

NEC meeting scheduled

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A meeting of the National Economic Council has been convened for June 6, which is likely to approve the federal development plan and the national PSDP. The Finance Ministry has also extended the working hours of its officers and employees till June 10 in view of the budget preparation. There will be no Saturday and Sunday off.



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PM Shehbaz meets leaders of various countries

ANKARA (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during his recent visit to Turkiye also met with different world leaders and discussed the bilateral ties and cooperation between Pakistan and their respective countries.

The prime minister had travelled to Turkiye to join the world leaders in the inauguration ceremony of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The prime minister met former deputy prime minister of Turkiye and Chairman MHP Devlet Bahceli and conveyed his felicitation over success in the elections, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

On the occasion, he also met with Kosovo's President Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu. Both leaders reiterated their desire to promote bilateral relations and cooperation in different fields.

The prime minister also interacted with Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhbber.

The prime minister referred to the establishment of market at the Balochistan-Sistan border and his recent meeting with the Iranian president. Welcoming the commencement of barter trade between the two countries, the prime minister expressed the confidence that it would mutually benefit the people of both brotherly countries. In his meeting with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the two leaders discussed regional cooperation, connectivity and further strengthening of bilateral cooperation in diverse fields.

Erdogan expresses gratitude to PM Shehbaz for attending swearing-in ceremony: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan along with his wife held a pleasant and informal conversation. The Turkish President thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for attending swearing-in ceremony. The prime minister had travelled to Turkiye to join the world leaders in the inauguration ceremony of President Erdogan.

President Erdogan's spouse also joined the interaction. They appreciated Pakistani mangoes.

The prime minister conveying felicitation to the president on his reelection and said that Pakistani nation was overjoyed at his success.

He also thanked him for extending an invitation to attend the ceremony and share their joys, PM Office Media Wing in a press release, in Urdu language, said.

The prime minister, on the occasion, expressed best wishes for the president. He informed them about the gift of Pakistani mangoes which brought smiles on the faces of President Erdogan and Emine Erdogan. President Erdogan reciprocated by saying that he was aware of the sweetness and delicacy of Pakistani mangoes. Both president and his spouse thanked the prime minister for his participation.

PM Shehbaz hopeful of achieving Pak-Turkiye \$5 billion trade target: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed his hope that the volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan & Turkiye can reach to \$5 billion annually over the next 3 years.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister referred to his recent visit to Turkiye where he attended the swearing-in ceremony of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan who had been re-elected for the third term in office.

In his tweet, Prime Minister Shehbaz wrote: "In my meetings with heads of leading Turkish business groups yesterday, I highlighted the need for investment & trade in the fields of agriculture, energy, information technology and construction. Exciting opportunities have emerged for collaboration especially after the historic Trade-in-Goods Agreement between Pakistan and Turkiye became operational on May 31 this year. The target of increasing bilateral trade volume to \$5 billion annually over the next 3 years is very much achievable. Was glad to find discernible interest of the Turkish business community in building on the existing partnerships & establishing new ventures."

PM Shehbaz also met with former deputy prime minister of Turkiye and Chairman of MHP Party Devlet

Bahceli. He congratulated the chairman on winning the elections.

Shehbaz also met with Kosovo's President Vjosa Osmani. Both the leaders expressed their desire to promote bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields.

The prime minister also met with Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhbber. He said that barter trade between Iran and Pakistan is a good development and it would benefit the people of both countries. PM Shehbaz also referred to the establishment of a market on the border of Balochistan and Sistan and his recent meeting with the President of Iran.

In his meeting with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the two leaders discussed regional cooperation, connectivity of the region and acceleration of bilateral cooperation in various fields.

PM Shehbaz Sharif gifts mangoes to Turkish president: In a goodwill gesture, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gifted Pakistani mangoes to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and congratulated him on his victory in the elections on behalf of the Pakistani nation.

In an informal conversation with the Turkish president and his wife, the premier told them he was now leaving for Pakistan.

Thank you very much for your invitation; you shared your moment of happiness with us, PM Shehbaz Sharif said to the Turkish president.

The premier told the Turkish president and his wife he had brought a gift of Pakistani mangoes.

"I know Pakistan's mangoes are very tasty and sweet," President Erdogan replied. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif attended the inauguration ceremony of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the Presidential Complex in Ankara. The prime minister conveyed heartiest felicitations on behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan to President Erdogan on his re-election as President of Turkiye and wished him continued success.



ANKARA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif departs from Ankara after completing his two day official visit of Turkiye.

Pervaiz Elahi sent on judicial remand in illegal appointment case

LAHORE (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President and former chief minister Pervaiz Elahi has been sent on 14-day judicial remand to jail in illegal appointment case. As per details, the court rejected the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) appeal for physical remand and sent the PTI president Pervaiz Elahi on judicial remand.

Furthermore, secretary Punjab assembly Rai Mumtaz Hussain Babar has been sent to jail on judicial remand. The court in its verdict sent PTI President Parvez Elahi to jail on 14-day judicial remand, rejecting the ACE's request for his physical remand in a case pertaining to illegal recruitments in the Punjab Assembly.

Elahi was presented before the court

today by ACE officials amid tight security after he was re-arrested for the second time in two days on Saturday. However, he was taken away by ACE officials after the court reserved its decision on the ACE's plea for his 14-day physical remand.

Meanwhile, talking to newsmen on the occasion of his appearance in anti corruption court, former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi said that he would stand with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) even if 100 cases were registered against him.

PTI Punjab President came down hard on the PDM, calling it a failed alliance. He stated that he had the opportunity to be in power three times and knew the ins and outs of the sys-

tem. He further added that PDM was leaving people in chaos and had nothing to offer to the public, with a lack of fulfillment of promises made.

He also expressed his concerns about the economy, stating that no one was getting anything due to inflation and Mr Zardari would collect Jahangir Tareen's left 'wealth'. Elahi also made the statement that Punjab belonged to PTI, and nobody could take that away from it. He proudly said that his family was standing with PTI and he would support them in thick and thin. He further added that, even if 100 cases were registered against him, he would support the PTI, and all the tactics being used against him would be down.

Workers being illegally detained in abysmal living conditions: Imran

LAHORE (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan has claimed that his party workers are being illegally detained in jails, while alleging that they are being kept in abysmal living conditions. He made these remarks while addressing PTI supporters virtually.

Furthermore, he once again questioned what the future of the country would be like if he were to be put in jail and crackdown on PTI is completed.

He noted that the country was progressing economically with inflow of dollars during PTI's tenure.

The PTI chairman once again reiterated that the judiciary has been intimidated and claimed that judges are being blackmailed with audio and video tapes. He also criticised the media for not speaking up for its freedom, similar to how it used to do during PTI's tenure. Imran Khan said that his party has been barred from carrying out political activities.

The ex-PM expressed his concern that Pakistan is regressing into what he described as the 'dark ages', where the principles of rule of law are overshadowed by the notion that might determines what is right.

Two more former PTI legislators shun politics

LAHORE (NNI): Two more former lawmakers on Sunday announced their decision to dissociate from the PTI, saying they would no more be involved in any politics. One them is Chaudhry Raza Nasrullah Ghuman – who was a Punjab Assembly member from Faisalabad, as he told reporters at a press conference that there was an urgent need for a grand dialogue and no institution should interfere in others affairs.

Announcing that he will stay away from the political arena some for time and focus on welfare activities after 21-year-long career in politics, he described the Nov 9 episode as a tragic event in the country's history.

Two soldiers martyred in North Waziristan attack

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: On 03 Jun 23, fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists in North Waziristan District.

Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and two terrorists were sent to hell, while injuring another two. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists. However, during intense exchange of fire, Naik Zaheer Abbas (age 38 years, resident of Khushab District) and Lance Naik Mairaj Ud Din (age 23 years, Resident of Dera



Ismail Khan District) having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat.

Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in



the area. Armed forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Punjab police to challenge Yasmin Rashid's release order

LAHORE (NNI): Resenting an anti-terrorism court's release order of PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid, the Punjab police on Sunday vowed to challenge the ATC decision absolving the former Punjab health minister of her role in the arson attack on the Jinnah House on May 9.

The Punjab police in its tweet wrote: "Dr Yasmin Rashid or any other person involved in May 9 incidents will be brought to justice. The

investigation of the Jinnah House attack is being conducted on the scientific grounds.

The Punjab police is going to challenge the verdict of the court issued on Dr Yasmin's remand request. The verdict by the ATC was issued without giving opportunity to the police to provide evidence on the basis of forensic analysis.

It's the prerogative of police to investigate cases. It is not fair to create a definite opinion

about the people involved in a case without completion of the investigation."

In the second thread of the Tweet, the Punjab police uploaded some videos and a purported audio tape in which PTI ticket holder Ibad Farooq is instigating his supporters (who is allegedly accompanying Dr Rashid and Mehmood-ur-Rashid) to reach the Corps Commander House and put it on fire allegedly under the 'clear instructions' of Dr Yasmin Rashid.

NAB summons record of 22 politicians in £190m scandal

LAHORE (NNI): In a major development, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has demanded record of 22 political leaders in illegal transfer of NCA's £190m scandal. The NAB in a letter to excise secretaries demanded record of automobiles, properties and accounts of 22 politicians including former federal ministers and cabinet members.

The anti-graft watchdog has summoned record of the properties of Sheikh Rashid, Pervaiz Khattak, Umar Ayub, Hammad Azhar, Murad Saeed, Asad

Umar, Fawad Chaudhry, Azam Swati, Ali Zaidi, Ali Ameen Gandapur, Shafqat Mehmood, Chaudhry Ghulam Sarwar, Shireen Mazari, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Farrogh Naseem, Khuro Bakhtyar, Ijaz Shah and others. The NAB has also demanded record of the vehicles in the names of 22 federal ministers and cabinet members, including details of how many cars they purchased and sold since year 2018.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has launched an investigation against PTI

chief, Bushra Bibi and others for the alleged gain of hundreds of canals of land in the name of Al Qadir University Trust, which reportedly caused a loss of 190 million pounds to the national exchequer.

As per the charges, the former prime minister and other accused allegedly adjusted Rs50 billion — 190 million pounds at the time — sent by the Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA) to the government. The PTI chief registered Trust for Al-Qadir University Project on Dec 26, 2019.

Hina to visit Norway, Sweden

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar would undertake official visits to Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium from Monday to 13th of this month. According to Foreign Office spokesperson, she will hold meetings at the ministerial level to discuss political engagement and cooperation in development, trade and climate change.

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Punjab ombudsman provides over 17.2 million to plaintiffs

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Ombudsman has effectively resolved the issues faced by 60 individuals across various districts in a cumulative financial relief worth Rs.1,72,38,187.

According to a statement issued by a spokesman on Sunday, the University of Mianwali, on the direction of the provincial ombudsman, has disbursed Rs.92,82,843 to 52 students, including plaintiff Muhammad Hanzala Zubair. Additionally, the District Education Authority Chakwal has granted 2.2 million rupees as financial aid to complainant Haji Mehr Muhammad. In another case, the district administration Lodhran has provided employment dues worth Rs.1.9 million to Ayesha Mai, the widow of deceased Patwari Ghulam Murtaza, the spokesman added.

In a separate instance, the administration of Ghazi University in Dera Ghazi Khan has refunded a security deposit amounting to Rs.17,70,824 to complainant Abdul Wahid. In a similar development, the agriculture department has distributed a total sum of Rs.12,53,070 to 21 farmers, including plaintiff Muhammad Abubakr from Rajanpur, as expenses for their demonstration plots.

Alongside this, Farzana Kanwal from Multan has been provided with a grant of Rs.8,31,450 by the Punjab Workers Welfare Fund (PWWF) after the ombudsman office interceded to resolve her issue. A work order worth Rs.71,82,000 has also been issued for the repair and restoration of Fatamand Chowk in Gujranwala.

PPP to mark 70th birth anniversary of Benazir Bhutto

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan People's Party will hold a rally on the birth anniversary of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto Shaheed in the city.

This was informed by PPP Lahore Division President Chaudhry Aslam Gill during his visit to Liberty Chowk, Mochi Gate and Nasser Bagh areas on Sunday to review the arrangements made for marking the 70th birth anniversary of the party leader. The birth anniversary of Benazir Bhutto is celebrated on June 21 every year. Commenting on current political situation and upcoming general election, Aslam Gill said allowing only electables in the folds of political parties would not have a positive impact on national politics. He said that only the PPP could steer the country out of the current political and economic crises.

Hot, dry weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department on Sunday predicted hot and dry weather in most parts of the Sindh province including Karachi during the next 24 hours. The minimum and maximum temperatures recorded in Karachi 35-37 degrees Centigrade, Hyderabad 41-43 degrees Centigrade, Sukkur 40-42 degrees Centigrade.

Budget must revolve around job creation: Altaf Shakoor

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoor here Sunday said that the coming budget must revolve around job creation to boost the economy by utilising every member of our youth.

He said the successive governments in Pakistan due to the IMF slavery have given budgets with a focus of getting more loans and thus diverting our resources to pay these loans and their killing interest. He said this debt trap has only served the interests of the international lending institutions and their hitmen sitting in every major political party and institution in Pakistan. He said these hitmen-made budgets have never served the interests of the nation and the country and especially its youths; resultantly the country faces an alarming ratio of joblessness. He said high joblessness and higher food inflation is a sure way to poverty and deprivation, which is the real objective of the debt trap.

Altaf Shakoor said all idle government land should be given free of cost to millions of our jobless youths.

He said cultivation of these barren lands would not only fight the joblessness but also tame unbridled food inflation in Pakistan. He said our agricultural sector needs drastic changes to utilize every inch of our fertile lands. He said in the coming

budget agriculture reforms and policy of allotting free of cost government lands should be given a priority. Altaf Shakoor demanded overhauling our education system and making vocational training part of all educational certificates, qualifications and degrees. He said students should be trained in a practical environment instead of teaching them old and impractical textbooks. He said technical and vocational colleges and universities should be set in every district of Pakistan. He said ample funds should be allocated in the budget in this regard.

Altaf Shakoor asked to focus on labour-intensive industry instead of tech-intensive industry to absorb the millions of Pakistani jobless youths. He said again the agricultural sector provides unlimited capacity for new job creation in the farming sector. He said with the use of solar energy saline water in deserts, creeks and coastal areas could be easily treated and used for farming. He said when land, water and sunshine is available abundantly why the government avoids using them for creating millions of new jobs with any foreign loans or borrowed technologies.

He appealed to the budget makers at the federal, provincial and local government levels to make creating new job openings their utmost priority while drafting their respective budgets for the coming fiscal.

Naqvi directs for immediate redressal of complaints of expats

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has issued instructions to the Inspector General Police for immediate redressal of complaints of overseas Pakistanis.

Syed Mohsin Naqvi also issued directions to all officials including all Commissioners, RPOs, Deputy Commissioners and DPOs should spare no effort to redress the grievances of Overseas Pakistanis in the respective cities. "Those who encroach on the property belonging to the overseas Pakistanis will be dealt with iron hands," Mohsin Naqvi added.

Punjab CM directed the administrative and police officers to personally address the complaints of overseas Pakistanis and submit the report to the Chief

Minister's office every month.

Syed Mohsin added in his directions that the concerned Overseas Pakistanis should be kept regularly informed about the progress made in redressal of each complaint and a time frame should be made for resolving the issues.

He said that every complaint should be dealt with in minimum time.

"Conventional action will not be tolerated on complaints received through portal, phone or mail," he maintained. He said that the concerned officers in the Chief Minister's office will also monitor the measures taken to resolve the complaints of overseas Pakistanis. Expats are ambassadors of the country abroad and it is our responsibility to redress their grievances immediately, he concluded.

Call for youth to play role for religious tourism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Calling the youth for playing a role for the promotion and protection of religious tourism in Pakistan, Gandhara Chair at the University of Wah Dr Nadeem Omer Tarar said that Pakistan had huge potential for religious tourism and attracted religious minorities both from home and abroad.

"Pakistan is a predominantly Muslim country but we have footprints of major religions of the world and historical worship places of Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism making a vast historical canvas of this land." "Pakistan being a Muslim country is also the custodian of all of these religions," said Dr Tarar in an interview with APP. "When we talk about all the religious minorities in Pakistan, the less information we have is about Buddhists."

We had Hindus and Christians on the minister level but this constitutional minority of Buddhists could not get the proper representation compared to the other minorities, he added. "It is very important for these minorities to visit and perform religious rituals in their sacred places. The teachings of Budha make it mandatory for the followers to visit their places as they serve as a spiritual center for them," Dr Tarar said, who is also working for Gandhara Resource Center at Taxila.

"Potential in religious tourism is like 'if there is a smoke there is a fire', so we have the smoke and it must be ignited into the fire. We have the sacred places and our Archaeology and Aukaf departments have well preserved them at some level."

"All we need is to realize this potential

to grow our economy." "There is a dire need to educate the masses to play a role in this sector of the economy which needs to be explored and maintained."

"The awareness cannot be created merely through lectures, but the media should play its role in making films, writing stories, and short film festivals having stories and information about Buddhists who visit Pakistan as thousands of foreign visitors come to Lahore and Taxila Museums every year."

"We must speak to those visitors to get advice on how to make facilities better for them," Dr Tarar said. "We have less information about the importance of sacred places of other religions, if this huge potential is explored, we can attract hundreds of thousands of religious tourists. If the general and public knowledge of the masses gets this responsibility, we can turn this sector into an industry. We can meet the Dollar crisis through this single sector." "We must invite, facilitate and involve foreign tourists in religious tourism to create awareness among the masses, especially youth," he remarked.

"Today in the era of social and digital media, the youth must be utilized to filter this messaging into their scrolling time in an interesting way. Such digital content should be produced and promoted by youth to attract foreign visitors to their sacred sites and this effort will also promote cultural diplomacy." "If the Islamic image of Arabs, Turkish, and other such countries has not been in danger by preserving the sites and promoting religious tourism, then we will also not suffer from this misconception," he said.



LAHORE: SAPM Rana Mubashir Iqbal listening problems of people in Khuli Kachehri at his Dera situated in Khayaban-i-Ameen.

Solving people's problems priority of PML-N govt: SAPM

LAHORE (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Rana Mubashir Iqbal said on Sunday that solving people's problems was a priority of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government, and all-out steps were being taken in that regard.

Addressing a khuli kutchehry (open court) in his constituency here, he said the PML-N was the only party which had solution to the prevailing challenges. He said the country had always progressed during the PML-N government.

He said that former premier Nawaz Sharif was the leader who made the country's defence impregnable in May 1998, and the country witnessed unmatched economic development during the PML-N tenures. Huge foreign investment under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) also came to the country during the PML-N government, he added.

The SAPM expressed his optimism that the PML-N would steer the country out of prevailing economic challenges, created by the

previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, and lead it towards prosperity. Commenting on ransacking the state properties including military installations and memorials of national heroes by a handful of the PTI miscreants, he said the incidents were highly deplorable as the attacks were an attempt to weaken the national integrity.

Rana Mubashir listened to problems of people present at the open court and issued on-the-spot directives for addressing the complaints.

Railways approach govt departments to pay outstanding dues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Railways has expedited the efforts and approached the federal and provincial departments to recover outstanding billion of rupees dues on account of using its land and other services.

"Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique has asked the official concerned to approach the federal and provincial departments for recovering the outstanding amount as soon as possible," an official in the Ministry told APP here Sunday.

About the amount payable against the different departments, the official said that an amount of over Rs 8375 million

(over 8 billion) was payable by different departments on account of using its land and various services.

The federal departments have to pay an amount of Rs 709.084 million, provincial departments Rs1980.217 million and autonomous and private bodies Rs 5685.736 million, he expressed.

Pakistan Railways, he said has upgraded as many as 167 vulnerable un-manned level crossings to manned level crossings, out of which 550 are identified by the department over the entire railway network last year.

The relevant provincial government provided the finances to Pakistan

Railways for the upgradation of un-manned level crossings in the country, he added.

He said that the present government was taking several steps including the up-gradation of un-manned and vulnerable railway level crossings across the country in collaboration with respective provincial governments.

The official said that there were two types of level crossings over the Pakistan Railways network, un-manned and manned level crossings, adding that the un-manned level crossings were without gate leaves.

"There are a total of 1,565 un-manned level crossings over the entire

railway network and as per railway policy in vogue, the up-gradation of any un-manned or manned level crossing is the responsibility of road owning authority," he added. He said that a joint survey of Pakistan Railways and the Provincial Government was also conducted in 2013-14 to identify accident-prone/vulnerable un-manned level crossings across the country.

The official said that it also mentioned Section 12 of the Railway Act of 1890 that the district administration or road authority should bear the expenses for the upgrade of these un-manned level crossings.

Plastic pollution posing threat to blind dolphins, say experts

LAHORE (APP): During recent years, incidents of stranding of the Indus River dolphin have multiplied surprisingly in the upstream of Sukkur barrage and its suburbs. Experts believe the incidents were happening apparently due to growing plastic pollution, industrial effluents, and motorised boats' movement in waterways.

The Indus River dolphin is also referred to as the blind dolphin, which has been marked as 'endangered' by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Red List of Threatened Species (RLTS).

Talking to APP in the wake of the World Environment Day observance across globe, they said protection of such rare mammals was crucial in Pakistan as they were considered the flagship species of the Indus River, having sonar an indicator of health of the Indus River ecosystem and its associated habitat.

The Wildlife Department has rescued various groups of dolphins in the past, which were stranded in the irrigation canals in Sukkur in the past two years, which is apparently linked to the abundant plastic pollution in the Indus downstream and growing motorised movement perils, destroying their habitat, the Wildlife official sources told APP.

"Now people are shifting to cutting of trees in the forests, left around the Indus

River area, by using motor-boats to shift the wood-logs to another side of the river to sell them off," sources explained. The Indus dolphin is a sensitive mammal, which relies on its highly developed hearing and sonar to orient and navigate.

However, increasing plastic pollution downstream was increasing perils for survival of the loving mammals, which were often caught in plastic waste in the past years. Another reason for their dislocation was noise of motorised boats, believe the environmentalists.

During the year 2021, the Wildlife Department successfully saved 10, out of 16, stranded dolphins across the canals and channels, while during 2022, a total of 38 such incidents were reported. The officials were able to rescue 34 stranded dolphins, he said. The endangered species could experience stress during the rescue and translocation process, and movement of the vehicles around in the area, he added.

Former director programmes WWF-Pakistan, Dr Ijaz, said the Indus River blind dolphins act as an indicator of river health in the basins where they live. If the dolphin population in a river is thriving, then it simply means the overall state and condition of the downstream freshwater system is also flourishing. But if that population is on the mod of disturbance or decline, then it would be a red flag for the ecosystem as a whole, he said. Plastic pollution had

made an 'alarming' contribution to climate change, which was often overlooked, he added.

According to the a report of the IUCN, most dolphins are confined to a stretch of 750 miles in the river Indus and divided into isolated populations amid six barrages. The dolphins have to adapt to life in the muddy river water and are believed since then to be functionally blind. Without eyes, the rare species rely on echolocation to communicate, navigate, and hunt prey including catfish, prawns, and carp.

IUCN Country Representative Mahmood Akhtar Cheema told APP that due to construction of various barrages and hydropower projects along the mighty Indus, the downstream dolphins are currently confined to just 20 per cent of their natural habitat range. Definitely, due to an increase in their population, the developmental projects and agricultural activities could peril the mammal species, he said adding that their population would gradually be declined due to worsening water scarcity and pollution. Development of irrigation projects, barrages, and habitat fragmentation could be cited as the major reasons for the dwindling population of the species, he added.

A WWF-Pakistan document reveals that PET (polyethylene terephthalate), a plastic that is widely used for packing food, soft drinks, beverages, water and juices, is not

biodegradable and contaminates water sources and its ways and causes the death of river and marine life when the animals ingest it. Uzma Khan, director of biodiversity at WWF-Pakistan told APP that the Indus River blind dolphin is an endangered species of the freshwater and is only found in the Indus River system, restricted from Chashma Barrage (in Punjab) to Kotri barrage (in Sindh) in the river stretch of approximately 1300-km. She said that the dolphin population between Jinnah and Kotri Barrage is around 2,000.

Meanwhile, the WWF conducted some tissue sample analysis of the species, which showed high levels of heavy metals in the tissues of the mammals. An official said, "We have also found pesticide residues in both Indus dolphin and fish samples."

The WWF has already set up a dolphin monitoring network in collaboration with local communities and a round-the-clock phone helpline has also been established, she informed. The latest survey, conducted by the WWF on dolphin census revealed there are 660 dolphins between Taunsa and Guddu stretch (approximately 354-km), Uzma Khan added. She emphasised that citizens should reduce the use of plastic to zero, and promote plastic-free practices across the riverside and coastal spots, to save the dolphins and marine life.



LAHORE: An elderly disabled person selecting books from roadside old books stall in Provincial Capital.



KP to be made strong hold of PPP, says Bacha

PESHAWAR (APP): President of PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha has said that the coming time belongs to PPP and the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be Jayala.

In a press statement issued here Sunday, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha said that the province would be made a stronghold of PPP as more important political and tribal figures from across the province are joining PPP under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Asif Ali Zardari.

He said that very soon more big surprises are coming in this connection. He said Imran Khan has sunk the country and the economy in 4 years and the Tehreek-e-Insaf government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has proved to be the worst government in history.

About the general elections, he said, it would be held accordingly in its

appropriate time by fulfilling all democratic norms. In the 55-year era, our leaders bravely faced the conditions and hardships and accepted all kinds of situations with determination and commitment.

PPP, he said, would pay full attention to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the mistakes of the past will not be repeated. PPP wants peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. PPP wants to give prosperity to every house of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Benazir Income Support Program, he added.

They will end the feeling of deprivation of the people of the province, he said, adding, With the support of Almighty Allah and commitment and determination of the PPP leadership, the PPP would continue hard work day and night to make the party active and organized and would have to fulfill the responsibility that the party has assigned to him.

It has happened and

today the PPP is being active and organized in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha said that the process of joining the PPP will continue. Jai Bhutto's voices are echoing and slogans are being raised throughout the province because the PPP is the country's largest political party, serving the people without any political affiliation.

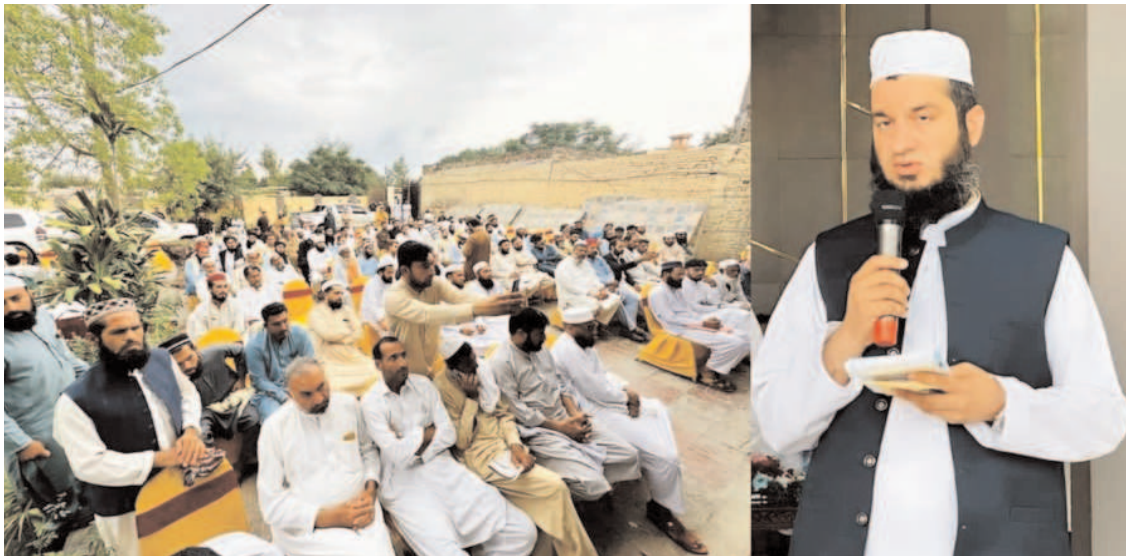
PPP has always ended hateful politics and the party wants peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and will take all possible measures to end the feeling of deprivation in the province, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha said while quoting both Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Asif Ali Zardari as saying.

He said the top leadership of PPP have always discussed that how to end the sense of deprivation and unemployment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and that by coming to power, the sense of deprivation of the people

of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be removed and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be made the cradle of peace.

He said that in 2008, when the PPP government came to power, the government did not have money to pay salaries to the employees, the PPP gave the NFC award, the PPP gave provincial autonomy, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa package to the provinces and millions of people were also given Benazir Income Support. Widows and the poor are receiving money, he said that the coming time belongs to the PPP and a plan will be made to end unemployment because the PPP has always served the poor, Mr. Bacha said.

PPP is the party of martyrs, he said, adding, "Pakistan People's Party is an ocean and the history of the party is full of sacrifices, so many friends who have joined the People's Party welcome them with open heart.



PESHAWAR: Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali addressing a public gathering.

TR&ER appointed against MTI, Election Acts F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The employees of Khyber Teaching Hospital condemned appointed of the Trainee Registrar TR and Experiential Registrar ER on criteria for two years by violating both Medical Teaching Institutions (MTI) and Election Acts.

Board of Governors put the condition just to appoint own blue eye and reasons less apply.

No one apply through proper channel inspite of having civil servants jobs but applications were accepted.

After doing a year job the board extended their jobs for three years and also notify that a if a person having civil jobs will not resign which is clear cut violation of the MTI act.

Moreover, TR and ER neither produced No Objection Certificate till date from health department nor Medical Director demanded NOC in this regard.

The appointment has been made under notification issued on 11th April 2023 and board decided this on 1st march 2023.

KTH employees requested Advisor for health, Chief Secretary and secretary health to take notice of the issue and stern action against the board and administration.

Unknown shooter kills one in City

PESHAWAR (APP): Firing by unknown persons in Hasangarhi limits of Fagirabad Police Station killed one identified as Izzat Khan on the spot while the shooter made his escape good, Police confirmed the incident of firing.

According to Police detail, as a result of firing, Izzat Khan died on the spot while the unknown shooter escaped. After the incident, the Police will reach the spot, and the body will be shifted to the hospital for post-mortem, the official of the Police said.

The police started the investigation by collecting empty shells and other evidence from the crime scene. The deceased's son is present in Fagirabad Police Station, in which a case has been registered against an unknown gun-man. According to initial reports, the deceased had a property dispute, police said.

Rescue 1122 deals 120 incidents

PESHAWAR (INP): Emergency Service Rescue 1122 has provided a quick response to the people during the last 24 hours in a total of 120 incidents of various natures.

He said that during this time, the emergency service provided medical assistance in 98 emergencies, 14 traffic accidents, 2 fire incidents and 21 individuals sustained injuries in traffic accidents.

The traffic accidents occurred at different locations, including Naguman, Nahaqi, Charsadda Road, Niaz Bus Adda, Hazar Khwani, industrial areas, GT Road, Industrial Estate, Patang Chowk, Kabutar Chowk, and Fagirabad.

The timely response of Rescue 1122 personnel helped prevent further damage and provided prompt medical aid to those in need.

A gas pipeline caught fire at a residential house in the Matini Bazaar area of Peshawar.

Local govt trying to address people issues

PESHAWAR (APP): The present local government is trying to build and develop the rural areas and steps are being taken to solve the basic problems along with the construction and development.

Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali expressed these views at PK 67 and 68 in Shah Alam. Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali said while addressing the public on the occasion of the public gathering in Jati Bala, Jati Payan, Takhtabad, Larama, Mamum Khatki, Pajagi, Haryana, Pajagi Bala and other different areas of the people.

Announcing electricity, needle gas, street paving, roads, education, health vans, craft centers, BHUs, and other development

works for the facility, he also issued orders to send teams from the next day.

The practical measures to solve the problems should be started as soon as possible by compiling reports regarding the problems, for which the people thanked the Mayor of Peshawar in the open court and assured him of all possible support.

The people informed the Mayor that despite repeated requests no one from the district government or local government representative visited Nasapa Bala, Khazana, Lala Zar Colony to address their problem regarding provision of clean drinking water, safety of garbage dumps laying uncheck in the streets, poor sanitation.

The people of Nasapa Bala, Nasapa Payan, Lala Zar Colony have also demanded that either the cleanliness staff of the SSWA or district government should be deputed so that the work of the poor sanitations, removal of garbage's dumps and cleaning of streets, provision of street lights should be completed.

They said that despite time and again requests, no one is bothered to visit the area, either of the local government representative or the staff of the SSWA or district govt.

They requested Mayor Peshawar to take timely action, otherwise they would stage a protest in front of District government and Mayor Peshawar offices.

Pashto Academy team visited Balahisar Fort

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Pashto Academy Peshawar visited the historical Fort Balahisar while Inspector General Frontier Corps North Major General Noor Wali Khan welcomed the delegation on arrival at Balahisar Fort.

The delegation was briefed about the history of Frontier Corps North, its area of responsibility and the measures taken to establish peace, development and prosperity in these areas. Addressing the delegation, IGFC North said that the Pashto Academy

is playing an important role in promoting not only culture but also the message of peace and harmony in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Its members are encouraging the young generation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to play a positive role through their research and work keeping in mind the requirements of the modern age. The participants thanked the IGFC for inviting them to Fort Balahisar.

The delegation strongly condemned the events of May 9 and paid tribute to the security forces and other law enforcement agencies and said that the

nation salutes the sacrifices made by these agencies for peace in the country.

The participants appreciated the steps taken by the Frontier Corps North for peace and development in the tribal districts of Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber and Malakand.

The participants said that a large number of KP youths are serving the country in Pakistan Army and other security agencies, which is a source of pride for the nation. The participants reiterated that they will stand by the Pak Army and other law enforcement agencies.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Salama Begum in a group with participants of 2-day training workshop on Child Protection Information Management System.

Extortionist killed, 2 held in operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Mattani police have killed an extortionist, while two others were arrested in an encounter that took place in Shriker area, said SHO Imran Khan.

Acting on a tip-off, the police conducted a raid on a hujra located in Shriker. Upon the arrival of the police team, the extortionists opened fire leading to a gunfight. As a result, one of the extortionists, identified as Ayaz was fatally wounded, while the remaining two Salahuddin and Ghulab Sher were arrested.

During the operation, the police seized hand grenades, three pistols, and cartridges from the possession of the arrested.

A case has been registered, and further investigation was underway.

Agriculture university got donation

PESHAWAR (APP): University of Agriculture Faisalabad Sunday donated books on various topics including agriculture to University of Agriculture Peshawar wherein the books were handed over to the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht and Librarian Haji Rahim Dad.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht thanked the Vice-Chancellor of Agriculture University Faisalabad and said that reading books is a useful hobby, reading books does not let you get bored, reading good books increases vocabulary and helps you think.

He said reading books would also improve skills. The reasons for lack of literacy in Pakistan include low literacy rate, low purchasing power of consumers, increasing use of mobile, internet and electronic media for obtaining information, decreasing trend of good books, he added.

He said lack of provision of adequate resources for libraries, including lack of efforts to promote literacy by families and educational institutions.

He urged the teachers to write books on the research done and to inculcate interest in the young generation towards libraries.

Director VC Secretariat Prof. Dr. Muhammad Zulfikar, Dr. Sartaj Alam and Dr. Ishrat Naz were also present on this occasion.

Child abuse: SACM emphasizes action in addressing challenges

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Social Welfare, Salama Begum emphasized the need for collective action in addressing the complex challenges of child abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect.

In a statement issued here Sunday, she expressed these views while addressing a concluding session of a two-day training on Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) that was attended by 42 social workers and child protection officers working in Zamung Kor, Police Department, Social

Welfare Department and Child Protection Staff in Newly Merged Districts.

The training was organized by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission in collaboration with UNICEF and FCDO.

She emphasized the need to remain proactive and responsive to emerging challenges in this ever-changing context in which children are exposed to multiple forms of abuse, violence and harmful practices.

She strongly encouraged the participants to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the training to their roles, ensuring and

safeguarding the rights of the children.

Salma Begum also praised the services rendered by KPCPWC to identify and register cases of child abuse, conduct investigations, monitor and follow up on interventions and referrals, and facilitate the rehabilitation of children who have experienced various forms of abuse.

She added that the integration of the Child Protection Case Management and Referral System was a significant step towards the efficient data management and effective responses to the needs of vulnerable children.

Civil society vows to curb extremism

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the patronage of Pakistan Development Foundation (PDF), a KP based civil society enterprise, scholars stressed at curbing extremism in the youth as they were joining heads in the maiden meeting of project "Fikar" at Sheikh Zayed Research Center, University of Peshawar. The meeting was hosted by PDF Chairman, Muhammad Bilal Sethi with Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, Prof. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Director Sheuihk Zayed Research Center Dr Rasheed Ahmad, Former

Secretary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr Khalid Khan, Chairman Department of English, Prof. Dr. Gulzar Jalal, Abbass Zaman of Jehanzeb College Swat, Afsar Afghan, Dr Abdur Rahman Khalil, Dr Ammer Raza, Muhammad Aizaz Sethi, Amir Khan Afridi, Malak Mubashir Khan and others.

"Fikar" is a newly established think-tank of the Pakistan Development Foundation aimed at addressing the issue of rising intolerance in the young people across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. PDF chief, Muhammad Bilal Sethi while apprising the forum

on the initiative said that in order to curb extremism and intolerance in the youth, "Fikar" was decided to think on and suggest solutions.

He added that in response to 9th May violent protests and extremism and lynching of a cleric in Sawalddher, Mardan this think-tank was felt necessary to form. Sethi expressed that "Fikar" was meant to enable young people know why and how to agree to disagree and why was it important to respect every person's opinion.

He said that the body was completely non-profit and was founded on a social cause.

Traffic police launch awareness campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Traffic Police on Sunday launched a new initiative to promote awareness of traffic laws among the city's residents.

Under the guidance of IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, flyers have been distributed on rickshaws and main roads to educate people about traffic regulations.

In the Cantonment Division, digital screens are being used to inform the public about traffic laws, as stated by Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan. The campaign, titled "Phoolon Ka Sheher Peshawar" (Peshawar, the

City of Flowers), appeals to citizens to cooperate with the traffic police for their own safety.

The awareness campaign is being rolled out in phases, with subsequent enforcement efforts to ensure the effective implementation of traffic laws. CTO Qamar Hayat Khan said the importance of personal responsibility and urges citizens to support the traffic police by following seat belt and helmet regulations, avoiding speeding and overloading, maintaining lane discipline, and disembararking from vehicles safely.

As part of the campaign,

SP Education Shazia Shahid and her team are providing information to residents in various sectors, focusing on the use of seat belts and helmets, avoiding mobile phone usage while driving, and the significance of adhering to traffic rules.

Wearing helmets and seat belts during travel ensures the safety of individuals, as even a momentary distraction caused by mobile phone use can lead to severe accidents, putting lives at risk.

Accidents can occur within seconds due to drivers' negligence.



PESHAWAR: A shopkeeper busy in preparing traditional Peshawari Kahawa at his shop.

Create awareness about environmental issues 4-day youth leadership summer camp held

PESHAWAR (APP): A four-day Youth Leadership Summer Camp 2023 held at Youth Hostel Batakundi organized by Directorate of youth affairs, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with Shaheed Benazir Bhutto woman University Peshawar to bring awareness among youth about environmental issues.

The students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Woman University and its affiliated colleges accompanied by their teachers visited Batakundi Youth Hostel.

The aim of this Leadership Summer Camp was to bring awareness among the youth regarding environmental issues, climate change and their responsibility to protect it from harm.

Activities like poster designing and presentations, cultural music, photography competitions,

poetical verses competition and other recreational activities was part of this 4-Day recreational visit. This camp focuses to sensitize and train the young generation towards the environmental sustainability and empowering them in the transition of the green Youth.

These young ambassadors will be the guardian of the planet and will inspire and support climate action in our communities and networks. The summer camp has various activities for the Youth including harnessing session on women employment, bringing green literature on canvas, importance of women in leadership role, poster presentation and awareness stickers on climate change, the students also distributed the messages and models in the local communities in Naran and Batakundi.

Students also got a

chance for extracurricular activities like talent hunt, hiking, swot analysis, poetry competition, singing and canvas painting nature.

Director Youth Affairs, Irfan Ali Khan and Deputy Director Youth Affairs Uzma Mukaram graced the occasion with their presence. Dr. Hamida Bibi, incharge department of History and Pakistan studies and Ms Tashfeen Zia Deputy Registrar Affiliation and Monitoring section, organizers from Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Woman University Peshawar thanked the entire team of Directorate of Youth Affairs for hosting and providing exposure to the students of our University and affiliated colleges.

The event concluded with the distribution of certificates and shields among the participants and organizing team.



In brief

Two killed in incidents

WAH CANTT (APP): As many as five persons were killed in different incidents in various parts of Taxila on Sunday, police and hospital sources said. In the first incident, a school teacher was killed on a road near Nehar stop on HMC road in the limits of Taxila Police station. Police sources said that Muhammad Istiaque-a teacher at a local school was coming towards his house when another motorcyclist coming from the opposite direction knocked him resultantly he died on the spot. Meanwhile, a victim of a bloody clash between two rival groups succumbed to injuries at the hospital on Sunday. Police sources said that Azadar Shah received head injuries during a fight between two rival groups in Bun Bhola village in the limits of the same police station on June 15 and was under treatment at a local hospital who succumbed to injuries. Later his body was handed over for burial after an autopsy at THQ hospital.

Motorcyclist killed in mishap

FAISALABAD (APP): A septuagenarian motorcyclist was killed in a road mishap in the limits of City Jaranwala police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that a speedy car hit a motorcyclist near Kalyar House Jaranwala on Lahore Road. As a result, 73-year-old motorcyclist Alam Sher resident of Chak No. 356 received serious injuries and died on the spot before getting any medical assistance. The police took the body into custody and started investigation for arrest of the car driver who managed to escape from the scene after accident, he added.

Girl dies after bitten by Cobra

LARKANA (INP): A six-year-old girl has died due to Cobra snake bite in a suburban village of Larkana. Moving scenes were witnessed when body of Gudhi Gadhni, resident of Chatu Wahan village, was shifted to her home from Dokri Hospital.

Electronics shop burgled

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Unknown thieves stole away batteries, UPS and other electronic items worth Rs two million from a shop situated at Seetpur Chowk in the premises of the City police station on Saturday night. According to police sources, unknown thieves broke into an electronic shop and took away batteries, UPS and other items from the shop. The police concerned have started investigations into the incident by taking CCTV footage of the shop. On the other hand, the local traders staged a protest demonstration against the rising incidents of theft in the premises of the City police station and demanded of DPO Muzaffargarh and RPO Dera Ghazi Khan for stern action against criminals.

Inter exams starts today

FAISALABAD (APP): The Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (BISE) Faisalabad has completed all arrangements to conduct the Annual Examinations of Intermediate (Part-I) 2023 in the division here from Monday, June 5, 2023. According to Controller Examinations BISE Dr Muhammad Jaffar Ali, 103,178 students were expected to participate in the Inter (Part-I) Exams 2023. Hence the education board had established 366 examination centres across the division including districts of Faisalabad, Jhang, Chiniot and Toba Tek Singh.

Police arrested 16 criminals, 49 suspects in grand operation

DIR LOWER (APP): Adenzai Circle Police crackdown against antisocial elements by arresting 16 criminals and 49 other suspects with a large number of arms, ammunition and drugs were recovered here on Sunday. Giving a detailed briefing to the media men, DPO Lower Dir Tariq Iqbal and DSP Adenzai Circle Muhammad Akbar Shinwari with a strong Police contingent conducted a grand operation by arresting 16 criminals wanted in different crimes. He said during the operation 49 other suspects

were also arrested and investigation continued to check their criminal record. He disclosed that overall they have arrested 1346 suspects also involved in drug trafficking and arms smuggling. DPO said that the Police have recovered 256 grams of ice and the accused has been arrested besides recovering 07 Kalashnikovs, 01 rifles, 12 shotguns, 80 pistols, 109 chargers, 1020 cartridges, 03 daggers and cases have been registered against the alleged accused. In this way, during various operations against the

forest protection campaign and the timber mafia, 76 slippers, 31 slaps, 29 galleys, 69 plinks and 295 wood slabs have been taken out and legal action has been taken against the accused. DSP Adenzai Circle, Akbar Muhammad Shinwari said that they have a grand operation against the illegal activities in the Adenzai Circle wherein initially arrested 1346 suspects and among them 16 were wanted criminals while 49 others have been involved in drugs and arms smuggling in the area.

Killer of wife sentenced to life imprisonment and Rs900,000 fine in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: On conviction the court of District and Session Judge/Judge Gender Based Violence Court Lower Dir Phool Bibi sentenced one Muhammad Hassan s/o Muammar Khan, a resident of Jam Dherai in Maidan to life imprisonment along with fine of Rs 900,000 for killing his pregnant wife and injuring his two years-old daughter at home on Oct 19, 2020. The convict shall also be liable to pay compensation Rs 500,000 to the legal heirs of the deceased lady and Rs 400,000 for injuring a minor Ms Sana Bibi. The court announced its 17 pages judgment here the other day. The accused was tried in the court under sections 302, 324, 311, 337 A (i) PPC, 37 CPA and 19 AA at police station Lal Qila

for murdering his wife Shazia Bibi, 25 who was 30 weeks pregnant at the time of the occurrence for mere suspicion and attempting at the life of his 2-year old daughter Sana Bibi on Oct 19, 2020. The prosecution proved the case and the accused was convicted and sentenced. A young lawyer advocate Nehal Yousafzai appeared for the victims and pleaded the case free of cost as the family was unable to afford the court and lawyer fee. Talking to local journalists after the judgment, advocate Nehal Yousafzai said that he would continue to help the oppressed free of cost to get them speedy justice in the courts. ANP committee: The Awami National Party (ANP) on Sunday constituted an organizing committee for the Munda tehsil.

The decision was taken during a meeting of the party held at Munda with its district president Haji Bahadar Khan in the chair. Mr Mumtaz Khan was nominated as tehsil chairman, Samiullah as general secretary and Bakht Baidar as secretary information while Ayub Khan, Gul Mali Khan and Iqbal as members of the committee. The meeting was attended by party presidents of union councils and other office bearers. Addressing the meeting Haji Bahadar Khan said the Pukhtun had no option other than the ANP in the province. He said the ANP was the party of martyrs and 'ghazis' and believed in non-violence philosophy of the late Ghaffar Khan. He said none of the political parties could defeat the ANP in Jandol in case the workers got united.

120 grams of bread at Rs20 in Bannu

BANNU (APP): Bannu district administration Sunday issued a declaration to set the price of 120 grams of bread at Rs20. A long meeting was held between the officials of the district administration and Nanbai Association in which after mutual consultation and negotiation, a declaration was issued to set the price of 120 grams of bread at Rs20.

According to the declaration, all the bakers and hotel owners of Bannu will ensure the implementation of the instructions mentioned in the declaration and all the bakers and hotel owners are instructed to make a price list of bread in Urdu language and display it clearly in front of the shop. Legal action will be taken against those who violate. Instructions have

been issued by the district administration that all food items including Roti (naan) should be kept and prepared in a healthy and clean environment and the complaint of Deputy Commissioner Bannu should be printed on the rate sheet by writing WhatsApp number 03040030032 and all bakers and Hotel owners keep digital scales for checking weight of bread.



HYDERABAD: People traveling on rooftop of passenger bus at Tando Jam Road may cause any mishap and needs attention of concerned authorities.

Sargodha man kills wife, kid

SARGODHA (INP): In a shocking incident, a Sargodha man on Sunday killed his wife and a child, police sources said. According to police, the incident took place in the suburbs of Sargodha, where a man killed his wife and killed over an unknown reason. The man has been arrested, who has confessed to killing his wife and child, the police said and added further investigation was underway. Separately, a man murdered his wife, father-in-law, brother-in-law and two others over a domestic dispute in Okara city of Punjab province. According to details, a man – identified as Rafiq – gunned down wife, father-in-law, brother-in-law and two others during separate attacks at Mandi Road and Latifabad.

80 Proclaimed offenders held: The Punjab

Highway Patrolling (PHP) police has issued its monthly performance report of May 2023 on Sunday. SP Akhtar Hussain Joyia while disclosing the monthly person report said that PHP has busted 80 Proclaimed offenders during the last month of May. He further said that PHP had checked 16,227.63 persons and 70,05.15 vehicles across the region through e-police post app. PHP also arrested 33 court absconders. He also said that PHP also recovered 296 motorcycles, eight cars and six other vehicles. Punjab Highway Patrolling police also recovered 10 missing children and guidance were provided to 1541 passenger who were facing travel difficulties. PHP also recovered 700 grams of Hashish from drug pushers. **APP adds:** Police have arrested 31 alleged criminals during a crackdown

across the district in the last 24 hours. The police launched a crackdown on criminals and arrested 12 proclaimed offenders, wanted to police in different cases of dacoity, robbery, theft and other crimes. Police also arrested two court absconders during the crackdown. Meanwhile, the police unearthed a distillery and arrested six drug-peddlers with 407-litre liquor, 240-gram Hashish, empty bottles and fake labels. The police also detained three illegal weapon holders and recovered three pistols and rounds from them. The police also apprehended two drivers for over-speeding and six gamblers with stake money and gambling material. Separate cases have been registered against the criminals with the police stations concerned, sources said.



MUNDA, LOWER DIR: Awami National Party district president Haji Bahadar Khan addressing a public ceremony.

Free eye treatment camp held F.P. Report

KHAR: Security forces are continuously focusing to provide basic health facilities to the people of tribal districts. In this regard, Frontier Corps North organized a two-day free eye treatment camp in Bajaur district. Camp was established jointly with Roots School System and Al Shafia Eye Trust Hospital Rawalpindi. In the free eye treatment camp, specialist doctors treated 2671 patients and provided medicines. While 560 men, women and children were referred to Shifa Eye Trust Hospital Rawalpindi for free treatment and operation. Apart from this, 898 men, women and children were provided free spectacles. On this occasion, free eye checkup of children was also done in different tehsils and surrounding schools and were provided free medicines. The people of Bajaur thanked the Frontier Corps North for organizing the free eye treatment camp and said that more such camps should be established so that basic health facilities can be provided to the poor people.

RTA, Traffic Police return extra fares

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The team of the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) and Traffic Police on the second day of an ongoing campaign against overloading and overcharging transports conducted a joint inspection of passenger vehicles on different roads of the city. The inspection team, led by RTA Secretary Pir Khalid Qayyum along with Deputy Superintendent of Police Headquarters Syed Sagheer Gilani, checked several vehicles on the routes of Peshawar, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Lahore. During the inspection, a fine was imposed on various vehicles which were found overloaded and overcharging the passengers. The extra fares were collected from the transporters and returned to the passengers. The RTA secretary and DSP Headquarters also talked with the passengers and listened to their problems. The RTA Secretary said the regular monitoring of overcharging, overloading, and vehicles' fitness would be ensured. He warned that strict action would be taken against the violators without any discrimination.

1 shot dead

MULTAN (APP): A man was shot dead while another sustained injuries over an old enmity at Adda Munirabad Multan Bahawalpur road in premises of Basti Malook police station here on Sunday. According to Rescue 1122 sources, two persons including 44-year old Jamshed s/o Ashiq and 30-year old Mehran s/o Wahid Bukhash residents of 17-Kashi Vehari-Multan road were on the way to Multan from Basti Malook on motorcycle. All of a sudden, two unidentified armed motorcyclists opened fire and shot Jamshed dead and injured Mehran. The criminals managed to escape from the scene.

District admin launches campaign to enforce new roti price

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The district administration on Sunday started a drive against the non-implementation of the new price of tandoori roti and imposed heavy fines on the violators in city areas. Assistant Commissioner Abbottabad, Saqib Salim conducted a raid on various areas of the city in response to complaints received from citizens regarding the price of tandoori roti. During the inspections, the AC took action against violations of the notification of roti prices and initiated proceedings against

those who did not reduce the price and other shopkeepers under the Price Control Act. According to the district administration spokesperson, after a significant decrease in the price of wheat flour, a decrease of Rs. 5 rupees in the price of tandoori roti was also notified, unfortunately, most of the tandoor owners did not comply with the orders, and continued selling it on old price. Similarly, Additional Assistant Commissioner Abbottabad, Ali Sher Khan Khalil, conducted visits to

the various areas of the city to check the price of the public complaints. During the visits, the weight and price of the tandoori roti were checked according to the official notification. Furthermore, FIRs were also registered against those who did not display the notification and against those who did not maintain the standard weight and price of the roti. The spokesman also urged the citizens to register their complaints regarding prices by contacting District Control Room number 09929310553.

Balochistan produces surplus wheat

QUETTA (INP): Balochistan has produced surplus wheat crops for providing wheat seeds for the cultivation of yield to around 100,000 farmers across the province. "The Balochistan government has provided 400,000 sacks of wheat seeds of worth Rs 2.20 billion to the farmers of the province to achieve its cultivation target," Minister for Agriculture Mir Asadullah Baloch said. He said the initiative was taken to eliminate the

wheat shortage after the recent floods. The record wheat production was possible by the grace of Allah Almighty, quality seeds, uninterrupted supply of fertilizer, and timely decisions of the government, he said. "The government has distributed around 400,000 bags of 50-kilogram wheat free of cost due to which the province has produced more wheat than the target," Asad Baloch said. For transparency in the distribution of wheat seeds,

the chief minister's inspection team was entrusted to monitor the program. He said that all necessary facilities were also provided to wheat growers to expand their production to make the province self-sufficient. The minister said that the policy yielded good results and the province more than doubled its wheat production compared with last year despite the challenges posed by heavy rains and floods last year.

Eight women among 12 abducted from Faisalabad

FAISALABAD (APP): Twelve persons including eight women were abducted from different parts of Faisalabad during the past 12 hours. A police spokesman said here on Sunday that 9-year-old girl Ayesha Ashraf was got missing under mysterious circumstances while playing outside her house in Gulstan Colony whereas 11-year-old Ehsan was kidnapped from Jinnah Colony when he stepped out to purchase some grocery items from a nearby shop in the locality. Similarly, a youth Adnan Maqsood was abducted when he was returning home after appearing before a court of law at District Katchery in a pending case

while 20-year-old Sumera Bibi was kidnapped from Sufi Di Basti Siddhpura when Saqlain and his associates seduced the girl and convinced her to go with them. Meanwhile, Shahid and his accomplices kidnapped 17-year-old Zubaira Bibi from Khurarianwala, Naveed and his associates abducted Shama Arif from Chak No.65-RB, Sher Muhammad and his accomplices abducted Abida Bibi from Chak No.55-JB, Ahmad Khan and his associates abducted Ayesha Anjad from Chak No.241-RB, Abdus Shakoor and his accomplices abducted Nayab Bibi from Chak No.66-JB, Ahmad and his associates abducted Nimra

Lateef from Chak No.119-JB whereas 11-year-old Ahmad Arif and Abdul Mannan were kidnapped from Mohallah Ravi Samundri when they were going to say prayer in the mosque of their locality. The police registered separate cases and started investigation for safe recovery of the abductees, he added. **Man electrocuted:** A man was electrocuted while taking bath in the area of Khurarianwala police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that 27-year-old Haseeb, a resident of Khurarianwala, was taking bath at a tubewell near Ghousia Darbar on Jhumra Road when he received a fatal electric shock.

Ten MC officials suspended

DERA GHAZI KHAN (APP): Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Jawad-Ul-Hassan Gondal suspended ten officials of the municipal corporation (MC) over absence from duty during a surprise visit to different water supply schemes on Saturday late night. In line with special directives of Commissioner DG Khan, the Chief Officer Municipal Corporation conducted surprise visits of different water supply schemes and checked the attendance of the officials. The officer found seven officials absent from duty and suspended them all. He also suspended three supervisors of the concerned schemes. The CO MC appointed Municipal Officer Planning

Khursheed Naseer and Municipal Officer Regulation as inquiry officers and directed them to send inquiry reports to his office at the earliest. Later, he presided over a meeting of the engineering branch and which he directed officers concerned to give their best in improving performance and also to resolve public complaints on priority. He said that a zero-tolerance policy was being adopted on performance and attendance. The CO MC Jawad-Ul-Hassan Gondal directed contractors to ensure good quality material in projects adding that the contractors would be blacklisted in case of using sub-standard material.

Blind murder traced, accused arrested

FAISALABAD (APP): The police have solved a blind murder of an aged woman and arrested the accused within few hours after the incident. Sub-Inspector (SI) Junaid Ahmad said here on Sunday that City Police Officer (CPO) Usman Akram Gondal took notice of a blind murder of a septuagenarian woman in the area of Gulberg police station and directed Superintendent Police (SP) Lyallpur Town Usman Munir to ensure arrest of the accused within 24 hours. A special team was constituted and the SHO Gulberg, along with a team, took a man Imran of the same locality into custody over suspicion. During investigation, the accused confessed to the offence.



War hits sowing season in Sudan breadbasket, fuelling famine fears

GEDAREF, SUDAN (AFP/APP): In past years Mohammed Haroun readily found work on Sudanese farms but this year he is left empty-handed as agribusinesses, starved of cash by fighting in Sudan, leave their land fallow.

Like hundreds of farm labourers from across Sudan, Haroun made his way to Gedaref state, the country's breadbasket, at the first sign of rain, which heralds the start of the growing season. But this year -- with the country embroiled in brutal fighting between warring generals -- no one was expecting them.

The state's large, mechanised farms are not taking on workers, as a cash crunch hits their finances, jeopardising a harvest that normally meets 40 percent of Sudan's grain needs and fuelling fears of famine.

Haroun makes the annual journey for work from his home region of Kordofan, hundreds of kilometres to the west.

"In the past, I would never be waiting for more than a day," he told AFP, lying on the untilled soil with his possessions around him.

"I've been here for five days now with no job offer and I've run out of money. I don't know where my next meal is coming from."

Around him, the rain has already started falling on the fallow fields -- meaning that it is now probably already too late to sow a crop this year. One bad season could spell disaster in a country where one in three inhabitants were in need of aid even before a power struggle between rival generals erupted into all-out fighting on April 15.

More than 80 percent of Sudan's workforce is employed in agriculture, which generates 35 to 40 percent of

gross domestic product, according to the United Nations.

Mirghani Ali sells farm supplies including seedlings, fertilisers and pesticides, and has never seen anything like this season.

"We should be overwhelmed with orders right now, but here we are at the end of May, and demand is incredibly low," he said.

For Mohammed Abdelkarim, who cultivates 10,000 acres (over 4,000 hectares) of corn, cotton and sunflowers, the cause is clear: financing has been cut off.

"Banks headquartered in Khartoum have not responded to requests since mid-April," when the fighting began.

"And even if financing does come through, we'll need time to get seedlings, and we don't know if we'll have access to fuel to power our machines," Abdelkarim said some farms in the state were already in debt after being forced to leave last year's wheat crop to rot in the fields as the cash-strapped government failed to honour promises to purchase their harvest. The central bank announced in May it would open lines of credit for farmers associated with local cooperatives, and government ministers -- who still hold press conferences despite the fighting -- assured the public that the sowing season is not at risk. Although Sudan's production of staple crops -- sorghum, millet and wheat -- rose 45 percent in 2022 compared with the previous year, it still met less than half of domestic needs, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

In the past, the balance has been covered largely by imports from Russia and Ukraine, but supplies

have been hit since Moscow launched a full-scale invasion of its neighbour in February last year.

Many Sudanese have been left unable to afford even basic staples, as world food prices have soared.

"Transportation disruptions, market devastation and the absence of financing... will have catastrophic impacts on the food security of the people of Sudan and the surrounding region," said the head of the Khartoum-based Arab Organisation for Agriculture Development, Ibrahim al-Dakhiri.

"Severed supply lines have led to the complete destruction of poultry production, which is mostly concentrated in Khartoum," he said.

Although some farmers have sown crops like maize, millet or oilseeds in areas spared by the fighting, they are doing so "with an unpreparedness never before seen in Sudan", he added. Preparing for the rainy season is essential in a country where 95 percent of cultivated land is rain-fed, according to the FAO.

Farmers in Gedaref found themselves facing the first rains "with no seeds or fuel, and now they can't work their land", farmer Hussein Ibrahim told AFP. With roads cut off by crossfire, trade at a standstill and processing factories razed or looted, agribusinesses face an uphill battle, prompting some heavyweight investors to walk away. One of the largest actors in the Sudanese economy, Haggard Group, which used to provide work for thousands of farm labourers, recently threw in the towel. In a letter dated May 29, employees were notified that the company was "suspending operations" and letting all of them go.

Indian officials search for answers after train crash kills at least 288

BALASORE (AFP/APP): Authorities were scrambling on Sunday to understand the cause of a three-train collision in India that killed at least 288 people, claiming that "no one responsible" will be spared.

The country's deadliest rail accident in more than 20 years left a blood-stained wreckage, with compartments smashed and some carriages flung far from the tracks.

Debris was piled high at the site of the Friday night crash near Balasore, in the eastern state of Odisha.

"I saw bloodied scenes, mangled bodies and one man with a severed arm being desperately helped by his injured son," researcher Anubhav Das, 27, told AFP after surviving the crash.

There was confusion about the exact sequence of events, but reports cited railway officials as saying that a signalling error had sent the Coromandal Express running south from Kolkata to Chennai onto a side track.

It slammed into a freight train and the wreckage derailed an express running north from India's tech hub Bengaluru to Kolkata that was also passing the site.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the crash site and injured passengers

being treated in hospital and said "no one responsible" would be spared.

"I pray that we get out of this sad moment as soon as possible," he told state broadcaster Doordarshan.

Das said he was in the last carriage of one of the trains when he heard "screaming, horrifying sounds coming from a distance". His coach stayed upright and he jumped out unhurt after it ground to a halt. "I lost count of the bodies before leaving the site. Now I feel almost guilty." Bystanders rushed to help the victims even before emergency services arrived. "There were severed arms, legs, and even some partially severed heads -- while the unlucky ones died in pain, too much pain," said witness Hiranmay Rath.

Over the next few hours the 20-year-old saw "more death and grief" than he could have "ever imagined", he told AFP.

Authorities said every hospital between the crash site and the state capital of Bhubaneswar, around 200 kilometres (125 miles) away, was receiving victims. Around 200 ambulances -- and even buses -- were deployed to transport them. At Bhadrak District Hospital, bloodied and

shocked survivors were receiving treatment in crowded wards.

The rescue effort was declared over on Saturday evening after emergency personnel had combed the mangled wreckage for survivors and laid scores of bodies out under white sheets beside the tracks.

"All the dead bodies and injured passengers have been removed from the accident site," said an official from the Balasore emergency control room.

Sudhanshu Sarangi, director general of Odisha Fire Services, said the death toll stood at 288 but was expected to rise further, potentially approaching 380. Odisha state's chief secretary Pradeep Jena confirmed that about 900 injured people had been hospitalised. India has one of the world's largest rail networks and has seen several disasters over the years, the worst of them in 1981 when a train derailed while crossing a bridge in Bihar and plunged into the river below, killing between 800 and 1,000 people. Friday's crash ranks as its third-worst, and the deadliest since 1995, when two express trains collided in Firozabad, near Agra, killing more than 300 people.

The disaster comes despite new investments and upgrades in technology that have significantly improved railway safety in recent years.

The railways ministry has announced an investigation.

Condolences have poured in from around the world.

Pope Francis said he was "deeply saddened" by the "immense loss of life" and offered prayers for the "many injured", while UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres extended "his deep condolences to the families of the victims".

French President Emmanuel Macron sent his condolences to India's president and prime minister, saying in a tweet that his "thoughts are with the families of the victims".

And US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said that Americans' hearts were going "out to those who have lost their loved ones and the many who suffered injuries". Abdul Mukhtar, who witnessed the crash, said he had only seen train incidents on TV before. "I never imagined that we would witness such an incident here in our own town and that we would help in rescue efforts," he said.

Israel demands Egypt help in full probe of deadly attack at border

JERUSALEM (Reuters): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday called the killing of three soldiers by a member of the Egyptian security services a terrorist attack and demanded a full joint investigation with Cairo.

Egypt says it is working with Israel to investigate the incident which occurred on Saturday.

"Israel relayed a clear message to the Egyptian government. We expect that the joint investigation will be exhaustive and thorough," Netanyahu told his cabinet in televised remarks. "We will refresh procedures and methods of operations and also the measures to reduce to a minimum the smuggling and to ensure tragic terrorist attacks like this do not happen again."

More details of the rare incident along the border emerged on Sunday. The frontier is usually peaceful, as the neighbours share close security cooperation, though there are frequent reports of drug smuggling, including one that took place prior to the



deadly violence. Israel's military said that two of its soldiers were shot dead early on Saturday by an Egyptian security services member who crossed through the border fence. Their desert post was remote and it took a number of hours before their bodies were discovered.

"From that moment a terrorist event was declared, leading to sweeps of the area," Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said in an interview with

Israel's YNET news. "A drone was sent up and 1.5 kilometres inside Israel a suspicious person was identified." Soldiers then made contact and during an exchange of fire the Egyptian guard and a third Israeli soldier were killed.

On Saturday, the Egyptian military said the three Israelis and Egyptian guard had been killed in an exchange of fire as the guard chased smugglers across the frontier.

Two Egyptian sources said on Sunday that a team was examining the scene and the guard's body to determine how events transpired. Coworkers and family members of the Egyptian guard have been interviewed to figure out if he belonged to any political groups or suffered from mental illness, they said.

Egypt in 1979 became the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel and they share a more than 200-km (124-mile) long border.

Senegal death toll rises to 15 as tensions persist

DAKAR (AFP/APP): Tensions remained high in Senegal Saturday after clashes brought the death toll to 15 since a court convicted opposition leader Ousmane Sonko.

Sonko's ongoing legal woes have prompted rare flare-ups of violence in Senegal, typically a bastion of stability in West Africa, and foreign allies have urged a return to calm.

Disturbances were reported on Saturday in the suburbs of the capital Dakar. But several neighbourhoods that had experienced outbursts of violence Thursday and Friday remained calm, said the minister of the interior, saying there had been "a drop in intensity" of the demonstrations.

Antoine Diome said "about 500 arrests" had been made since the start of the protest movement.

He added that the government suspected overseas involvement.

"There is foreign influence and it is the country that is under attack," he said, declining to elaborate.

Sonko, a 48-year-old former tax inspector, was initially charged with rape but was on Thursday convicted on a lesser charge of morally "corrupting" a young woman and sentenced to two years in prison.

He claims the charges against him were a bid by the government to torpedo his political career ahead of the presidential election next year.

His conviction may take him out of the running for the 2024 poll.

Clashes between Sonko's supporters and police broke out after the ruling, leading to 15 deaths over two

days, according to government figures. Shops and businesses were ransacked. The army was deployed to the streets but scuffles erupted on Friday night in parts of the capital, Dakar, and in Ziguinchor.

Diome accused protesters of trying to "destabilise the country".

"These are irresponsible people," he said. "They called for demonstrations. They called for public buildings to be burned. They called for the collapse of the state."

Sonko, who was tried in absentia, has yet to be taken into custody for his jail term, which is predicted to cause further tensions.

He is presumed to be at his Dakar home, where he has been blocked in by security forces since last weekend. He alleges he is being "illegally held". Sharp-tongued and charismatic, Sonko has drawn a strong following among Senegal's youth, who love his barbs against a political elite he refers to as the "state mafia".

He has spoken out against debt, poverty, food insecurity, underfunded health and education systems and corruption.

Sonko, who has two wives, portrays himself as a devout Muslim and defender of traditional values, and has called for harsher penalties for same-sex relations.

Supporters of President Macky Sall, however, see him as a rabble-rouser who has poisoned political discourse and sown instability.

Dakar residents interviewed by AFP said they feared the possible

consequences of his arrest.

"I am really scared because we don't know how this will all end," said 46-year-old Fatou Ba, a businesswoman in the Dalifort neighbourhood of Dakar.

"If they want peace they won't go and fetch Sonko."

Another Dalifort resident, Matar Thione, 32, said he felt unsafe in his own country.

"If the protests continue, life is going to get even harder," he said.

The government has restricted access to social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, to stop "the dissemination of hateful and subversive messages".

One frustrated user, Cheikh Diouf, told AFP: "It's a huge problem for us, because we can't get real-time information about where demonstrations are taking place, and our safety is at stake." Washington "is troubled and saddened by the violence and damage we have witnessed in many parts of the country", the State Department said Saturday, urging parties to "voice their views in a peaceful manner".

The African Union said the head of its executive commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, strongly condemned the violence and urged leaders to avoid acts which "tarnish the face of Senegalese democracy, of which Africa has always been proud".

The United Nations, the European Union and Senegal's former colonial power France have also expressed concern over the violence.

Kuwaitis again called to vote amid political paralysis

KUWAIT CITY (AFP/APP): Kuwait is staging its seventh general election in just over 10 years on Tuesday as the oil-rich Gulf state remains mired in a political impasse undermining hopes of economic reform.

Fearing that widespread skepticism will discourage many people from voting, the authorities have festooned the capital with posters in an attempt to encourage a better turnout.

The latest general election was called by the emir last month after he again dissolved parliament amid a persistent deadlock with the executive branch that has stalled reforms.

Kuwait adopted a parliamentary system in 1962 but repeated political crises over the past years have resulted in state



paralysis.

The emirate suffers from constant stand-offs between elected lawmakers and cabinets installed by the reigning Al-Sabah family, which maintains a firm grip on political life.

"We have to wake up and face up to this great frustration," activist and university professor Sheikh al-Jassem told

AFP of the political crisis.

One of the world's largest producers of crude oil, Kuwait is the only Gulf Arab state to have an elected parliament with powers to hold the government to account.

On April 9, its seventh new government in three years was announced after the previous cabinet resigned in January only

World's spy chiefs meet in secret conclave in Singapore

SINGAPORE (Reuters): Senior officials from about two dozen of the world's major intelligence agencies held a secret meeting on the fringes of the Shangri-La Dialogue security meeting in Singapore this weekend, five people told Reuters.

Such meetings are organised by the Singapore government and have been discreetly held at a separate venue alongside the security summit for several years, they said. The meetings have not been previously reported. The U.S. was represented by Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, the head of her country's intelligence community, while China was among the other countries present, despite the tensions between the two superpowers.

Samant Goel, the head of India's overseas intelligence gathering agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, also attended, an Indian source said.

"The meeting is an important fixture on the international shadow agen-

da," said one person with knowledge of the discussions. "Given the range of countries involved, it is not a festival of tradecraft, but rather a way of promoting a deeper understanding of intentions and bottom lines."

"There is an unspoken code among intelligence services that they can talk when more formal and open diplomacy is harder - it is a very important factor during times of tension, and the Singapore event helps promote that."

All five sources who discussed the meetings declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter. A spokesperson for the Singapore Ministry of Defence said that while attending the Shangri-La Dialogue, "participants including senior officials from intelligence agencies also take the opportunity to meet their counterparts."

"The Singapore Ministry of Defence may facilitate some of these bilateral or multilateral meetings," the spokesperson said. "Participants have found

such meetings held on the sidelines of the (dialogue) beneficial. The U.S. Embassy in Singapore said it had no information on the meeting. The Chinese and Indian governments did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand operate what is called the Five Eyes network to gather and share a broad range of intelligence, and their intelligence officials meet frequently. Larger meetings of the intelligence community are rarer, and almost never publicised. Although few details were available on the specific discussions in Singapore, Russia's war in Ukraine and transnational crime figured in the talks on Friday, the person with knowledge of the discussions added. On Thursday evening, the intelligence chiefs held an informal gathering. No Russian representative was present, one of the sources said. Ukraine's deputy defence minister, Volodymyr V.

Havrylov, was at the Shangri-La Dialogue but said he did not attend the intelligence meeting.

Another of the sources said the tone at the meeting was collaborative and cooperative, and not confrontational. At the main security dialogue, more than 600 delegates from 49 countries held three days of plenary sessions, as well as closed-door bilateral and multilateral meetings at the sprawling Shangri-La Hotel. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese gave the keynote address while U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Chinese Defence Minister Li Shangfu and counterparts from Britain, Japan, Canada, Indonesia and South Korea also spoke. Haines was among the official U.S. delegates to the Shangri-La Dialogue. At a discussion on cybersecurity in the main meeting, she said in response to a question from a Chinese military officer that cooperation between countries was essential.

Nepali guide rescues climber from Everest death zone

K A T H M A N D U (AFP/APP): A Nepali guide abandoned his client's Everest summit bid to rescue a Malaysian climber in a deadly mountaineering season that has seen at least twelve deaths.

Gelje Sherpa was guiding a Chinese client to the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) peak and planned to assist him to paraglide down.

Instead, only a few hundred metres from the summit, they came across a lone man clinging to a rope

and shivering in the area known as the "death zone".

The area above 8,000 metres has earned its name because of its thin air, freezing temperatures and low oxygen levels that heighten the risk of altitude sickness. It is also notorious for its difficult terrain.

"When I found him in that state, my heart did not let me leave him there," Sherpa told AFP.

Many other climbers had walked past the man that day, but he declined to crit-

icize them.

"It is a place where you have to think of your survival first," he said.

Sherpa told his client -- who will have paid at least \$45,000 to attempt Everest, including a permit fee of \$11,000 -- to return without a summit.

"When I decided to go down, my client did not agree at first. Of course, he was there after spending a lot of money, it must have been his dream for years and he had to find time to

come here to climb.

"He got angry and said he wanted to go to the summit. 'I had to scold him and tell him that he has to descend because he was my responsibility and I couldn't send him to the summit on his own. He got upset.'"

He explained that he wanted to take the sick man down the mountain.

"Then he realised that by 'rescue' I meant that I wanted to save him. He understood and then he apologised later."

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Pak-Turk ties and economic realities

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has invited Turkish investors and businessmen to expand their investments in various areas of Pakistan. PM Sharif, who has traveled to Turkiye to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, held separate meetings with the representatives of several Turkish companies and Industrial giants in Ankara on Saturday. The Primer called for establishing strategic collaboration in multiple sectors including energy, agriculture, information technology (IT), and construction. The discussions spanned around expanding trade and investment ties to maximize mutual gains from available opportunities in Pakistan and to enhance cooperation in key sectors of the economy through the direct presence of Turkish enterprises and via joint ventures with Pakistani counterparts.

Pakistan and Turkiye have long-standing fraternal strategic relations in all domains including trade and investment, IT, power generation, renewable energy, Science and Technology, Defense and security, and Culture and Tourism. Both nations are linked by multiple bonds of religion, language, culture, and history. Their bilateral cooperation has witnessed a sharp rise in multiple fields particularly in Security and defense collaboration as well as joint defense manufacturing and production between the two brotherly nations in recent years. Historically, the Muslims of the Indo-Subcontinent, especially the Pakistani nation have a historic affiliation with Turkiye dating back to World War I and the prestigious Ottoman Empire and they still envisage the revival of the great Khalafit-e-USmania under the revolutionary leadership of Tayyip Erdogan. Meanwhile, these historic religious and cultural sentiments had always remained crucial in the transformation of the Pak-Turkiye friendship and Strategic cooperation throughout history.

Pak-Turk economic and trade cooperation has grown many folds in recent years and over 100 Turkish firms are currently working in multiple fields in Pakistan. The Pakistani successive governments had worked actively to engage more Turkish companies to come and invest in the country. Currently, the volume of bilateral trade between Turkiye and Pakistan is around \$600 million which is quite nominal as compared to the decades long bilateral relationship of both nations. Over the years, Pakistan and Turkey could not transform their historic diplomatic and political relationship into a viable trade and economic partnership because of their strict trade regime and conflicting business priorities. Presently, the bilateral trade between the two countries is in favor of Turkiye while Pakistan products including textiles, surgical instruments, and sports goods have no significant share in Turkiye's imports due to the high tariff regime imposed by the Turkish authorities that reduced Pakistan's export to Ankara by almost 69% in recent few years. Presently, both nations had set the target of the bilateral trade at \$ 5 billion per annum and taking multiple measures to achieve that magnificent goal that had not been achieved so far. Pakistan and Turkiye held multiple rounds of talks to conclude a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) but could not forge consensus over tariffs, customs duty, and other trade issues and finally, both nations struck a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) last year that might help them to achieve an overwhelming target for their bilateral trade in the coming years.

The Republic of Turkiye is an emerging market and newly industrialized economy, that not only enjoys the dividends of a free European market but also vigorously expands its trade and investment in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe. Realistically, foreign trade and investment as well as exports largely depend on domestic trade and manufacturing policies, internal peace, cost-effective manufacturing, and high-quality products of any country. Meanwhile, in a business-friendly environment, the confidence of local traders and entrepreneurs is of utmost importance prior to lobbying for foreign investment that attracts multinational firms to grab their share of the market, however, Pakistan's case is totally different from the rest of the world. Currently, local businesses are at a halt, the energy crisis ruined the industry, and high production costs badly hurt the Country's exports, thus foreign firms are interested to work in specific sectors that guarantee them money back guarantee such as construction, energy production, etc but such mechanisms do not support the national economy in the long run. The government must first build the confidence of local businesses through the provision of a conducive environment, business-friendly legislation, and an uninterrupted supply of cheaper energy so Pakistani exports compete in the world. At the same time, Pakistan needs to learn from Turkiye, which has exemplary diplomatic and trade relations with Islamabad but kept imposing high tariffs on Pakistani goods and did not okay GPS Plus status for Pakistan in line with the approval of the EU community. Pakistani Strategists must adopt rational policies and focus on domestic businesses and industries to build a sustainable economy so foreign investors volunteer to invest in Pakistan to make their fortune, otherwise, no businessman deals in loss ever.

Libya: Reasonable calm for now, but at what cost?

Hafed Al-Ghwell

Since 2012, Libya has experienced multiple failed political transitions, taking a heavy toll on its people. The complex internal divisions and external factors affecting the country have repeatedly threatened to send it into another spiral of crisis and violence. However, recent developments hint at a breakthrough in the decade-long political deadlock. Rival Eastern and Western governments are increasingly leaning toward discrete contacts to quietly develop some “new” compromise palatable to both East and West following the dismissal of Fathi Bashagha by the House of Representatives.

To some, the situation in Libya is seemingly a lot better than it was two years ago when repeated attempts to overrun the capital, Tripoli, featured waves of sporadic violence and need-less upheavals. Today, the city appears largely peaceful, and fewer roadblocks impede traffic. In some areas, there are even infrastructure improvements, delivering a sense of relief and hope to average Libyans that the days of street-to-street gun battles are behind them.

However, if you scratch the surface of this “mirage of reasonable calm,” a deep sense of insecurity still grips a traumatized populace. Abductions, forced disappearances and extrajudicial detentions remain frequent, worsened by the consolidation of militias-turned-hybrid actors that source legitimacy from their close ties to the ruling elite. Other constant features of the Libyan crisis, such as miscarriages of justice, abuses of power and corruption, are still rampant, albeit not nearly as visible nor eliciting much public furor.

After all, even if unaccountable elements continue exercising enormous influence on Libyan security dynamics, politics, governance and, increasingly, the economy, most Libyans are just content to witness a relative improvement due to increasing oil and gas revenues now flowing freely in the economy. Besides, unlike neighboring Tunisia and Egypt, which were severely impacted by the knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine, Libya has escaped debilitating food inflation. At the same time, fuel remains subsidized and

thus cheap. The familiar anxieties caused by the friction between Libya's rival governments are only discernible from the diplomats and international organizations that still operate as if they are under siege and only move around with armed guards.

This same faux calm dynamic is also playing out elsewhere in Libya's other cities and regions, except in Fezzan. The continued marginalization and exploitation of people and resources there has transformed it into an additional “frontline” in a country crisscrossed by rivalries and opportunism, leaving the area vulnerable to

Libya, Abdoulaye Bathily, initially sought to broaden the negotiation process and establish an electoral roadmap with clear timelines, ensuring inclusive, accessible and fair elections. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that these efforts will not address how Libya will sustain a peaceful and just transition once the votes have been tallied and its supposed new leaders are announced. And that's not all.

Bathily's “elections-first” plan to help Libya find an exit from its gridlock is still fraught with problems, even though it

monopoly on power with the blunt instrument that is the will of the people. Additionally, the “new” structures that form in their wake will help address grievances related to the rule of law, public services delivery, the delegation of authority to subnational bodies, local economic development and, more importantly, the normalizing of security in Libya.

Of course, such an undertaking would require significant investment from the global community to transfer negotiated arrangements into real change for the people. Yet, without a

has gaping holes that rival authorities on either side appear eager to exploit, of course, with their own plans.

With Bashagha no longer a useful pawn in the hands of the House of Representatives and Haftar, the latter's entourage has since broached the subject of a new government. In it, Bashagha's deputy, Osama Hamad, could become Dbeibah's deputy prime minister, with full authority on all things “East,” especially finances.

Hamad is a particularly interesting choice because his stint as a finance minister in the Fayeze Al-Sarraj government and his role as

of Libya's transition.

Yet, here we are. Whether the back-room deals will result in material changes is still debatable since several thorny issues still need to be solved.

For instance, it is unlikely the military coalitions in western Libya would quietly accept Haftar as the most senior military officer in a combined military. Will they even agree to join the Libyan National Army? Similarly, the head of the eastern parliament does not favor Dbeibah remaining in power, a view supported by rank-and-file members of the House of Representatives, making backtracking on that akin to political suicide.

Meanwhile, the Haftar-Dbeibah end-around is unlikely to garner support from Western capitals and the UN itself, given their stance of: “elections first, everything else after.” That the two factions are talking is reassuring, but the West does not want to see a deal materialize that would again postpone elections. Moreover, to average Libyans, entrusting the country's future to the Haftar-Dbeibah coalition is unthinkable since it means consolidating power for an indefinite period around two controversial figures with mixed track records. Haftar's insistence on hand-picking the ministers for defense, interior and foreign affairs in this future government is even more concerning. At the same time, he serves as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, making him the shadow head of state.

In conclusion, Libya is arguably in a more difficult situation then when the force of arms and unrestricted violence was the primary currency for negotiation. It is a frustrating paradox because, on the one hand, Libya is relatively in a better place with little to no violence, oil money flowing freely, and rival factions talking. However, the status quo remains unchallenged, shutting everyone else out and freezing Libya in place.

On the other hand, if the international community has its way and elections go ahead, their inevitable violent aftermath will upset the “reasonable calm” mirage currently lulling Libyans (and other stakeholders) with a false sense of stability.

Why rock the boat when the state of affairs seems “better” than ever?

Alongside any political progress, going to the polls will also be a way to provide all Libyans with incremental peace dividends to ensure their enduring support for the complex negotiations that were put off to facilitate the elections. Moreover, elections allow outsiders to become part of the political process, breaking up the ruling elites’ monopoly on power with the blunt instrument that is the will of the people. Additionally, the “new” structures that form in their wake will help address grievances related to the rule of law, public services delivery, the delegation of authority to subnational bodies, local economic development and, more importantly, the normalizing of security in Libya. Of course, such an undertaking would require significant investment from the global community to transfer negotiated arrangements into real change for the people. Yet, without a constitutional framework, the powers of the presidency and a future parliament will technically be undefined, creating a dangerous “fix-it-as-you-go” mentality, easily exploitable by enterprising actors or other malign elements that have grown exceedingly comfortable with the status quo. This is not to say the UN’s efforts are doomed to fail.

transnational criminal networks and violent extremists.

In addition, porous borders with Algeria, Niger, Chad and Sudan pose genuine security threats, especially from the latter's ongoing internal conflict that could significantly impact Libya. Finally, the illicit trafficking of arms, persons, and contraband into (and out of) the country via Kufra could benefit the eastern-based Libyan National Army, led by the warlord Khalifa Haftar.

In this strange climate, the UN is still trying to forge ahead and frame up a pathway to elections by the end of the year. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for

enjoys broad support from Western capitals. In their view, by holding elections first, Libya will temporarily postpone the messy, dead-end negotiations around the constitution and also sidestep the preferred “solution” by Libyan elites to simply elect a new interim authority from within their own ranks.

Alongside any political progress, going to the polls will also be a way to provide all Libyans with incremental peace dividends to ensure their enduring support for the complex negotiations that were put off to facilitate the elections. Moreover, elections allow outsiders to become part of the political process, breaking up the ruling elites’

constitutional framework, the powers of the presidency and a future parliament will technically be undefined, creating a dangerous “fix-it-as-you-go” mentality, easily exploitable by enterprising actors or other malign elements that have grown exceedingly comfortable with the status quo.

This is not to say the UN's efforts are doomed to fail. On the contrary, there is still a possibility to corral all stakeholders — including hardened “survivors” of constantly shifting allegiances and rivalries — to support Libya's quest for peace, stability and a unified, fully functioning government, without repeating past mistakes. However, the current UN plan still

a former deputy of the eastern government's finance minister has helped him straddle an uneasy divide. Thus, if some new deal or “unity” government materializes, according to the designs of those involved in the not-so-secret Haftar-Dbeibah discussions, Hamad — who is politically closer to the East than the West — will be right at the center of it.

For now, it is too early to predict where the ever-shifting sands of Libya's political dynamics will go. Just a year ago, few would have envisaged today's momentary calm, and fewer still would have believed that Dbeibah and Haftar camps could collude to manipulate the trajectory

Can Biden and Sunak spark ‘special relationship’?

Andrew Hammond

Joe Biden and Rishi Sunak have different political philosophies and personas, yet they are both hoping that they can “re-spark” the special relationship after years in the deep freeze.

Whereas Biden was first elected to the US Congress in 1972 and is a left-of-center Democrat, Sunak is a conservative former banker who only became a UK member of Parliament in 2015. Add to this, too, that Biden is about double Sunak's age.

Indeed, one of the main commonalities between the two is that they both face big election battles in 2024. Sunak is seeking an unprecedented fifth term for the Conservatives against a resurgent Labour Party; while Biden may yet face off against ex-president Donald Trump in a 2020 presidential rematch.

Yet, despite their significant contrasts, there is a possibility that Biden and Sunak could have the most constructive meeting this coming week of any two UK and US leaders since Barack Obama's presidency. Sunak wants better relations with the US after they were strained with many anti-Brexit Democrats, including Biden, by the UK's departure from the EU. And their initial meetings, including at the G7 summit in Japan, have been cordial.

This is not to have high expectations of the meeting, but more that the bar was set so low by Sunak's predecessors in Downing Street, Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, both of whom Biden was skeptical about, that the US president is willing to work as constructively as possible with the prime minister given the ongoing emergency of the

Ukraine war, and the need to reunify the Western alliance. For instance, Biden has noted that Sunak is a Stanford University graduate, and asked for a visit to the home the prime minister still owns in Santa Monica.

Margaret Thatcher.

The two leaders will discuss not just Ukraine, but also broader global economic and political challenges including de-risking supply chains, transitioning

a white paper on AI this year, which spoke mainly of the benefits rather than the risks it poses, despite some experts warning that the technology could present an existential threat to

In the meantime, the UK is pursuing a “multi-track” approach. Firstly, it is focusing on targeted deals on key UK exports, for example, on Scotch whiskey.

Secondly, UK policymakers are seeking broader

one of the guarantors. While the US president has welcomed the Windsor Framework agreed between the EU and UK to try to tackle the challenges of the previous Irish protocol, the Northern Irish unionist community remains opposed to this diplomatic breakthrough and so problems remain.

What Sunak is now striving for, amid these irritants, is that he and Biden continue to largely put aside political differences and forge a constructive partnership building on the traditional ties between the two nations founded on demographics, religion, culture, law, politics and economics. This will be supplemented by long-standing security cooperation, including the new AUKUS deal with Australia, which has traditionally been at the core of the relationship given the close partnership between the two nations in areas like intelligence.

Amid the multiple uncertainties ahead, Sunak is likely therefore to seek to play the role of a trusted, albeit junior, partner to Biden in a bid to get close to him to try to make the relationship work as smoothly as possible. This may provide protections if relations get strained during what is a big US and UK election year in 2024.

However, while seeking the potential upside in the relationship, Sunak would be wise not to overestimate the UK's ability to shape US power.

He should also not be blind to the prospect that Biden's outlook may — ultimately — care significantly less for core UK interests than in the past given his more pro-EU outlook than Trump.

Sunak intends to ask for US support for the UK to play a leading role in coordinating the formulation of global guidelines for its AI's use. The UK government issued a white paper on AI this year, which spoke mainly of the benefits rather than the risks it poses, despite some experts warning that the technology could present an existential threat to humankind. On trade, many UK Brexiteers have been disappointed that a deal with the US has not been possible given the boost it would give to the “global Britain” agenda, even though bilateral trade currently stands at about £280 billion already. So Sunak has not given up hope that such an agreement is possible in a second Biden term, or potentially the first administration of a Republican successor from 2025 onwards. In the meantime, the UK is pursuing a “multi-track” approach. Firstly, it is focusing on targeted deals on key UK exports, for example, on Scotch whiskey. Secondly, UK policymakers are seeking broader deals with specific states with agreements already signed with North Carolina, South Carolina and Indiana. The government is also seeking closer partnerships with other states, including California, Texas and Utah.

While Biden has a different political philosophy to Sunak, the UK prime minister knows he badly needs to try to rebuild relations with Washington. For all of the president's perceived shortcomings in his eyes, Sunak knows Biden has often been a defender of UK interests.

He was, for instance, a staunch supporter of London over the Falklands War, which divided the Reagan administration, despite the-then president's deep admiration of

to zero-carbon economies, China, Russia plus the forthcoming NATO leadership summit in Lithuania in July. Moreover, the UK has a series of specific asks, including around Sunak's plans to make the UK a global hub for developing international regulation of artificial intelligence.

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There are also other key challenges in bilateral relations too, including the fact that Biden has long been opposed to Brexit, not least given his concerns about the implications for the 1998 Good Friday peace process, of which the US is

A Western distraction from climate action

It should be common knowledge by now that climate change is a complex problem with outsize consequences for the Global South. By 2030, most Small Island Developing States will lose up to 100 percent of their GDP to climate disasters. Similarly, Africa's 54 countries will suffer some of the worst consequences of a warming planet, even though they are least responsible for the crisis, contributing less than 4 percent of global greenhouse-gas emissions.

Rising temperatures are likewise threatening life in the Arab world, resulting in water scarcity in Jordan and extreme heat waves in the Gulf countries. The need for a great transformation at the regional, as well as the global, level was one of the main reasons why Egypt hosted last year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), and why the UAE will host this year's meeting. In preparation for COP28, which will convene in Dubai in November and December, the UAE has committed to engaging in open and honest discussions with everyone to ensure that the conference is a success.

Building on its strategic decision to promote and invest in renewables, conservation and climate technology, the UAE selected Sultan Al-Jaber as the COP28 president-designate. The choice has received ample attention. In addition to being the chairman of Masdar — the world's first carbon-neutral city and home to the International Renewable Energy Agency — and the minister of industry and advanced technology, Al-Jaber is managing director and group CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

Accelerating climate action, meeting the challenges of the energy transition, and maintaining the world's demand for oil must be addressed comprehensively. Recognizing this reality, the UAE has chosen as its official to oversee talks someone who has extensive experience in renewable-energy projects,

as a special envoy for climate change, and in positions responsible for reducing industrial emissions. Global warming is a complicated problem, and solving it calls for sophisticated solutions requiring the expertise of specialists in a wide variety of fields.

A small but loud group

Ali Rashid Al-Nuaimi

Last week, members of the US Congress and the European Parliament sent a letter to US President Joe Biden, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urging the removal of Al Jaber as COP28 president-designate.

Global warming is a complicated problem, and solving it calls for sophisticated solutions requiring the expertise of specialists in a wide variety of fields. A small but loud group of politicians in the US and Europe, together with some activists, have questioned why an “oil executive” is leading COP28. Many of these policymakers insist on reducing climate negotiations to a zero-sum game. By distracting people from the challenge of implementing realistic climate solutions and focusing instead on Al- Jaber’s appointment, they seem to view the fight against global warming as a political stick to wield, rather than a global imperative that requires close collaboration. Last week, members of the US Congress and the European Parliament sent a letter to US President Joe Biden, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urging the removal of Al Jaber as COP28 president-designate. Their demand was not based on any wrongdoing or a lack of commitment to the role, but rather was a means to score political points at the expense of a united global effort to tackle climate change and maintain economic growth.

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Legislators should ensure the best possible outcomes for their constituents and their children, not embrace positions based on political biases without any effort at genuine engagement. Worse

still, the US and European legislators are advocating international intervention in a sovereign decision — the latest in a long line of Western efforts to dictate to Global South governments for domestic political gain.

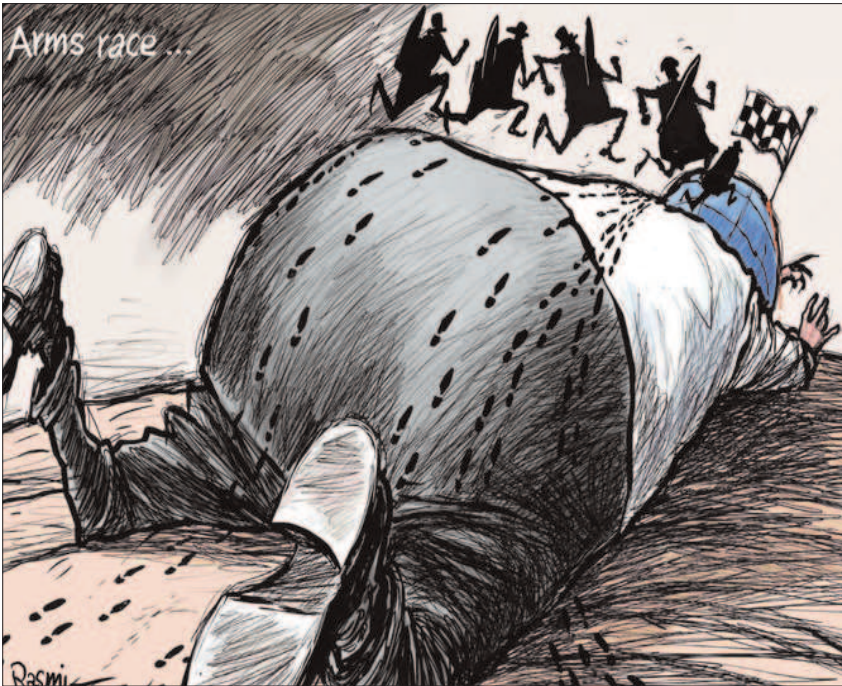
Moreover, the tendency to prescribe policy solutions to Global South coun-

try's largest capacity to manufacture and deploy renewables. The two countries lead globally in solar and wind capacity and have deployed more than 40 percent of the world's new solar and wind capacity each year since 2017. Fossil-fuel consumption continues in China and India — as it does worldwide — but has been reduced from 96 percent to an average of 83 percent of the total across both countries. With nearly three billion people between them, China and India are among the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world; their needs cannot be ignored.

The same legislators lecturing sovereign states about how to navigate climate policy seem to forget that the US and Europe are responsible for the majority of historic emissions. Rather than interfering in decision-making by countries committed to climate action, they should be exerting pressure on their own governments to live up to their climate commitments. Currently, the US and Europe are expanding their own fossil-fuel infrastructure and failing to contribute substantially to internationally agreed funds to mitigate the effects of climate change. The UK has announced its first new coal mine in 30 years, while Germany has resurrected or extended the lives of at least 20 coal-fired power plants.

Any discussion about the energy transition requires nuance and a sincere commitment to joint action. But that is impossible when certain politicians are more committed to catchy soundbites and making a name for themselves. The world has largely agreed on the need to reduce GHG emissions. We cannot let a minority change the framing of the problem and, in the process, slow momentum. The climate crisis is real, as is the political drama that impedes tangible and practical solutions. We must avoid the trap of division and distraction if we want to address global warming before it is too late.

Nonetheless, both China and India have invested substantially in climate mitigation and adaptation, and China has developed the



And then they went after civil society organizations

Yossi Mekelberg

The jury is still out regarding whether Israel's coalition government either genuinely doesn't understand what a true liberal democracy is, or whether they just passionately hate the very idea of it. But this is not the only baffling aspect of their assault on the pillars of their country's democratic system — there is also the chaotic nature of it, as they go about shooting from the hip at anything and everything that they target as their political enemies, yet without any understanding of the opposition they might face or how they might overcome it. They are switching tactics, from a blitz of legislation clearly aimed at grabbing the maximum amount of power for themselves, followed by an attempt to sedate a suspicious and protesting public with sham dialogue, while they then try to sneak in legislation using salami tactics to erode the democratic system slice by slice, hoping that this will pass quietly under the radar.

Similar to other countries that have gone down the slippery slope from a fully democratic system to

operate them. So what was meant to give the impression of creating a level playing field for NGOs of all political and ideological persuasion, has been shown in reality to be another attempt to give unfair advantage to those organizations that are more in line with the government's right-wing ideology.

Where right-wing cynicism and the manipulation of civil society are woven into this piece of legislation is revealed when one examines the sources of support for the right-wing non-profits compared to those who are critical of right-wing governments such as the one currently in office. Most of the funding for non-profits who support right-wing policies such as overhauling the judiciary or advocating further settlements in the Occupied Territories are sourced from private benefactors, while foreign government funding, which is done with complete transparency and accountability and is open to all who meet their criteria, is ending for those who promote human rights and

and the illegal expansion of Israeli settlements in occupied territory, activities carried out with complete impunity, are doing their best to induce some level of accountability for these gross violations of international law. Moreover, beyond the government's unacceptable, unjustified and undemocratic attempts to arbitrarily prevent the advancement of legitimate causes, to make things worse their measures might also end up harming non-profit organizations that address many other social issues, for the sole purpose of enabling the government to hide behind the false claim that it doesn't specifically target human rights organizations.

For now, the Israeli government has postponed this horrendous piece of legislation, mainly due to international pressure. This sixth Netanyahu government, in its disruptive nature and its unquenched desire to weaken Israel's democracy, has already managed to send hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets, and to fall out with friends and allies. Germany's ambassador to Israel tweeted that

It is not only the devil, but the evil which is in the details of trying to shut down vibrant debate in a democratic society, as antagonistic as this can sometimes be. The bill attempts to limit public advocacy to an extent that these organizations won't be able to promote their cause through the Knesset, its members and its committees, the judiciary, the cabinet, ministers, government agencies, or local authorities, including their employees, and to top it all won't be allowed to pay for advertising that highlights their opinions. Setting such severe conditions and penalties for what can only be regarded as the legitimate activities of civil society organizations only just falls short of closing them down altogether by government decree.

a mere semblance of democracy that is largely restricted to holding periodic elections, a number of institutions and values have been targeted, among them the judicial system, opposition parties, free media and expression, academia and civil society, and the coalition looks set to continue this trend until the entire country is exposed to a single voice, that of the masters who are in charge of government. In one of the latest attacks on a free society, one that has been thwarted for now, the Israeli Ministerial Committee for Legislation was set to discuss a bill whose sole objective was to restrict the ability of Israel's not-for-profit organizations to accept donations from foreign governments, on the face of it a piece of legislation aimed at preventing unwanted foreign intervention in the country's affairs, something which could easily appeal to an unsuspecting public. After all, who wants their country's sovereignty to be breached? The bill states that any non-profit group that engages in public advocacy two years before or after receiving a donation from a foreign government will lose its status as a public institution and will no longer be eligible for tax exemptions. To make things worse, these non-profits will be hit with a 65-percent income tax bill. In other words, it will be not worth applying for these funds and there will not be the resources to

equality of citizenship, including those who oppose the occupation. These are all legitimate causes, supported by the international community, but are voices that Netanyahu and his political partners would like to silence.

It is not only the devil, but the evil which is in the details of trying to shut down vibrant debate in a democratic society, as antagonistic as this can sometimes be. The bill attempts to limit public advocacy to an extent that these organizations won't be able to promote their cause through the Knesset, its members and its committees, the judiciary, the cabinet, ministers, government agencies, or local authorities, including their employees, and to top it all won't be allowed to pay for advertising that highlights their opinions. Setting such severe conditions and penalties for what can only be regarded as the legitimate activities of civil society organizations only just falls short of closing them down altogether by government decree.

The rather badly concealed ploy of this legislation was to silence non-profit organizations such as B'Tselem, Breaking the Silence, or the New Israeli Fund, who are all highly critical of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza or generally of the treatment of Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. These organizations, in the climate of unabated violations of human rights

“The draft bill on NGO taxation is a matter of grave concern to us & to many of Israel's international partners.” The ambassador also reminded Israel's government of something they should have internalized already, that “Lively and unhindered relations between civil societies are of essential value in our liberal democracies. We will continue to raise the issue with our Israeli friends.” Israel's closest ally the US was not far behind in expressing its extreme displeasure with this additional attempt to erode democracy. The State Department's spokesperson Matthew Miller not only emphasized the centrality of NGOs as part of civil society and “critical to democratic and responsive transparent government,” but in a clear reference to the proposed legislation declared that “We firmly believe that civil society should have the opportunity and space to operate and raise resources around the world.”

However, with this latest show of incompetence, myopia and disregard for democratic pluralism, Israel's extremist government has not only demonstrated its true authoritarian colors, but also how susceptible it is to pressures at home and from abroad — which should give us hope that with the right approach, commitment, determination and fighting spirit the widespread damage it is inflicting can be contained and reversed.

What Erdogan’s re-election means for the Gulf

Turkish elections were held at a time when the region had already entered into an era of de-escalation and normalization. Within that context, the outcome of the elections in Türkiye was particularly important for the Gulf states that look for predictable Turkish foreign policy in the post-election era.

Gulf states maintained a neutral stance without making any statements through official nor non-official channels during the election season in Türkiye, adopting mostly a “wait-and-see” approach. However, the outcome of the elections was highly critical for them as Türkiye is a major actor in the region where the Gulf states have significant investments and projects in accordance with their ambitious national visions.

Leaderships in the Gulf states were among the first to congratulate President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his re-election. Gulf states immediately expressed their strong commitment to maintain and further improve the ongoing process of enhancing relations with Ankara during Erdogan's upcoming term.

With Erdogan securing another five-year term now, what is next for the Turkish-Gulf relations? Given the current atmosphere of reconciliation in the region, Ankara will continue to prioritize its relations with the Gulf states, which are important actors in Türkiye's trade and defense markets. In this regard, Ankara will try to deepen its economic, political and security ties with the individual Gulf states. In doing this, it is likely that the Turkish-Gulf relations will continue to have a personalized nature as it has been in the past two decades. Today, many leaders use personal diplomacy in establishing relations with foreign leaders as a “shortcut” to achieve foreign policy objectives. Erdogan is certainly one of those leaders in the world who use the power of personal diplomacy, which is

often considered a practical way to resolve crises and extend bilateral cooperation. Therefore, the next five years of Erdogan's tenure are likely to bring a continuation of the personalities' cooperation on a range of areas.

In the new era, as an external actor, Türkiye should establish a unified and comprehensive strategy towards the Gulf Cooperation Council itself,

Sinem Cengiz

bilateral ties with each GCC state have their own dynamics. For instance, the case of the Turkish-Saudi relationship is an interesting one. The relations between Ankara and Riyadh were relatively cordial during the 2000s, only to witness a sharp downturn during the 2010s. With the start of the 2020s, both countries have again worked toward restoring a positive trend. Recent reconciliation efforts indicate that the positive momentum achieved is likely to continue.

Turkiye’s bilateral ties with each GCC state have their own dynamics. For instance, the case of the Turkish-Saudi relationship is an interesting one. The relations between Ankara and Riyadh were relatively cordial during the 2000s, only to witness a sharp downturn during the 2010s. With the start of the 2020s, both countries have again worked toward restoring a positive trend. Recent reconciliation efforts indicate that the positive momentum achieved is likely to continue. Under the current leaderships in two countries, Ankara and Riyadh are expected to continue pursuing ambitious foreign policy agendas. There are three key areas, namely economic, defense, and regional/international, where the Turkish-Saudi relationship is expected to develop over the next five years. Both countries signed multiple deals in March with this objective in mind. Additionally, there may be closer cooperation on other regional issues of mutual interest. For instance, Ankara and Riyadh have a stake in resolving the ongoing Sudanese crisis and could collaborate to reach a settlement between the warring factions.

while it could still continue to bilaterally cooperate with individual GCC states on separate dossiers. Türkiye-GCC relations still require a solid strategic and institutionalized partnership. Personalized foreign policy may bring with itself benefits, but achieving an institutional level would turn the relationship into a sustained engagement that could boost relations to an altogether new level.

Besides this, Türkiye's

ing a positive trend. Recent reconciliation efforts indicate that the positive momentum achieved is likely to continue.

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It is noteworthy that leaderships' role in enhancing this relationship shouldn't be underestimated. Turkish-Qatari relations will also see closer cooperation on regional issues of mutual interest. For instance, Syria and the issue of the repatriation of the Syrian refugees in Türkiye will be among those issues. In his victory speech, Erdogan said Türkiye would repatriate at least one million Syrians to northern Syria, liberated from terrorist groups, with a Qatari-backed housing project. Besides Syria, Libya and Sudan will be regional dossiers that Türkiye and Qatar will likely continue to cooperate with.

There are certainly areas that other GCC states, such as the UAE, would cooperate with Türkiye in Erdogan's tenure. This week, Türkiye and the UAE ratified the free trade deal, inked in March, to increase trade between two countries to \$40 billion in the next five years. It remains to be seen whether other GCC states would follow the same path.

Meanwhile, it is also essential to consider the international dimension, particularly the outcome of the 2024 US presidential elections which may significantly influence Türkiye's relations with the Gulf states. Keeping this in mind, it should be noted that there are still political disagreements between Türkiye and some GCC states that parties should engage into an “agree to disagree” understanding to avoid future deadlocks.

Erdogan is expected to visit the Gulf and Egypt soon, which reflects the importance of the Gulf states in the Turkish foreign policy agenda in the upcoming term. In light of the recent rapprochement process with the Gulf states, let us hope for a new Turkish approach to the Gulf region that may go beyond the economic-and-security nexus and include a sociocultural dimension to bring long-term benefits for all sides.



PIAF urges govt to take stakeholders on board prior finalizing budget 2023-23

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has urged the government to take all the businessmen and stakeholders on board seeking their suggestions prior finalizing the upcoming federal budget for 2023-24.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Chairman PIAF Faheem ur Rehman Saigol said that the new budget for 2023-24 should be framed in a way that it might achieve targets and realistic objectives as well, and thus give new life to the economy of the country.

He said that the industrial production has remained sluggish and all the targets of trade and industry would remain unfulfilled if measures were not taken to expedite the industrial wheel by availability of cheaper electricity and gas to the industry.

The PIAF chairman said that the FBR's reforms initiatives are not bearing fruit, as the revenue collecting agency could increase the number of sales tax return filers mainly due to rise in the type of those filers, who haven't paid any tax, implying that bad governance and weak tax management of the tax department still persist.

He said that the government's new measures seem to be inadequate to con-

vince people to file tax returns due to arm-twisting by the FBR, creating unnecessary controversy due to continuous raids on business premises. He asked the government to enhance liaison with the business community with a view to broaden tax base and enhancing tax-to-GDP ratio, as the number of active taxpayers has declined.

Faheem Saigol urged the authorities to introduce new tax incentives and extend the period of existing ones for attracting new foreign direct investments in line with the potential of the country. With a view to wipe out corruption there needs to develop local software and Apps with simplified system in Urdu so that interaction of human resource should be reduced, he suggested.

He said that the his group in consultation with business community across Pakistan had finalized its budget proposals, which have been sent to the relevant departments and called upon the government to incorporate them in the Federal budget 2023-24 as their implementation would address the key issues of trade and industry, facilitate better growth of business activities, improve tax revenue of government and help in revival of economy.

He stressed the need for reforming and simplifying the taxation system in consultation with the real stakeholders.

Dilating upon the key features of proposals, he said that the impact of political uncertainty has badly affected business and industrial sector and stressed that government should bring down GST and policy interest rate in order to ease the difficulties of business community.

In a joint meeting of various trade and industrial sectors held to review the budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal year, the business leader appreciated the government for its commitment of providing tax relief in the budget 2023-24, urging it that the major focus should be on greater relief to especially documented and registered SMEs rather than new taxation measures.

He said that efforts were made to give government a set of suggestions for upcoming budget to make it business-friendly. He said the business community understands that government was utilising its abilities to overcome economic challenges but at the same time the private sector considers itself duty-bound to point out the government hitches for speedy economic recovery.

Faheem Saigol said that the sustainable solution to Pakistan's problems lies in the structural reforms, as we can see very large inefficiencies in tax collection, which needs to be removed. So, the tax compliance must be improved and tax base should be broadened, which cannot be achieved with a single policy change, but by a systemic approach. He suggested that taxes should be charged one time by any provincial or federal government, as provinces levy same kind of tax which the federal government has already imposed, escalating the cost of production and discouraging the registered manufacturers.

He said that coordination between the government and the private sector was vital for economic growth, proposing the government to develop policies that could provide environment conducive to business in the country.

He called for strict measures to stop illegal trade, as the smuggling is not only causing massive shortfall in revenue collection but also discouraging the legal businesses and documented economy. Majority of the people don't want to get them registered and preferred purchasing of smuggled goods mainly due to high duties on legal import, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Vendor sells seasonal fruit mangoes at his stall in weekly Sunday Bazaar G-6 Sector.

Inflation breaks backs of masses: Dr. Shahid

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt said on Sunday that merciless inflation has broken the backs of the people and pushed millions of people below the poverty line.

He said that people in rural areas are more affected by the inflation than people in urban areas, which is unfortunate.

In a statement issued here, Shahid Rasheed Butt said that now that inflation is fully embedded in the system, it will continue to damage the masses with full force in the next financial year to increase public anxiety.

He said that according to the data released by the government, inflation has reached 38 percent in the month of May, which is the highest level in the history of the country and in South Asia.

Inflation is increasing, but there has been no increase in the wages of the workers, nor has there been a significant increase in the salaries of public and private employees, he added.

The business leader said that people are being affected by inflation and that it has become difficult for them to make ends meet. While the politicians, aristocrats, industrialists, landlords, and bureaucracy do not care about it.

To reduce inflation, it is necessary to improve the price mechanism, deal with hoarders and profiteers according to the law, and import cheap food items from neighbouring countries, he demanded.

Shahid Rasheed noted that authorities are not willing to take an interest in providing relief to the masses as they are all focused on politics.

Pakistan a priority market for business

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Naveed Qamar has urged the UK business community in Manchester to prioritize Pakistan as a market for business expansion.

He was addressing the Manchester based business community during his official visit to the UK to attend the Commonwealth Trade Ministers' meeting, said a press release issued here by the Commerce Ministry on Sunday.

The minister highlighted the favorable business environment and abundant opportunities available in Pakistan during his speech at the event, which was attended by the business community.

UK Parliamentarians, Mayors, Councillors and media representatives.

The minister acknowledged the 1.6 million-strong Pakistani diaspora in

the UK as the cornerstone of the strong UK-Pakistan relationship. The UK has become Pakistan's third-largest export partner, second-largest investment partner and third-largest source of remittances, Naveed Qamar said.

He said despite pandemic restrictions, Pakistan's exports to the UK grew by 33 percent, surpassing the US\$2 billion milestone. Exports are expected to maintain momentum, with a 10 percent growth rate in the current financial year, said the Minister. Minister Qamar thanked the UK Government for its development assistance to Pakistan.

Commending the UK government, Qamar highlighted the announcement of a £1.5 billion facility to support bilateral investment and export.

He also appreciated the

UK government's concessions to Pakistan on Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) facility, resulting in zero duty on over 92 percent of Pakistan's exports to the UK.

Qamar provided an overview of Pakistan's policy landscape and economic performance, including increased revenue mobilization and investment promotion.

Concluding his speech, Naveed Qamar expressed the confidence in further enhancing trade and investment relations between Pakistan and the UK. He encouraged businesses from both countries to capitalize on existing opportunities and collaborate on optimal utilization strategies.

The UK businesses expressed keen interest in engaging with Pakistan for business opportunities.

Dwindling political temperate positive sign

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior Vice President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), Dr. Hanif Mughal said on Sunday that the dwindling political temperature of the country is a positive sign for the struggling economy.

In a statement issued here, he said that masses are getting satisfied as inflation is receding, economic indicators are slowly improving, and things are coming back to normal.

Dr. Hanif Mughal was of the view that economic development will accelerate if appropriate measures are taken in the budget which will give relief to the people.

The former government not only took record loans in the history of the country, but also set new records of mismanagement, he added.

He said that Pakistan's economy which was 22nd in the world was pushed down to 47th number and now their frustrated leaders are claiming that the country will be bankrupted any time soon.

The former government destroyed the economy, leading to closure of thousands of businesses and millions losing their jobs, he alleged.

Dr. Hanif Mughal observed that the international institutions that provided record loans to the former cabal without question are not ready to provide a billion dollars to Pakistan, which indicates their ill intentions.

If the government was

not changed, it would have put the integrity of the country in jeopardy to please their foreign masters, he claimed.

The SVP PEW said that the process of difficult reforms has been completed, due to which the people and the business community had to bear a lot of trouble, but now the situation is improving, and the people have started getting some relief.

The government is committed to implementing long-term reforms aimed at improving the country's economic situation and Pakistan will never default like Sri Lanka, he said.

While the IMF's rejection of Pakistan's request poses a hurdle, the government remains resolute in its efforts to revive the deal and secure the financing to support the economic recovery.

Surge in gas prices to affect public, production and exports: Atif Ikram

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Vice President of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Atif Ikram Sheikh said on Sunday that a fifty percent increase in gas prices will affect the masses, production, and exports.

In a statement issued here, he claimed that the decision will increase poverty in the country, which is already facing unprecedented price hikes taking a toll on the masses.

Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as President ICCI and Chairman PVMA said that an upward revision in the gas tariff will burden the people with hundreds of billions of rupees, therefore the decision should be withdrawn.

The decision will help state-run gas companies get additional funds of 226 billion rupees amid mounting losses, he added.

OGRA's decision will provide SNGPL with additional funds of about Rs121 billion during the next financial year. SSGL will get additional funds of Rs105 billion, which is not justified.

The former VP FPCCI said that domestic production is continuously falling, the production of major industries has decreased to an alarming level, and exports have been continuously dwindling for nine months.

In the month of May, exports dropped by seventeen percent, and this decision will make the production process more expensive, which will further reduce exports, he warned.

In the first eleven months of the year, exports have decreased to 25.36 billion dollars, compared to 28.87 billion dollars during the eleven months of last year.

Atif Akram said that due to restrictions on imports, the economy is affected and businesses are closed, but the trade deficit has decreased from 43.40 billion dollars to 25.79 billion dollars.

In 2022, Pakistan's exports were 32.5 billion dollars, while India's exports were 680 billion dollars. Pakistan's per capita export earnings were 140 dollars, while India's per capita export earnings were 483 dollars, he informed.

APBF urges FM to focus on small industries in budget 2023-24

LAHORE (INP): All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has said that the government with a view to help grow the businesses will have to take solid measures in the upcoming Federal Budget 2023-24 to strengthen the industry, especially the SMEs, saving the livelihood of millions of workers associated with the small industries. The government will have to make a visible reduction in taxes in the budget to help grow the businesses, particularly the SME sector, as Pakistan needs millions of jobs annually.

It said that mere statements will not work unless the government takes solid measures. A sizable reduction in fuel prices, a major cut in the key policy rate, regionally competitive energy rates, quick refunds payment, and relaxation in duties & taxes are need of the hour.

President APBF Syed Maaz Mahmood put forward these recommendations while chairing a joint meeting of various trade and industrial sectors held here to review the budget

proposals for the upcoming fiscal year of 2023-24, urging the finance ministry to make focus on greater relief to the documented and registered SMEs.

Unveiling the budget proposals, the APBF President said that the Forum has submitted comprehensive proposals for the upcoming federal budget with main objective to bring liberal investment policy, infrastructure development, broadening of tax base and creating jobs through industrialization. The budget proposals were compiled in an unbiased and transparent manner, incorporating feedback received from business community on hosts of sectors from all over the country.

Chairman APBF Ibrahim Qureshi proposed the budget makers to reduce tax rates with a view to widen the tax base and curtail parallel economy, also providing a competitive edge to Pakistan's products in global markets.

Ibrahim Qureshi said that the SMEs are the major victims of corona pandem-

ic; therefore, the government should introduce supportive policies. He said that the small and medium enterprises are backbone of the economy and their role was crucial for economic development. He said that major issue of the SMEs is limited access to the financing, as just 5-7% of the total lending to the private sector was being given to them while the number of SME borrowers are below 0.2 million, which should be increased.

President APBF Syed Maaz Mahmood called for introducing soft policies for SMEs including special financing schemes where they can get credit at low markup rates with no collateral requirement.

Moreover, there should be a holiday for all taxes and levies for five years for the newly registered companies, especially SMEs. There should also be exemption from audit for the newly registered SMEs in this period.

He said that with a view to save the economy the government should announce special incen-

tives for a cash-strapped Small and Medium Industry, which represents more than 90 percent of around 3.2 million business enterprises in Pakistan, contributing 40 percent to the GDP, employing more than 80 percent of non-agricultural workforce, and generating 25 percent of export earnings.

Syed Maaz Mahmood asked the government to take solid measures, as a significant cut in fuel rates, a major cut in the key policy rate, regionally competitive energy rates, quick refunds payment, and relaxation in duties & taxes are need of the hour.

He added that promoting foreign direct investment, increasing the share of direct taxes and slashing the slab of indirect levies topped the proposals presented by the All Pakistan Business Forum for the federal budget 2023-24. He said that the APBF, in its budget proposals, also urged the government to reduce sales tax to single digit and also cut corporate tax to make the upcoming budget business-friendly.

Pakistan-Korea Diplomatic Relations:

Journey of 4 decades & bright milestones ahead

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

Pakistan and Korea are celebrating the 40th anniversary of their bilateral relations this year (1983-2023). Relations between the two countries in the fields of trade, investment, education, culture, and sports have strengthened in the past decades and presently growing in many fields of daily life from economic trade investment and more especially cultural and people to people interaction as a good number of Pakistani Students are studying in Korean universities & their numbers are increasing every year.

The present Korean Ambassador in Pakistan Suh Sangpyo is very active in further developing Korean-Pakistan relations from education, and culture to economic and commercial interactions and mentions that "Pakistan is a rapidly growing country with more than 200 million population and abundant natu-

ral resources. Located between the Middle East and Asia and as a country the ancient Silk Road passed through, it is geopolitically getting more important. Moreover, Pakistan, where the Indus Civilization began, has a rich and diverse cultural heritage such as the Mohenjo Daro civilization, the Gandhara Buddhist Arts, and Islamic Traditions. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1983, the bilateral ties between the two countries have been enlarged substantially in the areas of trade, investment, human exchange, and development cooperation. Nevertheless, considering the immense potential of Pakistan, the current level of ties is not sufficient and needs to be upgraded.

He assured that Korean Government will spare no efforts to support all the people who are interested in enhancing relations between Korea and Pakistan". This clear and loud statement of the Chief Korean Diplomat in Pakistan clearly shows their attachment and seriousness to further enhance both countries' relationship for the mutual benefit of both nations.

The Republic of Korea or commonly known as South Korea is one of the

most developed economies and having technological advancement is the tenth largest economy in the world with a GDP of 2.76 trillion dollars. Despite this, the trade volume between Pakistan and Korea is approximately 1.9 billion dollars. From an economic and business perspective, there are currently more than 800 Korean citizens living in Pakistan, while 20 plus Korean companies are also investing in Pakistan. The demand for Korean vehicles is also increasing rapidly recently. Korea is playing a vital role in helping Pakistan with its economic front. With the help of 350 million US dollar loans given by Korea on soft terms, 5 development projects are ongoing in Pakistan while The IT Park in Islamabad has already been completed with the support of Korea. Now the construction of a similar park is going on in Karachi, which is not only a source of employment but also a source of development in technology. The Korean company is also building a modern children's hospital in Sukkar and it is expected that the amount of the Korea Economic Development Cooperation Fund will be increased to one billion dollars in the next five years. South Korea has given more than 3 million dollars to help flood victims in Pakistan, while Korean companies

given 5 millions dollars. The number of Pakistani workers in South Korea is relatively less compared to European countries. 10,000 Pakistani citizens are employed in various cities including Seoul, while 1,500 Pakistani students are studying in Korean universities. Pakistan has enough manpower in other sectors too, which we want to send to Korea. Both countries agree to export Pakistani manpower in other sectors such as agriculture, services, and fisheries and especially in IT. Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) is the only government agency authorized to implement this employment system in Pakistan. At that time, OEC Korean Language Training became the most outstanding Korean language training center in Pakistan.

Presently leading internationally renowned Korean brands like DAEWOO, KEPCO (Electric), Sambu Construction Co. Ltd., DOOSAN Korea Midland Power Company Limited (KOMIPO) Korea Electric Power Hyundai and KIA Motors, Samsung, LG, LOTTE Group, Star Hydropower Limited (SHPL) POSCO, CK Solar, K-Water, and many others Korean multinationals are looking for investment and business opportunities in Pakistan collectively they direct and indirect business relations opportunities fur-

ther enhanced the not only foreign investment here but also the economic relationship will further improved.

Korea wants to increase financing for the development of IT sector, social sector and infrastructure projects in Pakistan. Under the financing of 343 million dollars from the Bank of Korea, five development projects are currently underway, including Islamabad Technology Park, Chitral Road, Chakdara-Timergara Road, Malakand Tunnel and Children's Hospital in Sukkur. The Pakistani Minister has announced various development projects by the Korean government and to combat the covid-19 pandemic and locust disease in Pakistan. Appreciated their increased support for disaster management including disaster management.

On the occasion of the meeting, a loan agreement was also signed for the establishment of an IT park in Karachi. The total cost of the project is about \$199 million, out of which Korean Exim Bank will provide \$158 million. The project aims to provide high-tech infrastructure for the IT sector through which IT companies can improve each other's skills and promote entrepreneurship in Pakistan. The IT Park will provide state-of-the-art infrastructure for national and international IT firms to set up their offices in

Karachi. During the initiative, a high-level officer from both sides attaches great importance to its relations with Korea. They appreciate the efforts of the Korean Exim Bank for possible projects in health care, road infrastructure development, the IT sector, and mitigation of climate change. Discussed the future roadmap to mobilize financing for projects and speed up the implementation of projects.

In short in the recent past, the Korean Ambassador Suh Sangpyo, apart from socio-economic relationships strengthen specially focused on Cultural Heritage and Korea new initiative at the highest level which was very much appreciated as the soft image of Pakistan as a land of Cultural connectivity with the rest of the world further enhanced. Korean Government also donates funds for the purpose.

The above discussion proves that the leadership of Pakistan and South Korea wants good commercial, economic, and social relations in the future; therefore the efforts made by both sides for the mutual reconciliation of citizens will benefit both countries. We, it is hoped that the leadership of South Korea and Pakistan will further improve diplomatic relations for the betterment of their people.

syed.gilani@gmail.com

Name Correction

My correct name is Shahinshah Afridi and my father's correct name is Shah Jehan Afridi. But by mistake, my father's name is written Shah Jehan in educational documents. So corrections should be made. Shahinshah Afridi and Father's Name is Shah Jehan Afridi.



Dynamites win Pakistan Cup Women’s Cricket Tournament



F.P. Report

KARACHI : An unbeaten century from Sidra Nawaz and seven wickets between spinners Ghulam Fatima and Nashra Sundhu helped Dynamites beat Challengers by 132 runs and lift the trophy of Pakistan Cup Women’s Cricket Tournament 2022-23 on Sunday at the State Bank Stadium in Karachi.

The match, which was live-streamed on PCB’s YouTube channel, saw Sidra Amin-led Dynamites pocket PKR1million as the winners’ prize money while Challengers captained by Omaidma Sohail had to set-

tle for PKR 0.5million.

This was Dynamites’ second successive win over Challengers in the one-day tournament final, after beating them in the 2018 edition by 190 runs at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

Batting first, Dynamites managed to score 211 for six in their 45 overs. After losing Khadija Chishtii (10, 36b, 1x4) in the 10th over, player of the tournament Sidra Amin was joined by wicketkeeper-batter Sidra Nawaz and the pair added 52 runs for the second wicket.

After the departure of Sidra Amin (38, 57b, 4x4s), who ended up with a tally of 269 runs in the one-day

phase, Sidra Nawaz kept one end intact and played shots at will. She brought her and the tournament’s first century, returning undefeated on 103 off 112 deliveries, which included 13 boundaries.

For Challengers, spinner Noreen Yaqub took two wickets for 53 from nine overs, finishing the one-day stage of the competition with eight wickets.

In turn, Challengers’ batters were never allowed to settle and they kept losing wickets regularly, eventually being skittled out for 79 in 28.5 overs. Right-handed batter Javeria Khan top-scored with 28 off 53 balls,

which included two fours, and was one of the only three players from her side to reach double figures. She scored 161 runs from five matches and stood second on the batting charts after Sidra Amin.

For Dynamites, the spin duo of Ghulam Fatima and Nashra Sundhu did the damage. Nashra bagged four wickets for five runs in 4.5 overs, while leg-spinner Ghulam Fatima grabbed three wickets for five runs from four overs. Ghulam Fatima ended up as the most prolific bowler with 12 scalps from five outings, while left-arm spinner Nashra stood second on the bowling charts with 11 wickets from five matches.

Scores in brief:

Dynamites beat Challengers by 132 runs

Dynamites 211-6, 45 overs (Sidra Nawaz 103 not out, Sidra Amin 38; Noreen Yaqub 2-53)

Challengers 79 all out, 28.5 overs (Javeria Khan 28; Nashra Sundhu 4-5, Ghulam Fatima 3-5)

Player of the match – Sidra Nawaz (Dynamites)

Player of the tournament – Sidra Amin (Dynamites).



PARIS: Novak Djokovic of Serbia during the Day 8 of Roland Garros at Roland Garros.

Enaam Ahmed finishes top 5 in the Detroit Grand Prix

ISLAMABAD (APP): Enaam Ahmed, a 23 years old talented British Pakistani sports racer, achieved an impressive accomplishment by securing a top-five finish in the Detroit Grand Prix.

The event was part of Round 4 of the 2023 IndyNXT by Firestone, which took place in Detroit, the renowned auto manufacturing capital of the United States (US).

A suspension part failure in qualifying forced him to start from outside the top 10 but Enaam Ahmed made up fast and finished in the top 5. On the opening lap, the car of Louis Foster was spun around by Hunter McElrea and Enaam had to take evasive action to avoid crashing into him, and also avoiding the walls. Enaam overtook two cars in one corner moving him up into the Top 5.

His aggressive overtaking wowed the American spectators who now call him the Pakistani Panther.

This is the second time in a month that Enaam has ended up in the top-five places, beating the most talented racing drivers America and the world has to offer. “The concrete canyon that is the Detroit Street circuit, I had to be careful as there was chaos all around at the start. I still managed to pass seven cars,” an excited Enaam said after picking up several places and finishing fifth in the race.

“This is his second top-five finish after fourth-place finishes at Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama. Enaam has jumped to 8th in the championship standings.”

“Championship success is a long game. Both my team and myself are rookies in the series and we are learning from each other. My goal is to be in the top five this year, and gain experience on American ovals and style of racing. If the opportunity is there I want to fight for the title this year,” explains Ahmed. Enaam’s illustrious career flying under the Pakistani flag has seen him beat the records of Formula One driver’s Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen. Not only that, Enaam Ahmed is also the British Formula 3 Champion, the first ever high-level Formula Championship winner in the history of Pakistan, and has surpassed the record of Ayrton Senna by winning 13 races in one season.

French Open 2023

Djokovic beats Pablo Varillas at Roland Garros

PARIS (Agencies): Novak Djokovic demonstrated his superior quality to swat aside Peru’s Juan Pablo Varillas and reach a record 17th French Open men’s quarter-final.

The Serbian third seed, 36, won 6-3 6-2 6-2 on the Roland Garros clay and moved ahead of Rafael Nadal to take sole ownership of the last-eight record.

Djokovic is also aiming to overtake Nadal by winning a record 23rd Grand Slam men’s singles title.

The two-time champion will play Russian 11th seed Karen Khachanov next.

Khachanov, 27, reached his third successive Grand Slam quarter-final with a 1-6 6-4 7-6 (9-7) 6-1 victory over unseeded Italian Lorenzo Sonego.

Spanish top seed Carlos Alcaraz, seen as Djokovic’s main rival for the title in the absence of injured 14-time champion Nadal, plays Italian 17th seed Lorenzo Musetti later on Sunday.

Drama-free afternoon for Djokovic

Drama tends to follow Djokovic around at a Grand Slam and, after he risked flaming political tensions in the Balkans by writing a

slogan about Kosovo at the start of Roland Garros, he admitted he gains extra drive from controversy.

A physical third-round match against Spain’s Alejandro Davidovich Fokina also provided a talking point, leading to Djokovic saying afterwards he did not have time to talk about his “long list” of injuries.

But the straightforward nature of beating Varillas meant it was a drama-free afternoon for the Serb.

Djokovic started edgily with a double fault and faced a break point in the opening game, saving that with an ace and then taking the Peruvian’s serve in the next game on his way to opening up a 4-0 lead.

Varillas clawed back one of the breaks in the fifth game, taking the chance with a bullet backhand winner on a second serve from the Serb.

In windy conditions on Court Philippe Chatrier, Djokovic continued to have issues with his ball toss and had to stop Varillas putting the set back on serve by saving another break point before holding for 5-2.

During that game came the only real bit of theatre.

Djokovic was booed by the French fans for a rather innocuous gesture of frustration following a Varillas winner for 30-40, thriving on the energy to deny the Peruvian and then, with a smile on his face, cupping his ear with his hand at the crowd.

Varillas, ranked 94th in the world, almost quit the sport in 2016 to return to university full-time and the decision not to retire has paid dividends with his best run at a major.

He was the first Peruvian man to reach the Roland Garros last 16 since Jaime Yzaga in 1994, but could not match his compatriot by going on to reach a Grand Slam quarter-final.

Djokovic, who won the Coupe des Mousquetaires in 2016 and 2021, had only lost once on the Paris clay to a player ranked outside the world’s top 50 - Italy’s Marco Cecchinato in the 2018 quarter-finals.

After going a break up early in the second set, he was never going to be on the end of another shock and quickly wrapped up victory to reach his 14th consecutive quarter-final at Roland Garros.

Real Madrid great Benzema to leave club

MADRID (Agencies): Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema has agreed a deal to leave the club, the Spanish giants said Sunday.

The 35-year-old forward has been heavily linked this week with a lucrative move to Saudi Arabia and Saudi state television channel Al-Ekhhbariya reported Sunday that he had signed with Jeddah-based Al-Ittihad.

“Real Madrid and our captain Karim Benzema have agreed to put an end to his brilliant and unforgettable era as a player at our club,” said Los Blancos in a statement. “Madrid want to show their gratitude and all their love to someone who is one of our greatest legends.”

The announcement comes after Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti had said Saturday there was “no doubt” about Benzema’s future being at Madrid, noting the forward had one more year left on his contract. And Benzema himself had said “not everything you read on the internet is reality” after reports emerged in the week about his potential departure to Saudi Arabia, where his former Real Madrid teammate Cristiano Ronaldo is playing for Al Nassr.

According to Al-Ekhhbariya, however, the president of Saudi champions Al-Ittihad and his deputy were in Madrid “to officially sign” Benzema in a “record transfer with Real Madrid”.

The TV channel said Benzema had agreed a two-year deal with the club, based on the Red Sea shores of the Gulf kingdom.

- Leaving Lyon -

The French forward joined Madrid in 2009 from Ligue 1 side Lyon. Benzema established himself as a key player alongside Ronaldo and Gareth Bale in the vaunted “BBC” attacking trident, before developing

into the team’s leader when the Portuguese striker left in 2018.

Benzema has lifted five Champions Leagues, four La Liga titles and three Copas del Rey with Real Madrid and is the current holder of the Ballon d’Or for the world’s best player.

He is Real Madrid’s second top scorer of all-time, with 353 goals for Madrid, behind only Ronaldo on 450.

Benzema’s final appearance for the club could be later Sunday when Madrid host Athletic Bilbao in La Liga at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Madrid confirmed Saturday that Eden Hazard, Marco Asensio and Mariano Diaz are all leaving this summer too, leaving plenty of space for new acquisitions in attack. Ancelotti avoided talking on Saturday about Madrid’s alleged interest in England and Tottenham striker Harry Kane.

Int’l Karate champion receives warm reception at Quetta Airport

QUETTA (APP): Shahzaib Rind, who made history after becoming the first-ever Pakistani to bag Karate Combat Pro Fight in the United States on Sunday received a warm reception at Quetta Airport.

He was welcomed by Balochistan government spokesperson Babar Yusufzai, sports department officials and karate enthusiasts in a remarkable manner.

Shahzaib Rind won the Karate combat after a tough battle in the United States in May last.

“This is indeed a matter of immense pleasure and joy for all of us”, said the Balochistan government spokesman.

“I am here to convey the message of Chief Minister Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo and assure full cooperation to Shahzaib Rind in promoting sports in the province,” he added.

Lauding the performance of the Karate player, he said Shahzaib Rind made the name of Pakistan known all over the world. “He is the pride of Pakistan and Balochistan.”

It may be recalled that six times National Champion, who hailed from Balochistan’s remote area clinched the Karate combat after a sturdy battle.

He knocked out Venezuela’s Gabo Diaz in the latest contest 3-0 and

hoisted the Pakistani flag in the United States.

During the thrilling contest, he dominated in all three rounds. “No one from Pakistan won two professional fights to date. My next target is a world title,” Shahzaib Rind said while talking to the media.

“My tour to the US remained excellent,” he said and expressed hope that the government would support him in his professional career.

“The youth of Balochistan is immensely talented and it is the responsibility of the government to extend its all-out support to them,” Shahzaib maintained.

Verstappen wins Spanish GP from pole for 40th career victory

MONTMELO (AP): Max Verstappen of Red Bull won the Spanish Grand Prix from pole position on Sunday to strengthen his hold on the Formula One championship.

The two-time defending champion was never challenged on the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya after beating Carlos Sainz’s Ferrari to the first turn. Lewis Hamilton crossed the finish line second in his Mercedes to equal his best finish of the season. Fellow Mercedes driver George Russell completed the podium.

Verstappen has won five of seven races this season.

His 40th career win, including his third in Barcelona, leaves Verstappen one win behind the late Ayrton Senna’s total of 41. He also seems well on course to matching Senna’s three world titles. Verstappen set a Red Bull record with 39 wins last weekend at Monaco, breaking Sebastian Vettel’s record of 38.

Verstappen’s Red Bull teammate Sergio Pérez, who finished fourth, has won the other two races this year.

The Dutchman grew his lead over Pérez to 55 points. “It is a big pleasure to drive a car like this and it showed on a day like this,” Verstappen said. “Hopefully we can keep it up throughout the year.” Sainz had to settle for fifth after being passed by the Mercedes cars and Pérez’s Red Bull.

Home favorite Fernando Alonso disappointed the legion of Spanish fans by

finishing a season-worst seventh place, right behind teammate Lance Stroll.

As expected given the superior speed of the Red Bull, the 66-lap race was largely decided in the 595-meter run from the starting line to Turn One. Sainz tried to get the jump on Verstappen from the off by starting on a faster, although less durable, tire than the polesitter. Sainz was side-by-side with Verstappen after the long opening straightway going into the first turn, but the Red Bull fended off the Ferrari to stay in front.

Esteban Ocon was eighth in an Alpine ahead of Alfa Romeo’s Zhou Guanyu and Pierre Gasly in the other Alpine to round out the top 10.

Home favorite Fernando Alonso disappointed the legion of Spanish fans by

Argentinian delegation of 10 members at the Argentinian Embassy Islamabad with Argentinian Ambassador to Pakistan was also present during the delegates meeting.

He said that the Argentine government already wants to work for the promotion of football in Pakistan and in this regard, he expressed this desire that the male and female teams of one of the leading Clubs of Pakistan including players from other provinces would visit Argentina.

Shahid Khan also confirmed that before the team’s visit to Argentina in September this year, Pakistan’s six-member delegation will go to Argentina on the invitation of the Argentine government, where it will participate in the Argentine National Games as a guest.

During the visits, they would

also discuss the organization of matches with various clubs in the month of October, he said. Steps will be taken for the promotion of football under the youth exchange program to provide not only the right coaching but also international exposure to the talent, Shahid Khan said.

Trials will be organized to provide opportunities to talented players from other provinces along with members of Shinwarian Club, Shahid Khan said, adding, “Argentine Ambassador is very kind and extended all out support to us so that the talented players of Pakistan could play football with the leading Clubs of Argentina.

He said Argentina wants to support Pakistan in both male and female football for which they are ready to provide coaching and training facilities

to the Pakistani players. There are not many opportunities for the Pakistani footballer to get international exposure and with such a youth to youth exchange program, more players would be benefitted.

He said that in connection with the Prime Minister’s Youth Talent Hunt, Women football trials will be starting from June 7 in five regions of the province including Kohat-Bannu, Mardan, Swat, Hazara and Peshawar under Bacha Khan University Charsadda and among them a good team of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be short-listed for the Argentina Tour.

He said after the trials the selected female players would also represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National League to be held under the Prime Minister Mian

Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif Youth Talent Hunt Program so it is a good opportunity that these selected players would be short-listed for the international tour.

He said after the trials good players would be short-listed as female players from all five regions will be taking part. He said the said trials will be supervised by the Director Sports Bacha Khan University, Charsadda, under the aegis of Higher Education Commission and talks with this connection have already been made with Shahbana Khattak, the Director Sports of the University.

He said that football is non-existent in Pakistan while the football organizers have kept silent and the talent is wasted. He thanked the Argentine Ambassador and said that his special attachment to Pakistan

and the steps taken for the promotion of football will not only help for the promotion of football but also the atmosphere of brotherhood between the two countries would further be cemented. He said that in this regard, he has also met with Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Khalid Mahmood, who has agreed to extend all out support in this regard. Former Pakistan captain and coach Arshad Khan, Director Development Saleem Raza, Assistant Director Sports Operation Imran Khan, Senior Sports Journalist Ijaz Ahmad Khan and football organizer Malik Hidayat Ullah were also present in the meeting. Shahid Khan Shinwari told the Argentine Ambassador that DG Sports Khalid Mahmood would lead this delegation besides providing all out support.

In brief

Sri Lanka bounces back

HAMBANTOTA (AP): Sri Lanka bounced back to beat Afghanistan by 132 runs on Sunday to square the three-match one-day series. It was Sri Lanka’s biggest win over Afghanistan in ODIs and makes amends for its disappointing performance in the first ODI on Friday, which they lost by six wickets. Having set Afghanistan a stiff 324-run target, fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera dismissed the dangerous Rahmanullah Gurbaz cheaply for two runs to give his side an early advantage. Although Afghanistan put together two strong partnerships after that, the required run rate kept climbing and the Afghans lost their way trying to keep pace. Opening batsman Ibrahim Zadran continued his good form, posting 54 runs while captain Hashmatullah Shahidi top scored with 57 runs, but once Sri Lanka dismissed the top order there was not much resistance from the rest of the batters. From 146-2, Afghanistan collapsed to be bowled out for 191 runs in 42.1 overs, losing their last eight wickets for just 45 runs. Spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Dhananjaya de Silva shared six wickets between them to seal a comprehensive win for the home side. Sri Lanka’s batting put on a show giving the team confidence ahead of the World Cup qualifiers in Zimbabwe this month. Afghanistan have already qualified for the World Cup and despite the heavy defeat on Sunday, will feel positive with star Rashid Khan expected to feature in the final game on Wednesday. The leg-spinner was ruled out of the first two with a back injury. Half-centuries by Kusal Mendis and Dimuth Karunaratne helped Sri Lanka post its commanding total. While Mendis top scored with 78 runs off 75 balls with seven fours and one six, Karunaratne, who was recalled for this series to stabilize the batting, made 52 off 62 balls with seven fours. Opener Pathum Nissanka contributed 43 runs while S a d e e r a Samarawickrama, featuring in an ODI for the first time since 2019, made 44 off 46 balls. There was some big hitting by the lower middle order with captain Dasun Shanaka chipping in with 23 runs while Wanindu Hasaranga finished things off in style with an unbeaten 29 off 12 balls with four fours and a six.



In brief

IRSA releases 158,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 158,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 188,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.06 feet and was 28.06 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 59,200 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1131.70 feet, 81.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 60,600 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 75,800, 80,900, 64,300 and 20,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 33,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera while 15,900 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

AIOU stands tall in global ranking

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) ranked 1st among 66 Pakistani varsities in recent Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023 (THE's Rankings) in SGD-4 (quality education). According to the details, SGD-4 measures universities' contribution to early years and lifelong learning, their pedagogy research, and their commitment to inclusive education. Globally, AIOU ranked 25th among 1304 international universities in this category being the only university from Pakistan to make it into the top 25 global universities. Keeping in view last year's rankings, AIOU jumped to 1 from 20th in Pakistan and 25th from 400-600 in this year's rankings. Moreover, AIOU is ranked 2nd among 39 Pakistani universities in SGD-8 (decent work and economic growth), 3rd among 49 Pakistani Universities in SGD-1 (No Poverty) while AIOU is ranked 5th among 72 universities in SDG-17 (partnerships for the goals). It is pertinent to mention here that AIOU bagged 10th position in the overall ranking among 72 Pakistani varsities. Vice Chancellor (VC) of AIOU Prof. Dr Nasir Mahmood congratulated the whole faculty and staff on this moment of pride. He further said, "We will keep working with full zest to maintain the quality of education and will put all our efforts into further improvement in all the SGDs to improve ranking."

Police held drug pusher

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police claimed to have arrested a drug dealer involved in supplying drugs in different parts of the twin cities including educational institutions. According to a police spokesman, Naseerabad police held a drug pusher namely Zubair and recovered a huge consignment of drugs weighing 55 kg from his possession. Police also confiscated the vehicle used in the crime. Moreover, the accused also revealed to supply drugs in other districts as well. SHO said that the arrest of other co-accused will also be ensured after the investigation. City Police Officer CPO Khalid Mehmood Hamdani appreciated the performance of the police team adding that effective crack-down must be continued against the drug mafia to purge the society from the menace of drugs.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change Senator Seemee Ezdi in a group photograph with participants during a cleanliness drive at the Shahdara Margalla Hills National Park to commemorate World Environment Day on June 5th.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral M Amjad Khan Niazi message on occasion of world Environment Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: 'World Environment Day' (WED) is observed on 5th of June each year and calls for protecting our natural surroundings. The day, celebrated under the ambit of United Nations Environment Programme marks an occasion to raise awareness on the challenges facing our environment such as pollution, illegal wildlife trade, sustainable consumption, rising sea levels and food security. This year's theme for the WED is 'Solutions to Plastic Pollution'. WED-2023 will showcase how countries, businesses and individuals are learning to use material more sustainably, offering hope that one day, plastic pollution will be history.

This is a timely call, since the world is being inundated by plastic. More than 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced every year, half of which is designed to be used only once. Of that, less than 10% is recycled. An estimated 19-23 million tonnes end up in lakes, rivers and seas.



Today, plastic clog our landfills, leaches into the ocean and is combusted into toxic smoke, making it one of the gravest threats to the planet. In addition, microplastics find their way into the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. Many plastic products contain hazardous additives, which pose a serious threat to our health.

Pakistan Navy celebrates WED to highlight the significance of environment and to promote awareness amongst personnel for mobilizing actions to stem detrimental effects of environmental degradation. PN has embarked on numerous

measures ranging from collection of solid waste from harbour, establishment of Reedbed plants in all areas under its jurisdiction and extensive tree plantation campaigns.

PN also continues to sensitize concerned Government and non-Government organizations and departments to take effective measures against marine pollution. While awareness is deemed a vital factor, Field Commands and PN Units inculcate a sense of responsibility with practical steps amongst all to save and preserve our environment. I expect all under Command to launch dedicated efforts to make these activities worthwhile and result-oriented.

On this day, let us reaffirm our commitment and resolve to ensure a cleaner and safer environment which directly affects our quality of life. I would also urge the industrial community to embrace best practices and principles to synergize our efforts towards, practical 'Solutions to Plastic Pollution'.

Commissioner advises students to learn skills during summer vacations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha advised the students to take vocational training during summer vacations as skills and technical education were the need of the hour in today's scenario.

According to a Commissioner Office spokesperson, the Commissioner inaugurating the summer vacation skills training camp in the Divisional Public School and Government College of

Technology said that the students, male and female, instead of wasting their precious time during summer vacations should learn skills that would help eliminate unemployment.

He said, "Vocational education leads to employment opportunities. In developed countries, children are taught skills during vacations." "The role of teachers and parents is very important in attracting the students towards technical education, he added. Good

intentions are needed along with the vision," Liaquat Ali said. "Today's skilled student is the guarantee of tomorrow's prosperous Pakistan," he added. The children, who would successfully complete the program, would be awarded a Rs 5000 scholarship, the commissioner said. Liaquat Ali Chatha said, "The program of imparting skills and technical education to the student during summer vacations is a major initiative of the Punjab government."

Excellent arrangements': Pakistani women pilgrims laud hospitality by Hajj mission in Madinah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani women pilgrims lauded "excellent arrangements" made by the country's Hajj mission in Madinah, describing their experience so far as smooth, with travel and accommodation excellently catered to and helpful guidance regarding the pilgrimage provided in detail.

Over 36,000 Pakistani Hajj pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia. Out of these, 28,000 are staying in Madinah while the other 8,000 have arrived in Makkah after completing their eight-day stay in Madinah. In January, Saudi Arabia removed COVID-19 restrictions for the 2023 Hajj season and said it would host pre-pandemic numbers of pilgrims. Pakistan's pre-pandemic Hajj quota of 179,210 pilgrims was also restored and the upper age limit of 65 for pilgrims was removed, Arab News reported.

"(The Pakistan Hajj mission) has made excellent arrangements for Hajj pilgrims, and we have not encountered any issues so far," Dilshad Bibi, a Pakistani pilgrim from Rawalpindi, said in an interview with Arab News. "We are grateful to Allah Almighty for granting us the opportunity to be His guests," she said, describing the hospitality as "exceptional" and hotel arrangements as being of "high quality."

Zara Ahmed, who is to perform Hajj for the first time and hails from Lahore, expressed satisfaction with the arrangements in Madinah and urged others to appreciate the "good things."

"I came on Hajj for the first time and the arrangements are very good," she said,

adding that she had posted on social media about her experience to help provide guidance to others.

"We should learn to appreciate the overall experience rather than focusing on complaining," Another pilgrim from Karachi, Hiba Farooq, said she was "surprised" by how good the arrangements were after reaching Madinah, including the quality of the food and rooms provided. "The government has made excellent arrangements," she told.

Farooq urged pilgrims to cooperate with the authorities in managing the rush and learn to stand in queues: "We should also demonstrate cooperation by patiently waiting for our turn as starting a sudden uproar benefits no one." Another pilgrim, Nusrat Javed, appreciated the training provided to pilgrims by the Pakistani Hajj mission to prepare them for the journey ahead.

"They (the Pakistan Hajj mission) explained all the steps of performing Hajj in great detail, and this is crucial because even the slightest mistake is not acceptable in this process," she said. Sehar Aslam, a pilgrim from Islamabad, said the arrangements have been "incredibly smooth," from the collection of passports from the Hajj camp to the administration of vaccines. She expressed appreciation for the Hajj mission representatives and volunteers for being "available everywhere" to assist pilgrims. "The entire process was timely, from our flight departure to landing," she said. "The hotel we are staying in is excellent, and everyone is cooperating very well."

Rawalpindi admin bans hides collection without NOC

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Administration would not allow anyone to collect hides of sacrificial animals without permission and a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) from the authorities concerned as per the directives of the Punjab government.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Office Rawalpindi had announced that the applications for collecting hides of sacrificial animals would be received till June 20 and after the deadline, no application would be entertained. The spokesman of district administration told on Sunday that the administration would not allow anyone to collect hides without prior permission of the authorities concerned as the Punjab government has 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 have been directed to submit applications to the office of DC Rawalpindi for getting permission letter by June 20.

The Home Department of the Punjab Government has banned the collection of the hides without the approval of the competent authority. The DC office Rawalpindi would not receive any application for the permission letter after the expiry of the above mentioned date.

Non-custom paid cigarettes ceased

RAWALPINDI (APP): Custom officials and Police in a joint action here on Sunday, confiscated non-custom paid cigarettes worth millions of rupees in the jurisdiction of Ganjmandi.

According to the police spokesman, the value of exported cigarettes is around Rs.80 lakhs.

The Customs authorities are taking legal action on the matter.

SP Rawal Faisal Saleem appreciated the performance of police team adding that strict action would be taken against such elements.

Faisal Saleem said the accused who will cause damage to the national treasury by selling non-custom cigarettes will be arrested and punished

Sherry Rehman expresses full solidarity with families of martyrs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman Sunday strongly condemned the violent incidents of 9th May terming it as 'a black stain on Pakistan's history and expressed full solidarity with families of martyrs.

The whole nation stands with armed forces and those who insulted the martyrs deserve the worst punishment", she said while talking to PTV news channel. The vandalism of the civil properties and defence installations on May 9 has exposed the wicked face of Imran Niazi and the government would have zero tolerance by taking strict action against attackers, she added.

The minister said that it was our priority to look after the families of those

Shuhada who sacrificed their lives for Pakistan, adding that all rioters and culprits involved in any state and anti-army activities would be dealt with the iron hand.

The entire nation is proud of its valiant martyrs who displayed the spirit of patriotism in testing times throughout the history, she added. The martyrs of Pakistan are our real heroes and a great asset, whose sacrifices should be remembered and appreciated by the nation, she mentioned.

Replying to a question, she said there is a dire need that all the political parties should sit together to find out the ways to end this political instability and take the country towards growth and development.

Decade of deprivation Students' hostel facility seized for orphan charity

ISLAMABAD (APP): The students of Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) H-9 have been deprived of their much-needed hostel facility for over a decade since it was taken over by Pakistan Sweet Home (PSH) in 2012.

The affected students, hailing from financially disadvantaged families in far-flung and remote areas of the country like Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Balochistan, and Sindh have been facing immense difficulties due to the unavailability of hostel accommodation within the college campus.

As a result, they are forced to reside in unhygienic and expensive private hostels located at far-off locations in Islamabad like Chatha Bakhtawar and Bhara Kahu. This predicament not only compromises the students' well-being but also imposes heavy rent and transportation costs on them, as they have to commute daily from these distant private hostels to the college.

An Assistant Professor of H-9 college on the condition of anonymity said, "The injustice lies in the fact that the college

possesses a hostel building on its campus, but it has been occupied by PSH, a charity organization that reportedly earns billions of rupees annually in the name of aiding orphans."

"The students, who are in desperate need of hostel facilities, are being neglected while the charity organization continues to benefit from the donated funds without making any effort to find alternative arrangements for the H-9 college students." "It is imperative that PSH, considering the vast amount of financial support it receives, takes immediate steps to construct its own dedicated hostel building. By doing so, it would not only alleviate the suffering of college students who require hostel facilities but also uphold its commitment to serving the orphaned community."

A concerned professor from the IMCB revealed that the decision of handing over the hostel to PSH was made in connivance with some officers of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) without consulting the college principal at that time, who could have provided valuable insights into the

importance of the hostel for the students and the institution as a whole, disregarding the needs of the students who now face the consequences of this unjust act. "As the management of PSH holds substantial influence and maintains close connections with politicians from various political parties, this, in turn, has led politicians to turn a blind eye to the student's plight in favor of supporting PSH."

The plight of students must be highlighted to ensure that their educational pursuits are not compromised due to bureaucratic negligence and the disregard of their basic needs," he added.

Ali, a student of the college said, "It's absolutely devastating to see how the education authorities have completely disregarded our needs as students. The hostel was not just a place to stay; it is our home away from home. Now we are forced to live in unhygienic and distant private hostels, which is not only affecting our health but also adding a significant financial burden. It feels like we have been abandoned and forgotten."

PMDC 2nd council meeting held

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exams as per provincial curriculum.

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical & Dental Council held its 2nd Council meeting in Islamabad. The meeting was chaired by President PM&DC Dr.Rizwan Taj. During the meeting matters related to National Registration Exam, Medical Dental Admission Examination (MDCAT) followed by other matters were discussed by the Council.

The Council taking up the most important agenda Related to MDCAT decided and proposed to hold the exam on 27th August 2023. The Council decided that the syllabus of the MDCAT will remain the same as last year exam. The Council directed all provincial secretaries to start preparation for the said exam. The decision was made keeping in view the larger interest of students.

Last year, almost 204259 Students appeared in exams, according to estimates this year 210000 students are likely to appear in the exams making the system more transparent and merit based public sector Medical Universities from all four provinces and ICT will again test the

The Council emphasised that, prior to exams all stake holders will be taken on board i.e. public medical universities examination departments to ensure secrecy of exams. The MDCAT paper difficult index will also be taken into consideration for ease of students without compromising merit this year to ensure that all provinces conduct exams without any trouble to students.

It was decided that NUMS shall be the admitting university responsible for admissions in all armed forces administered medical /dental colleges /institutes. NUMS admission test shall be considered at par with national MDCAT to be applicable only for admission in all armed forces administered medical /dental colleges.

The meeting was attended by the following members: Prof.Dr.Amjad Siraj Memon, Prof.Dr.Muhammad Zubair Khan, Mr.Jawad Amin Khan, Barrister Kh.Sultan Mansoor, Mr.Noor ul Haq, Dr.Mahmud Aurangzeb, Prof.Dr.Tahmina Asad, Lt.Gen.Mohsin Qureshi Surgeon General ,Prof.Dr.Muhammad Shoaib Shafi Secretary Health Ministry of NHRS&C and all Provincial Secretaries /nominees.



ISLAMABAD: Workers working on 9th Avenue Flyover at IJP Road during development work in the city.

100,000 passports issued

KABUL (Khaama Press): Passport Directorate has announced that it issues more than 100,000 copies of fresh passports to citizens on a monthly basis. Presidential palace on Sunday said that Abdul Salam Hanafi, Acting Deputy PM for Admin Affair's meeting with Head of Central Passport Department. Mawlawi Abdul Kabirm, Head of Passport Department said the organization is trying to increase distribution process of passports to Afghans.

Customs prevent smuggling

KABUL (Khaama Press): Taliban's Ministry of Finance announced that customs officials at the border have prevented the smuggling of at least ten tons of precious stones including crushed lithium stones, valuable statues and gemstone beds. Taliban officials have said the recovered precious items belonged to a local mining company, which will be death with accordingly. The seized consignment included lithium stones, statues and gemstone beds.

Pakistan requests change to planned Trans-Afghanistan Railway Route: ARA

KABUL (TOLONews): The head of the Afghanistan Railway Authority, Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharafat, said Pakistan wants to alter the path of the Trans-Afghanistan Railway project.

Sharafat said that Islamabad is in favor of shifting the railway's route from Logar-Torkham to Logar-Kharlachi.

According to Sharafat, this issue was discussed in the meeting of the International Union of Railways in the Middle East, held in Turkey.

"Pakistan has suggested another path to link from Logar to Paktia and then to Karam, Chamkani districts, and finally to Pakistan via Kharlachi road, but at the moment, Uzbekistan is calling for this (currently planned) road," he told TOLONews.

The Afghanistan Railway



Authority (ARA) noted that it does not have enough funds for the implementation of this project.

"This project also demands a lot of support since it costs a lot of money, and the existing status of Afghanistan does not require us to begin the actual work of this project until it is feasible," Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharafat further stated.

According to some experts, the

implementation of the Trams-Afghanistan Railway project will significantly lower the cost of goods and increase the nation's exports.

"The project can form good economic and commercial foundations between the countries of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, especially in the export of Afghan materials," said Shakir Yaqoobi, an economist.

Ismatullah Irgashev, Uzbekistan's special envoy for Afghanistan, and Ahmad Farooq, Pakistan's ambassador in Tashkent, have previously discussed transportation projects and the construction of a railway from Uzbekistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan.

According to statistics provided by the ARA, the Trans-Afghanistan Railway is 764 km long and its cost is estimated to be \$6 billion.

Earthquake strikes Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): An earthquake of 4.6 magnitudes struck Faizabad capital city of Badakhshan province of Afghanistan, on Sunday.

An earthquake of magnitude 4.6 occurred at 9:05 local time and had a depth of 150 Km, the Indian National Center for Seismology reported. "Earthquake of Magnitude:4.6. Occurred on 04-06-2023, 09:05:32 local time, Lat: 36.71 & Long: 72.96, Depth: 150 Km, Location: 218km E of Fayzabad."

According to National Centre for Seismology, a similar earthquake occurred with a magnitude of 4.2 and struck Kabul City, Afghanistan.

So far, no casualties have been reported due to the earthquake. Further details are awaited. Afghanistan is a disaster prone-region, including earthquakes, landslides, floods, heavy rain and avalanches.

The recent repeated tremors in the country, particularly in Faizabad's capital city of Badakhshan, have increased the concern of local people.

The lack of a disaster management system and response has caused severe damage in the country, including the northern and northeast.

Govt to build health centers, schools



KABUL (Khaama Press): Taliban's Acting Deputy Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi met with a number of scholars of Samangan province and said that measures will be taken to build schools and health centers in remote parts of the country.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the issues and problems the residents in northern Samangan province are currently plagued with, including a lack of religious schools, healthcare centers, social development programs and more.

According to a statement, Mawlawi Amanullah

a local official of Samangan province shared the current situation of the people with the deputy prime minister for administrative affairs in detail and discussed possible solutions.

The scholars and elders of Samangan expressed their satisfaction regarding the overall security improvement in the province and the prevention of corruption in the government administrations.

The former government had no intention to build religious schools and clinics in remote parts of the country, the provincial officials said. Over the past twenty years, billions

were spent on thousands of development projects, and ordinary people in rural parts of the country barely benefited from such projects.

Meanwhile, Hanafi praised the sacrifices and efforts of the people of Samangan against the invaders and their local partners during the past two decades.

These remarks come as the Taliban-run administration has completely banned secondary schools and universities for female students throughout Afghanistan, with no prospect and hope for their resumption in the near future.

IEA signs deals for cell phone services in remote areas



KABUL (Khaama Press): Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and private telecommunication companies on Sunday signed contracts worth 365 million afghanis

to provide telecommunications services in remote areas. The contract was signed in the presence of Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, Economic Deputy Minister and the

Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mawolvi Najibullah Haqqani.

Speaking at the meeting Baradar said the Islamic Emirate considers the serv-

ice necessary for the nation and tries its best to provide reliable and high quality telecommunications services to the people.

"Islamic Emirate has provided a good basis for investment in Afghanistan and appreciates the efforts of all those national businessmen and investors who invest for the economic growth of the country," Baradar said.

The contracts signed were with Afghan Wireless Communications Company (AWCC) and MTN.

The two companies will establish 33 new sites in Kandahar, Nuristan, Badakhshan, Uruzgan, Zabul, Kunar, Nangarhar and Kabul provinces. These will be in remote areas where people do not have access to telecommunication services.

'IEA strives to pave ground for investment in agriculture sector'

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Prime Minister Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, said that Afghanistan can soon be saved from poverty in terms of agriculture and livestock.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Acting Prime Minister met Mawlawi Fazl-ul-Bari Fazli, Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, according to a statement released by his office.

In the meeting, Mawlawi Fazli shared details about the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock plans, and said that by preventing the smuggling of wheat from Afghanistan to abroad, the remaining problems in this regard have been solved for years, the

rates have been reduced and hundreds of tons of wheat have been distributed to farmers. The plan to create reserves to protect wheat in the country is underway, after its completion, the amount of imported flour into the country will decrease, said the Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration.

This year many dams will be built throughout the country, and with their construction, most of the irrigation problems will be solved, he added.

Afghanistan can soon be saved from poverty in terms of agriculture and livestock and there is a need to pay more attention to this sector, said the Acting Prime Minister.

Lately, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir has said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan strives to pave

the ground for investment in the private sector in agriculture fields.

Acting PM Kabir Stressed Equal distribution of Aid to Disabled and Deserving People

Acting Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, said that the process of distributing aid to the disabled and other deserving people should be followed without any discrimination.

Acting Prime Minister, Mawlawi Kabir met Mawlawi Abdul Hakim Haqqani, Deputy Minister of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs at Sepadar Palace, said a statement released by Arg.

Deputy Haqqani spoke about the situation of orphans, widows, and disabled people in the country and said that the budget

allocated by the government in this sector has been fully spending in the last fiscal year.

He said from the past two years the number of widows and orphans stop growing since the war is over in the country and security maintained.

Acting PM Kabir, for his part, said that the Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs should provide more opportunities for their religious and modern education while cooperating with the relevant department regarding assisting orphans.

He stressed saying that the process of distributing aid to the disabled and other deserving people should be carried out without discrimination and considering their abilities, they should also be thought about providing them with work fields.

DABS collects 3.5b Afghani in debt during past fiscal year

KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat's officials during a press conference on Sunday said that the company has collected 3.5 billion Afghanis in debt from all government organs in the 1401 fiscal year.

The officials of DABS shared its annual reports with Media here in Kabul at the government media and information center, today, Sunday.

Speaking at the press conference, the CEO of Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat, Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Rahmani, said that this company has collected 3.5 billion Afghanis of its debts from all government bodies

during the 1401 fiscal year.

DABS collected 118 million Afghanis of its debts from powerful administration who were not currently living in the country, said Mr. Rahmani.

The DABS was able to collect 102 million Afghanis from large electricity consumers. In contrast to the 1400 fiscal year, the revenue of Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat has increased by 2.5 percent and the level of Uncertainty has decreased by 6.78 percent, according to Rahmani.

He says that there are no doubts about the payment of electricity between Afghanistan and neighbor-

ing countries.

According to him, in the 1401 fiscal year, about 94 million dollars were paid to Uzbekistan, 96 million dollars to Tajikistan, 47 million dollars to Turkmenistan, and 62 million dollars to Iran.

Meanwhile, the chief executive of Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat, Engineer Safiullah Ahmadzai, said: "Afghanistan is a country where 40 percent of people have access to electricity and 80 percent of its electricity is imported".

He said DABS has drafted a five-year strategic plan to continuously provide electricity to the citizens,

according to which around 710 megawatts of electricity will be produced, of which 470 megawatts will be solar and connected to the grid, 40 MW will be off-grid and 200 MW will be from wind projects.

Afghanistan collected 3 billion Afghanis in revenue from produce of 390 million kilowatts of electricity in the last fiscal year, he added. At the end of the press conference, the officials of Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat called on the government and private organs, and citizens to avoid unnecessary usage of electricity and asked them to pay their electricity bills on time.

Ministry calls attention to lack of school buildings, teachers in villages

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate's Ministry of Education said that the citizens of the country are facing a shortage of school buildings and teachers in the villages.

The Director of Madrasas and Dar Al-Hafaz for the Ministry, Abdul Razaq Seddiqi, believes that it is the duty of Islamic Emirate officials to provide education, and that society cannot advance without knowledge.

"The problem is the lack of teachers. Ever since the Russian invasion, in some

areas of the country, there are no schools," Seddiqi noted.

"In many parts of Afghanistan, there are no schools and school buildings; and the other issue that people are facing is the shortage of teachers," said Abdullah Sarhadi, the governor of Bamiyan province.

The governor of the province of Ghazni, Mohammad Amin Omari, urged donor organizations to address the issue of teacher shortages and to help build schools in the

province.

More than 35 schools in the province of Panjshir lack buildings, according to information provided by Abdul Matin Azam, head of the governor's office.

"There are more than 35 schools in Panjshir that are in private houses and are rented by the Ministry of Education," Azam said.

Meanwhile, the officials of a charitable foundation said they are willing to work with people in the areas of agriculture, health care, and education.



"We will build one school in every province of the country's 34 provinces that will have all the facilities," said Ahmad Khalid Suleimankhil, engineer of Mohammad Qais Arghandiwal Charitable Foundation.

15 people killed, some injured in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Last week, UN envoy discussed future engagement strategy with acting foreign minister, Central Asian and European leaders stressed over the protection of women rights while government said that efforts were underway to ensure women rights and reopen girls' schools and universities.

Casualties:

Fifteen people were killed and 11 others injured in different incidents of violence in the country last week.

According to officials security forces killed Daesh commander and his friend in Nangarhar province while one robber was killed during clash between security forces and robbers.

Reports showed that unknown gunmen have shot dead a businessman in Kandahar province, two people were killed and one injured in Badghis province last week.

Three people were killed and one injured in a mortar blast in Maidan Wardak province, one person was killed in a Explosive Ramnant of War (ERW)

blast in Logar province, three children were killed in ERW blast in Nuristan province.

Reports showed that last week one person was killed due to land dispute, one elderly person was killed in Nangarhar, four people got injured as a result dispute between two families while a man killed his brother and nephew and injured his mother and another brother in Nangarhar.

One security personnel from Afghanistan and one from Iran were killed during a lash in the border area, the Ministry of Interior said.

In the previous week, according to sources, ten people were killed and one person was injured in various incidents across the country.

However, before the regime change in August 2021, hundreds of civilians, government forces and insurgents would get killed and wounded every week.

Demand for inclusive government:

Participants of the second regional high level meeting in Kyrgyzstan

have asked the Afghan rulers to form an inclusive government and protect women's rights.

In a joint communiqué, the participants articulated common concern over the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and reaffirmed their commitment to see Afghanistan develop into a secure, peaceful, stable, prosperous country.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Islamic Emirate spokesperson, said that all ethnic groups are included in the acting government. "Afghanistan's internal matters should be left to the people of Afghanistan. He said efforts were underway to address concerns regarding women rights and their education."

Officials Meetings:

Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi has held a meeting with UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Afghanistan Roza Otunbayeva and discussed relationship between Afghanistan and the world, regional situation and future engagement strategy.

Pakistan's Chargé d'aff-

aires to Afghanistan Obaidurrahman Nizamani during a meeting with PM's Political Aide Mawlawi Abdul Kabir said that best opportunity for promoting trade relationship between the two countries was available and pledged Islamabad's continued support in this regard.

He said that Pakistani officials always stressed over establishing positive contact with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), release of Afghanistan's assets and increasing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.

This comes that Reuters recently claimed that Qatar's prime minister travelled to Kandahar province 20 days ago and held a meeting with the IEA supreme leader but the acting government so far have not spoken in this regard.

It added that during the meeting with Mullah Haibatullah both sides discussed matters related to women work, girls education and taking Afghanistan out of the international isolation.

But IEA Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid then

said that Qatar's prime minister met acting PM Mullah Hassan and discussed cooperation in the areas of education, health and economy.

Afghanistan, Iran water dispute:

Iran's President Ibrahim Raeesi lately threatened Afghanistan over water shortage in the neighboring country and demanded its due right in the Helmand River water.

But the IEA Spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid in response said: "Iranian officials should get complete information regarding Helmand water from legal channels and then express their views in fair words. When realities are not properly checked upon and unfair statements are issued this could deteriorate political environment between the two brotherly Muslim nations and this will be in the interest of no one."

Afghanistan has reaffirmed its commitment to resolve water dispute with Iran through talks and bilateral engagement, according to a statement from the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Afghan government said that the implementation of 1972 water treaty between the two countries was the best solution of water dispute and asked Tehran to first completed its investigation through legal channel and then raise its demand in a proper tone.

Afghan acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi during a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Afghanistan Hassan Kazami Qummi stressed over the negotiated settlement of disputes between the two countries.

Iran's Sipah Pasdaran Air Force Commander Amir Ali Hajizada last week said: "Enemies strived to push recent clashes between the two countries to a war which will never happen and such issues should not be promoted to bigger problems."

Iran's Foreign Minister Amir Abdul Lahyan said talks with Afghan acting government on water dispute ongoing and hoped for the success.

This comes that some Afghans backed the IEA

stance in the water dispute against Iran. Some asked Iran to provided oil against water while some believed that Afghanistan water should first irrigate the country's lands.

Afghanistan economic condition:

IEA welcomed the World Bank's report on Afghanistan's economic landscape and urged the bank to complete its unfinished projects in the country.

A statement issued from the deputy prime minister for economic affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar's office said if all international organizations like the World Bank presented factual image of Afghanistan to the world, it would lead to the world's positive interaction with the Islamic Emirate.

On Tuesday, the World Bank in its report "Afghanistan Economic Monitor" said that inflation in the landlocked country was 18.3% in July 2022 and since then, has been on a "downward trend."

According to official statistics, the year-on-year (YoY) headline inflation

"eased further in March 2023 to 1.94% (compared to 3.5% in February 2023)," said the report.

The report further said that government employees also received timely salaries while banks have been reported as the most prevalent mode for salary withdrawals.

Continuation of Aid: An aid package for Afghanistan worth \$1.8 has been inked with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) while the World Food Program has distributed over 30,000 metric tonnes of food items so far this year in the country.

UNHCR also pledged continued support to the IDPs and repatriated Afghans. An aid package for Afghanistan worth \$1.8 has been inked with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) while the World Food Program has distributed over 30,000 metric tonnes of food items so far this year in the country.

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Govt to announce business-friendly budget 2023-24: Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday said that the government would announce a pro-investment, people welfare-oriented, and business-friendly budget for the fiscal year 2023-24. Talking to a private news channel, he said this year the government will provide as much relief to the public as possible.

He said the present government was introducing long-term policies aimed at sustainable economic growth in the country and achieving the economic targets.

The government is focusing on providing relief to the people and businesses, he said, adding, we have to take the country forward, adding, we will try our best to make a budget according to the wishes of people and without putting more burden

on the business community.

Finance Minister further criticized that those who were announcing dates for default that there was no chance of Pakistan defaulting, adding, there were serious challenges the country had been facing, however, the incumbent government had rescued it from default.

While criticizing the opposition party (PTI), he said that party leadership should be a well-wisher of the country instead of damaging the state institutions and reputation of the nation, adding, we need to work collectively for the welfare of the country.

Replying to a query, he replied that we are aware that our traders need to be given more incentives in the budget and we are working on different long-term proposals to lift this sector and put the country on the right path.

PTI defectors announce Democrats group

LAHORE (NNI): Like-minded members who left Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have announced to form a new group called 'Democrats' instead of joining any other party.

A meeting of like-minded members who parted ways with PTI was held under the chairmanship of Dr Murad Raas and Hashim Dogar, who were part of the cabinet in the Punjab government of Tehreek-e-Insaf, in which the name of the group was finalised.

It was decided in the meeting that the like-minded members will not make any contact or join Jahangir Khan Tareen group for now. The members will keep their separate identity as Democrats. The identity of the members joining the group will not be revealed. The group will not be registered in Election Commission of Pakistan either. Dr Murad Raas, an important member of the Democrats group, said that they would make their identity as a separate group. He

said they would not join the Muslim League-Q, People's Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). He said they were in touch with all the people.

Earlier on Saturday, amid political activities ongoing in Lahore, former Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas had a meeting with Jahangir Khan Tareen. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the future political scenario. Faisal Hayat Jiwana and Ajmal Cheema of Tareen Group also joined the meeting.

Later, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas while talking to media, said that a good news was on the way for PTI members looking for a position of leadership in other parties.

"You will hear good news in days to come. Our understanding with Jahangir Tareen is that we will move forward together," he said.

He said several meetings had been held in the last

few days. Mr Ilyas said he also had meetings with Chaudhry Shujaat and Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq. Responding to a question, Ilyas said work was underway regarding the formation of a new party.

"There will be no separate group and all people will be together in one place." On this occasion, Numan Langriyal said that the events of May 9 should be condemned vehemently.

"A lot of people have contacted us. We will welcome those who leave PTI and its ideology," he added. Senior politician and former leader of Tehreek-e-Insaf Jahangir Tareen has also convened an important meeting of close associates in Lahore today to hold consultations.

Inclusion of new members, besides formation of a new political party will be discussed in the meetings.

It should be noted that Jahangir Tareen had met other political leaders including Firdous Ashiq Awan in the past few days.

CJP Bandial okays allowance for SC employees

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Chief Justice of Pakistan Umer Ata Bandial has approved the revised Special Judicial Allowance for the employees of the Supreme Court with effect from 1st May 2023.

After the approval, the SC workers (BPS-1-22) will be able to draw the allowance with effect from May 1, 2023, which is equal to one initial basic pay of the Pay Scales of 2022. "In continuation with notification of even number dated 07.02.2023, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, having exercised powers in terms of Finance Division's (Expenditure Wing) O.M.No.F.1(5)R.12/81 dated 24th November 1993, read with Rule 4 of the Supreme Court Establishment Service Rules, 2015, has been pleased to unfreeze Special Judicial Allowance which was admissible equal to one initial basic pay of the Pay Scales of 2017 to the employees (BPS 1-22) of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, allowing them to draw the revised Special Judicial Allowance with effect from 01.05.2023 equal to one initial basic pay of the Pay Scales of 2022," the notification dated May 31, 2023, issued by SC deputy registrar (Admin)," read a statement issued by SC deputy registrar (Admin).

It further stated that apex court employees shall continue to draw the revised Special Judicial Allowance equal to three initial basic pays of the Pay Scales of 2022 and the same shall stand frozen at this level till further orders and the expenditure involved will be met from within the sanctioned budget grant of this court.

"This issues with the approval of the Chief Justice of Pakistan," the notification added.

Political personalities from Gujranwala, Hafizabad join PPP

LAHORE (NNI): Three political personalities – this time from Gujranwala and Hafizabad – joined the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Saturday after meeting former president Asif Ali Zardari in the provincial capital.

Two of them – Chaudhry Ali Ashraf Warraich and Chaudhry Haris Miran – are from Gujranwala while Chaudhry Ansar belongs to the Jalalpur Bhattian area of Hafizabad. Mr Zardari, who is also the PPP co-chairman, reached Lahore on Tuesday as the seasoned politician eyes inducting more and more politicians from Punjab amid the disarray the PTI is in while focusing on the upcoming general elections.

The PPP leadership aims at a strong comeback in Punjab – the country's most populous province – after witnessing a decline in the party's fortunes since 2013 polls. Earlier, several big names – including Rasool Bakhsh Jatoi, Qutab Fareed Koreja, Sardar Shamshir Mazari, and Mian Alamdar Qureshi – from southern Punjab opted to join the PPP ranks. But the trend is not limited to Punjab as Usman Khan Tarakai – a former MNA from Swabi – and Jawad Hussain – who was elected as National Assembly member from Orakzai – also switched their affiliations in favour of the PPP. Previously, they were part of the PTI.



LAHORE: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali along with caretaker provincial ministers in a group photo with co-chairman of PPP Asif Ali Zardari.

PM urges global action to beat plastic pollution

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the occasion of World Environment Day, the Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has taken several steps to take Pakistan on a path to sustainable use of resources, and has emphasized the urgent need to combat plastic pollution under the global theme "Beating Plastic Pollution."

The Prime Minister emphasized Pakistan's unwavering commitment to combat plastic pollution and embark on a journey of plastics reduction. As one of the top 10 countries in the world for plastic pollution, with an estimated 70 percent of plastic waste being improperly disposed of, Pakistan recognizes the urgent need for action. The government has prioritized the adoption of environment friendly alternatives and is actively working on the Plastics Prohibition Regulation 2023 for ICT. This reg-

ulation will establish a comprehensive framework and timeline for phasing out single-use plastics, while also leading by example on a plan to reduce and then ban the use of single use plastics by the entire federal government. In a demonstration of the federal government's commitment to reduce plastic waste in Pakistan, the Prime Minister has directed PM House to stop using single-use plastics, which like the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, will lead the way in phasing out and restricting the use of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottles in Federal Ministries, Divisions across the board.

By doing so, the government aims to establish a sustainable and responsible approach to plastic usage and waste management, ensuring the protection of the environment and the well-being of future generations.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that Pakistan has actively participated in crucial international and national level discussions to develop a comprehensive, legally binding instrument aimed at ending plastic pollution, with a target date set for 2024.

The Government of Pakistan recognizes the significance of ensuring inclusivity and equity within the agreement, emphasizing the need for the treaty to prioritize that no one is left behind.

The Prime Minister called upon all stakeholders, including citizens, businesses, civil society organizations, and the media, to renew their commitment in fight against plastic pollution and preserving the planet's biodiversity for future generations. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of empowering local communities, supporting recycling initiatives, and promoting a circular economy that minimizes plastic waste.

US State Dept rejects PTI's propaganda about travel restrictions

WASHINGTON (NNI): Another propaganda of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to defame Pakistan at the international level to prove it a dangerous country has failed miserably.

The activists of the political party were once again caught spreading false information to Pakistanis living abroad and American citizens living in Pakistan.

The report said false and fabricated propaganda has been spread to

defame Pakistan that America has put Pakistan on the Watch List and imposed a travel ban. This fake travel warning has been issued by the political party as anti-Pakistan propaganda but the US Department of State has clearly rejected it and declared the fake travel advisory for Pakistan.

The US State Department in its message on its Twitter account warned, "We're aware of a fake travel warning circulating."

The US State Department further said in the tweet, "As a reminder, all our alerts and messages to US citizens in Pakistan are posted here". The political party is constantly engaged in efforts to defame Pakistan at the global level for its political gain and for this purpose, the party workers are fully active to get American Congressmen's support on the violations of human rights and the laws in Pakistan.

Roosvelt Hotel given to NY local govt for 3 years for \$220m: Kh Saad

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique said on Sunday that a contract had been signed with the New York City government to operate the renowned Roosevelt Hotel of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) situated in New York (USA) for three years.

In a press conference held at Allama Iqbal International Airport here, he said that a revenue of US\$220 million would come to the country as a result of the agreement.

Giving details of the agreement, he said that 1025 rooms of the hotel would be handed over to the City government for three years and the initial earnings from the hotel had started pouring in.

He said that under the agreement, one-year business was guaranteed; however, he expressed his hope that the hotel business would continue for all three years. He said that there were several issues involved in the Roosevelt

case, like the hotel was at risk of being declared a landmark after which the building would be unable to be altered. However, now the danger had subsided for at least three years, he added. The minister said that earlier the hotel had been closed since the COVID-19 period, and an amount of \$25 million were being spent on the closed building and \$20 million were pending as the liability.

He said that 479 employees were working in the hotel, which was a big number and it was difficult for the hotel to terminate them from jobs due to the US labour laws. However, now after the agreement, this number would be decreased to 77 at the end of the contract period, he added. He thanked the New York city government for its cooperation.

Regarding the outsourcing of the airports, the minister said that three international airports including Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad were being outsourced and made it clear

that outsourcing did not mean privatisation.

He said that only operation of the airports would be outsourced and not the land or property. As a result of the arrangement, new contractors would develop, improve and operate the airports, and after completion of the agreement period, the contractors would handed over it to the government again.

He said that the current administration had put it on the track and soon agreements would be signed with the best international airport operators.

A credible company, International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank, had been given the task of outsourcing the airports as no Pakistani company had the experience in this regard.

He said that several airports including Madina Munawwarah, Istanbul, Dubai and others were being operated through the PPP. Previously, they were part of the PTI.

Turkey's Erdogan unveils new cabinet after inauguration

ANKARA (AFP/APP): Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday unveiled a new cabinet lineup, naming a powerful spy chief as foreign minister and market friendly Mehmet Simsek as finance minister, hours after swearing in for a third term as president.

Erdogan took oath of office in parliament after winning a historic runoff election to extend his two-decade rule and promised to serve "impartially".

He also called for unity and the anger and resentment of the campaign to be set aside as he spoke during a lavish ceremony at his presidential palace in the capital Ankara attended by dozens of world leaders.

Turkey's transformative but divisive leader won the May 28 runoff against a powerful opposition coalition, despite an economic crisis and anger over the response to a February earthquake that killed more than 50,000 people.

Erdogan won 52.18 percent of the vote while his secular rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu scored 47.82 percent, official

results show.

"As president, I swear upon my honour and integrity, before the great Turkish nation... to work with all my power to protect the existence and independence of the state... and to fulfil my duty impartially," Erdogan said in parliament after a ceremony outside the building where he saluted soldiers under pouring rain.

Supporters in parliament gave Erdogan a minute-long standing ovation after his swearing in, while some opposition lawmakers refused to stand up.

In his oath, Erdogan also promised not to deviate from the rule of law and the secular principles of the republic founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk 100 years ago.

Turkey's longest-serving leader, who has survived mass protests, a corruption scandal and a failed coup attempt since he came to power in 2003, now faces significant immediate challenges in his third term, including the slowing economy and tensions with the West.

Erdogan changed almost all his cabinet members except for his health and culture ministers.

He named former deputy prime minister Mehmet Simsek, a reassuring figure with international stature, as treasury and finance minister.

Addressing the country's economic troubles will be Erdogan's first priority, with inflation running at 43.70 percent, partly due to his unorthodox policy of cutting interest rates to stimulate growth.

A former Merrill Lynch economist, Simsek is known to oppose Erdogan's unconventional policies.

He served as finance minister between 2009 and 2015 and deputy prime minister in charge of the economy until 2018, before stepping down ahead of a series of lira crashes that year.

Erdogan appointed the head of the National Intelligence Organisation (MIT), Hakan Fidan, as foreign minister. Fidan has been at the helm of the MIT since 2010 -- and Erdogan once called the 55-

year-old his "secret-keeper". Erdogan, standing next to his wife Emine, promised to embrace all segments of society during a ceremony at his palace earlier in the day.

"We will embrace all 85 million people, regardless of their political views, origins, creeds or sects," he said, hoping that his appeal would be reciprocated also by his opponents. "Turkey needs unity and solidarity more than ever," he said.

The polarisation in society has deepened under the rule of Erdogan -- called "Reis" by his supporters ("the chief"). "We want all opposition segments, including journalists, writers, civil society, artists and politicians, to reconcile with the national will," he said. "If there is resentment, if hearts are broken, let's find a way to make peace." Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Iran's vice president Mohammad Mokhber, Hungary's right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orban and the speaker of the lower house of

Sweden, Turkey, Finland set for more Swedish NATO membership talks

ISTANBUL (Reuters): Turkey, Sweden and Finland will meet later this month to try to overcome objections that have delayed Sweden's NATO membership bid, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Sunday after meeting Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan. Turkey in March ratified Finland's bid for membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but still objects to Sweden joining the alliance, as does Hungary.

Turkey has said Stockholm harbours members of militant

groups it considers to be terrorists. "Sweden has taken significant concrete steps to meet Turkey's concerns," Stoltenberg told reporters, referring to a constitutional change by Sweden and its stepping up of counter-terrorism cooperation with Ankara.

Stoltenberg's talks in Istanbul with Erdogan took place a week after Erdogan extended his two-decade rule in an election.

The election coincided with protests in Stockholm, against both Erdogan and NATO, in

which the flag of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), outlawed in Turkey, was projected on to the parliament building.

Asked about Sweden's chances of becoming a NATO member before a mid-July NATO summit in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, Stoltenberg said there was time.

He said the next round of talks between officials from Finland, Sweden and Turkey would be in the week of June 12, but did not specify when. NATO defence ministers will meet in Brussels June 15-16.

a terror group by Ankara and its Western allies.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg and Sweden's former prime minister Carl Bildt, who attended the ceremony at Erdogan's palace, are expected to press him to drop his opposition to Stockholm's bid.