

Body of missing girl found
F.P. Report

MIR ALI: The body of the missing minor girl was found after nine days of Police search in Mir Ali, North Waziristan. The six-year-old Samira body was found in Zakarkhel village, Mir Ali, North Waziristan. Police official said, the body of the one Samira, a six-year-old minor girl, was missing for the last nine days and the Police search was continued after the report of her missing.



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LAHORE: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanvir Hussain called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

9 of family
killed over
family dispute
in Malakand

F.P. Report

MALAKAND: At least nine persons of a family were killed over family dispute at Malakand district on late Tuesday night, police said. The rivals equipped with automatic weapons entered at the house of Hassan Shah around 1am last night and allegedly sprayed volley of bullets at his family.

As a result, six persons and three women were shot dead on the spot. The dead includes Hassan Shah, his wife Zanab, daughters Rabia, Azra, Roqia, sons Ali, Bilal, Zuhra, son of Izaz and Saima wife of Azaz.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan took notice by directing the top Police officials to immediately investigate the incident and take necessary action for the quick arrest of the killers.

In a message, the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan expressed his condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the victim's family. He also prayed for the bereaved family and said, this is a very sad, brutal and condemnable move. The elements involved in the incident cannot escape from the grip of the law under any circumstances, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan said. The killers will be immediately arrested and brought to justice and all possible efforts will be made to provide complete justice to the victim's family, Muhammad Azam Khan added.

PTI former
minister, city
mayor held

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The authorities on Wednesday arrested PTI former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa minister Dr Amjad Ali and city mayor Shahid Ali Khan from Swat in connection with their role in May 9 incidents.

According to police sources, Shahid Ali Khan was arrested from his house. Police were also shifting Dr Amjad to jail. Both the PTI leaders were booked in May 9 violent incidents. Meanwhile, police also raided the house of PTI former federal minister Sheikh Waqas Akram in Jhang.

A large contingent of police reached former minister Sheikh Akram's house to arrest him. But police did not confirm his arrest so far. A case has been registered against him under Terrorism Act in Kotwali police station.

Meanwhile, another PTI leader from Arifwala bid adieu to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf over May 9 incidents. Mian Amjad Joya, the PTI ticket holder from NA 140 Arifwala, on Wednesday parted ways with his party.

Pilgrims perform stoning
of devil at Jamarat

MINA (Agencies): Vast crowds of robed Muslims hurled pebbles in the "stoning of the devil" ritual on Wednesday as the biggest Hajj pilgrimage since the start of the pandemic draws to a close in intense Saudi Arabian heat.

From dawn in Mina, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims began pelting three concrete monoliths representing Satan, and heading to Mecca for a final "tawaf". More than 1.8 million people are taking part in the first unrestricted Hajj since Covid struck in 2020. About 2.5 million, the most on record, joined the pilgrimage in pre-pandemic 2019. As well as crowds at every turn, the visitors have had to contend with ferocious temperatures at the Hajj, which currently coincides with the Saudi summer.

Temperatures peaked at 48 degrees Celsius (118 Fahrenheit) on Tuesday, when the pilgrims prayed for hours at Mount Arafat, and were expected to hit 47 degrees on Wednesday in Mina. "I will not think of doing Hajj again until it takes place in winter," Farah, a 26-year-old Tunisian, said of the annual ritual which follows the lunar calendar and doesn't always coincide with summer. "My body is melting," she said.

More than 1.8 million pilgrims, most of them from abroad, joined the first Hajj with unrestricted numbers since pre-Covid in 2019, when 2.5 million took part. The attendance figure, announced by Saudi officials on Tuesday, falls well short of their predictions of beating the 2019 record. The Hajj is a source of prestige and a major revenue-earner for Saudi Arabia, which is trying to pivot its oil-reliant economy in new directions including tourism.

The devil-stoning marks the start of the three-day Eidul Azha holiday, celebrated by Muslims by buying and slaughtering livestock to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son. Afterwards, the pilgrims return to Makkah to perform a farewell tawaf — walking seven times around the Kaaba.

Mina's walkways have proven deadly in the past: in 2015, a stampede killed up to 2,300 worshippers in the worst Hajj disaster ever. A similar incident killed 364 in 2006. Other stampedes were reported in 2004, 1998 and 1994. In 1990, the failure of a tunnel ventilation system triggered a huge rush that killed 1,426 pilgrims, mainly from Asia.

There have been no major incidents since 2015, and the site has been extensively remodelled with a multi-storey bridge to allow the pilgrims to access the monoliths safely. On Wednesday, helicopters buzzed overhead and hundreds of police officers fanned out across Mina's roads to organise the flow of worshippers. As well as the crowds, scorching conditions have been a major challenge for the worshippers from 160 countries, including many elderly after a maximum age limit was scrapped.

In recent years the Hajj has coincided with the Saudi summer, compounded by global warming that has made the desert climate even hotter. Tuesday's peak of 48 degrees Celsius made it the hottest day at this year's Hajj. Experts have warned that temperatures of 50 degrees could become an annual occurrence in Saudi Arabia by the end of the century.

To protect themselves from the heat, many pilgrims walk with umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun, while others carry their folded prayer blankets above their heads. More than 32,000 health workers are on hand to treat anyone struck by heatstroke or other ailments, authorities say, while bottles of water are being distributed free of charge.

On his way out of Arafat on Tuesday, Egyptian employee Sobhi Saeed, 56, said he was fulfilled but drained as the Hajj winds down. "I am very exhausted. I feel very dehydrated." The Hajj started on Sunday at Makkah's Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest site, before an overnight stay in tents and then the prayers on Mount Arafat, where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivered his final sermon.

'Bonded bulk storage'
to end hoarding of petrol

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik said on Wednesday that government had introduced a new policy of 'bonded warehouse' to do away with dry outs problem in the petroleum sector.

Under this policy, he explained, the foreign companies doing legal business of oil from around the world could construct bonded warehouse for oil storage in various major cities and it would not only bring in foreign exchange reserves to Pakistan but also ensure all the time availability of petrol and diesel in the country.

It would also break the monopoly of a few oil marketing companies, which used to create artificial shortage of oil in the country on various pretext, and also discourage illegal hoarding of oil to gain more profits, he added.

Addressing a press conference here, he said the government was taking appropriate and comprehensive measures to maintain or gradually lower the prices of energy including petroleum, gas and electricity.

Dr. Musadik added that foreign companies which stored petroleum and diesel in the bonded warehouse, would definitely get themselves registered here in

Pakistan and would have to open their business accounts in the local commercial banks. Consequently, it would resolve the issue of LCs (Letters of Credit) confirmation as these companies would make business transactions in dollar or in Pak rupee directly through banks and in a way, it would also release the pressure on country's foreign reserves exchange and create a little bit space for the government in making various payments, he said. He added that this initiative would also do away with LCs charges, which so far were being passed on to the end consumer.

He asserted that it would be a great relief and facilitation for the small filling stations which faced even more problems during shortage of oil, and now they would be able to continue their business after buying oil from the bonded warehouses.

Dr. Musadik said, "On behalf of Prime Minister, I am giving this good news to people as this is Eid festivity so we should set aside the political talks for a while. Today, I will not speak about whatever the PTI is doing or had been doing to bring the country on the verge of collapse. It's Eid gala, so it is responsibility of the government to give hope to the people."

The Minister of State for Petroleum said that all the criticism by the PTI regarding Russian oil agreement and its shipment was now died down as second oil shipment from Russia also reached Pakistan. He mentioned that coalition government recently made a deal with Azerbaijan on its own terms and conditions for inexpensive gas, citing that under this deal, Azerbaijan would offer a gas tanker every month and it would up to Pakistan whether to purchase or not.

"We will purchase this gas if it is in our favour price. This deal will also help end gas shortage in the country during winter season. We have arranged inexpensive oil and gas and also put in place an effective and viable solution to cope with dry outs problem in petroleum sector," he remarked.

In addition, he said that as per commitment of the government for promotion of renewable energy, the Prime Minister had also launched four solar energy projects with an accumulative capacity of 10000 mega watt. The Prime Minister also issued directives for working out a comprehensive plan to divert all the major petroleum companies of Pakistan towards renewable energy, green hydrogen and green ammonia, he added.

ECC okays
Bonded Bulk
Storage
Policy 2023

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet approved "Bonded Bulk Storage Policy 2023" for petroleum products, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar tweeted here on Wednesday.

He said, it was another commitment of the government fulfilled with people of Pakistan that was made through Budget speech for the fiscal year 2023-24 on June 9 23 in National Assembly. He said, the details would be shared by State Minister for Petroleum through presser.

"ECC approved 'Bonded Bulk Storage Policy 2023' for petroleum products. Another Govt's commitment fulfilled with people of Pakistan that was made through Budget FY24 speech of 9June23 in National Assembly of Pakistan. State Minister for Petroleum will share detail through presser," the minister tweeted.

'Punishing
May 9 rioters
inevitable'

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif said on Wednesday that it was inevitable to punish the masterminds of the May 9 incidents as the public was facing the consequences of the conspiracy to facilitate a person.

Addressing a press conference here at Model Town, he said that the facilitator and mastermind involved in the events of May 9 and 10, no matter how powerful they were, must be punished because they had attacked not on an institution but on the state and its security. "From the day first, we have been saying that facilitation is happening which has now proved. Our goal is not to punish people but to make a difference by making right decisions," he argued.

Mian Javed Latif said that destruction they had done to Pakistan in the guise of elections was now exposed, and nation would not tolerate any concession to the mastermind of May 9 and 10. He said that it was a good omen that a powerful institution started self-accountability process and set an example for other institutions which should also start self-accountability process. He hoped that institution providing justice would also go through this process and those who made wrong decisions to crown only one person would be held accountable.

Federal Minister was of view that God forbid, an incident like May 9 might happen again, if those who launched this plot were not arrested and punished. To a question, he said whether one was in the institution or outside, Pakistan was a priority for everyone, and the people sitting in institutions had been criticized in the past as well. It was necessary to criticize such decisions which worsen the conditions of Pakistan.

To another question, he said that those who had brought a petition that there should be no punishment under the Army Act, must be asked when the Army Act was made. Those saying that Pakistan's law was in shambles, only wanted to save one person, and also, the people who aspired to become Green Card holders were supporting him, he maintained.

Notice

THE Frontier Post wishes a very happy Eid to its valuable readers. It is further notified that the offices of The Frontier Post will remain closed on Thursday and Friday. Therefore, there will be no issue of newspapers on Friday and Saturday.

PM forms
body for PIA's
restructuring

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday constituted a high-level committee to work out the restructuring, reformation and revival of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

He was chairing a high-level meeting to discuss the matters pertaining to the PIA, according to the PM Office. The committee, headed by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, would present its proposals and recommendations to the Federal Cabinet after Eidul Azha. The committee would also comprise Railways and Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant to the PM Jahanzeb Khan and secretary aviation.

The body would deliberate on different options for the restructuring and revival of the PIA. The avi-

ation minister briefed the prime minister about the proposed route map and reformative measures for the uplift of the national flag carrier. The prime minister appreciated the efforts of the minister for the PIA's revival. He viewed that the PIA had the capacity to overcome the losses.

The meeting was told that the number of planes in the PIA fleet would have to be increased from 27 to 49, in order to steer the airline out of the crisis. Prime Minister Shehbaz said the PIA had lost the Europe and US routes owing to irresponsible statements by the previous government, inflicting the loss of billions of rupees. He recalled that the incompetent ministers of the previous government had victimised international investors, Chinese firms and Turkish businessmen.

Calling the reformation process inevitable, the prime minister told the meeting that the PIA could only progress if run by pro-

fessional and administrative experts purely on a profit-and-loss basis. The prime minister said the government was heading toward a policy mechanism in which its role would be confined to the policy-making, and facilitation of investors, businessmen and companies. Federal ministers Khawaja Saad Rafiq and Azam Nazeer Tarar, Advisor Ahad Cheema and relevant authorities attended the meeting. Federal ministers Syed Naveed Qamar, Ishaq Dar and Ahsan Iqbal, SAPM Jahanzeb Khan and others joined via video link.

Minister Rana Tanveer calls on PM: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here. In the meeting, they discussed the country's overall political situation as well as the matters pertaining to education and professional training.

Three terrorists killed
in Bajaur gunbattle

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces shot dead three terrorists during a gunbattle in Bajaur District, ISPR said Wednesday.

According to a statement of the ISPR, security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in general area of Inayat Qilla in Bajaur District on June 27 after receiving information about presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of the operation, intense fire exchange took place between the security forces personnel and the terrorists, resulting in killing of three

terrorists including terrorist commander Shafi. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the slain terrorists, who remained actively involved in terror attacks against the security forces as well as killing of innocent citizens.

Sanitization of the area was carried out after the shootout to eliminate any terrorists left behind. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

Security forces kill terrorist in Tirah IBO: The security forces conducted

an Intelligence Based Operation in general area Tirah, Khyber District on 27 June 2023, said a statement issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Wednesday.

During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, one terrorist was sent to hell, while another three were injured. Weapon and ammunition was also recovered from the killed terrorist. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

Ali Muhammad sent to
jail on judicial remand

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A local court in Mardan on Wednesday sent incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Ali Muhammad Khan to jail on a 14-day judicial remand in a corruption case.

The PTI leader was rearrested for the sixth time in another corruption case shortly after being released by an anti-corruption court in Peshawar a day earlier (Tuesday). Earlier, the court had granted post-arrest interim bail to the PTI leader in a case related to alleged fake hiring in the fisheries department and causing Rs2.3 million losses to the national treasury.

Soon after his release, officials of the anti-corruption establishment (ACE) took him into custody in another case related to alleged embezzlement of funds in various contracts.

Khan was first arrested by the Islamabad capital territory police on May 11 under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order Order (MPO) in connection with the violent protests and attacks on the civil and military installations last month. The violent protests, triggered by the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan from the IHC in the Al-Qadir Trust case, erupted almost across the country.

During the days-long protests, which ended only after the PTI chief's release, enraged party workers allegedly attacked private and public properties, including military installations — the Lahore Corps Commander's House or Jinnah House and the General Headquarters (GHQ) entrance in Rawalpindi. At least eight people lost their lives dur-

ing the violent protests. On June 9, the PTI leader was released from prison after an anti-terrorism court (ATC) discharged him from all the cases related to May 9 mayhem and attacks on civil and military installations. The court ordered the authorities to let him walk free if he was not implicated in any other case.

Soon after his release, officials of the anti-corruption establishment (ACE) took him into custody in a corruption case from outside the ATC premises. Earlier today, the incarcerated PTI leader was arraigned before the court of judicial magistrate due to the public holiday. During today's proceedings, Judicial magistrate Malik Zeeshan Gul rejected the anti-corruption establishment's (ACE) request seeking physical remand of the PTI leader.

Four Armenian soldiers
killed by Azerbaijani fire

NAGORNO-KARABAKH (Agencies): Four Armenian soldiers were killed on Wednesday by Azerbaijani fire in Nagorno-Karabakh, said separatist authorities in the breakaway region, which has been at the centre of a decades-long territorial dispute between the Caucasus enemies.

On Wednesday morning, "units of the Azerbaijani armed forces opened artillery fire" on Armenian positions, the Artsakh Defense Army said, adding there were "four servicemen who were killed in action as a result of another provocation by Azerbaijan". In a later statement the group said

that the situation along the border was now "relatively stable".

The news came as the United States mediates three days of new peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in its latest attempt to quell a conflict that has flared repeatedly. Secretary of State Antony Blinken opened closed-door talks with the adversaries' foreign ministers just outside Washington on Tuesday, in the second such negotiation session he has led in as many months.

Russia has historically been the mediator between the two former Soviet republics but the United States and European Union

have been increasingly active as Moscow gets bogged down in its invasion of Ukraine. Armenia has repeatedly accused Russian peacekeepers of failing to live up to promises to protect ethnic Armenians in line with a 2020 ceasefire negotiated by Moscow after six weeks of fighting left thousands dead.

Russia last week pressed Azerbaijan to let traffic through the Lachin corridor that links Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh -- a predominantly ethnic Armenian area effectively controlled by Yerevan since war during the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Nawaz offers Eid prayer

DUBAI (Agencies): PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif along with other family members offered Eidul Azha prayers at Emirates Hill in Dubai. After offering prayers, former prime minister Nawaz Sharif also met his relatives and workers. On this occasion people also took pictures with him. It should be noted that Eidul Azha is being celebrated today in Gulf countries including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman.



Turkish Ambassador calls on Khawaja Ahmed Hassan

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci on Wednesday called on Khawaja Ahmed Hassan Coordinator to Prime Minister here at his office.

Bilateral relations between the two countries and mutual interests were discussed during the meeting. Khawaja Ahmed Hassan said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Republic of Turkiye proved helpful for strengthening the relations of both the countries.

"Turkiye has always helped Pakistan in critical circumstances and its major companies have invested in Pakistan a lot", he added. Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Pacaci said that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan loves Pakistan and its people and Muslim Ummah always wishes to see Pakistan as prosperous state.

Two members of robbers gang held

KARACHI (APP): Two members of a gang allegedly involved in committing house robberies were arrested by a patrolling team at Clifton police station on Wednesday.

According to a police spokesman, the arrested accused had been involved in the aforementioned operations for the past fifteen years and had targeted several houses in Defence and Clifton. Stolen cash, gold ornaments, and other valuables had been recovered from the possession.

The accused were identified as Ashraf alias Achho and Asif, while the third accomplice of the accused was already in jail.

A case had been registered and further investigations were underway.

May 9 rioters will be tried in the military courts: Chohan

RAWALPINDI (PPI): Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) leader Fiaz Chohan said Wednesday that the May 9 rioters will be tried in the military courts.

Talking to the media in Rawalpindi on Wednesday, the IPP leader said that the situation has become clear after the press conference of ISPR DG who categorically stated that those who attacked military installations, would have to stand the military trials.

He said what the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf did to the state of Pakistan, even its enemies - Israel and India - could not have done that. He said that the PTI social media team sitting in America has launched anti-Pakistan propaganda.

PTI dissident Chohan said that the public and ISPR DG have given a shut-up call to the false propaganda of the PTI. He lamented that PTI Chairman Imran Khan is still instilling venom in the minds of people.

Talking about military trials, the IPP leader said that during the PTI tenure, 27 cases were tried in military courts. He said that barrister Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan and advocate Latif Khosa are making false statements regarding military courts.

Delegation from Iran met with Sharjeel Memon

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A delegation from Iran, led by Iranian Consul General Hassan Nourian, met with Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, at the Archives Complex in Karachi.

During the meeting, the Iranian delegation discussed concerns and challenges faced by pilgrims, engaging in a discussion with Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon.

During the meeting, the Iranian delegation empha-

sized their commitment to offering optimal travel facilities to the pilgrims. In the meeting, the Iranian delegation said that we want the pilgrims not to face any kind of difficulties and we will try to make it easier for the pilgrims coming to Iran.

In the meeting, Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon appreciated the Iranian government's actions for the pilgrims and said that we value the Iranian government's actions for the pilgrims.

Iranian Consul General

Hassan Nourian, Iranian Road and Transport officials Hamid Reza Shahraki Sanavi, Daryoush Bagher Javan, Reza Nafissi, Naser Kalantari, Habibullah Jamshid and Leila Eslamian participated in the meeting. Secretary Transport Saleem Rajput, CEO Trans Karachi Tufail Palijo were also present on the occasion of the meeting. Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon also presented gifts of Sindhi Ajrak and hats to the Iranian Consul General Hassan Nourian and other guests.



Control room made operational to monitor mega cleaning operations on Eid

LAHORE (APP): Secretary Local Government Punjab Parvaiz Iqbal has said that staff will be present in the field on all the three days of Eid in order to make all the districts free from litter.

In a press statement issued here on Wednesday, he said that Local Government Department has completed all arrangements to ensure cleanliness in cities, towns and villages on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha. In this regard, a control room headed by Secretary Local Government Board has been activated.

109 officers and employees will perform duties in three shifts in the control room. First shift from 9 am to 5 pm, second shift from 5 pm to 1 am and third shift from 1 am to 9 am will be present

in the control room to resolve complaints. The control room staff will also supervise the ongoing cleaning operations of other waste management companies and local governments including Lahore. He said that control room numbers have also been issued for filing complaints. Citizens can contact given numbers in case of any complaint: 99214831, 99214837, 99214840, 99214841, 99214883.

Apart from this, helpline 1198 representatives will also be present in the control room. In cities where waste management companies are present, citizens can also contact the helpline of the respective waste management company on 1139 in case of complaints.

Sindh finalises Eidul Azha plan, introduces GPS tagging system

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Local Government (LG) Department has finalised its Eidul Azha plan for the disposal of offal of the sacrificial animals and decided to introduce a GPS tagging system, it emerged Wednesday. The Sindh LG department unveiled its Eidul Azha plan and introduced a GPS tagging system for ensuring the timely and proper timely disposal of offal of the sacrificial animals.

A notification read that the transition officers will link the GPS system to the dumping points, whereas, the lists of the on-duty sanitary staff and supervisors at the collection points were declared mandatory.

Additionally, the chief executive officer will be bound to present the performance report of each chairman of the concerned local council. Holidays of all employees including the chief executive officer of the Sindh Local Government (LG) Department. The executive officers will be responsible for providing the necessary machinery for the disposal of the offal.

KMC, Eidul Azha plan, GPS tagging

system, Sindh LG dept Earlier in the day, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab chaired a session to review arrangements for Eidul Azha which was also attended by the town chairmen of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Mayor Murtaza Wahab said that they want to work with all stakeholders to provide relief to the Karachi people. He vowed that public issues in all towns will be addressed on a priority basis after consultations.

"We assure our maximum cooperation with the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB). The digging work has been completed at the landfill site and 18 trenches are finalised for burying the offal."

He added, "93 collection points will be established for collecting the waste of the sacrificial animals during Eidul Azha. Additionally, complaint centres will be made functional in each district of the metropolis. Murtaza Wahab said that complaints can be registered at SSWMB helpline 1128.



LAHORE: A deserted view of road in Provincial Capital during Eid-ul-Adha holidays.

Poor, destitute should not be forgotten on Eid: Tessori

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori on Wednesday, congratulating the people on Eidul Azha, said following the Sunnah of Prophet Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) they sacrificed animals every year as per the command of Allah Almighty, they should also not forget those who were not able to perform the religious obligation. The governor, in his message on Eidul Azha, said the poor and destitute people, and those who were badly affected by economic condi-

tions, deserved the most attention from their well-off brethren, and the Islamic injunctions in that regard were also clear that they were entitled to the meat of sacrificial animals.

Some 100 camels would be sacrificed at the Governor House, whose meat would be distributed among the deserving and needy people, he added. The governor asserted that the darkness from society could be removed by following the Sunnah of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS). "A welfare

society can be established if we mould our lives as per sayings of the Prophet." He recalled that Pakistan came into being as a result of the great sacrifices of Muslims and it could be made a stable, strong, prosperous and Islamic welfare state if "all of us remove our differences". The governor said the entire nation condemned the May 9 incidents and proved that no conspiracy against the country's security and stability could succeed.

Prisoners get 120-day remission in punishment

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday announced a 120-day remission in the punishment of prisoners on Eidul Azha festival.

The Sindh Home Department also issued a notification in this regard. According to the notification, this remission will not apply to prisoners involved in kidnapping for ransom and terrorism, and also to prisoners involved in robbery and anti-state activities.

Eid prayers will be offered at polo ground at eight o'clock

KARACHI (PPI): The arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha prayer have been completed in the polo ground managed by KMC, the Eid prayer will be offered at 8:00 am. Khatieb of Kmc Jama Masjid Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Salimi, will lead the prayer, it is expected that Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad, diplomats of different countries, current and former federal and provincial ministers, members of national and provincial assembly and a large number of dignitaries of the city will offer Eid prayers here.

This gathering held at the Polo Ground is the largest gathering in the city, according to the spokesperson of KMC, Ali Hassan Sajid, large scale arrangements have been made for the Eid-ul-Adha prayer this year.

Armed men steal 84 sacrificial goats from Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A gang of more than 12 armed individuals looted 84 sacrificial animals from a farm located near Dhabeji railway station on Wednesday. The audacious criminals, who remained in the shed for approximately four hours, executed the heist, leaving the owners and employees shocked and helpless.

Pervez Bari, the owner of the farm, immediately lodged a complaint with the Station House Officer (SHO) of Steel Town, seeking justice and prompt action. According to Pervez Bari, a total of 65 goats, 17 sheep, one cow, and one calf were being kept on the expansive 100-acre land farm. In a statement the victim stated that the unsuspecting employ-

ees were present in the shed, carrying out their regular duties. Suddenly, a group of 14 to 15 armed culprits stormed into the premises, brandishing their weapons. The robbers quickly overpowered the employees, tied them up, and took control of the situation. Without any hesitation, the accused forcefully loaded all the animals present in the shed onto their vehicles and swiftly fled the scene. During the entire ordeal, the perpetrators maintained contact with someone via phone, suggesting a potential coordination with an external party. The distressed owner's plea for intervention and justice has been received by the police, who have initiated an investigation into the incident.

PTI Karachi president Akram Cheema quits party

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Akram Cheema, who recently made party's Karachi president, on Wednesday announced that he was parting ways with the PTI over the events of May 9. In a press conference, Cheema - who had been a member of MNA from Karachi - announced that he had resigned from the party's position. "I strongly condemn the attack on military installations on May 9. As a Pakistani, I demand that such people should be punished," Cheema stated. "We should not fight with the institutions," the ex-lawmaker added. The press conference from Cheema comes a day after an anti-terrorism court granted bail to him in the May 9 rioting and arson case. PTI leaders Akram Cheema and Abid Jeelani were booked among others by the police on violence, rioting and arson charges in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area.

No one to be permitted on Eid to collect hides of sacrificial animals without NoC

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Administration would not allow anyone to collect hides of sacrificial animals without No objection Certificate (NoC) from the authorities concerned as per the directive of the Punjab government. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Office Rawalpindi had directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against the violators of the order.

According to a district

administration spokesman, the administration would not allow anyone to collect hides without prior permission of the authorities concerned as the Punjab government had imposed a ban on the collection of hides

without NoC on Eid ul Azha. The charity organizations intending to collect the hides of the sacrificial animals had been directed to submit applications to the office of DC Rawalpindi for permission letters.

NET SUPPLY OF PAK AIR CONDITIONERS

NESPAK-led Mohmand Dam Consultants Group (MDCG), invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders/Firms/Supplier/Manufacturers having valid registration with FBR for Income Tax and relevant Provincial Sales Tax Authority for the **Supply of Air Conditioners (1.0 Ton Tripple Inverter)** for the MDCG site office at **Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project near Munda Head Works Mohmand Agency, KPK**. The bidder should be an active taxpayer on ATL of FBR.

A complete set of bidding documents may be downloaded by interested eligible bidders from **NESPAK** (www.nespak.com.pk) and **PPRA** (www.ppra.org.pk) website. Bidding documents fee of **Rs. 1000/- (Rupees one thousand only)** may please be deposited to National Bank of Pakistan in favor of Mohmand Dam Consultants Group A/C No. 2132003311833307, Islamic Banking Branch, Gulberg Main Boulevard, Siddique Trade Centre, Lahore. Deposit receipt may please be sent to Secretary Procurement Committee MDCG.

Sealed bids (financial proposals along with technical documents) from eligible bidders/ firms must be delivered to the **office of Secretary Procurement Committee (MDCG), 38-N, Model Town Extension, Lahore Pakistan**, on or before **July 13, 2023 (Thursday)** up to **10:00 A.M.**

All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security / Earnest Money (Refundable) 1% of the bid price in the form of Pay Order / CDR / bank draft in the name of MDCG.

Bids will be opened at **11:00 A.M.** on the same day in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend, at the same address.

NESPAK-MDCG reserves the right to accept or reject any / all bids according to provisions of PPRA Rules.

Secretary Procurement Committee Mohmand Dam Consultants Group (MDCG), 38-N Model Town Extension, Lahore, Ph: +92-42-35218089 (Ext. 108), Email: afzal27@hotmail.com PID(L) 3727



KARACHI: Workers busy in preparations for Eid-ul-Adha congregation at Polo Ground, Gulshan-e-Jinnah Park.

People throng to markets, but most of animals remained unsold

LAHORE (APP): With only one day left for Eid-ul-Adha, people thronged to cattle markets to buy sacrificial animals but many of the animals remained unsold because of their sky-high prices. After receiving salaries, the government and private sector employees also visited the markets on the first official holiday on Wednesday, however, most of them seemed complaining about inflated animal rates, while on the other side, cattle sellers claimed that insufficient supply from Punjab and Sindh provinces had driven the prices high.

"Cattle markets have visitors in large numbers but serious buyers are a few. People mostly ask about the prices, take selfies with animals, and go away," some sellers told APP. Meanwhile, cattle traders insisted that affluent

people preferred goats and sheep for health reasons as they feared that the other sacrificial animals were infected with cattle skin disease.

A visit to different sale points also revealed that the price of a normal-size goat, sheep, or lamb ranges from Rs 65,000 to Rs 75,000, whereas a medium-size cow and calf ranged from Rs 140,000 to Rs 300,000. "Transporting animals from south Punjab to cities like Lahore, Rawalpindi or Faisalabad had become a pricey affair," Imran Ali, a livestock trader from Narang Mandi, said. When asked about the high prices, he replied that last year a truck carrying animals to Lahore from Mithan Kot and Dera Ghazi Khan would charge Rs 48,000 to 50,000, but this year they were demanding around Rs 95,000 to 100,000 for the same task.



PDMA issued pre-monsoon rains relief guidelines

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Wednesday issued pre-monsoon rains relief guidelines for people and district administrations across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to avoid any incident.

According to a notification issued by PDMA to all district administrations in view of more pre-monsoon rains during the Eid holidays, issued guidelines for the concerned institutions and district administration, spokesman of the Relief Department said here Wednesday.

The guidelines says that people should avoid standing near electric or telephone poles (pylons) during thunderstorms, stay away from seasonal drains (dry streams), bridges and drainage canals and do not attempt to cross them during rain.

The guidelines warned the people not to risk their life while crossing roads with high flow of water while travelers and tourists plan trips keeping in mind the weather conditions. District administration should share the information of untoward incidents with all concerned institutions in a timely manner while Civil Defense and Rescue Services (1122/Fire Brigade) be alert. Ensure availability of emergency response personnel and equipment during forecast holidays, Secretary Relief said in the notification.

People living near landslides take extra precautions and local administration and Disaster Management Authorities to keep emergency operation centers active so that they could easily deal with any untoward incident.

All institutions should be alert and ensure provision of staff and supplies as per the forecast during the holidays while disposing of the remains of sacrificial animals in properly designated places so as not to obstruct the drainage system.

The people have been warned to limit the crossing of seasonal channels and instructions for continuous monitoring of seasonal drains. The guidelines aim to create awareness, implement preventive measures, says the spokesman of the Relief Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He advised the people and other concerned departments to share the information of the unfortunate incident with the Provincial Control Room of PDMA in a timely manner so as to take immediate relief activities.



PESHAWAR: Afghan refugees slaughtering on occasion of Eidul Azha.

Pakhtunkhwa Radio to broadcast colorful programs, songs on Eid

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar FM 92.2 will broadcast colorful programs and songs on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha. Station Director Ghulam Hussain Ghazi told APP here on Wednesday.

He said on the first day of Eid, caretaker Minister Information and Awqaf and Haji Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel will participate in a program as a special guest. Information Secretary Mukhtiar Ahmed and Station Director Ghulam Hussain Ghazi will also be a part of the program while the host Professor Dr. Abasin Yousafzai and producer Fitrat Buner will add colors to the program and convey the remarks of the guests regarding Eid to the listeners.

Eid messages of Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan and other provincial ministers will also be aired to the audience at different times on the three days of Eid.

Similarly, Chairman Chief Minister's Inspection Team Farrakh Sair will also present the performance of his institution besides sharing Eid joys along with the Station Director in the live studio on the first day of Eid-ul-Adha.

In addition to other moments of infotainment including happy songs regarding Eid-ul-Adha, the philosophy of sacrifice by the eminent Ulama and doctors and the principles of foods and health will also be highlighted.

Guest producer Rukhsar Javed profusely decorated the on-air studios while Duty Officer Farhan Khalil and Engr Taj Muhammad will serve the guests and radio staff with different cookies prepared of Qurbani meats.

Traffic Police announced traffic plan

PESHAWAR (APP): The Traffic Police Dir Lower announced a traffic plan in connection with the forthcoming Eid-ul-Adha by deploying more than 150 Traffic Police for tourists during Eid days.

The traffic Police will be on patrol duty around the clock, DPO Lower Dir Ziauddin Ahmad said here Wednesday. District Police Chief, Dir Lower Ziauddin Ahmad has welcomed all the tourists to Dir Lower, the land of lush green, dense forests and beautiful valleys, and said that they should travel from Dir Lower to Dir Upper and Chitral during Eid-ul-Adha.

A special security plan has been issued to guide and protect the tourists. Special blockades have been established on the entrance and exit routes of the district along with round-the-clock patrolling of the Police on main GT Road. He has said that more than 150 traffic Jawans will be on duty for the flow of traffic during Eid-ul-Adha. Tourists can come here without fear of danger. He has requested the tourists to respect the traffic rules while travelling besides avoiding fire in the Jungle.



PESHAWAR: A large number of people purchasing sacrificial animals for Eidul Azha.



PESHAWAR: Afghan refugees offering Eidul Azha prayers at a mosque in Khazana Refugees Camp.

Crackdown against drug peddlers, hironchis in City

PESHAWAR (APP): The Policemen of Inqilab Police Station and Rehman Baba have crackdown against drug peddlers and hironchis with dozens of suspected elements arrested during the operations.

According to detail, the Police teams of both Inqilab Police Station and Rehman Baba have launched a joint operation against drug peddlers and hironchis in the areas.

The teams led by SP Sadar Division Malik Habib with DSP Saddam Circle Muhammad Ali overall supervised the comprehensive crackdown against drug peddlers and hironchis.

During the crackdown, drug dealers were arrested and drugs ice, heroin and hashish were recovered. Intelligence-based operations against drug peddlers are going on from time to time in Bara Khor Musazai and adjacent areas, SP Sadar Division Malik Habib informed.

More rains likely in KP: Met Office

PESHAWAR (APP): More rains are likely in all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar, an official of the Meteorological Department confirmed here on Wednesday.

However, he said, the chances are that it is sometimes sunny and sometimes cloudy in the city of Peshawar. The minimum temperature of Peshawar city is 25 centigrade, the official of the Department of Meteorology said.

He said, during the last 20 hours, the heaviest rainfall in Risalpur was 61 mm, 53 mm rain in Cherat, 34 mm in Kakol, 18 mm in Tira, 15 mm in Kohat, 8 mm in Takhtbhai, 8 mm rainfall in Mohmand and 3 mm in Bajaur with four millimeters of rain in Timaragarh, Saidu Sharif, Malam Jabba and Buner recorded.

This spell of pre-monsoon is likely to continue till June 30, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

Police started targeted search operation in City

PESHAWAR (APP): SSP Operations Haroon Rashid Khan Wednesday said that the Police along other forces have started targeted operations against anti-social elements and other criminals involved in different crimes.

Talking to media men, SSP Operations Haroon Rashid Khan said that a series of comprehensive investigations is going on with the detained accused from various angles. SSP Operations Haroon Rashid Khan along with security forces and other units, indiscriminate operations against anti-social elements are going on.

He disclosed that with extra patrolling on a daily basis across the district, spot checking and special roadblocks have been established at all entrances. He informed that the targeted search operation was in the limits of Agha Mir Jani Shah Police Station (Yeka Tut) to resolve the law and order situation on the special instructions of the higher officers.

Under the command of SP City Division Abdul Salam Khalid, a targeted search and strike was conducted by security forces in Dir Colony and adjacent areas. SDPOs, SHOs, Pak Army, Police Commandos, RRF, Jail Van, BDU, Sniffer Dogs and Ladies Police and other units participated in the search and strike operation.

Actions were taken against unregistered renters, illegal resident Afghans and suspects by conducting street-to-street targeted operations in Dir Colony and adjacent areas.

He disclosed that during the targeted operation, several suspects and criminals were detained and weapons and ammunition were also recovered.

Trans Peshawar to active on all 3 days of Eidul Azha

PESHAWAR (APP): The different routes and services of the Trans Peshawar would be active on all three-days of Eid-ul-Adha, said a spokesman of the BRT here on Wednesday.

He said the following routes including SR 02, DR 3A, DR 06, SR 08, DR 3B, DR 05 would remain active in order to ensure facilities to our valuable passengers. Apart from the above routes, the other routes the services would remain closed during Eid.



PESHAWAR: Shopkeeper tradition wooden stick made sheet to attract customers at Peepal Mandi.

Shahid Khan and Arbaaz Khan's Pashto film Shahanshah Bacha releasing on Eidul Azha

PESHAWAR (APP): Shahid Khan and Arbaaz Khan's Pashto file Shahenshah Bacha is coming on Eid-ul-Adha, famous actor and director Shahid told media men here on Wednesday. The other cast of the film includes Tariq Jamal, Kaleem Khan, Feroza, Jaya Butt, Neelam Gul and others. It is said to be an action-packed movie Shahanshah Bacha will be jam-packed on the big Eid day, Shahid Khan added.

The federal government will have to sit down with the real stakeholders and take practical steps to revive the Pashto film industry, only announcements will do nothing, Shahid Khan and Arshad Khan told media men.

Pashto film super-star Shahid Khan and well-known director Arshad Khan have said that their film Shahanshah Bacha is releasing on Eid-ul-Adha to make a splash. Arbaaz Khan, Tariq Jamal, Imran Khattak, Kaleem Khan, Naseem Pahlwan, Feroza, Jaya Butt, Neelam Gul, Khaleda Yasmin, Rahim Shahzad and others are included in the film with music director Shakirzeb Nowshiravi, while writer Salim Murad and dialogues by Sajjad Ali have written this action-packed film on the big Eid.

The story and music of the film are fantastic, he informed me. The government will have to take real measures to patronize Pashto films, they added. It is not so easy to make Pashto films in these conditions, they said.

Shahid Khan said that the cinema industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is taking its last breath. Demolition of cinemas must be stopped because cinema is about to disappear in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "If the owners of three cinemas in Peshawar convert the cinemas into business centers, then the Pashto film industry will be completely destroyed. Serious steps will have to be taken to revive the cinema industry, Shahid Khan said. He said that Pashto films have been supported by Shahid Films production, if the government does not take practical steps for the revival of Pashto films and industry, then very soon Pashto cinema will turn into business centers. People will miss out on cheap entertainment, he said that Federal Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb should also pay attention to the Pashto film industry. Due to the demise of the cinema industry, hundreds of people have become unemployed so far, Shahid Khan said.

"If the Pashto film industry is closed, thousands more people, artists and talented people will be unemployed," he added. Therefore, for the revival of the Pashto cinema industry, the federal government needs Pashto films, he said. It is necessary to sit down with the real stakeholders of the industry to solve these problems and decide the plan for the revival of the Pashto cinema industry so that this industry can stand on its own feet.



Mayor greets Muslims Ummah over Hajj and Eid

PESHAWAR (APP): Major Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali extended greetings to Muslim Ummah over Hajj and Eid-ul-Adha and urged them to pray for the country's prosperity, integrity.

In a message of greeting, Haji Zubair Ali, Mayor Peshawar, said: "On the happiest occasion of Eid-ul-Adha and Hajj, I wish all the Muslims and pilgrims and people of the Islamic world. "Be sure to share with the poor deserving ones and perform this duty with good intentions." Haji Zubair added.

He said that Eid-ul-Adha asked the public to cooperate with WSSP and collect the garbage from the streets and neighborhoods of the city in a timely manner and dispatched it to the points specified by WSSP so the workers could dispose of such waste in appropriate manners. He said that there are great expectations from the people and the elected representatives that they will contribute their full share in cleaning on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha. "We have to live up to the expectations of the people," he added. He said that we believe in serving the people without any discrimination.

Eid prayer in Eidgah at 6:30 am

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Chief Imam Khat-eeb, Maulana Muhammad Tayyab, will lead Eid-ul-Adha prayer at Eidgah on Charsadda Road in Peshawar. According to details available here it is said that the Chief Imam will deliver a sermon at 6:00 AM followed by the Eid prayer at 6:30 AM.



In brief

Police finalizes security plan

MIRPURKHAS (APP): The Mirpurkhas division police on Wednesday finalized the security plan to maintain peace and order on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha in the districts of the division. A total of 2363 police officers and personnel had been deployed in the range including 1447 personnel for 192 Eid congregations, 136 personnel for 23 Eid shopping centers, and 114 police personnel for 17 cattle markets. Moreover, 266 personnel had been deployed by establishing 73 checkpoints at the entry and exit points of highways, and 275 personnel were deployed for more than 50 mobile patrol teams while 65 policemen were part of the motorcycle patrol teams. A reserve force of 60 young police officers and three QRF (Quick Response Force) teams would also be on duty. In the police control room, closed-circuit cameras would be used to monitor the security situation during Eid-ul-Azha in urban areas as well as on major highways. Temporary checkpoints had also been set up at various locations to check on suspicious activities. DIG Mirpurkhas had instructed the three SSPs and police officers of the range to take strict security measures to maintain peace and order in all areas of the range. In order to maintain the flow of traffic, traffic police personnel have also been deployed in and around Eid prayer gatherings.

Dacoit shot injured

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): A dacoit was shot injured during an exchange of fire with police near Attari petrol Pump on the premises of Rohlanwali police station on Wednesday early hours. According to police sources, a notorious dacoit Shakeel s/o Ashiq was in police custody over charges of various criminal activities. The police brought him to a place and recovered two looted motorcycles and were returning to the police station when three unidentified armed outlaws started firing on the police party to get their fellow released from police custody. The police also retaliated in self-defense and the exchange of fire continued for twenty minutes after that the police found Shakeel injured by the firing of his own accomplices, however, the other criminals managed to escape from the scene. The injured criminal was wanted to police in more than 47 cases of dacoity, robbery, theft and other crimes and he was on physical remand in ten different cases, police sources said and added that special teams have been formed to arrest the escaped criminals.

Motorcycle lifter gang busted

WAH CANTT (APP): The Taxila Police on Wednesday busted a motorcycle lifter gang and recovered ten stolen motorcycles besides other looted booty from their possession. Sub-divisional Police officer DSP Ghulam Ashgar Chandia told reporters that a team of Taxila Police led by station house officer Sarmad Ilyas while acting on a tip-off, raided the hide-out of the outlaws and arrested the two members of the gang identified as Sher Wali and Aabid. He said that ten stolen and stashed motorcycles besides looted booty cash worth Rs 0.3 million, six cell phones and weapons utilized in the various crimes were also recovered. He said that the members of the gang have confessed their involvement in various lifting, snatching and street crimes in twin cities of Taxila and Wah.



QUETTA: A blacksmith bus in sharpening knives ahead of Eidul Azha.

Inter-provincial gang of dacoits arrested

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police officials here Wednesday claimed to have busted and arrested 6-members of an inter-provincial gang of dacoits and recovered looted items including cash amount and other valuable things from their possession. Police officials including SP operation Rokhanzib Khan, DSP city Inam Jan Khan, inspector Mukadam Khan and investigation officer Bashir Khan disclosed this in a press conference held at the building of city Police Station.

On the occasions, the

Superintendent of Police (operation) Rokhanzib Khan told journalists that they busted an inter-provincial 7-members gang of dacoits of which six members were arrested while the remaining one would soon be arrested. He claimed that the arrested accused had also confessed of their crime of robbery in which Rs.2.4 million were snatched on gunpoint from a travel agent on Bank Road occurred on June 13 of the current month.

He went on to say that the facilitators of dacoity would also soon be taken to task. Besides, he disclosed

that arms, snatched bikes and looted cash amount were also recovered from their possession. The SP operation Mr. Rokhanzib Khan further added that the accused had rented a house where they made plans for carrying out their criminal activities and also they gathered over there before and after commission of any robbery and dacoity incident. During the investigations, it was come in to their knowledge that the accused were also wanted to Police in criminal cases that occurred in Par Hoti, Takhtbai and Saroshah areas.

Two girls killed as roof collapses

F.P. Report

SWABI: Two minor girls were killed and six others injured after the roof of a house collapsed in Swabi's Moli area on early Wednesday.

Locals with the help of rescuers managed to pull out the dead and the injured from the debris and shifted them to Kalo hospital. According to local authorities, the roof apparently affected by rain caved in, leaving the entire family trapped in the debris.

Police operation continue

RAJANPUR (APP): Police reinforcements have encircled Mauza Dangri Suri where hardened criminals are believed to be hiding in their hideouts as the police continued operations against gangs of criminals in the Katcha Area of Tehsil Rojhan Mazari for the last 80 days.

Launched on the orders of Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, the operation was personally supervised by Additional IGP South Punjab Maqsoodul Hassan Rana, RPO DG Khan Captain (retd) Sajjad Hassan, and spearheaded by DPO Rajanpur Captain (retd) Dost Muhammad.

Total seven alleged terrorists have been killed, over 20 injured while over 40 facilitators have been arrested during last 80 days, according to the RPO. DPO said, police reinforcements have encircled the Dungri Suri area to target criminals adding that very important achievements are expected soon. He said that all the criminals would soon be brought to face the law and peace would be restored in the Katcha Area.

Police bust dacoits' gang

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The district police have arrested five members of an inter-provincial dacoit gang that was involved in various cases and recovered stolen items from their possession.

According to police spokesman, Karri Khaisor police led by SDPO Pharpur Circle Kashif Sattar and Station House Officer (SHO) Shah Jehan Khan have launched a crackdown against dacoits and thieves in the area, on the directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Rauf Qaisrani, and successfully busted the gang.

During the operation, the police arrested five members including Akbar Khan, Bakhtullah, Saleh Muhammad, Shah Wali and Ghani Khan and all the accused are residents of Zhob. The police also recovered three stolen motorcycles.

He said that the gang was involved in various other cases and police started further investigation. Separately, Dera town police conducted a successful action and arrested a wanted proclaimed offender and recovered more than one kilogram hashish, 61 grams of ice drug and a 30-bore pistol along with ammunition.

Murtaza directs for probe into Mansehra fire incident

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi Wednesday while taking notice of the fire incident at a petroleum agency in Mansehra directed Commissioner Hazara division to submit an inquiry report.

He also directed the commissioner to conduct the inquiry through Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mansehra and a thorough examination should be carried

out to determine the cause of the fire. The minister further said that all precautionary measures would be taken and in case of any negligence, action would be taken against those responsible, and also relevant authorities will be questioned in that regard.

Murtaza Abbassi expressed deep sorrow and anguish over the loss of lives in the incident and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families. In Mansehra City, a fire broke out in a warehouse located

on Thakrah Chinar Road due to an oil tanker.

Upon receiving the report, Rescue 1122 dispatched an ambulance and three fire vehicles to the place. The reason for the fire was yet to be ascertained, posing a threat of damage to nearby properties, the staff of Rescue 1122 successfully gained control over the fire. Rescue 1122 confirmed the death of one person and also shifted the injured to King Abdullah Hospital Mansehra.

PESCO disconnects dozens of illegal connections

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) disconnected more than six dozen illegal electricity connections during a grand operation against power thieves in Bannu district, claimed an official on Wednesday. He said that the operation was launched on the instructions of deputy commissioner Manzoor Ahmad Afridi and superintending engineer Shan Haidar Afridi.

He said that assistant commissioner Syed Abrar Ali Shah supervised the action against power stealers. The PESCO workers disconnected 76 illegal connections within four hours in the Sukari Karim Khan area and seized cable and other equipment the electricity thieves had used to get illegal connections", he claimed. He said that two power thieves were arrested and complaints were referred to concerned police stations for registration of FIRs against eight others. He said that the action against power

thieves and kunda culture would help to overcome low voltage and tripping problems.

Meanwhile, Bannu additional deputy commissioner Islahuddin has asked the authorities of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) to launch work on installation of an additional power feeder without any delay. He issued these directions during a meeting attended by Assistant Commissioner Syed Abrar Ali Shah, additional assistant commissioners, PESCO superintending engineer, executive engineers and other concerned officials.

The meeting was convened on the instructions of deputy commissioner Manzoor Ahmad Afridi to devise a strategy to reduce duration of load shedding and provide maximum relief to citizens in the sizably heat. The additional deputy commissioner told the meeting that the government had approved an additional power feeder with the cost of Rs 14 million for Bannu city and the

completion of the project would help to resolve low voltage and tripping problems.

A PESCO official briefed the meeting about the demand and supply of the power facility to the local grid stations and said that operational staff was trying its best to ensure provision of uninterrupted electricity to citizens. He said that use of the facility through kunda (hook) and line losses were also causing tripping, low voltage and load shedding problems. Islahuddin said that the district administration would extend full support to the power supply company to curb power theft and take those using electricity through illegal means to task.

He asked the PESCO authorities to improve the power supply system and reduce the duration of outages during hot summer. He also urged the people to install power metres and pay their utility bills regularly so as to enable the company to provide them with better services.

Rescue team inspects Central Station

SIALKOT (APP): Rescue inspection team visited the Rescue 1122 Central Station to review possible flood preparations and check flood fighting equipment.

According to the rescue spokesperson, the inspection team included Deputy Director Planning WASA Ali Husnain, District Emergency Officer (DEO) Gujranwala Mian Rafat Zia, Coordinator District Disaster Management Authority Gujranwala Muhammad Bilal, Civil Defence Officer Saifullah and Local Government Sub-Engineer Imran Chatta, reviewed the equipment in the DDAM store, the number and functionality of dewatering sets available at the Municipal Corporation Sialkot.

Later, District Emergency Officer (DEO) Sialkot Engineer Naveed Iqbal along with the Coordinator District Disaster Management Authority also inspected

the flood fighting equipment at Rescue Station Kutchery Road. The inspection team expressed satisfaction regarding rescue flood fighting.

54 vehicles challaned: Secretary Regional Transport Authority (RTA) Sialkot Muzaffar Hayyat on Wednesday conducted crackdown against public transporters for charging excessive fare from passengers. According to the spokesperson, more than 500 vehicles were inspected at seven different bus stands and challans were issued to 54 vehicles whereas a total of Rs. 132,000 fine was imposed on violators. An amount of Rs. 10,000 was returned to the passengers on the spot, he added.

A complaint cell was setup on the instructions of the Deputy Commissioner, while banners and panaflex were displayed on C and D class bus and wagon stands for the awareness of the general public.

One bandit killed, four arrested in encounter: One bandit was killed, while four others were arrested during encounter in Suddar area.

Police said here on Wednesday that upon information of two incidents at two petrol pumps in Daska and Sadra Badra area late night, District Police Office (DPO) Sialkot Muhammad Hasan Iqbal ordered a strict blockade across the city to arrest the culprits of the incident.

When armed criminals riding on motorcycles reached Rehmatnagar area of Suddar police station, the bandits opened fire on the police team. The police team took the defensive strategy around the bandits and arrested four bandits while one bandit was killed by the firing of his own accomplice. The deceased outlaw was identified as Abbas alias Nani Don, who was wanted in several cases of murder, robbery and dacoity, said police.

Workshop on 'Bamboo' concluded

SARGODHA (APP): A three-day training workshop titled "Mobile-App Base Bamboo Resource Assessment training for Pakistan" concluded held at District Forest office here on Wednesday. The aim of the training was to increase the production of bamboo crops and to know their number and types through mobile-app launched across the country.

According to the press release issued by District Forest office here on Wednesday, the workshop was organized by the International Bamboo and Rattan organization in collaboration with the ministry of climate change and environmental coordination and Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) Peshawar.

The workshop was inaugurated by Director General PFI Khalid Ilyas while Additional Director General PFI Safdar Ali Shah, Assistant Inspector General Forest Parveen

Ijaz, District Forest Officer Nisar-ul-Haq and experts from the district also participated. Experts said that bamboo was one of the fastest growing species and was located in more than 85 areas of Pakistan including Sargodha, Jhang, Kasur, Lahore and Dera Ghazi Khan.

They added that bamboos had enormous potential for generating income and employment. Experts shared that the bamboos could play a significant role for eco-system restoration, climate change adaptation and mitigation and proved to be a potential crop for restoring degraded land, conserving soil and water.

The speakers said that Pakistan recently become a member country of INBAR in 2021 and intensified its bamboo sectorial development for green economy development. Later, the PFI delegation conducted field survey at

Chak 90SB in Sargodha, Bamboo Nursery at Bucha Kalan and Kotmomin and examined bamboo process unit comprises of grading, drying, and kiln treatment for enhancing elasticity and straightness in details, while pictorial evidences had been shared in the group at the time of activity conducted.

Two killed in car-dumper collision: Two men were killed in car-dumper collision near Muazzamabad under the jurisdiction of Kotmomin police station.

Police said on Wednesday that Babar r/o Chak 88 NB along with his friend Shoaib was coming home from Islamabad in a car when a recklessly driven dumper hit the vehicle from front side. Consequently, Babar died on the spot while Shoaib was shifted to THQ hospital Kotmomin where he succumbed to injuries. Police registered a case and started investigation.

Foolproof cleanliness arrangements made

SARGODHA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Capt (retd) Shoaib Ali said that the district administration has made foolproof arrangements to keep the city clean on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

Talking to APP here on Wednesday, he said that shopping bags were being distributed by the Municipal Corporation so that the public could put the sacrificial animal remains in these shopping bags and deposit to designated collection points instead of throwing them away. He appealed to the citizens to not only to follow the instructions issued by the district administration to ensure cleanliness in the city on the days of Eid-ul-Azha, but also to encourage others.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner also visited the camp set up by the Municipal corporation at Shaheen Chowk to address

the complaints of the citizens regarding cleanliness on Eid-ul-Azha and also distributed shopping bags among the shopkeepers as well.

24 SIs promoted: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sargodha Division, Shariq Kamal Siddiqui issued orders to promote 24 Sub-Inspectors (SI) to the rank of Inspector on merit.

Police spokesperson said here on Wednesday that the RPO, during meeting of Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC), issued orders to promote 24 SIs as Inspector of all the four districts including Mianwali, Bhakkar, Khushab and Sargodha.

On the occasion, the RPO Shariq Kamal Siddiqui congratulated the newly promoted police officers and directed them to ensure the law and order situation in their respective areas and elimination

of crimes. SP Investigation Farhan Aslam was also present in the meeting.

PFA uproots veggies cultivated with sewage water: Punjab food Authority (PFA) on Wednesday root out vegetables cultivated on 32 kanal area of land with sewage water in Bhakkar district. According to the press release issued by PFA, the team equipped with a tractor inspected vegetables grown on 252 kanal land in Bhakar and Kalur Kot and eradicated sewage grown vegetables on 32 kanal land in Gorchha Nasheeb.

The vegetables included tomato, green chilies and brinjal which were being grown with contaminated water. A spokesman of PFA said that a ban had been put on the cultivation of sewage water grown vegetables and strict action was being taken against the farmers on violation.



Haley says Trump did ‘too little’ about China threats

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP): Former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley criticized former President Donald Trump for being too friendly to China during his time in office, while also warning that weak support for Ukraine would “only encourage” China to invade Taiwan. Haley, a Republican presidential candidate running against Trump, said in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute that Trump was “almost singularly focused” on the US-China trade relationship but ultimately did “too little about the rest of the Chinese threat.”

Specifically, Haley noted that Trump failed to rally US allies “against the Chinese threat” and that he had congratulated Chinese President Xi Jinping on the 70th anniversary of Communist Party rule in China. “That sends a wrong message to the world,” Haley said. “Chinese communism must be condemned, never congratulated.”

Haley’s comments, promoted by her presidential campaign as “a major foreign policy speech,” came a week and a half after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken held talks with Xi in Beijing. Blinken said they had agreed to “stabilize” badly deteriorated US-China ties, but there was little indication that either country was prepared to bend from positions on issues including trade, Taiwan, human rights conditions in China and Hong Kong, Chinese military assertiveness in the South China Sea, and Russia’s war in Ukraine. Haley did note that Trump imposed tariffs and other trade restrictions on the superpower, saying he “deserves credit for upending this bipartisan consensus.” But she added, “Being clear-eyed is just not enough.”

As Trump remains the clear front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, his rivals are increasingly lashing out at him. In New Hampshire, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said that, unlike Trump, he was “actually going to build the wall,” a reference to Trump’s 2016 signature issue that he fell short of meeting during his first term. Haley, who served for two years as Trump’s ambassador to the United Nations, said President Joe Biden has been



“much worse” when it comes to dealing with threats she said China poses to America’s economic, domestic and military security. She also said that China’s military buildup and aggression toward Taiwan shows that the nation is “preparing its people for war,” a conflict she said would draw in the US and other global partners if left unchecked.

“We must act now to keep the peace and prevent war,” she said. “And we need a leader that will rally our people to meet this threat on every single front. ... Communist China is an enemy. It is the most dangerous foreign threat we’ve faced since the Second World War.” In a question-and-answer session with reporters, Haley was asked about comments from Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, the newest Republican presidential candidate, who said, “What’s a Uyghur?” in response to a question from radio show host Hugh Hewitt about the predominantly Muslim group that China has been accused of oppressing.

Haley, who didn’t mention Suarez in her response, called the allegations of sexual abuse and religious discrimination against the Uyghurs a potential “genocide,” adding, “The fact that the whole world is ignoring it, is shameful.” For his part, Suarez later tweeted that he is “well aware of the suffering of the Uyghurs in China”

but just “didn’t recognize the pronunciation.” In her speech, Haley also called Biden “far too slow and weak in helping Ukraine,” warning that a failure to send enough military equipment to help stem Russia’s invasion there could “only encourage China to invade Taiwan as soon as possible,” leading to further international conflict. “The events of this past weekend show how weak and shaky the Russian leadership is,” Haley said, referencing the short-lived weekend revolt by mercenary soldiers who briefly took over a Russian military headquarters. “Make no mistake: China is watching the war with Ukraine with great interest.”

Some of Haley’s Republican rivals, including Trump and DeSantis, have faced criticism over their own comments toward Ukraine. Both Trump and DeSantis have said that defending Ukraine is not a national security priority for the US. DeSantis also had to walk back his characterization of Russia’s war in Ukraine as a “territorial dispute.” Last month, Biden approved a new package of military aid for Ukraine that totals up to \$300 million and includes additional munitions for drones and an array of other weapons. In all, the US has committed more than \$37.6 billion in weapons and other equipment to Ukraine since Russia attacked on Feb. 24, 2022.

Russian militia maintains ruthless role in Africa

BIRAO, Central African Republic (AP): The Russian mercenary group that briefly threatened President Vladimir Putin’s authority has for years been a ruthless force-for-hire across Africa, protecting rulers at the expense of the masses. That dynamic is not expected to change now that the group’s founder, Yevgeny Prigozhin, has been exiled to Belarus as punishment for the failed rebellion.

The Wagner Group brutalizes civilians in the Central African Republic, Mali and elsewhere to crush dissent and fend off threats to their leaders’ power. In exchange, Russia gains access to natural resources and ports through which weapons can be shipped, and receives payments that enrich the Kremlin and help it fund operations elsewhere, including the war in Ukraine. Neither Russia nor the African leaders dependent on Wagner’s fighters have any interest in ending those relationships. But many questions linger in the aftermath of Wagner’s stunning revolt, such as who will lead its thousands of fighters stationed across many African nations and whether Moscow will absorb these fighters into the Russian army.

“The situation is extremely volatile,” said Nathalia Dukhan, senior investigator at The Sentry, a US-based policy organization that published an investigative report accusing Wagner of carrying out various human-rights abuses in African countries. “But what we have learnt from investigating and analyzing Wagner in Africa in the past 5 years is that the group is resilient, creative, fearless and predatory, so it is less likely that the Wagner empire will instantly fall like a house of cards.”

Beyond the financial rewards, Putin has also sought to use Wagner fighters to help expand Russia’s presence in the Middle East and Africa. He seeks out security alliances with autocrats, coup leaders, and others who have been spurned or neglected by the US and Europe, either because of their bloody abuses or because of competing Western strategic interests. Asked whether Wagner’s weekend mutiny could erode Russia’s positions in Africa, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told a state-run TV network that security assistance to African countries would continue. He specifically mentioned the Central African Republic and Mali, and noted that Russian government officials have maintained contact with leaders there.

Sierra Leone polls: Julius sworn in as opposition cries foul

FREE TOWN (BBC): Incumbent Julius Maada Bio has been declared the winner of Sierra Leone’s presidential election but the opposition has disputed the count. Official figures give Mr Bio 56% of the vote. His main rival, Samura Kamara, trailed far behind with 41%. A candidate needs more than 55% for outright victory and avoid a second round.

After the first tranche of results were released, Dr Kamara called the outcome “daylight robbery”. International election observers have highlighted problems with transparency in the tallying process. Vote took place amid tension but President Bio had called on Sierra Leoneans to “keep the peace”. The 59-year-old, a former soldier, was sworn in for his second and final five-year term.

The retired army brigadier took part in a military coup during the country’s civil war in 1992, only to overthrow the military junta itself in 1996 and pave the way for free elections that year. Scenes of celebration have been reported in the capital, Freetown, with Mr Bio’s supporters hoisting his banner and marching across the wet streets of the city. The rivalry between him and Dr Kamara, 72, was a repeat of the closely fought 2018 election, which went to a second round.

This time Dr Kamara, who was the candidate for the All People’s Congress (APC), has alleged that his electoral agents were not allowed to verify the ballot counting. Cameron Hume, head of the US-based Carter Center’s election observer team, told the BBC they had questions about how some votes were counted. “We are not convinced that the integrity was maintained throughout the elections,” he told the BBC’s Newsday programme, not-

ing that the seals had been broken on some ballot boxes before they were counted.

However, he stressed they did not have any evidence that fraud had been committed and that much of the election process had gone well. In the run-up to the vote, the APC had made complaints about the electoral commission. However, the commission insisted that it had mechanisms in place to ensure a fair vote. The presidential, parliamentary and local council elections came at the end of a campaign marred by several violent incidents.

Last week, the APC alleged that one of its supporters was shot dead by police, which the police denied. The party has said that another one of its backers was killed when security forces tried to break up the crowd at its headquarters in Freetown. Members of Mr Bio’s party, the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP), have said they were attacked by opponents during campaigning.

The campaign took place against a backdrop of a troubled economy, the rising cost of living and concerns about national unity. Mr Bio, who blamed the country’s woes on external factors such as the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine, now has the task of solving these problems. The election is the fifth since Sierra Leone’s 11-year civil war officially ended in 2002. It was a particularly brutal conflict, with 50,000 deaths and thousands of people estimated to have had their arms and limbs amputated. But since then the country has had a tradition of largely peaceful, free and credible elections, according to Marcella Samba Sesay, chairperson of the non-governmental organisation National Elections Watch.

DUP head says party could back new proposal

LONDON (Reuters): Northern Ireland’s largest pro-British party could back a new proposal to solve post-Brexit trading difficulties between the province and the rest of the United Kingdom as part of a long-term solution, its leader Jeffrey Donaldson said.

The Democratic Unionist Party has been at odds with the government since Prime Minister Rishi Sunak agreed a new deal with the European Union earlier this year, which London said eased trade arrangements and firmly rooted the province’s place in the United Kingdom. The DUP has not returned to Northern Ireland’s devolved executive since February 2022, rejecting the first post-Brexit deal with the EU and then the second, so-called Windsor Framework, which is due to be introduced later this year.

Donaldson said he was still awaiting a response from the government on his proposals to fix the problems caused by the Windsor Framework, but that a report by the Centre for

Brexit Policy could form a basis for a longer-term solution. “We are very clear that the Windsor Framework does not meet our seven tests. We’ve put proposals to the government that we believe would address those concerns, we’ll see what the government come back with,” he told a press conference. “I’ve made clear we need to find a longer-term solution to this problem and ... mutual enforcement, we believe, would meet the requirements that we’ve set down for that longer-term solution.”

He said there could be potential for his party to return to the power-sharing government, but that London would have to accept the proposal of the mutual enforcement of trading rules and then it would have to win the backing of the EU. In response, a British government spokesperson said the Windsor Framework was “the best deal for Northern Ireland”, adding that it was working with businesses, communities and political

parties on implementing the framework. “It is in the best interests of Northern Ireland to restore a fully functioning Executive and Assembly as soon as possible,” the spokesperson said.

The DUP has criticised the government’s post-Brexit deals for the province since former Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed the so-called Northern Ireland Protocol in order to secure a Brexit divorce and wider trade deal with Brussels. It says that deal, and the subsequent one, have put a question mark over Northern Ireland’s place in the UK after the province effectively remained in the EU single market for goods to preserve an open border with bloc member Ireland. That put an effective border in the Irish Sea, and the new report suggested instead Britain should launch a system of mutual enforcement of import and export regulations and standards at a so-called invisible border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Sudan violence likely to push over 1m refugees out of African country

CAIRO (AP): The United Nations said the surging violence in Sudan is likely to drive more than 1 million refugees out of the African country by October, as the 10-week conflict shows few signs of easing. Sudan descended into chaos after fighting erupted in mid-April between the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. Since then, over 3,000 people have been killed, the country’s Health Ministry said, while about 2.5 million people have been displaced, according to the UN.

The violence has been most acute in the capital, Khartoum, but also in the western Darfur region, where RSF and Arab militias are reportedly targeting non-Arab tribes, local rights groups and the UN said. Most

of those who have escaped have fled east to Chad. “We were talking about 100,000 people in six months (fleeing to) Chad. And now the colleagues in Chad have revised their figures to 245,000,” said Raouf Mazou, assistant secretary-general at United Nations High Commission for Refugees, at a news conference in the Swiss city of Geneva.

Burhan and Dagalo separately declared a truce to mark the beginning of the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha this week. Dagalo, in a voice recording posted on his social media page, said; while Burhan, in a televised speech broadcast, said a “unilateral cease-fire” would take place.

There have been at least nine cease-fires since the conflict erupted in April and all have foundered. During the same TV speech, Burhan

called on Sudan’s youth and others capable of fighting to support the Sudanese army, either from “their place of residence or by joining the military movement.” It remains unclear if the call-up is mandatory.

In May, the country’s Defense Ministry made a similar appeal, calling on retired soldiers and army reservists to report to the nearest military command to fight against the RSF. The province of West Darfur has seen some of the worst violence. In a report last week issued by the Dar Masalit sultanate, the leader of the African Masalit ethnic community accused the RSF and Arab militias of “committing genocide against African civilians.” He estimated that more than 5,000 people were killed in the province’s capital, Genena, over the past two months.

‘How would you survive?’: Desperation grows in Iraq water crisis

RAMADI (Agencies): The most precious resource in the villages of al-Ankour is water, and it’s gone. Many of the area’s 13,000 residents want to leave but don’t have the means to escape. Habbaniyah Lake, once a sprawling body of water spanning 140sq km (55sq miles) with a capacity of 3.3 billion cubic metres (4.2 billion cubic yards), is rapidly shrinking as a devastating water crisis unfolds around it. The land is cracked, the sun stings and locals are struggling to cope.

A trace of toxic waste wafts from the edge of the lake, the stench of putrid water hitting long before it can be seen. In some parts of the village, salt-encrusted ground irritates the nose, the burning sun increasing the residue. “We have no water, no electricity, no air conditioning,” shouts Abdullaheem Ismail, 44, in front of his mud-brick home in al-Ankour, south of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province in western Iraq, as the scorching midday heat reaches 40C (104F).

The villages worst impacted are on the south side of the lake, 40km (25 miles) from Ramadi. An abandoned water purification tower, long out of use, looms to Ismail’s right. The father of five has spent most of his life in al-Ankour, except for the period when the community fled to nearby displacement camps after the ISIL (ISIS) armed group captured the area. Although they returned in 2016, the current water crisis means most are now wondering where they can flee to this time.

About 30km (18.6 miles) farther east along the lake’s shore, a once popular resort town is also struggling as the water used to sustain thousands of people through fishing and tourism dries up. Al Jazeera interviewed multiple residents who described the recent reduction in water as the most severe they have ever witnessed. Nine months ago, due to the declining flow of the Euphrates River from neighbouring Syria, a barrage in Ramadi began redirecting the water away from the lake and towards

Fallujah. Those who live around the lake were left with a dangerously reduced supply of water that formerly fed their villages.

Freshwater tankers sent by the local government two weeks ago are already dry. A well was dug recently in one village, but after reaching a depth of 86 metres (282 feet), it failed to strike water. Locals say they are reliant on plastic water bottles to sustain themselves. Habbaniyah was built in the early 1980s as a water reservoir and tourist city during a short era of rapid development and financial prosperity in Iraq. After the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, it fell into neglect and disorder, which was exacerbated in March 2015 when ISIL seized control of the area.

The Green Iraq Observatory, a local environmental organisation monitoring the situation, estimated in May that the 13,000 residents in the al-Ankour and al-Majar areas have been affected by shortages caused by redirection of water. Firas Mohammed, 45, was also born in the village. “How would you survive here?” he asks, visibly angry. “We are stranded.” He blames Syria, Turkey (farther upstream) and Iran for the water shortages – but also local officials for mismanaging their water allocation. “I pay 50,000 Iraqi dinars [\$37] every week for bottled water for my family for drinking and cooking,” the former fisherman says.

“My sons travel to Ramadi to try to find manual labour to support us, but they can’t always find work. The situation is very bad.” He gestures at the dry, parched ground as he describes falling into debt to buy water. “All of this used to be the lake, at least 5 metres (16.5 feet) deep.” Mohammed nods towards a trickle of lime green liquid nearby, shaking his head. “Take a sample from this water and test it. Even dogs avoid it.” He lacks the means to leave.

“I don’t have the financial capacity to move to Ramadi,” Mohammed says. “If the government decided to move us to a camp with freshwater to cope with this crisis, we would even

accept being moved to Ukraine.” “Despite the horror and cruelty of war, it’s still better than living in drought and water scarcity,” he adds desperately. Mou’ad Abel, 40, approaches on his bike, calling out to his two sons. “We returned to the village on March 8, 2016” after the area was liberated from ISIL, he says.

“In my youth, I worked here as a fisherman, but there are no fish anymore.” His children, 13-year-old Rusool and six-year-old Waad, are quiet. “My only source of income has disappeared. The only other work is as a manual labourer in the city with a daily rate.” Thirty families have already left the village, he says, and those who remain feel trapped. If he had enough money, he would leave without hesitation, he says. Activists like Nooraldeen Adil, 29; Amin Hamid, 32; Samim Salam, 28; and Zaid Mayouf, 32, are working to provide water to affected families and advocate for better solutions from local authorities.

Until recently, Hamid lived in one of the villages south of Habbaniyah. Adil, Salam and Mayouf grew up in Ramadi. “We use our funds from voluntary donations to distribute water to them,” says Adil, who started the Peace Forum NGO in 2016. It works to support young people and foster dialogue in the community. On the banks of the Euphrates, Ramadi is still overcoming the trauma of brutal fighting in the years following the US-led invasion and, later, Iraq’s five-month battle to liberate the city from ISIL control. After the group captured the area in 2015, tens of thousands of people fled, and entire sectors were razed to the ground. “After the war, humanitarian work was really needed, and we noticed a lot of pollution in the river that wasn’t being addressed,” Salam explains.

“The ministries and government institutions need a push,” Adil adds. Seeking to provide a level of accountability that is lacking in Iraq, Mayouf posted a video on social media in May, showing families leaving al-Ankour. “Recently, the crises are both

humanitarian and environmental,” Mayouf says, estimating that more than 1,000 children are suffering from the lack of water in al-Ankour. The area has just one small medical centre by the lake. It is open only in the mornings and is limited in what it offers to treat water-borne diseases, dehydration and lack of hygiene as opportunities to wash are constrained.

For the past six months, Salam has been compiling reports on the state of Anbar’s water pollution, tracking river levels and pollution in the ground and in water samples as well as the informal – in some cases, illegal – use of water, such as digging unauthorised wells. He shares his reports with local and national government bodies but has been frustrated with the lack of meaningful response. “No action was taken to prepare them [local residents] for the situation,” Salam says. Recent samples of the river water, he adds, were six times more polluted than the average level. The crisis in Habbaniyah Lake is just one aspect of the country’s environmental threats. The Ministry of Water Resources has warned that Iraq is facing its worst water shortage in a century with 7 million people experiencing reduced access to the resource.

According to the United Nations, 90 percent of the country’s rivers are polluted and Iraq will meet only 15 percent of its water demands by 2035. Baghdad-based biologist and environmental activist Husam Sobhi has tracked the declining water levels of Iraq’s lakes through satellite images for the past three years.

“Habbaniyah has lost around 40 to 45 percent of its water since 2020,” he tells Al Jazeera by phone. “We need a strong negotiation strategy to improve Iraq’s access to water from neighbouring countries.” In his air-conditioned office in Ramadi, Jamal Ouda Sameer, director of the water resources department in Anbar, is frank. “If the situation continues like this, the lake will be empty soon,” he tells Al Jazeera, attributing the reduction in Habbaniyah to a combination

of reduced water from the Euphrates from Syria and Turkey, a lack of rain and a heating climate, which he estimates has all occurred in the past four years.

It is a grim irony that in the 1980s, flooding would have been his department’s main problem. Parts of the Euphrates used to flow up to 4,000 cubic metres per second (141,000 cubic feet per second), Sameer says. Khalid Shamal Mushab, a spokesperson for Iraq’s water ministry, says his ministry needs at least 500 cubic metres per second (17,700 cubic feet per second) of water released from Syria to feed the Euphrates. “But Iraq gets 200 cubic metres per second [7,000 cubic feet per second] in the best situations.” Such is the serious decline in water levels that Sameer is happy to hear that the flow from Syria, measured around al-Qaim, is 250 cubic metres per second (8,800 cubic feet per second). Less than 100 cubic metres per second (3,500 cubic feet per second) is not uncommon and presents a serious threat to water access in Iraq as it flows further downstream. He acknowledges that at least 10,000 residents have been impacted in the villages surrounding the worst-affected southern area of the lake. “The main purpose of the barrage is to open it when there is extra water – but this is unlikely now as the flow of water from the Euphrates in Syria is reduced.”

“We can open the water if the amount reaches 300 cubic metres per second [10,600 cubic feet per second], but the maximum we get now is around 200 cubic metres per second, and we need this water for others in Iraq to drink,” he says, estimating that shortages would affect half a million others if water continues to flow to Habbaniyah at the same rate as previous years. “The population in the centre of the Anbar government is 500,000 residents. It’s impossible to deliver water for them if we open towards Habbaniyah.” In Baghdad, the water ministry’s spokesperson tells Al Jazeera that his ministry is not responsible for the lack of drinkable

water in villages. “We can provide drinkable water to all Iraqis in the meantime, but municipalities and other service institutions have not worked or developed ways to deliver drinkable water to rural villages via an efficient pipe system.” He also blames state institutions for water pollution as chemical, organic and medical waste is frequently disposed of directly into the river. “It’s ridiculous that the health ministry reports about the spread of diseases among residents of the rural areas close to the river because of water scarcity,” he says. “According to our data, health institutions are the largest contributors to water pollution.”

The ministry has filed a lawsuit against multiple state institutions over the disposal of their waste but no actions have been taken yet, he says. “In Qaim [farther upstream, closer to Syria], the water is good quality. By the time it has reached Ramadi, it’s bad. By the time it hits southern Iraq, it is toxic,” Sameer says. The issue is also political. “All of Iraq’s lakes are in the west and north of Iraq,” he adds. “There is a water shortage in the middle and south, which must be supplied with this water.”

Peeling a thin lid from a small plastic cube of water, he shakes his head. “We import too much water. This is clean, but it won’t last forever.” Meanwhile, at the entrance to a tourist village on the other side of Habbaniyah Lake between Ramadi and Fallujah – a once vibrant and glamorous attraction – a lonely security guard is bemused. “Why are you here? The water is already gone. You can’t even swim in it.” Among the dilapidated pastel holiday homes, a family from Baghdad explores the dried-up shore. Noor Haddi, 35, reminisces about her childhood visits to the site and expresses shock at its current state. Her two young sons venture towards the distant water, their legs sinking into the muddy ground. “It used to be so beautiful,” she says, looking away. “But two rivers [the Tigris and the Euphrates] have dried up. What hope should we have?”

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Global laws and Western double standards

PAKISTAN has urged the advocates of the concept of 'responsibility to protect', (R2P) to equally apply this global commitment to safeguard the oppressed people of Palestine and the Indian- illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. During his speech in the UN General Assembly on the responsibility to protect and prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, the Pakistani Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN said that apart from its abuse, the concept of R2P has also led to the criticism that some powerful states failed to invoke R2P by showing hesitancy either in condemning the massive human rights violations committed by their close allies' or by holding them accountable in the Security Council. According to him, India has denied the right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people and resorted to extra-judicial killings, forced abductions, collective punishments, and the incarceration of the political leadership of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) over the past decades.

Over seven decades ago, nations around the globe founded a global platform called the United Nations Organization (UNO) in a bid to maintain peace, end wars and resolve their mutual disputes amicably under the globally accepted framework, universal laws, and decisions of that prestigious global forum. The United Nations unanimously adopted the resolution at the 2005 World Summit to endorse a global responsibility to ensure that the international community never fails to halt the mass atrocity and crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and others. That global commitment encompasses three broader prospects including the responsibility of each State to protect its populations, the responsibility of the international community to assist States in protecting their populations as well as the responsibility of the international community to protect humanity when a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations.

Although, the UN charter comprehensively covers all fundamental human rights enshrined under the Universal Declaration of human rights, however, there had been continuous maltreatment of religious and ethnic minorities in certain parts of the world that compelled the UN Human Rights Council to adopt specific resolutions to curb recurrent incidents of genocide and ethnic cleansing in certain nations. After the adoption of the R2P resolution, the international community was expected to protect those in danger, but its selective application driven by double standards, economic interests, and geopolitical considerations of powerful nations seriously undermined the credibility and genuineness of this global humanitarian doctrine.

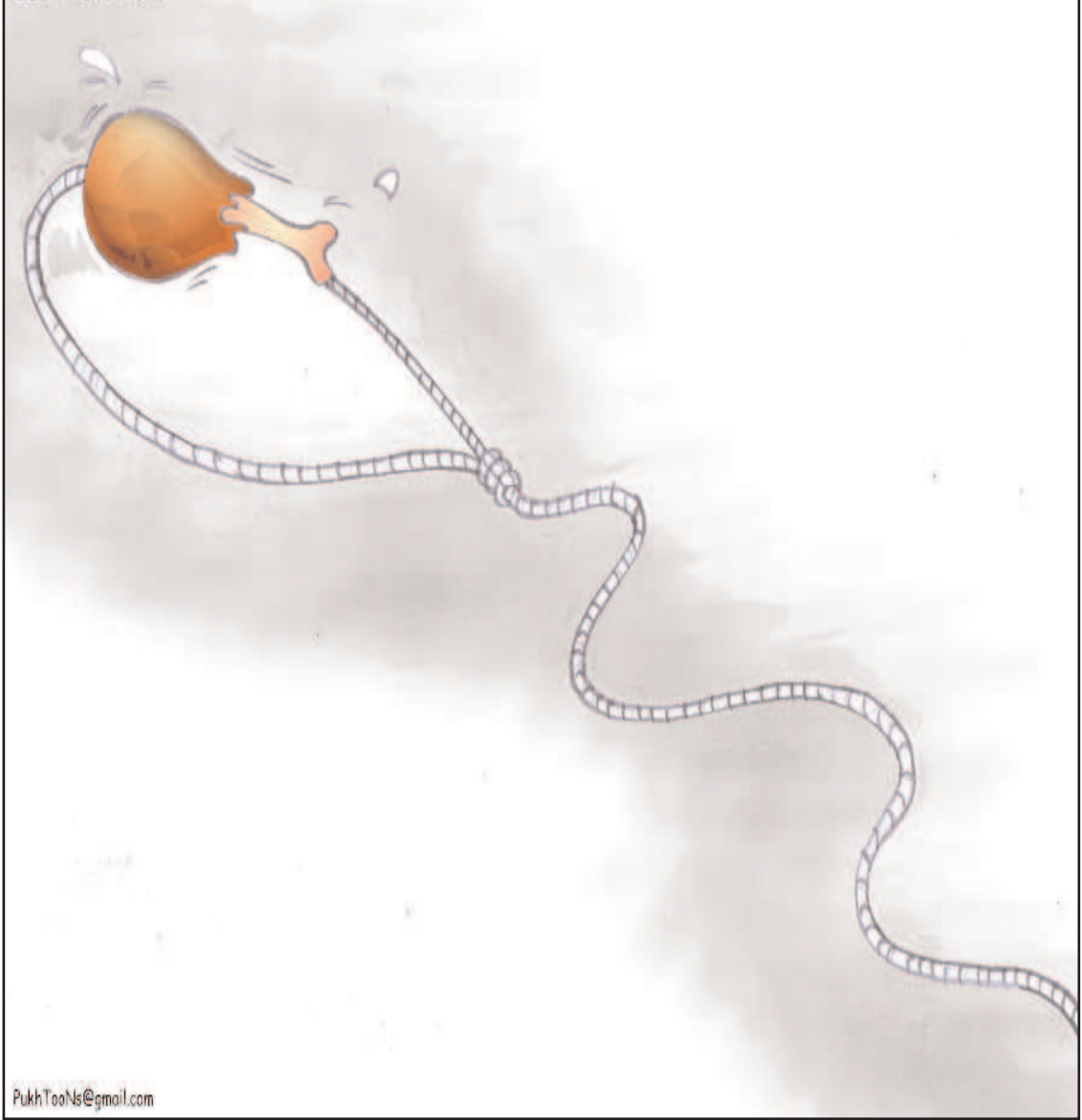
Unfortunately, India has blatantly violated multiple UN Security resolutions and denied the right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people, waged war against innocent Kashmiris, and turned the occupied valley into an open prison by deploying over 900,000 troops to forcibly rule over 2 million people. Presently, the Indian military has employed extreme suppression, while extra-judicial killings, torture and arbitrary detention, and collective punishments are common tools for occupied forces to prolong India's illegal and unjust occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. The UN Commission on Human Rights has comprehensively highlighted gross human rights abuses and suppression in India's Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in the past years, while Pakistan has also recently circulated a dossier with the evidence of 3,432 war crimes committed by Indian officials in the highly militarized region in the world. Similarly, the state of Israel is unashamedly waging a crusade against unarmed Palestinians, establishing new Jewish settlements in West Bank and Gaza, demolishing homes, and committing unabated crimes against humanity. Ironically, the so-called champion of human rights and democracy are unable to admit or raise their voice against the grave human rights abuses of their strategic allies because of their vested interest in India and Israel.

Realistically, the global multilateral forum, universal humanitarian laws, and divine values became mere tools for the powerful nations, who selectively apply that important declarations to their advantage to achieve their political objectives, otherwise vehemently oppose the same rules when contradict their interests. These, double standards and biased attitudes of world nations had caused frustration among marginalized societies and worsened the human rights situation in occupied zones across the world particularly in long-held disputed regions of Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine. There is a dire need for the UN to rationalize its system which promotes its core objectives ends discrimination, restores peace, and resolves longstanding issues so that humanity lives in peace, prosper unrestrictedly and equally.

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Post Eid bait...



Palestinians unprotected as Israeli settler war escalates

Chris Doyle

THE brief respite in the burgeoning Israeli settler war on Palestinians is over. The conjunction of Ramadan, Easter and Passover witnessed a concerted effort from the international community to limit the violence. This included demands, largely ignored, to pause settlement construction. It also coincided with the pause in the Netanyahu government's plans for judicial overhaul.

All of this has ended. The last few weeks have seen the Israeli coalition - a government dominated by the settler movement - return to full-scale operations. So far this year, Israeli forces and settlers have killed 170 Palestinians, three times the number of fatalities at this point last year.

In the last few days, settlers have run riot in numerous Palestinian towns and villages. Between 200 and 400 settlers rampaged through Turmus Ayya, damaging about 15 homes by arson and stoning. They set fire to homes with people still inside, as well as about 30 Palestinian-owned cars. This was the day after a lethal Palestinian attack at the settlement of Eli, which had followed yet another major assault on the Jenin refugee camp, where Israeli forces killed seven Palestinians including two children. The Israeli army has also upped its use of force, with Apache helicopter gunships and armed drones deployed in the West Bank.

But the chutzpah prize of the millennium goes to the heads of the Israeli military, police and Shin Bet. They boldly stated that: "In recent days, violent attacks in (the West Bank) have been carried out by Israeli citizens against innocent Palestinians ... These attacks contradict all

Jewish values and are nationalist terror in every sense, and we are obligated to stop them." Yes, these attacks do violate Jewish values, but the military, police and Shin Bet, many of whom are settlers, are part of the package. They facilitate the settler-colonial occupation. While Jericho was put under lockdown for a week earlier this year after one Palestinian fired one bullet, these security services seem incapable, despite their skills and resources, of arresting more than a few token settlers for what they say are terrorist attacks.

Is there any difference between Israeli settler policy and state policy? If there is, it is minor and it only revolves around how to proceed at a pace the major powers, particularly the US, can live with. The settler leaders resent this, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would not have been able to oversee such a great land grab over his 15 years in power without mastering how to keep Washington largely in check, even if he does test the limits. The settler movement believes force against its Palestinian neighbors is a requirement to achieve its ambitions. Settler violence has escalated to intensities never before witnessed in 56 years of occupation. These are not random acts of thuggery and vandalism. Indeed, many of the attacks were advertised online beforehand. It is a core part of the settlers' strategic designs to push Palestinians off their land and into ever more crowded cities.

To crush the rural Palestinian communities, settler violence targets their land, their water supplies, their solar panels and their crops. In a West Bank village I visited last month,

Palestinian farmers showed me videos of settlers, with the active assistance of the army, burning their crops, shooting two Palestinians and torching five cars. The attackers were from two outposts facing each other across a small valley. The fields they burned were on land between the two. This was not random. Settlers have also targeted Palestinian children. They know that Palestinian parents will leave if the children are terrified. Settlers from the notoriously violent settlement of Yitzhar set a school on fire at Urif last week. Close to this village, a member of the Knesset was calmly watching the settler rioters from a viewing platform.

Fresh outposts are a core aim. The settlers want to smash the Palestinians and take advantage of any Palestinian response to initiate more outposts. After the Palestinian attack that killed four settlers at Eli, the settlers built several new outposts. The Israeli government chipped in by approving an extra 1,000 units in Eli itself. All over the West Bank, settler attacks on Palestinian communities take their toll. The village of Huwara, to the south of Nablus, experienced a full-scale settler pogrom in February. Settlers also created the coercive environment that forced the inhabitants of Ein Samiya to leave their community north of Nablus in May.

But do not be surprised if the settlers are pushing for a full-on Israeli military operation. Why wouldn't they? They could only come out as winners, with more land and resources. Palestinians would fight back, but the fight would be so unequal as to be ridiculous. Some openly discuss the need for an "Operation Defensive Shield Two," in reference

to the major Israeli military invasion of West Bank cities in 2002 during the Second Intifada, arguably the largest operation since 1967. There would be little defensive or protective about any such operation. Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's national security minister, openly craves a military operation.

Palestinians have few options. The Palestinian Authority is nearly bankrupt economically and also morally. Some want a change of leadership, but what could a younger, more dynamic leadership achieve? The PA has barely any authority at all. Israel will not let this change any time soon. Young Palestinians may turn to the Lions' Den or similar groups. Some will mount attacks on Israeli soldiers, settlers and civilians, yet this is not a fair contest. There is no strategy to the Palestinian attacks - they stem from frustration and anger. They achieve little for Palestinians while handing settler extremists a gift-wrapped opportunity to hit Palestinians harder. But these young men have nothing to live for, not unlike the refugees attempting the deathtrap journeys across the Mediterranean. The international powers just watch. US Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides claimed that Washington "will not stand by and watch settler violence." Unfortunately, standing idly by has become a major talent of US and European diplomats, because that is precisely what the US, EU and UK have been doing, not just this year but for decades. What will stop the escalating settler war? Very little, it seems. Palestinians are left unprotected, even though, under international law, a people under occupation should be. It looks like all the wrong records will be broken this year.

Arab News

Inflation, debt and discontent: UK faces perfect storm post-Brexit

Mick O'Reilly

ON Thursday, the Bank of England raised the base interest rate by half a percentage point, adding to the woes of any consumer who has debt in the United Kingdom. While a raise was anticipated, the doubling of the expected hike came as something of a surprise to Downing Street - and certainly to anyone who is coming off a fixed-rate mortgage and trying to renew their house funding.

The timing of the rise was impeccable, not because it comes as Britons are wondering just how they are going to make their overstretched paycheques find some more elasticity, but because the hike coincided with a poll that says that just 18 per cent of Britons who supported Brexit and thought it was a good idea the leave the European Union. Am I cynical? Yes, of course, such a trait is always finely tuned in someone who reports on the affairs of politics and economics, history, geography and society. But even the most ardent Brexiters can't help but wonder just what the heck has happened to the UK since they decided to leave the third-largest global economy on their doorstep.

Sure, coronavirus and shutting down national economies had a detrimental effect on economies globally - but they have bounced back. Britain, leaving the EU just before we were all locked down, suffered another 8 per cent hit on their gross domestic product. And then that small matter of the conflict in Ukraine was the next hit. And while prices soared and governments across Europe came up with measures to try and protect those struggling with the choice between heating and eating, the UK was in a far weaker position to be able to help those facing much higher household bills. If you think I'm being overly hard on Britain, consider then one further piece of economic news that broke there this week. For the first time since 1961, Britain owes more than 100 per cent of its annual GDP.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the UK owes £2.6 trillion - a figure that represents 100.1 per cent. In layman's terms, for every £1 in circulation in the UK economy, another £1.01 is owed to lenders. This is no mere statistic. The importance of this means that the government of Rishi Sunak has very little wriggle room to try and help mortgage holders who are coming off fixed low-rates mortgage terms and are renewing at levels that, one average, are £300 more per month. That means that over the next few months, there are going to be a lot of disgruntled people struggling to keep a roof over their heads, put food on the table at a time when inflation in the UK remains stubbornly high, and who will be heading into the winter facing high energy costs.

Inflation in the UK stands at 8.7 per cent, just

as it was the previous month. In other EU countries, it's far lower. France is below 6 per cent, Germany at 5. Why? Well, the key difference is that France and Germany are within the EU. And being outside the EU had added a hefty premium to food prices in the UK. Analysts estimate that any given food item in the EU costs 20 per cent more in the UK. Consider if you will that traditionally, the Conservatives have always had the reputation with voters of being, well, conservative when it came to the economy. The party was considered to be best in handling finances and letting the free market grow without regulatory processes of big state spending and interventions - none of that nation-owning railways or waters or things that Labour and lefties like to do with other peoples' money.

That was then. Now? And particularly since Liz Truss - remember here? - got her hands on the economy, it's all gone up the creek. But despite the best efforts of Sunak and Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, inflation remains rampant, the negative effects of Brexit are all too real for everyone to see and feel, and the government's fiscal policy is simply down the toilet. That economic storm coming on the horizon coincides perfectly with a general election in the UK that has to be called before January 2025.

Normally, any government would try to time tax cuts to the period just before the election is called in a cynical attempt to buy votes on the back of the economic bounce those tax cuts would create. Now, thanks to Brexit, thanks to soaring inflation, thanks to rising inflation, the Sunak government simply doesn't have the wriggle room to create those tax cuts. What's more the government is in something of damned if you do, damned if you don't conundrum. Offer tax cuts, and people will ask why couldn't the money have been used to end the countless public sector strikes that have crippled the country. Or gone to give some sort of aid to people facing much higher mortgage rates. On that note, the opposition Labour party says it would instruct banks to offer interest-only payments and extend the term of mortgages to help borrowers through this sticky period.

But with debt so high, Sunak risks being perceived as reckless, almost in the ilk of Truss, offering tax cuts on borrowed money, worsening the UK's overall financial position. Back to that Brexit poll. I would be disingenuous if I did not note that 61 per cent of Brits believe that the effects of Brexit will get better. But that was before the interest rate hike was announced. I would happily wager that come the next poll, that figure would hardly break 50 per cent. How long before less than 10 per cent of Brits think Brexit was a good idea?

Gulf News

Turkiye fights to overcome its structural economic problems

Yasar Yakis

IN the aftermath of last month's general elections in Turkiye, all attention was naturally focused on the political outcome, but an equally important subject is how the economy will be managed as a result of the elections. This month's appointment of Hafize Gaye Erkan as the governor of the central bank served as a turning point in the country's fiscal policy. She has a brilliant educational and professional background.

She completed her doctorate studies at Princeton University. She worked for Goldman Sachs in the US for nine years. While she was working in the First Republic Bank, she was promoted to the post of CEO. On June 8, she became governor of the central bank of Turkiye. If President Recep Tayyip Erdogan does not interfere with the rules of a transparent market economy, the new team may improve Turkiye's economy, even if some bitter

pills may have to be swallowed.

The first concrete step taken by Erdogan's new government was in the field of interest rates, with the central bank last week almost doubling the country's key interest rate from 8.5 percent to 15 percent. Paradoxically, this was a subject that Erdogan was previously opposed to. He had developed a theory that stated: "The interest rate is the cause and inflation is the result." Few economists believe in this theory. Rising and falling interest rates are the result of complicated interactions in the free market, but Erdogan persistently continues to back his thinking. On his way back from Baku, Azerbaijan, this month, Erdogan said: "We accepted that Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek, together with Mrs. Hafize Gaye Erkan, the newly appointed governor of the central bank, would quickly implement the required measures." He carefully avoided giving a carte

blanche to Simsek because he does not want to legitimize interest rate rises.

Last Thursday, the new team of Simsek and Erkan announced the official interest rate increase. The real interest rates are still higher than the 15 percent figure. However, Simsek said the difference between the real and the official interest rates would be reduced as time goes by. Even this figure is far from being realistic. The real figure must be somewhere around 25 percent, but the new team of decision-makers seems to be determined to bring the real rate closer to the political figure with frequent adjustments.

The interest rates float according to the rules of a free market economy. Finance Minister Simsek said during his first public statement that Turkiye had no choice but to return to "rational ground" to ensure predictability in the economy, which means stability, trust and

sustainability. Despite unpromising predictions, the Turkish economy has proven in the past to be resilient to a very large extent. With better management, it has the potential to be revitalized.

The minimum monthly salary in Turkiye is €520 (\$568). Only three countries in Europe have lower minimum salaries than this, namely Serbia (€460), Bulgaria (€398) and Albania (€297). Turkiye also has a relatively skilled labor force. Therefore, if the country's economy is properly managed, it has the potential to overcome some of its economic problems.

Erdogan is a leader who is capable of persuading his people to swallow bitter pills from time to time. Four deputy ministers have been appointed during the last week. One of them is a political appointee, or a party commissary, who will act as a watchdog and supervise

the recruitment and transfer of personnel from one department to another. The three others are professionals in the economic field with various backgrounds.

In the last five years, four finance ministers have been replaced, while three governors of the central bank have been dismissed in the last two years. Such practices discourage bureaucrats who want a challenge from accepting important posts. They also fail to provide the business community with the trust that is essential for a stable economy. Because of Erdogan's insistence on his questionable theory on interest rates, the Turkish economy suffered an enormous transfer of money from petty capital holders to big capital holders. When the interest rate was fixed by the central bank at 8.5 percent, the economic operators who needed money had to pay the difference between the political and the market rate.

The outgoing governor

of the central bank coined the epithet "heterodox" for the practices of the central bank, without the economic actors understanding exactly what it meant. In encyclopedic terms, heterodox means "not conforming with the accepted standards." Therefore, the former governor must have meant that an amalgam of various rules would be utilized to guide the country's economy.

One of the major vices of democracy is that it forces political leaders to promise the moon. With the forthcoming local elections in Turkiye to be held in March 2024, political leaders on both the government and the opposition sides are almost bound to promise high salaries, while the economic decision-makers will try to dissuade them from making unrealistic promises. If Simsek remains in his post for a few years, Turkiye may overcome some of its economic plights. However, miracles should not be expected.

UNESCO members to decide on US rejoining

Lisa Bryant

UNESCO member states meet later this week on the Biden administration's bid to rejoin the Paris-based UN scientific and cultural body, a move that will inject hundreds of millions of welcome dollars into its coffers and give the United States a say in shaping programs ranging from climate change to education and artificial intelligence. Few expect any surprises on the outcome of the deliberations, which will be held at an extraordinary UNESCO session Thursday and Friday. There have been no reports of serious objections by the agency's 193 members, although China and Russia have offered some critical and cautionary remarks.

Yet even as many welcome Washington's move to rejoin over concern that competitors like China are filling the void, some observers wonder how long that welcome will last. Next year's US presidential elections are looming, potentially ushering in another administration hostile to UNESCO's policies and membership. Still others suggest Israel, which similarly defunded and ultimately left the body, should follow Washington's footsteps in returning. UNESCO itself has given an enthusiastic thumbs up to the US request to rejoin earlier this month. Secretary-General Audrey Azoulay - who has taken pains to erase perceptions UNESCO was biased against Israel and woo Washington back - called it "a historic moment." "The reason why the US is coming back is a strong signal that UNESCO's mandate is more relevant than ever," said UNESCO's New York office head, Eliot Minchenberg, in an interview, laying out a raft of UNESCO programs reflecting US priorities including fighting antisemitism

and Holocaust education. "In the absence of the US, of course others have stepped up and helped, but it is definitely not the same as the US presence and engagement - both financially, diplomatically and politically," he added. Also welcome are US dues that once accounted for 22% of UNESCO's budget. The Biden administration has proposed slowly paying off the \$619 million in arrears, starting with \$150 million in 2024 dues and back payments. Located not far from the Eiffel Tower, the small agency - known officially as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - runs a raft of programs from promoting education and free press, to fighting against climate change and antisemitism.

Many know it best for helping to preserve and showcase the cultural and physical heritage of member states. French baguettes, Tunisian harissa, Finnish sauna culture and Colombian marimba music have all landed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. More than a thousand sites have also made UNESCO's World Heritage List, including two dozen in the US, from the Statue of Liberty to the Everglades and Yellowstone national parks. Even today, some US universities and other private groups continue collaborating with UNESCO. That includes the Massachusetts-based nonprofit Union of Concerned Scientists, whose deputy director for climate and energy programs, Adam Markham, says without membership the US cannot weigh in on key discussions around climate change and World Heritage sites.

"You're seeing China taking a

lot of leadership roles," said Markham, who can still participate in scientific meetings as a member of a nongovernmental organization. "I'm not saying that's a good thing or a bad thing. It's just changing the geopolitical relationships that the US has with other UNESCO partners." The US first quit UNESCO in 1984 under the Reagan administration, over corruption concerns and an allegedly pro-Soviet tilt. It rejoined under another Republican president, George W. Bush, then suspended dues under Democrat Barack Obama, when Palestine became a member. In 2018, President Donald Trump pulled the US out altogether over perceived anti-Israel bias and management issues, with Israel following suit. Now, politics are again driving America's return - this time, over concerns Beijing may otherwise have an out-sized say in sensitive programs like artificial intelligence.

"Joe Biden's administration has realized that the empty chair policy is incompatible with the defense of the country's interests and that its absence from this forum ends up serving those of its great rival, China," wrote France's Le Monde newspaper in an editorial - even as it warned against Washington's "fickleness." "The succession of departures and returns can only raise questions about the durability of the...decision, less than two years before a presidential election that could bring the party of ultra-nationalist retreat back to the White House" it added, referring to the Trump administration. China's ambassador to UNESCO has indicated Beijing was ready to work with a newly rejoined Washington. But the state-backed China Daily was blunter. "Whether the US will

play a positive role in the agency remains a conjecture," it wrote in an editorial. "If... its return is just for regaining its own influence against that of China in the organization, the US will likely just be a troublemaker."

Russia's foreign ministry said it, too, was willing to welcome back the US, but warned Washington needed to follow UNESCO's rules and "should pay back its astronomical debt unconditionally and in full." In Israel, Michael Freund, a former communications advisor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, cast the US return as a "fiasco" and UNESCO "as an appalling club," in an opinion in The Jerusalem Post. But the newspaper's own editorial suggested Israel might consider rejoining the agency - picking which programs to support while boycotting others - to counter Palestinian "disinformation." Mixed reactions over UNESCO have been sounding in the US as well.

"Returning to UNESCO is a waste of time and money, and not an effective riposte to China," John Bolton, a former national security advisor under President Trump, wrote in the New York Post. He called on Congress, with the House of Representatives now controlled by Republicans, to block UNESCO funding and said no current Republican presidential candidate appeared to support rejoining the agency. But Markham, of the Union of Concerned Scientists, says he saw a different reaction when he spoke recently to a group of historic preservationists in New Jersey. "The one thing they burst out spontaneously in applause was when I said the US had announced it was going back to UNESCO," he said. "And I'm certain there were Republicans as well as Democrats in that audience."

VOA

Putin's Russia isn't finished. It may just have become even more dangerous

Sherelle Jacobs

SINCE the fall of the Soviet Union, two doomsday scenarios have come to capture the imagination of the West. One is that, thanks to climate change, our planet will explode into a retributive blaze reminiscent of the Book of Revelation. The other is that we are on the cusp of inventing an artificial intelligence that will opt to destroy humanity after performing some impenetrable cost-benefit calculation.

Our attitude to the threat posed by Vladimir Putin's Russia, by contrast, borders on the flippant. It is striking that the Wagner Group's abortive coup was greeted with neither trepidation nor a sober assessment of the potential fallout. Much of the West looked on with a kind of awe, as pundits confidently pronounced the end of Putin's reign. This was swiftly followed by a scratching of heads when Yevgeny Prigozhin called his rebellion off. This speaks to a strange blind spot in the West. We have become hopelessly complacent about the existential threat posed by an enigmatic and dangerous country that is in many ways beyond our ability to comprehend. Hollywood is more interested in psychopathic robots than exploring the Russian "soul". Despite the war in Ukraine, there is strikingly little interest in the Russian elite's long-standing self-conception as the bringer of the apocalypse, traceable back to the medieval era and a recurring theme in the country's philosophy and literature.

Even despite the eruption of the Ukraine war there is remarkably little interest in the Russian elite's distinctive brand of apocalyptic messianism. (Whereas the Western apocalyptic tradition dreads humanity's extinction at the hands of an external threat, the Russian elite has, since the medieval era, ambivalently imagined Mother Russia itself as the anti-Christ and bringer of End Times in philosophy, film and literature. The fascist Russian regime's bizarre railing against Ukrainian "Nazism" thus seems not merely ironic, but a chilling fulfilment of the homegrown prophecy that Russia is doomed to become the very thing that it fears; the outbursts of Moscow TV pundits who demand "why should a world without Russia exist?" are part of a deeply entrenched nihilistic tradition.) It has become easy to dismiss the idea that nuclear-armed Russia might still pose a super-catastrophic threat to humanity. Rudimentary analysis of recent events would suggest Putin's position has never been weaker. Wagner's

mutiny has demolished Putin's authority. Military morale has been seriously damaged, and Putin may have no choice but to redirect resources to stave off further rebellions at home. The view that the Russian spectre that haunted the West for much of the 20th century is set to be vanquished in a final deranged act of self-immolation seems not to be an unreasonable one.

But are we really so confident that the threat is essentially over? Are we so certain that the Kremlin has been neutralised by its own incompetence? Or could Saturday be a turning point of a far more dangerous sort? The first worrying scenario is that Putin knows that his political status is terminal - and that this tempts him into escalating the Ukraine war in a manner that truly does risk triggering another world war. It has been asserted that what Putin fears more than anything else is coming to a grisly end akin to Saddam Hussein or Muammar Gaddafi. He is believed to have gone mad with fury at the death of the latter, watching footage of his violent death on a loop. With restive warlords threatening his authority, and the International Criminal Court having issued a warrant for his arrest, one can't help but wonder whether such an end has taken on a new vividness for Putin.

If so, he could well be tempted to use tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine in a desperate bid to change the dynamics of the war in his favour. Indeed, we ought to take his transfer of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus and pursuit of upgraded and new ranges of nuclear missiles extremely seriously. We should also be open to the theory that the Kremlin has fundamentally altered its nuclear strategy from basic deterrence to a regional aggressive stance. Nor can we ignore the risk of the Kremlin shifting its red lines over Western assistance to Ukraine - not least in its heightened paranoia that foreign agents could be encouraging its leaders on the battlefield to go rogue. But Putin is not the only factor here. A second potentially devastating scenario involves Russia's warlords running amok. The Russian president has sought to run the country like a mafia corporation, keeping the capitalist barons who seized control of its resources and infrastructure in the Yeltsin era in check, by guaranteeing their protection against each other while threatening them with kompromat. But his permissive attitude to the privatisation of security means he now risks being held hostage by rebel armies over which he has lit-

tle control. While these militias are just as wealthy as oligarchs (Wagner, which offers African governments security in exchange for resource contracts is a good example), they also have serious military power. And many want to escalate Russia's war in Ukraine. Both the Chechen leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, and Alexander Khodakovsky, a Russian militia commander in Donetsk, have called for the Kremlin to use nuclear weapons against Kyiv. What if Putin hangs on, or is even strengthened by Saturday's events? History teaches us that leaders who survive coup attempts and mercilessly crush opponents can go on to enjoy long and terrifying reigns (Hafez al-Assad's 18-year stint after ending a failed coup in 1982 in Syria comes to mind). The Russian middle class's revulsion for the likes of Prigozhin is quite probably stronger than its horror towards Putin. Although the Russian media has been more outspoken than usual, lecturing the Kremlin that it has put military expedience before domestic stability, ordinary Russians who are terrified of a re-run of the civil war of 1917 to 1923 seem keen for armed units that are not part of the official security forces to be disarmed.

The risk in this scenario is that Putin carries on leading Russia down the path of slow physical and psychological disintegration - only to delay a final point of explosive reckoning further down the line. Unable to terminate the conflict, he may seek to endure a war of attrition as long as possible, in the hope that there is a change of administration in Washington. He may look to continue anaesthetising a frustrated middle class with corrosive myths of Dionysian Russia's manifest destiny to destroy an Apollonian liberal order in which Russia can never exist. In other words, he will continue to preside over a ticking time bomb scenario in which nothing is resolved. The West's enemies will be preparing for all eventualities. We can be certain that a disintegration of the Russian Federation will be exploited by China. Beijing is already heavily invested in Russia's easternmost republics. It may feel emboldened to increase its influence in places like the republic of Buryatia, a Siberian region on the border with Mongolia, which has long harboured ambitions of independence. The West cannot afford to bury its head in the sand. Whatever happens as a result of the Wagner coup, there are few outcomes which would seem to be positive for peace or stability. It's time to take the threat to civilisation seriously.

The Telegraph

Why a Siberian Shaman is a thorn in Kremlin's side

TWO years have passed since Alexander Gabyshev's second placement for compulsory treatment in a psychiatric dispensary. The practice of using punitive psychiatry as a tool to silence dissidents has been known and loved in Russia since the persecution of Pyotr Chaadaye by the Okhranka, the Tsar's security service, in the 19th century.

However, the focus of this discussion is not on historical examples, but rather on the phenomenon of the "Warrior Shaman" and its place in both Gabyshev's native republic of Sakha and Russian politics. Alexander Prokopyevich Gabyshev, a janitor, welder, handyman, and graduate of the history department at Yakut State University, initially appeared to be an ordinary citizen who didn't fit into the prevailing capitalist system.

But he, unlike so many others, had the courage to speak out against loneliness, disorder and injustice. His campaign, which began in August 2018, initially had no specific objectives, although Gabyshev identified himself as a pilgrim and someone who embraced the beliefs of Indigenous peoples of the North. In the summer of the following year, Gabyshev shifted his focus from missionary work to the political agenda, perhaps recognizing the demand for

Free Yakutia Foundation and its interactions with others.

The shaman embarked on a cross-country trek and pledged to hold an Algeys ceremony on Red Square, after which, he believed, Putin would resign voluntarily. Despite the seemingly archaic image he adopted, Gabyshev advocated for the establishment of democratic values, emphasizing the need for a balanced relationship between the government and the people: "Democracy must be without fear. Now people are afraid to speak, they are afraid that they will be fired, they will be deprived of their salaries... There must be a balance between the government and the people. And the struggle for balance sometimes goes on, yes, by bloody methods, if the tyrannical state regimes do not allow them to balance their power in a democratic way. And Putin will defend statehood, which we will now try to balance with democracy." Although Alexander Gabyshev's campaign was short-lived, any news related to the "Warrior Shaman" inevitably garnered millions of views and thousands of supportive comments. Additionally, he amassed a sizable group of direct followers.

What caused this? The popularity of this unsuccessful and seemingly naive protest march can be attributed to the boldness

and simplicity of Gabyshev's image. One can draw parallels between his trek from Russia's Far East to Moscow with Mahatma Gandhi's "Salt March," Lenin's "walkers," or even with the plot of the 1998 Russian tragicomedy starring Mikhail Evdokimov, "Why Don't We Send... a Messenger?" The shaman's pilgrimage to Red Square is a peaceful and relatable expression of despair, representing an ordinary person's final attempt to reach out to the authorities in Moscow. The homemade shaman's tambourine becomes the voice of millions of Russians, and the smoke from an unlit ritual bonfire symbolizes the fire that those who haven't heard the "Shaman Warrior's" call will soon witness. It may be that the dictator's superstitious nature and love for rituals and spiritualism played a role in the decisive and aggressive arrest of the shaman. Currently, Gabyshev remains under compulsory treatment, effectively making him a political prisoner. In the eyes of the Kremlin, this former welder and hard worker is deemed more dangerous than Navalny and Yashin, as the rebellion of an ordinary person, which resonates with most Russians, is difficult to analyze and predict in terms of its potential threat to the existing constitutional order.

The Moscow Times

How China can offer Abbas a political lifeline

Daoud Kuttab

ANYONE following the political strategy of Mahmoud Abbas knows that he has a one-track mind. The Palestinian president rejects any form of violent resistance to the Israeli occupation. He has put all his eggs in the diplomatic basket. Abu Mazen, as he is called by his friends, understands well the power imbalance that exists. He knows that Palestinians cannot change that balance using violent resistance. Ever since he has been in power (and before, during the Oslo negotiations) he has always believed that Palestinians' biggest asset is the justice of their cause, and that rallying world support can rectify the current imbalance.

That is why the aging Palestinian leader did not hesitate for a second in accepting Beijing's invitation for a four-day official state visit to China. Abbas has been hinting for some time that while Palestinians do not discount the important role of Washington in peacemaking, there has to be another party to ensure that the blind US support for Israel doesn't result in the continuation of the occupation and colonial settlement of the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Palestinian leadership has for decades had a good relationship with China. Beijing has been a consistent supporter of Palestinian rights and was an early recognizer of the state of Palestine. China is also deeply involved in economic ties with Israel. Chinese foreign policy has been more assertive in the Middle East lately, its most successful effort of late being sponsorship of the Iran-Saudi rap-

prochement. Chinese-Saudi relations have so much improved that more than \$10 billion of contracts were signed on the first day of a business conference in Riyadh this month.

A person close to the Palestinian president notes that what makes the Chinese different from Americans is that Beijing is willing to invest and put its money and other resources in play with Arabs, while the Americans and other Western countries are reluctant to share their technology or work in partnership with Arab businesspeople.

At the last Arab League summit in Riyadh in May, Chinese President Xi Jinping invited the Palestinian leader for a state visit. It began on June 13, and was aimed at showing the depth of Palestinian-Chinese relations. The visit was described as a celebration of 35 years of Palestinian-Chinese relations, although ties between the PLO and the Chinese Communist Party precede that by decades. China wants to strengthen its relations with the Arab world, which it is convinced require a serious effort to support Palestinians. The Palestinians would like to see more Chinese direct support and investment in Palestine, and would love to see another superpower challenging US domination in the Middle East.

According to the UN Comtrade database on international trade, Israel's exports to China in 2022 were worth \$4.68 billion and China's exports to Israel were worth \$16.48 billion. Over the past 21 years, Chinese exports to Palestine have increased at an annualized rate of 19.2 percent,

from \$6.15 million in 2000 to \$248 million in 2021. Palestinian exports to China, mainly art and sculpture have increased at an annualized rate of 7.28percent, from \$76,900 in 2000 to \$337,000 in 2021.

The Chinese record at the UN in support of Palestinian rights is almost perfect. But even though China is a permanent member of the Security Council, its position has hardly been converted to action. With Beijing is preparing to take a bigger political role in the region, it is possible that its presence will grow.

Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely that China can achieve any sort of breakthrough with the current Israeli government, despite tensions between Tel Aviv and Washington — largely based on Joe Biden's deep mistrust of Benjamin Netanyahu, and the US president's siding with his own progressive wing, which deeply opposed to the Israeli prime minister's controversial and divisive judicial reforms.

Palestinian officials concede that China will not use its economic might to pressure Israel. That is not how China operates. Rather than take a negative role against Israel, Beijing will look for other means to flex its political muscle. So, while the visit to China by the Palestinian leader was more about economics than politics, there is hope that China will be able to use its economic power to achieve some political movement. Palestinian officials also secretly hope that China's involvement may be a wake-up call to the Americans, forcing them to take a more proactive role as the cycle of

violence in the conflict escalates.

China's power is also derived from the fact that it is increasing its presence globally, as a result of its foreign policy style of operations. Its methodology focuses on forging international relations through partnerships for development, security, and technology, striving to build a multipolar world order and thus reduce US domination.

Many countries in the Global South, Africa and Latin America, find in China, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS group a new outlet for development and a move away from Western domination. They see that China provides the ability to create a parallel track that aims to strike a balance in relations with Western countries that are controlled by the US, with its financial system and the imposition of the dollar economy and military protection.

Abbas and his delegation were received royally in China. They came home optimistic about the seriousness with which China will pursue its aims in the Middle East, including a serious effort on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The 86-year-old Palestinian leader is unable to say or do anything about the current oppressive actions of the Israeli army and settlers in Palestine. But what Abbas hopes to do is to bring political sanity and diplomacy back to center stage.

Time will tell if he will be able to match his success in bringing Iran and Saudi to agree on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For Abbas, this might be his last chance to move the political needle to save the two-state solution — and his own political legacy.

approaches the international community can take to assist the Sudanese refugees and the destination countries. First of all, the international community ought to increase its attempts to help the host countries that are lacking resources so that they can provide the required social services to refugees. And if the host countries have the capability to cover the needs of the refugees and help them integrate into society, this initial investment can have several benefits for them in the long term.

Secondly, the most effective approach over the long term is to continue employing diplomacy and dialogue in order to reach a resolution between the warring factions in Sudan, which would facilitate the safe return of refugees who want to return to their home country. It is important to recognize that peace, stability and security are vital and necessary for the sustainable return of Sudanese refugees. In conclusion, it is incumbent on the international community to provide assistance to the countries that are receiving refugees from Sudan. Sudanese refugees continue to pour into countries that do not have the resources to deal with this tragic situation. The escalation of the conflict in Sudan is having severe repercussions not only for the Sudanese people, but also for neighboring countries.

There are two different

How the world can help Sudanese refugees and their host countries

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

A refugee crisis is one of the negative consequences of armed domestic conflict. The ongoing clashes between Sudan's military and a rival paramilitary force have severe implications and repercussions not only for the people of Sudan, but also for the countries that are receiving the refugees fleeing the violence.

People in an affected country tend to escape their homeland not only due to the violence and destruction, but also because of the shortage of basic necessities that the war creates. The situation is exacerbated when the country is already suffering from infrastructure underdevelopment, a poor healthcare system, water scarcity and environmental issues. For example, the conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has made Sudan's humanitarian situation much worse, leading to shortages of food, water and fuel, higher inflation and rising prices, as well as limited electricity.

Thousands of people have been killed and many others have been forced to flee their homes in order to find safety and shelter, either in other parts of Sudan or in neighboring countries. According to the International Organization for Migration's June 20 Displacement Tracking Matrix report, about 2.5

million people have been "displaced within and outside Sudan since the onset of the conflict on April 15. Nearly 2 million people are internally displaced, mostly in Northern (18 percent), West Darfur (15 percent), River Nile (14 percent) and White Nile (12.5 percent) states." In addition to the internally displaced, more than 520,000 people had crossed into neighboring countries as of June 18, according to the UN Refugee Agency. As the conflict continues, the refugee crisis is getting worse, affecting several other countries in particular. Sudan shares borders with seven countries - Libya, Egypt, Chad, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

One of the main issues is that the countries receiving the Sudanese refugees are generally not fully prepared for such an influx and are already struggling with their own challenges. A primary destination for refugees from Sudan is Egypt. More than 170,000 refugees have arrived in Egypt so far and it is expected that hundreds of thousands more will arrive over the coming months.

It is worth noting that Sudan and Egypt enjoy deep ties and local charities and volunteers have been going out of their way to help the refugees arriving from Sudan.

However, Egypt is struggling with its own economic problems. Another destination for the Sudanese is Chad, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. Chad was already hosting more than half a million refugees from Sudan before the conflict erupted in April. The refugees in Chad were mainly Sudanese who had fled the conflict in Darfur.

Most of the Sudanese refugees in Chad are living in refugee camps and host communities. The level of underdevelopment in the country is alarming, which makes the situation much worse. As the UN Agency for International Development has pointed out: "Only about 6 percent of the population has access to electricity, and only 8 percent has access to basic sanitation. Adult literacy is 22 percent. Life expectancy is only 53 years. Around three-quarters of all births take place without the attendance of a skilled health professional." It is worth noting that refugees can have a significant impact not only on the economy of the host nation, but also on its social, political and even environmental landscapes. The hosts tend to face more political and economic strain if they are not prepared for the situation.

There are two different



Pakistan Pavilion opened at China International SME Fair in Guangzhou

BEIJING (APP): Acting Pakistani Consul General, Sardar Muhammad, inaugurated the Pakistan Pavilion at the 18th China International Small and Medium Enterprises Fair in Guangzhou.

He also represented Pakistan at the opening ceremony of the Fair and the 2nd SME International Cooperation Summit main forum, both held in Guangzhou.

Sardar said that Pakistan has been allocated a significant area at the Fair where eight Pakistani companies are showcasing a variety of products including jewelry, handicrafts, and food items, he told China Economic Net (CEN).

The Consul General and He Bing, the Deputy Director General of the

Department of Industry and Information Technology of Guangdong Province and others involved in organizing CISMED for providing this great platform for SME promotion, which is the real engine of global inclusive sustainable economic development,” he stated.

Sardar noted that CISMED offers valuable opportunities for SMEs, both from China and globally, to learn from each other and strengthen exchanges and cooperation. He is confident the Fair will meet its set objectives.

“As per the 2022 esti-

mates from the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), there are over five million SMEs in Pakistan. They contribute 40% to Pakistan’s GDP and account for 25% of overall exports. After agriculture, the SME sector employs the highest percentage of the working population in the country,” he pointed out.

He emphasized that SMEs play a crucial role in shaping national growth strategies, generating employment, and fostering social cohesion by improving the standard of living for vulnerable segments of society.

He acknowledged that Pakistan’s SME sector is still developing and has much to learn from China’s

mature and well-developed SME sector.

“There has been cooperation in many areas between the SMEs of China and Pakistan, but there’s much more that can be achieved together.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) provides a tremendous opportunity for SMEs to develop and grow.

There’s ample scope for joint ventures between Pakistani and Chinese SMEs, especially in the fields of logistics, trucking, training, warehousing, fisheries, horticulture, minerals, food processing, construction, dairy and livestock, ICT and related services, light engineering, apparel, and cold storage and supply chain businesses,” the CG added.



CHINIOT: A worker busy in making traditional basket with branches of tree.

Modern technology boosting agriculture production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Rice Research and Development Board Government of Punjab Shahzad Ali Malik on Wednesday said that use of modern technology and best quality seed plays a crucial role in boosting agriculture production, offering numerous benefits and addressing key challenges faced by farmers in Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led Shoukat Ali Arain from Mamukanjhan Faisalabad, he said climate change poses significant challenges to agriculture, including erratic rainfall patterns and increased frequency of extreme weather events, said a news release.

Modern technologies like climate modeling, remote sensing, and crop simulation models help farmers adapt to these changes, he added.

They assist in making informed decisions regarding crop selection, planting schedules, and water management, ultimately enhancing resilience and reducing vulnerability.

He said government must provide interest free soft loans to farmers for purchase of modern agriculture implement and technology to bring green revolution across the country.

He said advanced agricultural technologies such as high-yield crop varieties, precision farming techniques, and improved irrigation systems enhance productivity.

These technologies help farmers maximize their output and yield, resulting in increased agricultural production and food security.

He said technologies offers innovative solutions for pest and disease management in crops.

Remote sensing, satellite imagery, and drones equipped with multispectral sensors help identify early signs of plant stress, pests, or diseases.

This early detection allows timely intervention, preventing extensive crop damage and reducing the need for indiscriminate pesticide use.

China to help Pakistan develop chemical industry

KARACHI (INP): “We hope to set up chemical factories collaborating with China under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China has modern technology, and we can improve our chemical sector with it. Improved industry can generate employment as well,” said Sheikh Muhammad Nadeem, chairman of Pakistan Chemical Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA).

Earlier this month, Chinese Consul General (CG) in Karachi, Yang Yundong, attended the tea party of PCDMA and delivered a speech. Yang appreciated the association’s contribution to Pak-China cooperation and highlighted the fruitful results of

CPEC programs, according to Gwadar Pro.

“Over the past decade, CPEC has laid a solid foundation for Pakistan’s economic and social development. In the next step, the two countries will broaden the scope of cooperation and continuously enhance cooperation in industry, agriculture, culture, science and technology.”

Yang also encouraged the association to seize the opportunity to strengthen its connection with relevant Chinese industries, and the Consulate General will maintain close exchanges with Pakistani business communities to boost bilateral trade and promote the development of relevant industries.

“In Pakistan, the devel-

opment of chemical industry has not received enough support. People set up the industry on their own. There are no proper labs. Private labs are there, but they are costly.

Therefore the cost of making products is expensive. That’s why we want to build connections with Chinese chemical companies.” Sheikh Muhammad Nadeem said. He also expressed gratitude to the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi for its strong support to Pak-China economic cooperation.

“We hope that the interactions between enterprises of the two countries will be strengthened in the post-epidemic era to further promote the development of the industry.” He said.

President SCCI calls on Member

SIALKOT (APP): President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik called on Member (Inland Revenue – Policy) Afaq Ahmed Qureshi to discuss the issues of industry pertaining to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

According to SCCI, Member Inland Revenue-Policy Afaq Ahmed Qureshi has assured the President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik that the exporters would be exempt from the application of Section 111 (4A) of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 that requires submission of Audited Accounts for businesses falling under Final Tax Regime.

President SCCI said that this was a positive development as the export sector had concerns regarding Section 111 (4A) as it is against the spirit of the Presumptive Tax Regime.

Zindigi-powered by JS Bank bags Best Digital Startup Award 2023

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, is pleased to announce yet another achievement of being recognized as the Best Startup of the Year at the esteemed Pakistan Digital Award 2023. This recognition comes as Zindigi continues to demonstrate commendable growth in its operations at a brisk pace, promising to make a significant impact in the industry in the near future.

This notable accomplishment adds to Zindigi’s series of achievements within just one year of entering the market, building on their earlier success at the Pakistan Technology Excellence Award 2022.

Receiving the Best Startup of the Year award at

the Pakistan Digital Award is a testament to the incredible dedication and hard work of the entire Zindigi team,” said Noman Azhar, Chief Officer at Zindigi. “We remain committed to our mission of redefining the financial world for the digital generation in Pakistan. This award motivates us to continue our journey towards revolutionizing the industry and providing innovative financial solutions to our valued customers.”

“We are delighted to win as it reflects our wonderful team’s commitment and trust of millions of our customers base”, said Meena Munawar Khan, Zindigi’s Chief Product and Marketing Officer.

Since its launch, Zindigi has made significant contributions to the mutual funds

and stocks market. Since its launch, Zindigi has made significant contributions to the mutual funds and stocks market. Through its innovative solutions, it has revolutionized the investment process, simplifying it like never before and making mutual funds an accessible investment option for every citizen of Pakistan. By empowering individuals with financial knowledge and providing user-friendly digital tools, Zindigi is playing a crucial role in democratizing the investment landscape. Zindigi is actively dedicated to empowering Pakistan through its multifaceted projects focused on youth and women empowerment, as well as the digitization of various systems across the country.

Pakistan confronting worst-ever climatic disaster: Iftikhar Ali

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik on Wednesday said that Pakistan is among the hardest hit country in the world confronting the worst ever climatic disaster in memory because of emissions of other rich countries.

Addressing a seminar as keynote speaker on “Pakistan and Response of Leading Emitters” he said around the world 2022 has been a year of climate catastrophe including drought, floods, mega-fires, typhoons, and Pakistan’s flash floods and its large-scale destruction opened the eyes of all over the world which he added is bigger global wake up call, said a press release.

He said one-third of

Pakistan was submerged wiping out hundreds of villages from the map and snatching livelihood from poor strata of the society rendering millions homeless and displacing 33 million.

He said unfortunately developed countries have so far after a lapse of one year given assistance to Pakistan less than peanuts.

He said global “Justice is Underwater”. Although some progress has been made in recent years to elevate climate justice to a higher place on the global agenda but the world’s leading emitters still have not risen to the occasion he added.

He said it’s known to everyone globally that the world’s rich countries are like that polluting factories that have deprived Pakistan

of the long-term climatic conditions on which it has built its economy, homes, farms and infrastructure.

He said if there was a global climate count, Pakistan would have a strong case against other high-income countries for failing to limit climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs).

But since there is no global climate count (yet) governments should act like one and allocate the attributable climate losses and damages to those countries that are historically responsible for them, he added.

He said the costs of Pakistan floods are enormous to the tune of more than US\$30 billion and the coming months brought increased hunger, disease,

poverty, and other social complications.

He said rich countries should bear their fair share of the attributable costs of climate adaptation, emergency response and recovery in countries that played little to no role in causing today’s calamities.

He said too often rich and powerful countries deny their historical responsibilities- whether for colonial, slavery, or climate damage.

Replying to a question, he said that the developing world will not forget the leading role that rich countries have played in creating today’s worldwide climate disasters.

As climate-related losses rapidly mount, global demands for climate Justice will only grow.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis Wednesday said that the countries with strong manufacturing sectors generate trade surpluses, increase foreign exchange reserves, and improve balance of payments besides providing impetus to economic growth.

Speaking at seminar, He said that the manufacturing sector equally plays a vital role in international trade by producing quality goods for export besides strengthening the economy by increasing GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and ample jobs creation opportunities, said a press release.

“Manufacturing industries tend to have higher productivity levels compared to other sectors, leading to higher economic output and improved living standards”, he added.

He said it is a labor-intensive sector that provides employment opportunities to a large number of people that creates both skilled and unskilled jobs,

supporting a diverse range of occupations.

“Availability of manufacturing jobs helps reduce unemployment rates, alleviate poverty, and promote social stability”, he said.

Manufacturing sector is closely linked to innovation and technological advancements and drives research and development activities, leading to the creation of new products, processes, and technologies.

Meher Kashif Younis said technological advancements in manufacturing can enhance productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness, benefiting both the sector and the overall economy.

“Export-oriented manufacturing industries contribute to economic diversification and reduce dependence on a single sector”, he added.

Highlighting the significance, Meher Kashif Younis said manufacturing can drive regional development by attracting investments and creating industrial clusters in addition to concentration of manufac-

turing activities in specific areas stimulates local economies, encourages urbanization, and promotes the development of supporting infrastructure and services. It can help bridge regional economic disparities and promote balanced growth, he added.

He said this sector also adds value to raw materials by transforming them into finished products and this value addition increases the overall wealth of a nation.

By producing higher value-added goods, countries can command higher prices, capture larger market shares, and improve their competitiveness in the global economy, he added.

Manufacturing sector is crucial for sustained economic growth, job creation, technological progress, and export competitiveness.

He said government and policymakers often prioritize the development and promotion of manufacturing industries to achieve broader economic objectives and improve the standard of living for their citizens.

MWC Shanghai-2023:

Huawei takes center stage unveiling ‘GUIDE to Intelligent World’

SHANGHAI (APP): Huawei, the global technology leader, here on Wednesday made a spectacular appearance at this year’s three-day Mobile World Congress (MWC), captivating the participants with an array of activities centered on their theme of “GUIDE to the Intelligent World”.

Drawing in visitors from around the world, Huawei’s experiential tour offers a captivating journey through multiple cities, showcasing the company’s groundbreaking technology and business initiatives. Attendees have the unique opportunity to witness firsthand the transformative power of Huawei’s innovations as they explore various cities and immerse themselves in the company’s vision for the future.

Highlighting Huawei’s commitment to pushing the boundaries of technological advancement, the company’s product launch has stolen the spotlight at MWC Shanghai 2023.

Huawei has unveiled its newest innovative products and solutions, designed to revolutionize industries and enable the full potential of

5GigaGreen, 5G intelligent core networks, Intelligent OptiX Networks, private line + X products, and other intelligent digital transformation solutions.

These cutting-edge offerings demonstrate Huawei’s dedication to delivering state-of-the-art technology to meet the evolving needs of industries worldwide.

With 5GigaGreen, Huawei introduces an environmentally conscious solution that harnesses the power of 5G to drive sustainable practices across industries. By integrating green technology and connectivity, Huawei aims to create a more sustainable and eco-friendly future.

The 5G intelligent core networks by Huawei mark a significant leap forward in connectivity and network management. The intelligent core networks empower businesses with enhanced speed, reliability, and intelligence, enabling them to seamlessly adapt to the demands of the digital age.

In the realm of Intelligent OptiX Networks, Huawei showcases its expertise in optical network solutions. Leveraging advan-

need technologies, Huawei’s Intelligent OptiX Networks enable ultra-high-speed connections and pave the way for the development of smart cities and industries.

Huawei’s private line + X products demonstrate the company’s commitment to delivering tailored solutions to meet individual business requirements. By integrating private line services with other intelligent technologies, Huawei empowers enterprises to unlock new levels of productivity and efficiency.

The diverse range of intelligent digital transformation solutions presented by Huawei at MWC Shanghai 2023 cements the company’s position as a driving force behind the global technological revolution. These solutions span multiple industries, empowering businesses to thrive in the increasingly interconnected and digital-driven world.

As Huawei’s presence at MWC Shanghai 2023 continues to captivate audiences, the company reaffirms its commitment to leading the way in innova-

tion, connectivity, and digital transformation. With their “GUIDE to the Intelligent World” theme, Huawei paves the way for a future where technology revolutionizes industries, transforms lives, and creates a truly intelligent world for all.

In her keynote address titled “Embracing 5G Transformations” Sabrina Meng, Rotating Chairwoman and CFO of Huawei, emphasized the profound integration of the future intelligent world’s digital infrastructure into every aspect of our lives, industries, and society.

According to Meng, the integration would not be solely based on advancements in individual technologies but rather on the convergence of multiple elements within incredibly massive and complex systems. She highlighted the need for systems-level thinking and design to achieve the vision.

Meng drew an analogy to a game of chess, stating that while observers can see the big picture, players focus on the intricate details. Similarly, she

emphasized the critical importance of systematic capabilities to integrate technology and transform management for the future success of 5G.

Addressing the integration of different technologies, Meng discussed the potential for greater synergy across cloud computing, networks, edge computing, and devices through systematic design and innovation across various domains. She also highlighted the significance of optimization across software, hardware, chips, and algorithms in overcoming the challenges associated with developing complex solutions for diverse industrial scenarios.

She stressed the need for management transformation in parallel with technological advancements. “By adopting forward-thinking management practices, organizations can effectively harness the potential of 5G technology and ensure its successful implementation across industries.”

Sabrina Meng’s keynote provided valuable insights into Huawei’s perspective on embracing 5G transfor-

mations, emphasizing the importance of holistic thinking, systematic capabilities, and management innovation in shaping the future intelligent world.

Digital and intelligent transformation encompass more than just technology itself; it involves a fundamental shift in management approach.

Embracing digitalization requires redefining the relationships between people, events, things, and theory, and adopting an open and forward-looking management style to effectively tackle future challenges.

Currently, there are over 1.2 billion 5G users worldwide, and operators who swiftly embraced 5G development are already reaping the initial benefits. This is due to the escalating network demands driven by new applications across various markets. In the consumer market, services such as New Calling, cloud phones, and glasses-free 3D necessitate faster data rates and lower latency.

In the industrial sector, the RedCap ecosystem has matured, the passive IoT market is expanding, and

the Internet of Vehicles (IoV) requires higher upload speeds.

These all-encompassing applications are expected to result in approximately 100 billion connections, thereby ushering in a second wave of benefits and driving industry upgrades.

Commercial 5G services entered the market four years ago and have been implemented in more than 17,000 private-network projects worldwide. The revenue generated from 5G private networks and the number of industrial connections has both tripled.

Moreover, operators have utilized the CNY10 billion earned from 5GtoB private networks to fuel a CNY100 billion increase in revenue from cloud services, data storage, and platform services.

While many 5GtoB services were initially piloted in China, they have now expanded to other regions worldwide, including Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

These services enable industry customers to reduce costs, enhance efficiency, and facilitate intelli-

gent digital transformation in sectors such as manufacturing, ports, mines, oil fields, and healthcare.

The communications industry is rapidly approaching the advent of 5.5G technologies, which are expected to improve network capabilities 10-fold and create 100 times more business opportunities for operators.

At this year’s MWC Shanghai, Huawei is showcasing four of the major features of 5.5G including 10 Gbit/s downlink, 1 Gbit/s uplink, 100 billion connections, and native AI. It is also exploring the five connectivity areas expected to go mainstream with 5.5G – connectivity for people, for things, for vehicles, for industries, and for homes.

Huawei has already started helping a number of operators around the world begin commercial verification of 5.5G. The 5.5G industry will continue growing quickly as the first release of 5.5G standards is expected to be frozen in the first half of 2024 and related technologies have already been extensively verified.



In brief

Sana brings laurels for country

MIRPURKHAS (APP): 21-year-old Sana Kapri, the daughter of a poor labourer, returned to her village Niaz Muhammad Kapri in Jhado Tehsil of Mirpurkhas district to a warm welcome on Tuesday evening after winning the fourth position in the race at the Special World Olympics Games in Berlin, Germany. Sana Kapri, who also has the honour of getting first position in the race competition for special children at the national level, said she was happy for bringing laurels for the country. He grandmother Mehra-ul-Nisa attributed her success at an international competition to that of the Sindh province and Pakistan. She urged the Sindh chief minister to help her in the construction of house, besides taking steps for restoring her mental health

Gauff thrashes Jodie Burrage

NEW YORK (BBC): World number seven Coco Gauff thrashed Britain's Jodie Burrage to reach the quarter-finals of the Eastbourne International. American Gauff proved a step up in class for Burrage as she overpowered her 6-1 6-1 in exactly an hour. Burrage lost 10 games in a row against the excellent Gauff before breaking the American as she served for the match. However, Gauff recovered quickly to secure victory and her place in the last 16. Gauff will face either doubles partner and world number three Jessica Pegula or Colombia's Camila Osorio next. "Jodie has had a couple of good weeks on grass and hopefully she can have a good time at Wimbledon," Gauff, 19, said on BBC Two. "Being in a town like Eastbourne where you can walk reminds me of home. It's peaceful and I need that before getting into a Grand Slam." Burrage, 24, will feature at Wimbledon, which begins on 3 July, after being given a wildcard. Burrage reached the final of the Nottingham Open at the start of the grass-court season, beating world number 23 Magda Linette and French veteran Alize Cornet on the way. However, she always faced an uphill task against Gauff, who is 121 places above her in the world rankings and an excellent mover on a grass court. The American won five games in a row to take the first set, breaking Burrage's serve early with a fine backhand winner and consolidating her lead with a 124mph ace.

Arsenal make third bid worth £105m

LONDON (BBC): Arsenal have submitted a third bid worth £105m for West Ham and England midfielder Declan Rice. Treble winners Manchester City, who had a £90m offer for the 24-year-old rejected on Tuesday, will not match the Gunners' bid. Arsenal have also had two bids previously rejected after their offers fell short of the £100m West Ham want. However, it is understood the Hammers do not believe the structure of the latest bid is right. Rice's current contract at the London Stadium expires in 2024 but has the option for a one-year extension until the summer of 2025. If Arsenal's bid of an initial £100m plus £5m in add-ons is successful, the initial fee would equal the British record Manchester City paid for midfielder Jack Grealish. Earlier this month, England midfielder Jude Bellingham signed for Real Madrid for an initial £88.5m, although that deal could reach £115m if add-ons are activated.

Haris to lead Pakistan A in Emerging Asia Cup in Sri Lanka

LAHORE (Agencies): Mohammad Haris will lead Pakistan A in the eight-team Men's Emerging Asia Cup, which will run from July 14 to 23 in Sri Lanka. Omair Yousuf has been named his deputy in the 15-member squad that includes the likes of Saim Ayub, Shah Nawaz Dahani and Mohammad Wasim among others.

Haris was part of the senior T20I squad in the most recent series that Pakistan played against New Zealand at home. In all, he has represented the senior side in five ODIs and nine T20Is.

Others in the squad who have senior international experience include Arshad Iqbal, Kamran Ghulam, Wasim, Ayub, Dahani, and Tayyab Tahir. Wasim is the most experienced out of the lot, with two Tests, 14 ODIs and 27 T20Is under his belt.

Haris' deputy Yousuf has not turned out for Pakistan but has a good domestic record, wherein he averages 43.33 in 40 first-class games. In List A cricket, Yousuf has scored 1158 runs in 41 matches at 32.16. He was Pakistan A's leading run-scorer when they visited Zimbabwe for a six-game

unofficial ODI series in May this year, with 275 runs in four outings at 91.66. Pakistan A had gone down 4-2 in that series.

Pakistan A, the defending champions, have been placed in Group A alongside India A, Nepal and Sri Lanka A.

They will open their campaign against Nepal A on July 14, followed by the clash against their Indian counterparts on July 16 and Sri Lanka A on July 18. The tournament will be held in the 50-over format. Group B consists of Afghanistan A, Bangladesh A, Oman and UAE.

The top two sides from each group will qualify for the semi-finals. The final will be held on July 23. Pakistan A squad: Mohammad Haris (capt & wk), Omair Yousuf (vice-capt), Amad Butt, Arshad Iqbal, Haseebullah, Kamran Ghulam, Mehran Mumtaz, Mubasir Khan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr., Qasim Akram, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Shah Nawaz Dahani, Sufiyan Muqeem, Tayyab Tahir

Reserves: Abdul Bangalzai, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Junaid, Rohail Nazir

Plenty of internationals in Afghanistan A

Shahidullah Kamal will lead a strong 15-member Afghanistan A squad consisting of eight capped players for the competition. The squad has the likes of Ihsanullah Janat, Ikram Alikhil, Riaz Hassan and Noor Ali Zadrin in the mix. Noor, who has represented Afghanistan in 51 ODIs and 20 T20Is, is the most experienced out of the lot. Afghanistan A are part of Group B and start their campaign against Oman on July 14, followed by Sri Lanka A on July 16 and Bangladesh A on July 18.

Timeless Venus Williams eyes one more Wimbledon magic spell

LONDON (Agencies): The summer of 1997 saw Britain hand over Hong Kong to China, "Men in Black" top the movie charts and Harry Potter take his first, faltering steps at Hogwarts. It was also the year that Venus Williams, just 17 and with white beads in her hair, made her debut at Wimbledon.

Her maiden experience of the tournament was over pretty quickly, a first round loss at the hands of Poland's Magdalena Grzybowska.

Fast forward 26 years and the elder stateswoman of tennis is preparing to play at the All England Club for the 24th time at the age of 43.

She has been champion five times – in 2000, 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2008 when she beat sister Serena in the final. She is also a four-time runner-up, losing to Serena in 2002, 2003 and 2009 and then in 2017 to Spain's Garbine Muguruzza when she was 37.

A former world number one, but now ranked at 554, Williams insists she has no plans yet to follow Serena into retirement. She prefers to march to the beat of her own drum.

"I don't think anyone in life has anything to prove," said the American when she last played the tournament in 2021.

"The only thing you have to do is pay your taxes or else you're going to jail." Having played the tournament in four different decades, Williams boasts wins over the likes of fellow Grand Slam standouts Martina Hingis, Justine Henin, Kim Clijsters and Maria Sharapova – all long retired – on the famous lawns of south-west London.

Her 90-18 win-loss record comes with significant breakout performances. The 2005 semi-final win over Sharapova avenged Serena's loss to the Russian teenager in the 2004 final.

Days later, she defeated Lindsay Davenport 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 9-7 in an epic two-hour 45-minute final with Williams saving a match point. Williams's 2008 final triumph over Serena was just her second win in seven meetings in a championship decider against her sister at the majors.

"You could never detract from winning Wimbledon, but I'm definitely thinking about how my sister's feeling," said Williams after collecting her fifth and last title in London. Recent visits to any tennis court, however, have been rare for the American. She was sidelined for six months after injuring her hamstring in Auckland in January. On her return to the sport earlier this month, she fell to 17-year-old Celine Naef in the first round of 's-Hertogenbosch. She then bounced back in Birmingham to defeat Camila Giorgi in a three-hour 17-minute victory.



LORD'S: Stuart Broad is bemused after a DRS referral is turned down in 2nd Ashes Test.

Late own goal sees India settle for a 1-1 stalemate with Kuwait

BENGALURU (Agencies): A late own goal by Anwar Ali in the stoppage time restricted India to settle for a 1-1 draw against Kuwait after an ill-tempered South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship last Group A fixture on Tuesday.

Hosts, India got an upper hand just at the stroke of the half-time when Sunil Chhetri opened the scoring by converting the corner with great ease.

A corner coming from the right landed perfectly for an unmarked Sunil Chhetri inside the box, who made no mistake to guide it into the nets.

Tensions erupted in both camps during the second half when India's head

coach Igor Stimac received his second red card of the tournament.

The tensions persisted as the game continued and India's Rahim Ali and Kuwait's Hamad Al Qallaf were also given the send-off in the 90th minute.

With the completion of the regulation time, India were looking favourites to register a close 1-0 victory over Kuwait.

However, Kuwait then received unexpected support and equalised in the stoppage time, courtesy of an own goal by Anwar Ali.

Amrinder Singh had little opportunity to save the ball after a low cross from the right took a deflection off Anwar's leg and landed in the far corner of the post.

India captain Sunil Chhetri was disappointed with the result but backed his teammate, Anwar, stating an error such as this can happen to anyone.

"It's not Anwar, it is the country that conceded," said Chhetri.

"It can happen to anyone. We didn't even talk about it now (after the match) and we are all professional enough to not talk about it. I hope the kid shrugs it off, we all have his back as it can happen to anyone," he added.

Following the 1-1 stalemate, both India and Kuwait remained unbeaten in the group stage but the latter occupied the top Group A standings due to superior goals scored.

England captain Bright expects to be fit for World Cup

BURTON UPON TRENT: England captain Millie Bright expects to be fit for the start of the Lionesses' World Cup campaign next month as she recovers from knee surgery.

The Chelsea defender has not featured for club or country since March.

However, Bright was still selected as her nation's skipper for the tournament in Australia and New Zealand after Leah Williamson suffered an anterior cruciate ligament injury.

Bright will not be

involved when England face Portugal in a warm-up friendly on Saturday, but is hoping to face Haiti in her side's opening game of the group stage on July 22 in Brisbane.

"I think we are a little bit ahead (of schedule) actually," Brighton told reporters on Tuesday.

"Coming into it, there's a big chunk of time before the first game, so we're really confident and everything is going exactly the way we wanted it to go."

Rather than being con-

cerned by the long lay-off ahead of the World Cup, the 29-year-old believes she will be rested and refreshed after a gruelling 12 months.

Bright was a key figure as England won Euro 2022 on home soil last summer and helped Chelsea to a Women's Super League and FA Cup double.

"I think the amount of minutes I've played leading up to this has been ridiculous, through the roof, so if anything I feel mentally and physically fresher than I've ever felt," she added.

Players of Abbottabad City shines in World Special Olympics in Germany

PESHAWAR (APP): One of the pride of the city of Abbottabad in the World Special Olympics, the wonderful and lively achievements of special athletes during these Games and soon after arrival they were largely welcomed.

Pakistan has won 10 gold and 80 other medals from Berlin, Germany in the Special Olympics held from June 17 to June 26. Kingston School is the only school in Pakistan with the highest number of athletes participating in Special Olympics Germany.

Two players from Kingston School, Ali Amir and Abdullah Khan Jadoon, played in the Special Olympics Pakistan hockey team and defeated

Paraguay by 3-2 in the world competition and won two bronze medals.

Kingston's Ali Amir won bronze and silver medals in basketball and Sardar Haibullah won three silver medals along with one gold in weightlifting.

Principal Sardar Muhammad Irfan said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is like a living graveyard for special children as for these special children, there is no curriculum, no book, and no beneficial policy in the province.

There is an individual education curriculum for these special children in the world, but the irony here is that these children study the education curriculum of normal children.

Kanigram Club win Shaheed Mustafa Kamal Barki Memorial Soccer title

PESHAWAR (APP): Kanigram Club clinched the trophy after defeating Miranshah Chashma Green Club in the final of the All Pakistan Floodlight Shaheed Brig. Mustafa Kamal Barki Memorial Football trophy played at Baisaki Ground Dera Ismail Khan.

In the first 90 minutes of the match, the match was equal between the two teams, which was decided on a shoot-out. Kanigram Football Club won the tournament 4-3 before playing a goalless draw in the stipulated 90-minute final match. In the first tournament, the winning team was awarded Rs. 0.2 million as cash prizes while the runners-up team got Rs. 0.1 million.

The first All-Pakistan Floodlight Shaheed Brigadier Mustafa Kamal Barki Memorial Football Tournament was organized

by Regional Sports Office Dera Ismail Khan Division and Pakistan Army. Commander Task Force Brigadier Muhammad Rashid Khan was the chief guest on this occasion. Colonel Umar Ahmed Commanding Officer 8 Cavalry, Lt. Col. Hasibur Rehman Khan, Lt. Col. Saleem, Deputy Commissioner Dera Mansoor Arshad Khattak, Assistant Commissioner Farhan Ahmed, elder brother of Shaheed Brigadier Mustafa Kamal Barki Zaroili Khan Barki was also present.

Upon the arrival of the special guests, Regional Sports Officer Anwar Kamal Barki gave them a grand welcome and garlanded them and introduced them individually to the players. A total of 32 teams participated in the tournament and this tournament continued for 8

days. It should be noted that the sector commander of ISI, Shaheed Brigadier Mustafa Kamal Barki, was returning from Angorad on the first of Ramadan, during which he was martyred in an attack by elements hostile to the country.

To pay a rich tribute to him, RSO. Anwar Kamal Barki announced that this tournament will now be held every year in memory of martyred Brigadier Mustafa Kamal Barki. He said the martyr is always alive. He said sports plays a key role for the promotion of positive activities.

Deputy Commissioner Dera Mansoor Arshad said that the district administration will continue to encourage sports activities in memory of martyr Brigadier Mustafa Kamal Barki and urged the youth to take active part in healthy sports activities.

Ashes: Just Stop Oil protesters briefly disrupt opening morning of England v Australia Test at Lord's

LONDON (Agencies): Just Stop Oil protesters briefly disrupted the first morning of the second Ashes Test, with one carried off the Lord's ground by England wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow. Two people entered the field attempting to spread orange powder. As the players guarded the pitch, one was picked up by Bairstow and another stopped by England captain Ben Stokes.

The powder did land on the square, but was cleared by groundstaff and the game resumed after a short delay.

The Metropolitan Police said three arrests were made after the protest.

Guy Lavender, chief executive of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) which owns Lord's, said he condemned the protest "in the strongest possible terms".

"Their actions not only endanger themselves and those who work at the ground, but they have consistently shown complete disregard for the people who pay to attend events, not just here at Lord's but around the country at other sporting venues," he said. A Just Stop Oil spokesperson said: "Cricket is an important part of our national heritage, but how can we enjoy the Ashes when much of the cricketing world is becoming unfit for humans to live in?"

"We can no longer afford to distract ourselves when the sports we play, the food we eat, and the culture we cherish is at risk."

"It's time for cricket lovers and all those who understand the severity of this situation to get onto the streets



and demand action."

The campaign group said on its Twitter account it did not know who the protesters were, but added it "loved" them.

Just Stop Oil protesters have disrupted other sporting events this year, including the rugby union Premiership final and the World Snooker Championship.

The environmental protest group is calling for the government to halt all new oil, gas and coal projects.

Security has been heightened around major cricket matches. With the pitch and conditions more important to the outcome in cricket than most sports, the potential for damage and disruption is greater if protesters are able to reach the middle.

England's team bus was briefly

held up by protesters before the Test against Ireland at Lord's earlier this month. At the World Test Championship final at The Oval, the International Cricket Council took the unusual step of preparing a reserve pitch in case the original one was damaged.

Wednesday's match was only one over old when the protesters entered the field from the Lord's Grandstand.

Initially confronted by the players, they were also tackled by security staff from the venue and the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Bairstow was cheered by the crowd as he carried one protester from the middle to the boundary edge. The other, who got closer to the pitch, was blocked by Stokes and Australia batter David Warner.



In brief

IRSA releases 344,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 344,500 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 552,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1493.23 feet and was 95.23 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 290,600 cusecs and 154,800 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1172.75 feet, which was 122.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 81,800 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 217,900, 169,300, 109,600 and 42,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 77,500 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 77,700 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Int'l day of Tropics to be marked today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Day of the Tropics will be marked on June 29 (Thursday) across the globe that celebrates the extraordinary diversity of the tropics while highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities nations of the Tropics face. It provides an opportunity to take stock of progress across the tropics, to share tropical stories and expertise and to acknowledge the diversity and potential of the region. The Tropics is a region of the Earth, roughly defined as the area between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. Although topography and other factors contribute to climatic variation, tropical locations are typically warm and experience little seasonal change in day-to-day temperature. An important feature of the Tropics is the prevalence of rain in the moist inner regions near the equator, and the seasonality of rainfall increases with the distance from the equator. The tropical region faces several challenges such as climate change, deforestation, logging, urbanization and demographic changes.

ANF nabs eight drug peddlers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) during three different operations across the country on Wednesday, arrested eight accused allegedly involved in drug smuggling and recovered 150 kg of drugs from their possession, said an ANF spokesman here. He informed that in an operation near Kala Shah Kaku Motorway Toll Plaza, 96 kg opium and 24 kg charras were recovered from a vehicle while two drug peddlers, residents of Jhelum and Sheikhpura were also rounded up. In the second operation on Shakarpur, Sukkur Road, a drug smuggler, resident of Balochistan was arrested while 12 kg charras was recovered from his possession. In the third operation near Kuchlak Bypass, two motorcycles were intercepted five accused residents of Faisalabad, Qilla Abdullah, and Shakarpur were netted on recovery of 18 kg charras, concealed beneath the seats of the motorcycles. Separate cases had been registered against the accused while further investigations were in process, the spokesman added.



ISLAMABAD: A deserted view of Islamabad Highway as people deaprts to the hometowns to celebrate Eidul Azha with their dear ones.

Police to ensure comprehensive security measures during Eid-ul-Azha: SSP

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations/Investigation) Malik Jamil Zafar Wednesday chaired a meeting to reinforce foolproof security arrangements during the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha festivities.

The meeting focused on ensuring the safety of citizens, protecting public gatherings, mosques, Imambargahs, and maintaining law and order throughout the district.

In adherence to the directives issued by Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the SSP Operations/Investigation convened the meeting to discuss proactive security measures. The attendees included SP Investigation, SP Traffic, SDPOs, DSP Property, In-charge Anti-Vehicle Lifting Unit and officers incharge police sta-

tions. Recognizing the mass movement of citizens to their native town during this festive season, it was emphasized to establish street committees in respective areas. These committees will appoint representatives with their contact numbers shared among police officers, officials of the Falcon and Dolphin of the Safe City project, as well as patrolling officers. This collaborative effort will ensure enhanced security for residences and swift response to any potential threats.

Furthermore, stringent security protocols are to be implemented in all markets, highways, and shopping malls through effective patrolling. Police personnel are advised to remain vigilant, safeguarding the life and property of the general public, including approved cattle markets. Special attention will also be given to recreational areas, parks,

and cemeteries to ensure a secure environment for everyone. He further directed to ensure the security situation 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, he added.

SSP Operations/Investigation reiterated his personal commitment to closely monitor all security duties. He urged citizens to cooperate with the law enforcement personnel on duty and urged them to carry their identification documents for smooth security checks. In his address, he also encouraged all officers and jawans to approach their duties with dedication and zeal.

Huge rush at cattle markets amid attraction of children

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

According to a private news channel, despite prices, most people have been visiting animal markets to get the animals of their choice well before Eid day, to provide their family members, especially children, to spend maximum time with these animals before they are slaughtered to fulfill the command of Allah Almighty.

Children are enjoying the best time while enjoying at the cattle market, said a citizen. For the attraction of buyers, sacrificial animals are being decorated with colorful garlands, sterling bands, embellished belts, and crowns. All kinds of heavy-weight and various unusual name animals including cows, bulls, camels, goats, and lambs are becoming part of cattle markets across the country. A goat with a heavy weight of more than 300 kilograms has become an attraction for youngsters in the Faisalabad cattle market.

BISP disbursed Rs. 42b among over 4.6m beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed Rs. 42 billion among over 4.6 million beneficiary women under the Benazir Kafaalat. The BISP is disbursing fourth quarterly tranche of Benazir Kafaalat for the Financial Year-2022-23.

Under Benazir Kafaalat, 90 lakh registered beneficiary families are entitled to a quarterly installment of Rs 9,000 per household. BISP has already released over Rs 81 billion to its partner banks, that is, Bank Alfalah and HBL for disbursement among the beneficiaries through their retail distribution network. Along with Benazir Kafaalat, Benazir educational scholarships are also being given out to the children of registered families, however, 70 percent attendance in the school is mandatory to receive educational scholar-

ships, said the spokesman of the programme. Disbursement of the tranche continued on June 28, 2023 through banks' retailers despite the public holiday, however, payments will remain suspended during Eid-ul-Azha holidays and Banks' holiday on Monday, July 3.

The payments will be resumed from July 4, and will continue till the payment to all remaining beneficiaries, the statement continued.

In case of any complaint, beneficiaries can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil Offices or call on toll-free helpline number 080026477 of Benazir Income Support Program. The BISP spokesman reiterated that any messages from Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171 and messages from any other number should not be trusted.

‘Decisions about political fate taken in London, Dubai’

RAWALPINDI (PPI): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid said on Wednesday it would be clear in the next 48 hours whether the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would revive the bailout package for cash-strapped Pakistan. In a series of tweets, the former interior minister said additional taxes to the tune of Rs300 billion would be imposed after the IMF deal.

Former finance minister Miftah Ismail had secured an IMF tranche but Ishaq Dar could not stop the rupee devaluation and put the economy on track, he quipped.

Taking a dig at the ruling parties, the AML chief said decisions about political fate of the country were taken in London and Dubai as they hold their assets there.

Calling the current rulers hypocrite, he said public hated them, adding that it was first time that the Hajj quota was underutilised. The decisions about caretaker setup, elections and seat adjustment were being taken in Dubai, he said, adding that Pakistan was just used for money laundering by them. He said national assets were leased out while the poor were facing severe inflation, adding that the ruling coalition was not capable. In upcoming elections, Punjab will hold centre stage, he said. Mr Ahmed said he informed the high court that seven cases were registered against him and vehicles were taken away for three times. He said police were reluctant to give his vehicles despite orders from the court.

Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Following the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP), the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, during this campaign, various teams of Islamabad capital police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to inquire about the

problems faced by the citizens. In this regard, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad has registered a data of 176 house servants of 265 houses from Kohsar police station jurisdiction.

The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital Islamabad adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the ele-

ments involved in any kind of suspicious activity. Citizens are also requested that they can ask for the identity of a person if someone dressed in civil clothes comes to their house in order to collect the data. Unregistered employees and tenants could be involved in serious incidents like theft and robbery by impersonating as a common citizen and Islamabad Capital Police is trying to provide a safe environment to the citizens of the federal capital by using all its resources.

Cantt residents urged to dump entrails at specific collection points

RAWALPINDI (APP): Cantonment Executive Officer, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) Imran Gulzar has urged the citizens to cooperate with the Cantt staff and dump entrails of the sacrificial animals and offal at specific collection points from where, these could be removed properly.

He informed that after completion of the cleanliness task and removal of offal, all collection points and other areas would be cleaned and sprayed.

He said that over 700 sanitary workers would remove entrails of animals and offal from all cantonment areas during Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

The board had finalized a comprehensive cleanliness plan for Eid-ul-Azha to dispose of entrails of sacrificial animals. He informed that the sanitary workers under the supervision of three sanitary inspectors, 22 supervisors and a public health officer would perform their duties in Cantt areas during Eid holidays. All available resources would be utilized

to accomplish the task during Eid-ul-Azha holidays, he said and informed that over 118 vehicles including dumpers, mini dumpers, tractor trolleys, pick-ups, compactors, trucks, excavators, with a large number of hand-carts would be used to remove garbage, entrails of animals and offal from all Cantonment areas.

Two transfer points at old Daewoo Adda and Ghaziabad Dhoke Syedan would be set up from where entrails of the animals would be shifted to the dumping point. A special monitoring team had also been formed, he added.

The staff had also been provided Tracking Sims which would be used to monitor the cleanliness operation from the control room. Cantonment Board had been divided into six sectors to make effective the cleanliness arrangements for Eid-ul-Azha while a main control room/complaint cell would also be set up in RCB office. 10 complaint cells would be set up in 10 wards of the Board. Banners were displayed in

all the wards with phone numbers of complaint cells and sanitary supervisors, he added.

The citizens could use universal number 111-07-07 and 051-9274421, 9274422 and 9274423 for registration of complaints.

He further said all the wards would have a separate Sanitary Inspector In-charge to clear the area effectively. The Eid holidays of all the sanitary workers of RCB had been cancelled while officials of the department concerned to ensure cleanliness during the Eid days.

He informed that in view of the flash flooding threat, a rain emergency cell would also work round the clock during Eid-ul-Azha holidays. The spokesman told that the staff of water supply department of RCB would also be on duty during Eid holidays. He informed that the board had also made cleanliness arrangements for 'Ijtamai Qurbani' points. To a question he said that garbage bags were also distributed among the residents to facilitate them.

Citizens urged not to throw offals, entrails in nullahs

RAWALPINDI (APP): The citizens particularly those living near nullahs have been urged not to throw offal and entrails of sacrificial animals in drains.

According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities concerned had been directed to utilize all available resources to ensure cleanliness on Eid-ul-Azha. He said, negligence on the part of the officials concerned would not be tolerated and strict action would be taken against those found absent from duty.

The citizens could use the toll-free number 1139 to register their complaints about the removal of offal and entrails.

He informed that Rawalpindi Waste Management Company on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Hassan Waqar Cheema had finalized a comprehensive cleanliness plan for Eid-ul-Azha to get rid of entrails of animals under which a large number of points were set up in the city while a control

room had also been set up to monitor cleanliness operation. The sanitation staff would work round the clock to ensure the timely removal of entrails and offal from city areas.

Total 4052 sanitary workers and 463 vehicles would take part in the cleanliness operation during the three days of Eid ul Azha. 17 permanent and 43 mobile transfer stations were set up in this regard, he said and informed that over 10,000 entrails and offal would be shifted to the dumping station and buried underground.

Over 200 officials would supervise the cleanliness operation including 'number-dars' and revenue officers, he said.

He informed that special bags were distributed among the citizens.

11 cattle markets were set up in Rawalpindi district to facilitate the citizens, he said.

Under the plan, all available resources would be utilized to fulfill the task during the Eid-ul-Azha holidays, he added.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people purchasing sacrificial animals at Khanapul for upcoming Eidul Azha.

IEA frees 2,000 prisoners

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) supreme leader has freed 2,178 prisoners in a goodwill gesture over Eid-ul-Adha. According to a statement issued by the Supreme Court, the prisoners were freed ahead of Eid-ul-Adha based on the decree of Islamic Emirate's supreme leader Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada. The statement also said that at least 489 other prisoners were given reduced sentences on the occasion of Eid.

74,000 migrants returned

KABUL (Khaama Press): Taliban's provincial officials at the Refugees and Repatriation Department of Nimroz said that more than 74,000 Afghan migrants have returned to country from Iran through the Silk Road crossing point in the past month. Mawlawi Abdullah Ryaz, provincial head of Refugees and Repatriation said that at least 74, 360 people including 1,106 families and 69,259 individuals have returned to the country from Iran over the past couple of weeks.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Amid growing unemployment, Baradar calls it porpaganda



KABUL (Khaama Press): Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of Afghanistan Abdul Ghani Baradar on Wednesday on the occasion of Eid al-Adha prayer said there is enough work in Afghanistan, adding foreigners fuel the

rumor of unemployment. While speaking at the presidential palace (Arg) Abdul Ghani Baradar said that perhaps the employment situation in the country is not favorable, however, the rumors spread by foreign media is not true

either. He further added that the Taliban-run administration has initiated economic projects aimed at creating employment opportunities for the people of Afghanistan. Referring to Salang Pass highway,

Baradar said, the construction work of the highway will commence after Eid. Furthermore, he added that economic development projects are underway at different levels throughout Afghanistan. Baradar called on Afghan youths instead of leaving the country and drowning in oceans, they could remain in Afghanistan and work towards the development of the country. In his remarks, he also highlighted the decreasing level of the amount of water in the capital Kabul and described the situation as unfortunate for ordinary citizens. He encouraged industrialists and factory owners to supply water by tankers from the rivers. Taliban officials try to represent Afghanistan's situation promising while international aid organizations report dire poverty and hunger millions of Afghans are plagued with.

IEA ramps up security over Eid-ul-Adha



KABUL (Agencies): Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials say serious measures have been taken to ensure security over Eid-ul-Adha throughout the country. "Eid days are the days when Afghans are happy, they travel more, they move more, of course, they

go everywhere; there is peace, security, and stability now in the country," said Zabiullah Mujahid, IEA's spokesman. "The security departments were also ordered to improve people's security in all sectors, including cities," Mujahid added. According to officials,

thousands of security forces have been assigned to ensure the safety of the people throughout the country. The residents of some provinces meanwhile are also happy that the security forces are trying to provide security day and night, and they hope the three days of

Eid pass without any security incident. Since the IEA's takeover in August 2021, special and religious days have passed without any security incident. Therefore, the expectation is that people will celebrate Eid in a safe environment this year as well.

Rug exports record 55 per cent increase in solar year 1401

KABUL (Pajhwok): Carpet exports recorded a 55 per cent increase in 1401 solar year compared to the previous year and the number of people involved in the industry also increased, Afghanistan's Carpets Production and Exports Association said. Noor Ahmad Noori, the association head, told Pajhwok Afghan News about 800,000 meter square of carpets were exported to foreign countries in 1400 solar year. He said in 1401 solar year, the amount of exports to foreign countries reached over 1.2 million square meter, showing a 55 per cent surge. The bulk of carpets of Afghanistan were exported to the United States, European countries, Turkey and Pakistan. Due to high level of

unemployment in the country, more people turned to carpet weaving business, he said. According to Noori, one million people were busy in carpets weaving business in 1400 and the number surged to 1.2 million in 1401 solar year. He said: "From 60 to 65 percent of the carpets are produced in northern zone of Afghanistan, but because of continuous droughts during the past three years and high unemployment rate in the northern parts of the country, more people have switched to carpet weaving business". Saliha Ghulami, owner of four carpet weaving centers, told Pajhwok Afghan News many people had started carpet weaving business recently. Ghulami invested \$40,000 in four carpet

weaving centers about 11 months ago and has employed 400 women to weave carpets. She said before these women would weave carpets in their houses and when she established carpet weaving centers, she hired 100 craftswomen in every center. Ghulami added: "I opened the carpet weaving centers because the doors of schools and universities remain shut for girls and many women were unemployed so they could work in carpet weaving centers". These women are paid 3,000 afs for weaving of every square meter of rugs, she said. "I have hired women who were once employed in the past but then became jobless, girls who were studying at universities now have switched to car-

pet weaving profession" Ghulami said. Ghulami said 100 square meters of carpet was produced in a month in all these four carpet weaving centers and then sold to other companies. Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesman of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC), told Pajhwok, that the ministry was providing all kinds of support to the carpet weaving industry. Jawad sai the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) assisted carpet weavers in importing raw material and exporting their products to foreign countries. He also said in 1400 solar year 800,000 square meters of carpets were exported to foreign countries compared 1.2 million square meters in 1401.

UN's Markus Potzel calls for national dialogue in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLONews): The UN deputy special representative for Afghanistan Markus Potzel called for national dialogue in Afghanistan and the formation of an inclusive government. In an interview with TOLONews, Potzel urged the Islamic Emirate to remain committed to the pledges it has made to the international community. "Both inclusive government to reflect the different (ethnic groups) of Afghanistan, and the Taliban should also fulfil their international pledges," Potzel said. Potzel said that it is near-

ly impossible to imagine that any country will recognize the Taliban. "Recognition is the issue of the member states. The member states recognize them but at the moment it is nearly impossible to imagine that any country will recognize the Taliban given the policy directed against women and girls," Potzel. He said that the UN Assistant Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is engaged with the Taliban on daily bases. "We as UNAMA as the UN, we engage with the Taliban on a daily basis, so do other members of the international community, but so far we haven't seen



any indication that the Taliban will change course. On the contrary, I think the course they have taken, discriminatory course, has widened the gap between Afghanistan and the inter-

national community," Potzel said. Earlier, the Islamic Emirate has said there is no need for national dialogue in Afghanistan.

Afghan deportees complain of mistreatment by Turkish military



KABUL (TOLONews): Afghan migrants who have

been deported by Turkey complained of mistreat-

ment by Turkish border forces, claiming that they

were beaten and tortured after they were arrested. Abdul Rahman, 24, said that migrants face harassment while being deported. "They told us you are a son... What are you doing here? I (said) I am obliged to in order to find a piece of bread," he said. "The refugees are in fact facing problems with job opportunities, resettlement challenges and lack of identification. The Islamic Emirate should pay attention in this regard," said Asifa Stanikzai, a refugee rights activist. TOLONews interviewed a number of Afghan deportees from Turkey who claimed to have been beaten by Turkish forces. "They have beaten us very badly with steel. They broke my feet," said

Sarwar, a deportee. The Islamic Emirate's spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said that around 2 million Afghans have returned to Afghanistan within the past two-years. He said that the process of deportation should be done without any harassment. "The Islamic Emirate is in contact with Turkey about this issue so they treat the Afghan refugees with good behavior. However, there are also legal issues and (Turkey) doesn't accept the refugees," he said. Earlier, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation have reported that countries hosting Afghan refugees have violated refugees' rights against Afghans.

AI calls on IEA authorities to release Matiullah Wesa



KABUL (Khaama Press): Amnesty International called on Afghanistan's de facto authorities to release Afghan educationist, Matiullah Wesa, the founder of 'Pen Path' and supporter of girl's education unconditionally. Late Tuesday, Amnesty International in a tweet said the Taliban officials arbitrari-

ly abducted and imprisoned Matiullah Wesa three months ago on unknown grounds. "Under international human rights law, Wesa's arbitrary detention is a violation of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Therefore, the Taliban administration should immediately and unconditionally release Matiullah Wesa."

Matiullah Wesa was detained on March 27 by the Taliban Intelligence unit while he was on his way home from the mosque in Khushhaal Khan, the fifth provincial district in Kabul city. His family members described Wesa's health conditions as worrying and said they have not been able to contact him since his arrest. In early May, the organization had called on the Taliban authorities to release Matiullah Wesa and some other human rights activists, however, no improvement has been witnessed in this regard so far. Rasul Parsi university lecturer, Hamza Ulfat and Shams ur Rahman Raheeq, civil society activists, Murtaza Behbudi Afghan-French photojournalist, Haseeb Ehari poet and writer, and tens of other activists live in Taliban detention. Besides some international organizations including the United Nations demanding the release of these activists, the Taliban administration has kept them imprisoned for months. This comes as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its May report had expressed concerns about the violation of human rights and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. It is stated in this report that Taliban authorities silence the voices of their opponent through arbitrary detentions, death threats and harassment.

Panjshir residents want all disputes resolved through mediation

PARAKH (Pajhwok): Conflicts are still being resolved through mediation of religious scholars and tribal elders in central Panjshir province and the ancient method can also solve issues on national level, some residents say. Such gatherings of Ulema (religious scholars) and tribal elders for solution of disputes are a historic practice all over Afghanistan. Some religious scholars and tribal elders of Panjshir told Pajhwok Afghan News conflicts among the people in the province are still mostly resolved through such meetings. Such cases are referred to judicial authorities when tribal elders and scholars fail to solve them or if their decision is rejected by any of the conflicting parties. Maulavi Mohammad Nazir Mati, a religious scholar of Pariyan district, who takes part in such gatherings, told Pajhwok the local government authority used to refer most of the disputes to the elders' and scholars' councils for solution. He says the government intervenes in such cases or disputes only

if the Ulema and other tribal elders fail to solve a dispute among the people. Mati said the easier way to solve a dispute is through the council of tribal elders than the government. Mohammad Akbar, another tribal elder of Rukha district, corroborated Mati's views and said: "The ancient method of resolving conflicts through scholars and elders among the people should be kept alive, it is better not to forget this ancient method in solving national issues as well". "A final decision is usually made and every party can comfortably share their words and majority of the people delegate their authority to religious scholars as well". Rohul Amin Rahimi, a tribal elder of Rukha district, said majority of disputes among the people were solved by the councils of elders and religious scholars or even the council of youths during the time of previous government and the current government as well. According to Rahimi, if local elders cannot solve a dispute, it is then

referred to the council of religious scholars, but if the religious scholars also fail to solve the dispute, then it is referred to the local government's authority. Rahimi says religious scholars and tribal elders can play important role in resolving the country's major issues. Scholars and tribal elders should also play their role at the national level in order to unite the people because divisions among the people cause big problems in the country, he adds. He asked officials of the Islamic Emirate (IE) to encourage "disgruntled factions" to move forward through discussions and to eliminate differences. He also insisted on solving disputes through Jirgas (tribal councils). "Tribal Jirgas have a long history in the country and the Loya Jirga can still be the solution to the country's current problems as different ethnic groups can participate in its decision". Mohammad Sabir Daneshjo, another tribal elder, believes that tribal Jirgas are better platform for

solving disputes. He said: "The meetings of well-known people to solve disputes are a facility for the government, such meetings can solve everything from small issues to big issues at the country level". According to Daneshjo, Afghanistan will achieve prosperity once disputes are reduced and disputes can reduce when the people can see their political future bright. He also asked the opponents of the IE to discuss their demands through civil manner. Abdul Ahad Ahadi, a tribal elder from the provincial capital, said the people of Panjshir province traditionally solved their disputes through the councils and such disputes were referred to the government authorities only if the tribal councils failed to reach a decision. Ahadi said: "We have come to the conclusion that council meetings are solution to any kind of conflict, our people have embraced this tradition, the secret of the success is to listen to the wishes of each other and implement them". According to Ahadi, by solving

conflicts, the people have shouldered a part of the government's work and such actions are a sort of facility for the people too. Maulavi Nasrullah Malikzada, the head of Information and Culture Department of Panjshir, said in Panjshir like many other provinces conflicts between the people were solved by tribal elders and religious scholars and there was no need for the government to interfere in such cases. He said the government used to interfere in such cases only if the conflicting parties resorted to violence and indulged in fighting or they themselves refer their case to the government. Addressing those dissatisfied with the current government, Malikzada said there was no excuse for war in the country and that everyone could raise their demands peacefully, not through violence and taking up arms. He added the people of Afghanistan could not afford another war as the country needed development and Afghans must join hands to reach this goal.



HYDERABAD: Children waving their hands as goodbye from the window of a train during a journey to their parental cities on Eidul Azha, at Railway Station.

Belarus leader, long the supplicant, feted in Russia

LONDON (Reuters): Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko is usually the one thanking Russia's Vladimir Putin or asking him for a favour - be it a loan, cheap gas, help in navigating protests or tactical nuclear weapons. This time, the shoe is on the other foot.

While the full extent of Lukashenko's role in defusing an armed mutiny by Wagner mercenaries aimed at toppling Russia's military leadership remains unclear, the Belarusian leader - derided by Russian officials for years as a useful but volatile and demanding partner - is now being feted in Russia. It was Lukashenko, according to his own narrative and Putin, who played a major role in ending a mutiny that threatened to destabilise the world's largest nuclear power.

In Lukashenko's telling - something he did in some detail - he was the one who persuaded rogue mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin in protracted phone negotia-

tions to halt his mutiny and who advised Putin not to rush to act. Lukashenko said he told Prigozhin: "Halfway (to Moscow) you'll just be crushed like a bug." It is not immediately apparent what more Moscow, on whom Lukashenko relies for cheap energy to keep his country's Soviet-style economy afloat and whose security apparatus he relies on to ensure his own political survival in extremis, can give him. But he has at the very least bought himself more political goodwill that he may convert into further financial and economic concessions when the time is right. Lukashenko has ruled Belarus as - in his own words - Europe's last dictator, since 1994. According to his opponents, many of whom he has jailed or forced to feel abroad after giant protests against his rule in 2020 and 2021, his actions to defuse the mutiny were likely all about self-preservation.

"Without Putin's support, the Lukashenko regime will

not be able to survive," exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya said on Twitter. "They hate each other. But they need each other," Franak Viacorka, an opposition adviser, said of Putin and Lukashenko. Lukashenko, who said there were no heroes in the saga, including himself, acknowledged how closely his own fate and that of his country in its current form was tied to Putin's.

"If, God forbid, this turmoil would have spread across Russia, and the prerequisites for that were enormous, we would be next," he said. "If Russia collapses, we will all be under the rubble." Russia's State Duma, the lower house of parliament, opened with a tribute to Lukashenko and Putin and a round of applause. Putin, in his first address to the nation since the mutiny was called off, thanked Lukashenko for "his efforts and contribution in peacefully resolving the situation".

PTI Karachi president Cheema quits party

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Akram Cheema, who recently made party's Karachi president, on Wednesday announced that he was parting ways with the PTI over the events of May 9.

In a press conference, Cheema - who had been a member of National Assembly (MNA) from Karachi - announced that he had resigned from the party's position. "I strongly condemn the attack on military installations on May 9. As a Pakistani, I demand that such people should be punished," Cheema stated.

"We should not fight with the institutions," the ex-lawmaker added. The press conference from Cheema comes a day after an anti-terrorism court granted bail to him in the May 9 rioting and arson case. PTI leaders Akram Cheema and Abid Jeelani were booked among others by the police on violence, rioting and arson charges in the Gulshan-e-Iqbal area.

TikToker Ayesha case: Prime suspect remanded

KARACHI (PPI): The prime suspect Jibrán who abandoned Tiktoker Ayesha's body at Jinnah Hospital was sent on two-day physical remand.

As per details, the prime suspect Jibrán was presented in the city court in the TikToker Ayesha case. In his statement, the prime suspect told the court that he lifted an abandoned girl's body which has made him a criminal now. The court asked why didn't the accused called an ambulance or 15. At this, his lawyer said that he is not literate enough to call the ambulance or contact the police.

Furthermore, the court sent him on two-day physical remand and ordered the investigation officer to present the accused before the court on June 30 along with the progress report. Earlier, police registered the First Information Report (FIR) in the abandoned girl's body case over the complaint of her father and also recorded his statement. Police recorded the statement of deceased Ayesha's father Sultan today.

that the PTI chairman gained reputation through NAMAL University and Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital. The nation's trust in PTI chairman was built upon observing the achievements of both the institutions. He clarified that his decision to support PTI chairman was not driven by personal interests but rather a desire to contribute to the betterment of the country. Had his primary concern been protecting his business, he would have joined PML-N after leaving PML-Q. The IPP President revealed that he had told Pervaiz Khattak about the numerous issues caused by his actions, adding that the PTI chairman had expressed his displeasure towards Pervaiz Khattak, which led to the implementation of the formula that resulted in the appointments of Usman Buzdar in Punjab and Mehmoood Khan in KP. While Abdul Aleem Khan admitted to being unfamiliar with Mehmoood Khan, he claimed to have personal knowledge of Usman Buzdar's actions in Punjab, serving as a witness to his actions and their impact on the province.

ed an invitation for him to join their party. He also expressed that if Asad Umar intends to pursue a political career, he would be welcomed to join their party. The IPP President affirmed that he has extended invitations to individuals across the board, underscoring that there have been no specific discussions with anyone yet. He stated that those who possess new ideas and a dedication to building a beautiful Pakistan are welcome to join the party. He stressed that the doors are open for anyone who was not involved in the events of May 9.

Mr Khan further expressed that the IPP welcomes everyone, as its doors are open to all. He anticipates that many friends will join the party after Eid, adding that numerous individuals are engaging in consultations with their circles and friends, indicating a growing interest in joining the party. He said, "Over 25 percent of those who left PTI have joined our ranks, and noted that those who decided to leave PTI were inclined towards pursuing politics and sought a platform to fulfill their aspirations."

Mr Khan also highlighted

Tareen will be IPP's PM candidate: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) President Abdul Aleem Khan, while declaring the imminent end of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), expressed his belief that not only himself but the entire nation has been deceived.

In an interview with a private TV channel, he said that his party would contest forthcoming elections against all parties. Furthermore, Abdul Aleem Khan announced that Jahangir Tareen would be the prime ministerial candidate for the IPP if they achieve victory in the general elections. Mr Khan said that the collective decision of friends led to the formation of IPP. The individuals involved in the PTI aimed to support the chairman in his mission to build Naya Pakistan, and each person contributed their efforts towards that goal.

Abdul Aleem Khan clarified that he had no direct communication with Parvez Khattak. He also mentioned that he did not have any conversations with Shah Mahmood Qureshi, however, he did have a meeting with Asad Umar and extend-

France braces for more protests after police kill teenager

PARIS (Agencies): France is bracing for further protests after police shot dead a teenager, an incident which French President Emmanuel Macron said has "moved the entire nation". Clashes broke out between demonstrators and police overnight after an officer killed the 17-year-old in a Paris suburb, Nanterre.

The teenager, identified as Nael M, allegedly failed to comply with a police order to stop his car on Tuesday. He was driving a rental car when police pulled him over for breaking several road rules, prosecutors said. A video circulating on social media, authenticated by the French news agency AFP, shows two police officers trying to stop the vehicle, with one pointing his weapon at the driver through the window and firing at close range when he apparently continues to drive. The car moved a few metres before crashing.

Emergency services tried to resuscitate the teenager at the scene but he died shortly afterwards. The deadly police shooting was "inexplicable" and "unforgivable", Macron said on Wednesday, as the government raced to ease tensions. "A teenager was killed. That is inexplicable and unforgivable," he said during a visit to the Mediterranean city Marseille, saying the case had "moved the entire nation".

Local residents held a protest outside the police headquarters. Tensions soared later on Tuesday; demonstrators lit fires, set a car alight, destroyed bus stops and threw firecrackers towards police who responded with

tear gas and dispersion grenades. Thousands of police were deployed on Wednesday amid fear of further unrest. Al Jazeera's Natacha Butler, reporting from Nanterre, said anger "boiled over" in the suburb.

"Many people are deeply shocked and upset at what has happened on their doorstep," she said, adding that the video circulating on social media was fuelling feelings of rage. "People here say this is cold-blooded murder. The French government have called the images shocking and distressing. The government is calling for calm, talking about an investigation. 'The problem is, we have seen incidents like this over the past year and a half - more than 13 people have been killed in traffic stops and checks. People are saying this is another example of police tactics in France which are often heavy-handed and deadly.'"

"There is a sense that the French police have a culture of impunity and it is not being addressed." During the riots, 31 people were arrested, 25 police officers were injured, and 40 cars burned, officials said. The French football star Kylian Mbappé, who grew up in the Parisian suburbs, was among those who were outraged by the latest killing. "I feel bad for my France," he tweeted, deploring the "unacceptable situation".

"All my thoughts go out to Nael's family and loved ones, this little angel who left far too soon." Actor Omar Sy called for "justice" to "honour the memory of this child". The

officer accused of firing on the driver has been arrested on homicide charges, the Nanterre prosecutor's office said. French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin acknowledged that the images on social media were "extremely shocking".

In a statement, lawyers rejected a reported statement by the police that officers' lives were in danger because the driver had threatened to run them over. Yassine Bouzrou, a lawyer for the family, told local media that while all parties needed to wait for the result of the investigation, the images "clearly showed a policeman killing a young man in cold blood". "This is a long way from any kind of legitimate defence," he said, adding the family had filed a complaint accusing the police of "lying" by initially claiming the car had tried to run down the officers.

After the record 13 deaths from police shootings in France during traffic stops last year, the killing of Nael is the second fatal shooting in such circumstances in 2023. Three people were killed by police shooting after refusing to comply with a traffic stop in 2021 and two in 2020. A Reuters news agency tally of fatal shootings in 2021 and 2022 shows the majority of victims were Black or of Arabic origin. "As a mother from Nanterre, I have a feeling of insecurity for our children," said Mornia Labssi, a local resident and anti-racism campaigner, who said she had spoken to the victim's family, which she said was of Algerian origin.

NATO will defend members from threat of Wagner forces

BRUSSELS (Agencies): NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said the Western military alliance is ready to defend itself against any threat posed by the move of Russia's Wagner mercenary force to Belarus amid fears the relocation of the private army could create instability for NATO's Eastern European members.

Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin was reported to have arrived in Belarus on Tuesday under a deal negotiated by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, which narrowly prevented the mercenaries from marching on Moscow on Saturday after the private army mutinied against Russia's military leaders. "If Wagner deploys its serial killers in Belarus, all neighbouring countries face even bigger danger of instability," Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said after a meeting in The Hague with NATO's Stoltenberg and government leaders from six other NATO allies.

Polish President Andrzej Duda said he hoped the threat posed by Wagner mercenaries to NATO would be on the agenda at a summit of all 31 members in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11-12. "This is really serious and very concerning, and we have to make very strong decisions. It requires a very, very tough answer of NATO," Duda said. NATO's Stoltenberg said it was too early to say what the Wagner presence in Belarus could mean for NATO allies, but that the military alliance would protect "every ally, every inch of NATO territory" against threats from either "Moscow or Minsk". "We have already increased our military presence in the eastern part of the alliance and we will make further decisions to further strengthen our collective defence with more high-readiness forces and more capabilities at the upcoming summit," Stoltenberg said.

Prigozhin has not been seen since Saturday, when he waved to well-wishers from a vehicle in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, which his fighters briefly occupied. On Tuesday morning, a private jet believed to belong to Prigozhin flew from Rostov to an airbase southwest of the Belarusian capital of Minsk, according to data from FlightRadar24. Amid the fallout from Prigozhin's mutiny against Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin's supporters have insisted his rule has not been weakened by the revolt and that Russian officials have been trying to put the crisis behind them, with the FSB intelligence service dropping all criminal charges against Wagner fighters.

Putin has also attempted to shore up his authority by thanking regular Russian troops for what he described as averting a

civil war and has portrayed events over the weekend as a sort of victory for the Russian army. "You de facto stopped civil war," Putin told troops from Russia's defence ministry, National Guard, FSB security service and interior ministry who gathered in a Kremlin courtyard on Tuesday.

"You proved your loyalty to the people of Russia and the military oath," Putin said, before holding a minute of silence for the airmen shot down and killed by Wagner forces on Saturday. In a separate meeting with defence officials, Putin said for the first time that the Wagner Group was wholly funded by the Russian federal budget, despite operating as an independent mercenary force. He added that since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow has paid the group 86.262 billion rubles (about \$1bn) in salaries. Moscow has said that preparations were under way for Wagner fighters still in Ukraine, who number about 25,000 according to Prigozhin, to hand over their heavy weapons to Russia's military.

Talking to his military officials on Tuesday, Belarus's Lukashenko said he had urged Putin not to kill the rebellious mercenary boss Prigozhin. "I said to Putin: we could waste him, no problem. If not on the first try, then on the second. I told him: don't do this," Lukashenko said, according to state media. Lukashenko also said that his military can learn much from the Wagner mercenaries.

"They were at the very front of the attacking troops. They will tell us what's important now," Lukashenko said, according to the Belarusian news agency Belta. Wagner fighters could report on which weapons worked well in Ukraine and how attack and defence could be conducted successfully, Lukashenko was reported to have said. "This is very valuable. We have to get this from the Wagner fighters," Lukashenko said, adding that the mercenary troops were still in their bases in the Russian-occupied Luhansk region of eastern Ukraine. "But if they would like - and I understand that they are looking at a number of locations - then we will accommodate them," he said. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a Washington, DC-based think tank, said on Monday that Russian-language opposition media had reported that Belarus was in the process of constructing several military camps to house the Wagner fighters. The think tank added that a base, which would accommodate up to 8,000 fighters, was in the process of being constructed in the country's Mogilev region, located approximately 200km (124 miles) east of Minsk.

Sudanese say Eid truce meaningless

KHARTOUM (Agencies): A 24-hour ceasefire agreed upon in Sudan has been violated as Eid al-Adha celebrations were unlike any before for people in Sudan suffering from the war for more than 70 days.

Residents reported hearing heavy gunfire in parts of the capital Khartoum early on Wednesday as well as artillery strikes and air strikes that the Sudanese army launched against Rapid Support Forces (RSF) positions. Negotiations between the parties to the conflict are currently on hold.

Al Jazeera's Hiba Morgan, reporting from Omdurman, a city that lies across the Nile from Khartoum, said there was little sense it is Eid - a Muslim holy festival - and few people are out on the streets. Many fear the 17th ceasefire to be announced since the start of the conflict on April 15 is no guarantee of their safety after violations of the previous ceasefires. The heads of the army and RSF each announced a unilateral truce on Tuesday for Eid.

"A ceasefire has very little meaning because, again, this Eid al-Adha [the Sudanese] can't really celebrate," Morgan said, adding that the peacetime mood of Eid has instead been replaced by sadness from people having lost family members or being displaced due to the conflict. Many do not have the financial capabilities to celebrate the holiday either. Thousands fleeing the conflict and waiting along the border with Egypt or those displaced from the western region of Darfur into neighbouring Chad are not celebrating the festival after the ordeals they have been through. Sudan's conflict has killed at least 2,000 civilians and wounded many more.

Wagner's network in Africa faces uncertain future

LONDON (BBC): The failed weekend mutiny in Russia by the Wagner mercenary group is likely to have repercussions for Africa, where it has several thousand fighters based as well as lucrative business interests. It is unclear whether Wagner's leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has been told to relocate to Belarus, will still run his private army from there to allow it to service its security contracts in places like the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov assured CAR and Mali of the status quo in terms of their crucial security arrangements. Primarily to make money - though as it had tacit approval from the Kremlin, it also bolstered Russia's diplomatic and economic interests. It was a major boon for Russia, for example, when France withdrew its forces from Mali after Wagner agreed in 2021 to help the new military junta in its battle against Islamist militants.

Wagner has just posted a timeline of its operational history on Telegram, confirming its official involvement in Africa began in 2018 when it sent "military instructors" to the CAR and Sudan - and then moving into Libya the following year. It has been noted that these countries have natural resources of interest to

Prigozhin's outfit. The CAR, which has been unstable for decades, is rich in diamonds, gold, oil and uranium. Wagner has allowed President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, who even has the mercenaries as its bodyguards, to shrug off the influence of former colonial power France as the country tries to gain the upper hand against rebel groups - in return for a slice of the resource pie.

"Wagner's operational strategy over the past two to three years has been to expand both its military and economic footprint in Africa," Julia Stanyard, from the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, told the BBC. The think tank analyst says Wagner has a network of companies associated with it - and they have pursued commercial activities in the countries in which the mercenary group operates. In CAR these allegedly trade in conflict minerals and timber, as well as making beer and vodka.

Wagner's brief foray into Sudan allowed Russian mining firm M Invest, which the US Treasury alleges is owned or controlled by Prigozhin, to set up operations there. Its subsidiary, Mercoe Gold, is one of Africa's biggest gold producers. In Libya, Wagner is not thought to have the numbers of fighters in the country as

it did when it backed renegade general Khalifa Haftar's attempt to take the capital, Tripoli, nearly four years ago. But strategically, Libya creates a gateway for Russia into Africa, strengthens its presence in the Mediterranean and aligns with the Kremlin's backing of Gen Haftar. Wagner mercenaries still remain around key oil facilities in Haftar strongholds in the east and south of the country - and sources have told the BBC there has not been a noticeable change on the ground.

Wagner's interest in Mali may be linked to its rich gold reserves - though there is no evidence as yet of its firms operating there - and it is likely to be more strategic, opening up Russia's sphere of influence in West African countries under pressure from so-called Islamic State and al-Qaeda groups. Mali could also, according to the large batch of US military documents leaked earlier this year, have been used as a proxy to acquire weapons from Turkey on Wagner's behalf, with one Pentagon dispatch saying junta leader Col Assimi Goïta had confirmed it would do so.

Wagner fighters have been accused of widespread human rights abuses in several countries. In 2021, a BBC investigation found evidence

that implicated members of the group in Libya in the execution of civilians and the unlawful use of anti-personnel mines and booby traps in family homes around Tripoli. In Mali, figures from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (Acled) show that militant violence more than doubled between 2021 and 2022, with civilians making up the highest number of casualties.

Operations by the army involving the Wagner group have led to higher civilian deaths. Among the worst incidents was the killing of some 500 civilians in a week-long operation in the central town of Moura. The UN linked "foreign forces" and the Malian army to the killings, while the US sanctioned two soldiers and the de facto commander of Wagner in Mali. Earlier this year, the US Treasury accused the mercenaries of engaging in an ongoing pattern of serious criminal activity, including "mass executions, rape, child abductions, and physical abuse in the Central African Republic and Mali". Though Wagner's success against a powerful rebel coalition in the CAR has entrenched public support there.

This fan base has been helped by local troll farms, run by Mr Prigozhin, with the intention of influ-

encing debate in Africa and whipping up anti-Western sentiment. For example, the Malian junta has just asked the UN peacekeeping force to leave the country - in line with a social media push to get the force replaced by Russian troops. In May, Mr Prigozhin told the Cameroon-based Afrique Media TV, a station affiliated with him, that Wagner mercenaries were "more effective" than UN peacekeepers in Mali and the CAR.

Analysts say while Wagner has been incredibly useful for the Russian state in Africa, especially as it seeks diplomatic support amid the Ukraine conflict - the mercenary group could not be where it is without the Kremlin. The two are so intertwined, unravelling them on the continent seems a perilous task. It is clear in Libya, for example, that Wagner units have been relying heavily on support from the Russian defence ministry.

A UN diplomatic source and Wagner watcher has told the BBC that if the group were to be completely disbanded, its units in Africa would no longer be resupplied by the Russian authorities. Meanwhile all their fighters in Africa are paid by a Prigozhin holding company, Lou Osborn from the All Eyes on Wagner Project, has told the BBC - an inter-

esting point with regard to Mr Lavrov's recent assurances to the CAR and Mali. The UN source says that if fighters are left unpaid, with no political or military support - they would essentially be out of job and up for hire in countries grappling with dangerous civil wars and insurgencies.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin has said Wagner fighters should join the regular army, go home or head for Belarus - but Ms Stanyard says it is unclear if this will be the case for the Russian soldiers of fortune in Africa. The analyst suggests there may be "some sort of compromise position" whereby Yevgeny Prigozhin, from his current exile in Belarus, will retain control and ultimate responsibility for the Wagner operations in Africa.

There are also big questions about what will become of the murky business operations in Africa linked to Wagner and Prigozhin. Interestingly the African-based troll farms, which went silent during the mutiny, have focused on the Kremlin's line since the Belarus deal was announced. One called Mr Putin "the master of war" but did not go so far as to discredit his erstwhile ally Prigozhin - perhaps indicating the two may fudge a way forward together on Africa.