the children registered under Benazir Education Stipends are also being paid the education stipend amount.

Since June 19, an amount of about Rs. 26 billion has been disbursed to more than 2934000 households.

Under the instructions of Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri, the monitoring teams are also working to ensure transparent payment of these stipends.

The beneficiaries can report immediately to BISP's toll-free helpline 26477-0800 in case of complaint. All messages from BISP are sent exclusively from 8171.

## Ensuring peace, security to public lives, properties during Eid holidays in ICT

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP)/Investigation Malik Zafar Jamil has said that protection of sacrificial animals, providing security to public lives and properties during public gatherings of Namaz e Eid and during Eid holidays will be ensured. He said that security personnel will perform security duty across the district at gathering of Eid prayers at mosques/Imam Bargahs to ensure law and order and protection of life and property of the public. SSP Operations/Investment Malik Jameel Zafar said that safety of citizens' lives and property are the top priorities to ensure the security of the homes of citizens visiting their native villages during Eid holidays.

It is worth mentioning here that security plan have been announced in line with the instructions and directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and CPO/DIG Operations, Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations/Investment Malik Zafar Jameel has ensured the safety of life and property of the citizens. Meanwhile, during a meeting, the Zonal DPOs, SP Investigation, Sub-Divisional Police Officers, DSP Upper, In-charge Anti-Vehicle Lifting Unit, All Police Stations to ensure and make fool-proof security arrangements on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha prayers.

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, Islamabad Police have been issued instructions to set up a comprehensive security plan, according to which police officers and employees including zonal DPOs, SDPOs and police officers across the district under the supervision of SSP Operations / Anu City. Duties will be performed by various, the security of mosques and imam bars should be kept alert. Apart from that, Safe City's Falcon

and Dolphin squads will also remain active. SSP Operations/Investment Malik Jameel Zafar instructed the Zonal DPOs, Circle SDPOs and officers of various police stations that a large number of people leave for their native areas on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. Form neighborhood committees in your area and appoint focal persons for these committees. Contact numbers of these focal persons should be available to all officers and employees of Falcons and Dolphin squads of Safe City apart from Patrolling Officers of Police Stations. Ensure the security situation in all the markets and shopping areas through effective patrolling. Duties should be kept alert in the livestock markets approved by the district administration to protect the life and property of the public. Banned organizations are prohibited from collecting sacrificial skins. Only organizations with NOC issued by the district administration can collect sacrificial skins.

Special security arrangements should be made in entertainment places, parks and graveyards, SSP Operations Malik Jameel Zafar will supervise all duties himself. Crackdown against one-wheeling and professional beggars will be continued across the district, special patrolling squads have been formed. SSP Operations has requested the citizens to cooperate with the personnel on duty and carry their identification symbol with them.

He also instructed all the officers and youths that all the officers should perform their duties with interest and zeal and sacrifice their rest and sleep for the safety of the people so that miscreants and criminal elements do not succeed in their ambitions. The SSP Operations further said that the Islamabad Police is taking all possible measures to prevent crimes and ensure the protection of lives and property of citizens.

## Met Office forecast more rainfall after heavy pre-monsoon spell

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Met Office forecast more rainfall on Monday, after devastating pre-monsoon rainfall that claimed several lives in Punjab on Sunday.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department has predicted rainfall with thunderstorm in Punjab, Islamabad, Potohar region, KP, northern and eastern Balochistan, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan on Monday (today). Heavy rainfall is expected in northeastern Punjab, Potohar region, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir with downpour and hail-storm at some places. The wet spell will also persist on Tuesday.

Lahore received very heavy rainfall with 241mm at Laxmi Chowk, 236mm at Paniwala Talab, 230mm at Qurtaba Chowk, 226mm at Airport, 213mm at Gulshan-e-Ravi, 202mm at Nishtar Town, 178mm at Iqbal Town, 165mm at

Tajpura, Jail Road 163mm, city 162mm, Johar Town 155mm, Gulbarg 130mm, Mughalpura 126mm, Chowk Nakhuda 125mm, Samanabad 120mm, Farrukh Abad 115mm and Upper Mall 103mm.

Sialkot Airport received 71mm rainfall and city 47mm, Rawalpindi received 66mm at Katchehry, 55mm at Chaklala, 59mm at Bokra, 58mm at Zero Point, 56mm at Golra and 47mm rain at Syedpur. Narowal 54mm, Mandi Bahauddin 53mm, Gujranwala 44mm, Chakwal 41mm, Murree 39mm and Attock 30mm.

Kashmir: Rawlakot 40mm, Muzaffarabad (City) 33mm, Airport 25mm), Kotli 28mm, Garhi Dupatta 21mm. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Mardan 81mm, Bannu 41mm, Balakot 36mm, Kakul 25mm, Peshawar 22mm, Bacha Khan Airport 20mm.

## Three die in Islamabad house roof collapse

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Three people, two children and their mother, died when roof of their house caved in due to heavy rain at Shahzad Town of Islamabad on Monday.

According to sources in the police, one of the deceased children was 11-month-old while the other 11-year-old.

They further said that police reached site of the incident and shifted the bodies to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

Two little kids drowned in Kank area of Khuzdar when they fell into a stream, which was spilling over due to heavy rain.

Family members of the deceased blocked the road in protest. They said that they had already protested against the construction of a dam near a human settlement. But still the authorities paid no heed to their concern and went ahead with its construction.



ISLAMABAD: Country Representative, UNFPA, Dr. Luay Shabaneh giving away souvenir to a jury member during the launching ceremony of the 2nd Naqsh Digital Film Festival (NDFP).



#### 74,000 refugees returned

NIMROZ (Agencies): Local officials at the Department of Refugees and Repatriations of Nimroz say, more than 74,000 Afghans returned to the country from Iran through the Silk Road. The provincial head of Refugee and Repatriations of Nimroz, Mawlawi Abdullah Ryaz, said that 74360 people, including 1106 families and 69,259 Single Afghan refugees have returned to the country from Iran through the Silk Road.

## The Frontier Post

Zil-Hajj 08, 1444 — Tuesday, June 27, 2023

#### Weapons recovered

PAKTIKA (Agencies): Conducting an operation the GD of Intelligence forces recovered and seized a number of weapons and ammunition from in Paktika. The Intelligence forces recovered these weapons and ammunition from Yusuf Khel Jani Khel districts of the Paktika. The weapons and ammunition recovered include 35 rounds of rocket projectiles, 4 rings of Russian mines, 14 rounds of hand grenades, and a number of weapons and some other ammunition that were stored illegally.

# Graduates call for girls' education

KABUL (TOLOnews): Some graduates of medical school, on their graduation day, asked the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools and universities for girls immediately.

According to the graduates, girls also have the right to education and their time should not be wasted.

"There were also girls with us during this period, unfortunately, after the Islamic Emirate took over girls were banned from universities," said Ahmadullah, graduate student.

"In a society, we need female and male doctors," said Mohammad Mustafa, a

graduate student.

Meanwhile, some of the family members of the graduate students who participated in the ceremony said that they hope that one day their daughters will get the graduation certificate along with the boys.

"We all want to reopen schools and universities for girls and for girls to also get their diplomas along with the boys," said Dawood, a Paktia resident.

"We call on higher education to allow girls to go to schools and universities because we need female doctors," said Baraktullah Takal, a Paktia resident.

Meanwhile, the deputy minister of Higher Education said in the graduation ceremony that concerning the matter they will act according to the decision of the leadership of the Islamic Emirate.

"It is clear to everyone that it is suspended until the second order, when we have the second order, schools will start on that date," said Lutfullah Khairkhwa.

According to the information provided by officials, 146 people graduated from the medical school of Paktia University, but there were no female graduates among them.

## 60 teenagers graduate from trade classes

KABUL (TOLOnews): At least 60 children and teenagers graduated from a training program lasting three months at the Juvenile Rehabilitation Center in Kabul.

The head of the Juvenile Rehabilitation Center, Nazar Mohammad Naseri, said that nearly 250 children are being trained in this center.

"The crafting workshops will be open. The number of students who graduated from these workshops is 60," he said.

Elham, 17, said that he has been detained here for nearly two years.

"They have launched professional workshops for us which include mobile phone repair, laying pipe, shoemaking and other fields," Elham said.

Some of the youth who studied various subjects in the center wished they could get an early release.

"Math, English and several other subjects were discussed here," said Kiwmares, a teenage detainee.

"We ask the juvenile rehabilitation centers to pardon us and release us," said Mazhab, a teenage detainee. "I am very happy that my son now studies religious studies," said Abdul Karim, father of a teenage detainee.

The detainees here have various opinions about the behavior of the center's employees.

The detainees said that they have been detained for committing various types of crimes including robbery, murder and other criminal activities.

## \$20 cut in coal customs royalty Announced

KABUL (Agencies): The Country's Finance Ministry has announced a decrease in the customs product of coal.

Based on the decision of the Economic Commission, in order to grow the country's exports and inspire more traders and investors, coal exported from the country, the customs royalty brought down by 15 dollars per ton, and in the actual price, it is 5 dollars per ton, which makes a total of 20 dollars the Ministry said in a statement.

The verdict is enforced from Sunday in all customs offices of the country, the Ministry statement added.

With the increase in the price of coal in the world markets, the mentioned rates will also be revised, further said the Ministry statement.

## Authority sees marked increase in rail cargo volume

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan Railway Authority says that last month, 257,635 metric tons have been transferred through the country's railways.

According to the Afghan Railway Authority, most of the transformation made Hariatan port.

The Afghanistan Railway Authority strives to provide suitable conditions for more transfers and provide necessary facilities to traders, says ARA officials.

Meanwhile, in the second month of the current 1402, 427,595 metric tons were transferred through the Afghanistan Railway, of which about 3 thousand tons were exported.

## Destroyed arms repaired

KABUL (Agencies): Thousands of light and heavy weapons were repaired by teams of the Defense Ministry, Defense Ministry published this news said.

In 2005 different types of weapons were repaired by a special contingency of the Defense Ministry and efforts of the Mujahidin technical team of that ministry and ready for use.

# Expired, low-quality food items destroyed



KABUL (Agencies): A total of 100 tonnes of expired and low-quality food items were set on fire in Kabul on Monday, Afghanistan Food and Drug Authority said.

The items were seized from different parts of the city.

"We call on all businessmen in the country to first obtain a license from the National Food and Drug

Authority and then familiarize themselves with the principles and regulations of the authority. They should try to consider the issue of health in their work," Abed Ehsaas, head of the supervision of licenses at Afghanistan Food and Drug Authority, said.

AFDA officials said the authority seeks to set up laboratories in the country's ports to prevent the entry of

low-quality goods into the country.

"In order for quality food products to enter the country and be available to our compatriots, we are trying to establish quality control laboratories by the end of 1402 in the eight customs provinces through which most of the food items enter the country," Javed Hajir, AFDA's spokesperson, said.

# Earthquake of magnitude 4.2 jolts Badakhshan

KABUL (Khaama Press): On Monday, an earthquake of 4.2 magnitudes jolted the 35 Km Badakhshan province of Afghanistan.

The Earthquake of magnitude 4.2 occurred around 11:16 am local time, 35 Km south of Ishkashim, Tajikistan, with a depth of 31 km, according to the Indian National Center for Seismology reported on Monday.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.2, Occurred on 26-06-2023, 11:16 am local time, lat: 36.43 N/71.48E, Depth 31 km,

location: Ishkasim district, Badakhshan, Afghanistan."

Earlier, a similar tremor of 4.6 magnitude struck Faizabad capital city of Badakhshan province of Afghanistan.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.6, Occurred on 21-06-2023, 6:25 am local time, lat: 36.51 N/71.28E, Depth 100 km, location: Zebak district, Badakhshan, Afghanistan."

Recently, the frequency of earthquakes in the province has increased, which could be a matter of

concern to the local people.

No casualties have been reported from the province as of now.

According to the seismological report, the province is the most vulnerable to natural disasters, including earthquakes, flash flooding, avalanches and landslides.

The recent powerful Earthquake of 6.5 occurred in March of this year in the Badakhshan province, Zebak district, where 13 people were killed and 100 others were injured.

# Over 600 people join national police in Wardak



WARDAK (Agencies): Police cadets attend a graduation ceremony in Maidan Wardak, a total of 612 police officers have completed a training course from a National Police Academy.

Including the chief police commander and provincial officials, senior of the Ministry of Interior

also participated in the graduation ceremony of these officers, a statement said.

The chief police commander of Wardak, Mawlawi Mohammad Sharif Halimi, during the ceremony, stressed the good behavior of police with the people during their duty, obedience to their

seniors, and unity and harmony among nations.

At the end of the ceremony, the graduated policemen received certificates, and they oath to serve the people with sincerity and honesty.

Based on reports, lately, about 3,000 soldiers and police have graduated in different provinces.

# Increase in cancer cases in Western Afghanistan

HERAT (Khaama Press): The number of patients seeking cancer treatment in Afghanistan's western region has increased by 30%, according to doctors at a cancer treatment facility in Herat province.

They said that among 4,000 cancer patients, 50 per cent of them were women during the last year.

Among 1,000 of these patients or 50 per cent of the women, had breast cancer, according to the director of the cancer centre, Dr Farooq Ahamad Sidqi.

"Almost out of every two cases of women that come to us, one case is breast cancer. This statistic has increased compared to the past. We need to know ways to diagnose and treat," said Sidqi.

According to him, most women are unaware of the symptoms of breast cancer, which causes them to wait until the disease has advanced before seeking

medical treatment.

However, women who have breast cancer complain bitterly about their financial difficulties and claim they cannot receive treatment.

On the other hand, due to a lack of diagnostic facilities, medications, technicians and specialized doctors in the country, most patients are financially stable. They can choose neighbouring countries, for medical care.

medical treatment.

However, women who have breast cancer complain bitterly about their financial difficulties and claim they cannot receive treatment.

On the other hand, due to a lack of diagnostic facilities, medications, technicians and specialized doctors in the country, most patients are financially stable. They can choose neighbouring countries, for medical care.

# Most foreigners in Iranian prisons Afghans



KABUL (Agencies): Askar Jalalian, a senior official from Iran's interior ministry, has said the majority of foreign prisoners in his country's jails are Afghans.

According to Jalalian, there are about 6,900 foreigners in Iran's prisons.

He told Iranian media that after Afghans, citizens from Iraq, Turkey, India and Azerbaijan number the most.

Jalalian also said that in accordance with an agreement with the Islamic Emirate of

Afghanistan, the IEA will hand over 50% of Iranian prisoners currently in Afghan prisons.

He said these prisoners were mostly incarcerated for drug trafficking and conflict and had not committed "political crimes".

# Turkey deports nearly 230 Afghan migrants

KABUL (Khaama Press): Nearly 230 Afghan migrants have been deported from different cities in Turkey, according to Turkish media outlets.

According to reports, most deported Afghan refugees were undocumented and illegal migrants.

Based on the reports, the Turkish authorities have emphasized that they will continue identifying illegal asylum seekers in the eastern city of Agri, Turkey.

Earlier, the General Directorate of Migration of Turkey announced that it had deported some 68,290 Afghan asylum seekers out of 124,441 undocumented migrants during the past year.

Approximately 68,290 Afghan residents, 12,511 Pakistanis, and migrants from other countries were deported from Turkey in the previous year, according to the General Directorate of Migration. The Turkish government's migration office maintains that it will deport more undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers this year, including 227 citizens of Afghanistan.

Since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan in August 2021, thousands of Afghans have left the country to the neighbouring nations for fear of being physically harassed, persecuted or killed.

Most Afghan migrants chose relatively dangerous and illegal paths to reach the neighbouring countries, including Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. After months of uncertainty, they are threatened with forcible deportation and jail.

"Returning to Afghanistan is similar to suicide. I have suffered quite a lot to reach Turkey, and now they forcefully deport me to my country. I have no choice but to end my life rather now than later," said an Afghan refugee.

Similarly, other neighbouring countries, including Iran and Pakistan, deport Afghan migrants regularly.

# Large areas of landmines cleared in Paktia: Officials



PAKTIKA (Agencies): Local officials of Paktia say that 100,000 acres of land in this province cleared from landmines and other unexploded materials.

With the cooperation of the police, the OMAR demining organization in Paktia started clearing lands from landmines and will continue until all mines and unexploded materials are fully cleared, local officials of the province said.

During the past nine months, the organization has cleared hundred thousand seven hundred and forty-nine acres of land in Paktia from landmines and other unexploded materials.

The districts of Aryob and Sayid Karam have been the main focus of landmines and unexploded ordnance in Paktia. The head of the OMAR demining organization, Mohammad Khalid Mullakhil said that they have discovered and neutralized or destroyed hundreds of landmines and other unexploded materials from the roadsides and around public places such as schools, and mosques.

Two demining officers of OMAR demining organization were injured, said reports. OMAR's demining organization, in the process of discovering and destroying landmines and other

unexploded materials, has informed more than five thousand citizens of Paktia about the dangers of these war tools. Landmines are still a serious threat to Afghan citizens. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has started efforts to discover and destroy landmines and other explosive materials in the corners and sides of the country.

Meanwhile, along with the demining organizations, the technical teams of the military-security units of Afghanistan have discovered and destroyed landmines and other unexploded materials in the corner and side of Afghanistan.

## No cases of torture in country's prisons

KABUL (Agencies): The military deputy of the Directorate of Prisons affairs, Major General Qari Habibullah Badr, at the graduation ceremony of 124 officers and guards of the educational center of that department said: "No cases of torture and oppression of prisoners have been recorded in the country's prisons."

Mr. Badr said that no prisoner has been tortured physically and mentally in the prisons of the country and according to the decree of supreme leader, the prisoners are treated well.

The establishment of the Islamic Emirate, in addition to the professional training programs of sewing and metalworking courses, memorization of the Holy Quran has been prepared for the prisoners, adding that efforts have been made the prisoners useful in society after their release and avoid any kind of crime, Mr. Badr added.

124 officers from prisons in 34 provinces were invited to the center for professional training after two months they will return to their provinces to continue their duties, said General Abdul Wahid.

After the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate, more than 17,500 people, including women, were imprisoned in the country's prisons, and about 2,000 prisoners lacked in the central prison of Kabul Pul-e-charkhi.

## Private companies start extracting marble mine

BGHLAN (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has signed a five-year contract to extract marble from a mine in the Khwaja Zaid Valley of the Doshi district of Baghlan province with two companies.

The Department of Mines representative stated that this mine has two blocks, and the firms will pay the government 900 Afghanis each tonne. According to the governor of Baghlan, the extraction of this mine will assist the local population by enhancing infrastructure and generating employment.

Operations are now regulated, and according to Adel, a representative of the Baghlan Mining Directorate, "With small-scale companies, each of them has a contract for five years, and these companies start their work according to the plan and contract that was concluded."

In response, the governor of Baghlan stated that funds from the province's mines would be used for infrastructural initiatives such as constructing and maintaining roads, bridges, and culverts.

"We assure the people that the work will be done safely and properly in this mine, and we assure the people that public services will be provided to them," said Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Haqqani, governor of Baghlan province.

"We request that the damaged condition of our roads and culverts be addressed because it is necessary," said Mohammad Yousuf, the district governor of the Doshi district of Baghlan.

According to company representatives, the marble the two companies export will be marketed locally and internationally.

"The materials that are extracted, we are trying to cover domestic needs first, and in the next step, we will have talks with countries like Turkey, Uzbekistan, and China, with whom we will sign business contracts," said M. Nabi.

# New governors appointed

KABUL (Agencies): Under the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, new governors were introduced for the provinces of Kunar, Badakhshan and Zabul.

The former governor of Kunar, Mohammad Ayub Khalid, appointed as the

governor of Badakhshan, the former judge of Badakhshan court, Abdul Jamil, appointed as the deputy governor of this province, and the former governor of Zabul, Qudratullah Abu Hamza has been appointed as the governor of Kunar, the

Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid on his Twitter page wrote, today, Monday.

The former deputy of the 217th Army Corps, Hezbullah Afghan appointed as the governor of Zabul province, the former governor

of Badakhshan, Amanuddin Mansoor appointed as the commander of the 217th Army Corps, and the former commander of the 217th Army Corps, Agha Mohammad Ibrahim, has been appointed as Deputy, Mujahid continued his tweets.





MOSCOW: Fighters from the Wagner Group of private mercenaries are deployed in a street near the headquarters of the Southern Military District in the city of Rostov-on-Don, Russia.

## Ahsan for efforts to achieve economic growth

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, on Monday, stressed on all the sectors of economy to work in unison as 'team Pakistan' for achieving economic growth and export expansion.

The minister, in a media interaction during visit of Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works Ltd here, said that current economic situation of the country require every field of life and sector of economy to play a proactive role for ensuring sustainable economic growth and expansion of GDP.

Ahsan Iqbal said that all the democratic forces of Pakistan while putting their political ideologies, manifestos and interests as well as differences aside, joined hands just for the sake of security and solidarity of the country. "There is a national government in Pakistan and all the allied parties believe that national interests of Pakistan were more important than their political motives and it was the time to build up a consensus and demonstrate unity to steer the nation on path of sustainable development, prosperity and glory," he

stated.

Political stability is vital for economic development while uncertainty tarnish the efforts for growth, he opined and reiterated that country needed fast track growth in GDP, tax to GDP ratio, exports and industrial production and for achievement of the growth objectives it was imperative to improve governance, through consensus based political, economic and administrative reforms. Ahsan Iqbal said that a political party that promoted politics of hatred in the country and tried to create mayhem had lost public support after the sad incidents of May 9 when monuments of national heroes were desecrated, house of Quaid-e-Azam was attacked.

Pakistan is bestowed with immense workforce having unmatched skills, vast mineral resources and remarkable capabilities in IT and other sectors to achieve target of increasing its exports of commodities and services to \$100 billion within a decade, he noted and urged the trade and industrial sector to attach topmost priority to expansion of exports and work with dedication to achieve the objective. The federal minister said that Karachi

Shipyard and Engineering works Ltd is a significant entity of country's engineering sector that is playing a remarkable role in ship building and maritime engineering.

The PML-N, while realizing the significance of naval force, started 2 important projects during its previous tenure and those projects has played pivotal role in strengthening of Pakistan's Naval force. The project aimed at modernising of the shipyard through installation of heavy duty cranes and other state of the equipment, ship lifting and transfer facilities and other innovative measures has enhanced the capabilities of the shipyard, he said adding that now the shipyard was not only capable of meeting the country's own requirements but it might offer boat and ship building and repair services to other countries of the region.

Managing Director Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works Ltd Rear Admiral Salman Ilyas and other senior officers of shipyard were also present at the occasion. Earlier, the federal minister inspected facilities, received briefing about the Karachi Shipyard, and also inaugurated crane system at the shipyard.

## Power outages irk masses as shortfall rises to 6,300MW

ISLAMABAD (INP): Citizens across Pakistan are forced to experience the extremely hot weather due to prolong power outage as the power distribution companies are observing a shortfall of 6,300 megawatts (MW) on Monday.

Sources within the power sector have revealed that the total demand for electricity stands at a staggering 26,900 megawatts, while the overall electricity generation falls significantly short at 20,600 megawatts. According to reliable sources from the Power Division, the national grid is currently generating a modest 7,900 megawatts of electricity, while the independent power producers (IPPs) are contributing an additional 7,700 megawatts, making up a substantial portion of the country's electricity supply.

However, it is worth mentioning here that the electricity generation from nuclear power plants is only reaching 3,130 megawatts, further exacerbating the prevailing crisis. Government thermal power plants are producing a meager 520 megawatts, failing to meet the soaring energy demand.

Renewable energy sources, although commendable in their efforts, are currently unable to bridge the substantial gap in power supply. Wind power plants are contributing 1,115 megawatts, while solar plants are generating a mere 100 megawatts. Authoritative sources within the Power Division confirmed that the citizens are experiencing prolonged load shedding for a duration of 6 to 8 hours.

## SSP operations summoned

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday summoned SSP operations in a personal capacity in former principal secretary Azam Khan missing case.

Chief Justice IHC, Justice Aamer Farooq took up the plea seeking the recovery of Azam. At the outset of the hearing, Justice Farooq asked the police officials about the position of the Safe City's cameras. The car in which Khan was shifted was not spotted in the cameras, the police officials said.

Azam Khan is 'missing' from June 15, show some seriousness, the CJ remarked. The additional attorney general said the police are cooperating and investigating to trace Azam is underway. Later, the hearing of the case was adjourned until July 5 by Islamabad High Court and SSP operations was summoned in a personal capacity.

It should be noted that the former Prime Minister's Principal Secretary, Azam, allegedly went missing and his family reported his disappearance, confirming it to the Kohsar police station. In a statement the family members stated that Azam Khan had left home the previous evening and did not return. His mobile phone is also switched off. Meanwhile, the police said that investigations into the matter are underway to recovered the abducted former principal secretary.

# Disbelief, anger: Russians struggle to process Wagner revolt

MOSCOW (Agencies): At first, 30-year-old Ivan from Rostov-an-Don did not believe an armed uprising was taking place in his southern Russian hometown on Saturday. "That morning, I told my friends it was all fake news, to which they responded by sending me photos of tanks," he told Al Jazeera.

After months of feuding with Russia's military chiefs, Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the feared Wagner Group, stepped up his fight and ordered his mercenaries to seize the port city of more than 1 million people. They crossed the border with Ukraine and were ready to go "all the way" against the Russian military, the Wagner boss said.

"I went to the headquarters of the Southern Federal District, and at every intersection, there stood armed Wagnerites, and the headquarters itself was already surrounded by soldiers and tanks with their barrels pointed towards the building," Ivan said. Despite being under military occupation, the atmosphere in the city was very calm, Ivan said.

The presence of heavily armed men did not appear to bother the locals, who took pictures and struck up conversations with the mercenaries. Ivan said he filmed a now-viral video of a cleaner nonchalantly sweeping the street next to a tank. "By the time I returned to the city centre in the evening, there were already crowds of people, families with children, waving Wagner and Russian flags," he recalled. "They shouted in support of the Wagnerites, gave them cigarettes, hugged and shook hands. Every Rostovite now has a photo with a tank. By midnight, under the extremely warm reaction of the townsfolk, they gathered in a column and left just as quickly as they appeared. And today, everything in Rostov is calm."

Prigozhin mutinied against the Russian high command and captured the country's 10th largest city before marching his fighters towards the capital. But the Wagner convoy stopped within 200km (124 miles) of Moscow, after a deal was seemingly struck with the help of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. Prigozhin was told he could go into exile in Belarus and charges against him would be dropped if he ended his mutiny.

Lukashenko is an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Prigozhin has held close ties with the Kremlin chief too. The convict-turned-oligarch was known as "Putin's chef" because his restaurant and catering business was often awarded lucrative Russian government contracts. The spectacle this weekend baffled observers of the Russia-Ukraine war as well as Russians themselves. "It

left me totally confused," Alexey Krapukhin, a member of the liberal party Yabloko, told Al Jazeera.

"When I heard [Wagner] was crossing the border, I thought, 'Alright, here we go. There are going to be some major changes in Russia, and not for the better.' I can't say I shared the excitement of certain oppositionists that here comes Prigozhin and he's gonna topple Putin. "But I had a small hope that if he came to power, people like him don't last long, and then Russia will be, finally, on the path to reform. Then when he turned his forces around, that caught me totally by surprise. I spent the weekend in Karelia and thought when I returned to Moscow I'd see barricades, fires, soldiers on the street. But no, it's just another peaceful city, unlike what's happening in Ukraine."

"I think soon we'll learn the terms of the deal with Prigozhin. I wouldn't wait for a revolution, but Putin's power is weakening. People can see that a relatively small armed group can make it all the way to Moscow, and it's frightening to think what could happen next. Will the security services interfere next time there's an inter-elite squabble?" Historian Ian Garner told Al Jazeera that Russians were following the story with "eyes agog" as the unprecedented events unfolded, with Telegram channels "deluged" in a hunt for information.

"However, we didn't see much enthusiasm for any particular side in the conflict: liberal Russians didn't use this opportunity to protest en masse against Putin or the war, but nor did ordinary patriots rush to man barricades against an advancing Wagner column," he said. Russia's state-backed media extensively reported on Saturday's attempted putsch but avoided vilifying the mutineers, at least at first.

The local St Petersburg news site Fontanka reported that police searching Wagner's offices found passports for Prigozhin under various aliases, five gold bars, six pistols and five bricks of an "unidentified white powder". But after the announcement that charges against Prigozhin would be dropped, the story disappeared from the site. Investigative journalists have since managed to track the names on the passports and link them to Prigozhin's activities.

An editorial released by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency described the mutinous mercenaries as "heroes of Artemovsk", the Soviet and pre-2016 name for Ukraine's now occupied city of Bakhmut, which Wagner helped capture. The editorial applauded the maturity of the Wagner fighters for seemingly reaching a compromise. "On this day, people from both sides clashed, ready

to die for Russia," the RIA article read. "But they refused to kill each other for her." But of course, a paramilitary army advancing so close to the capital practically unopposed is something that cannot be ignored.

On his web show, Solovyov Live, the prominent pro-Kremlin pundit Vladimir Solovyov pondered how such an event was allowed to happen. "We must understand what happened today. We must leave emotions aside and carry out a very hard, sober calculation," he told his audience. "We need to sharply build up the armed forces. We need to boost the size of the armed forces, their combat readiness, so that not only the front, but also the rear is saturated with armed forces. In the event of an invasion on the territory of the Russian Federation, how and what and who should raise the alarm? How should various services operate. How should the roads be blocked and in what order? If there are tank columns, what stops them? A million questions that have been raised today and which we must answer."

The weak response to Prigozhin's insurrection was also seized upon by the oppositional liberal media. Writing for the Latvia-based news site Meduza, journalist Maxim Trudolyubov compared Putin to the ruler in the Danish fairy tale The Emperor's New Clothes, in which everyone can see the king is naked but no one dares tell him except a little boy. "Prigozhin has just proved that in Russia it is possible to capture a city of a million people without firing a shot and then move towards Moscow without encountering resistance," Maxim wrote.

"Prigozhin's rebellion is another link in a long process, as a result of which the king will be recognised as naked. ... It is clear now that Putin is not able to control even 'his' people." Trudolyubov then referred to a leaked conversation between an oligarch and well-known music producer this year, in which the pair privately disparaged Putin and the decision to go to war.

"These people are losing money, power and opportunities to get rich because of Putin's actions," Trudolyubov said. "But they prefer to publicly praise the king's outfit and earn as much as they can. There is an understandable explanation for this, and only it still allows Putin's system to stay afloat: At the very moment when the king is finally recognised by everyone as naked, his court hypocrites will also be left without clothes." And Prigozhin's revolt might not be forgiven after all. On Monday, the Kommersant newspaper and RIA Novosti reported that according to insiders, the investigation against Prigozhin over armed rebellion is ongoing.

## Aitzaz demands PM's resignation

ISLAMABAD (INP): After the dissolution of the seven-member bench, senior lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan has demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Monday.

Following the government objections, the seven-member bench – hearing the appeals against the military court trails of civilians – was dissolved. After which the senior lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan during media talk outside the court called Shehbaz Sharif to resign from his office. Aitzaz Ahsan criticized the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government, stating that, the government is not going to hold election on – October 08 – the date given by the coalition government for general election.

He said that the PML-N vice president and chief organizer Maryam Nawaz and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Fazlur Rehman have undermined the authority of the courts through their speeches and rallies. "Their answers and speeches in rallies are in themselves contempt of court," Aitzaz Ahsan said. The senior lawyer further stated that the Supreme Court should disqualify the politicians found guilty in contempt of court.

## IHC seeks response from PIC

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court has sought a response from the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) in relation to a petition filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding meeting minutes.

The PIC had previously ordered the ECP to provide meeting minutes to a citizen under the Right of Access to Information Act 2017. The role of the PIC is to ensure that citizens have access to information held by federal public bodies.

## PHC extends four PTI's activists bail pleas

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has extended interim bail pleas of four Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists including former Member National Assembly (MNA) Anwar Taj and tehsil Nazim Swabi in 9th& 10th May vandalism, on Monday.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali heard writ petitions while counsel for petitioners as well as Additional Advocate General appeared on behalf of provincial government and disposed-of several petitions following submission of reports by concerned Deputy Commissioner denying issuance of arrest warrants.

The counsel argued that following arrest of PTI chairman Imran Khan on 9th May, the activists protested and vandalized public's infrastructures while former MNA Anwar

Taj along with his two colleagues were booked under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO).

The counsel added that former MNA approached PHC while the court has granted interim bail and argued that petitioner didn't aware regarding cases registered him. He requested PHC to direct competent authorities for submission of record before court and pleaded for extension in the bail.

However, PHC has extended interim bail of former MNA Anwar Taj along with his two colleagues and directed to submit record of First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against the petitioners. The same bench has also extended bail plea of tehsil chairman Swabi while stopped his arrest till next hearing and directed to submitted record of FIRs registered against him before court.

Additional Advocate General Danyal Asad

Chamkani and counsel for petitioner Shah Faisal Ottmankhel Advocate appeared before court while requested for provision of records of FIRs registered against the tehsil chairman Swabi. The counsel pleaded for extension in bail and argued that petitioner didn't aware regarding number and nature of cases against him.

However, Additional Advocate General Danyal Asad Chamkani informed that Tehsil chairman Swabi is booked in corruption charges while didn't appearing before Anti-Corruption. The counsel argued that petitioner didn't know the nature of case initiated by Anti-Corruption Establishment against him. PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali extended bail of tehsil chairman Swabi and stopped competent authorities from his arrest while ordered to submit record on next hearing before court.

## I really, really miss Shahzada Dawood: Wife

LONDON (BBC): Teenager Suleman Dawood, who died in the Titan submersible, took his Rubik's Cube with him because he wanted to break a world record, his mother has told the BBC.

The 19-year-old applied to the Guinness World Records and his father, Shahzada, who also died, had brought a camera to capture the moment. Christine Dawood and her daughter were on board the Polar Prince, the sub's support vessel, when word came through that communications with the Titan had been lost.

"I didn't comprehend at that moment what it meant - and then it just went downhill from there," she said. In her first interview, Mrs Dawood said she had planned to go with her hus-

band to view the wreck of the Titanic, but the trip was cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. "Then I stepped back and gave them space to set [Suleman] up, because he really wanted to go," she said. As well as Suleman and his father Shahzada Dawood, three other people died on board: Stockton Rush, the 61-year-old CEO of OceanGate which owned the Titan, British businessman Hamish Harding, 58, and Paul-Henry Nargeolet, 77, a former French navy diver and renowned explorer.

Speaking of her son, Mrs Dawood said Suleman loved the Rubik's Cube so much that he carried it with him everywhere, dazzling onlookers by solving the complex puzzle in 12 seconds. "He said, 'I'm going to solve the Rubik's Cube

3,700 metres below sea at the Titanic.'" Suleman was a student at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, in the UK. Businessman Shahzada Dawood, who was British, was from one of Pakistan's richest families.

The family, including daughter Alina, 17, boarded the Polar Prince on Father's Day. Mrs Dawood said they hugged and made jokes in the moments before her husband and son boarded the Titan submersible. "I was really happy for them because both of them, they really wanted to do that for a very long time," she said.

Mrs Dawood described her husband as infectiously curious about the world around him - the kind of person who made the family watch documentaries after dinner.