

Two troops hurt in IED blast

LANDI KOTAL (Monitoring Des): Two soldiers sustained injuries when a force squad was attacked with Improvised Explosive Device (IED) here In Karapa area of Tirah valley on Thursday. The forces official said that 9 medium BD squad came under attack. As a result two soldiers Sepoy Gul Sher and Naik Ahsan got injured who were shifted to military hospital for treatment.

@thefrontierpost

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

CTD arrests TTP operative

KARACHI (INP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of Sindh police on Thursday claimed to have arrested an active operative of banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) from Karachi. As per details, the CTD team raided Rehri Goth, located in Ibrahim Hyderi, Karachi and arrested an active operative of the TTP named Ghulam Nabi. The arrested has confessed to collecting funds for the TTP via social media.

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 142

Regd. No. 241

ZIQA'AD 19 1444 -- FRIDAY, JUNE 09 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

PM approves ‘revolutionary program’ for uplift of youth, farmers, women in budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday approved the inclusion of a 'revolutionary programme' in the upcoming budget 2023-24 for the uplift of youth, women and farmers.

As per the prime minister's directives, the funds have been allocated in the upcoming budget for projects on the welfare of youth and women as well as for agriculture tube-wells.

According to a PM Office statement, in the next fiscal year, the youth would be provided interest-free loans and endowment fund would be established for education and sports.

The prime minister approved the establishment of Pakistan Endowment Fund for Education on the pattern of Punjab Endowment Fund. Under the Fund, the intelligent but poor students from across the country, would be given educational scholarships. The funds have been allocated Prime Minister Youth Programme to extend small loans to the youth.

The government has also specified funds to impart skill training to the youth, including in information technology. The upcoming budget would also have funds for the distribution of 100,000 laptops among youth, besides extending financial support to

the IT startups.

The government has made budgetary allocations for the promotion of sports activities among youth and to encourage their participation.

The upcoming budget will also feature the funds allocations for a programme to achieve the economic empowerment of women.

The prime minister also approved a programme for the solarisation of agriculture tube-wells which would be implemented in the second phase of PM's Kissan Package.

TAPI project to strengthen energy security of Pakistan, region: PM: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that being a critical component of his government's vision, the TAPI gas pipeline project would ensure energy security, economic growth and prosperity in Pakistan as well as the entire region.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a high ranking delegation from Turkmenistan, said the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas project was manifestation of the strategic cooperation between Pakistan and Turkmenistan in the energy sector.

The delegation was headed by State Minister and Head of TurkmenGaz

Maksat Babayev, a PM Office press release said. Welcoming the delegation, the prime minister said Pakistan and Turkmenistan enjoyed brotherly relations underpinned by common history, culture and religion. He said the leadership on both sides had keen desire to further promote economic and commercial relations. He underscored that Pakistan could be a gateway for quick access to Turkmenistan's rich energy reserves. The prime minister renewed the commitment for early implementation of the project and hoped that the TAPI gas pipeline would be completed at the earliest by optimizing all available resources by all relevant parties.

In order to expedite work on various components of the project, the prime minister nominated Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Dr Jehanzeb Khan to work as the focal person from the Pakistan side as the head of the Senior Coordination Committee. The visiting Turkmenistan delegation also included Deputy Minister of Energy Annageldi Saparov, CEO and Chairman of BOD, TPCL, Muhammetmyrat Amanov as well as the Turkmen Ambassador to Pakistan, Atadjan Movlamov.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Ishaq Dar and economic team presenting the Economic Survey of Pakistan for FY 2022-23 to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Jahangir Tareen launches ‘Istihkam-e-Pakistan Party’

LAHORE (PPI): Seasoned politician Jahangir Tareen officially launched the "Istihkam-e-Pakistan" party amid presence of top political figures of the country. As per details, several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) deserters including former governor Sindh Imran Ismail, Amir Kiani, Sardar Tanveer Illyas, Mahmood Molvi, Firdous Ashiq Awan, Ali Zaidi, Fayyaz ul Hasan Chauhan, Fawad Chaudhary and Nauman Langrial attended the press conference.

While announcing the new political party "Istihkam-e-Pakistan" Jahangir Tareen said: "We all have one purpose

which is to work for the development of Pakistan." Jahangir Tareen said that they worked hard in PTI for reforms in Pakistan but unfortunately, they did not work on their manifesto and people got disappointed from PTI.

The May 9 violence the politics across the country and if the preparators and mastermind of the May 9 riots are not punished it will be damaging for the country, he added. Jahangir Tareen reiterated the need for leadership that can bring unity and end the divide in society amid the economic and political crisis.

He claimed that more people will

join "Istihkam-e-Pakistan" in the coming days and the party will try its best to meet the expectations of the people of Pakistan. Jahangir Tareen, who has been active in the formation of his new party following the May 9 events, held meetings with senior politicians to chalk out future strategy. It is pertinent to mention here that Tareen was the secretary general of the PTI before he was ousted from politics in 2017 after the Supreme Court disqualified him for being "dishonest" on a petition filed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hanif Abbasi.

Pakistan, Iraq to expand cooperation in trade, defence production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iraq have agreed to expand bilateral cooperation in diverse areas including trade, agriculture, water management and defence production.

A Joint Statement simultaneously issued in Islamabad and Baghdad mentioned the agreement between the two countries on the inclusion of Pakistan in the Iraqi Development Corridor and establishing sister port cities relations between Basra and Karachi, health, textile, pharmaceutical and supporting Iraq's efforts in their reconstruction and rehabilitation. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari during his visit to Iraq from June 05-07 held

wide-ranging interactions with Iraqi leadership, including with the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Parliament, Interior Minister, Governor of Karbala, Head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, President Al-Hikmet Party and Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Bashir Al-Najafi.

Both sides noted the vital importance of the Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) meeting, and agreed to hold its next session in the second half of 2023. It was also agreed to hold the inaugural session of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC), at the Senior Officials' level in 2023.

Pakistan and Iraq will

continue to promote parliamentary diplomacy through the exchange of visits and regular contacts between the members of their respective bilateral Parliamentary Friendship Groups.

Both countries would strive to strengthen and expand the bilateral economic, trade and investment ties in the traditional and non-traditional sectors, including by exploiting the existing complementarities and opportunities. Recognising the huge tourism potential in both countries, Iraq and Pakistan discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of tourism, as well as continuing to encourage tourism and hospitality investment in both countries.

Toshakhana case IHC extends stay on proceedings against PTI chief

LAHORE (PPI): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday approved an extension in its previous order halting the criminal proceedings against the PTI chairman in the Toshakhana reference.

During Thursday's hearing, the former premier's lawyer Khawaja Harris pleaded the court to extend the stay order for a week. However, the counsel for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) urged the court to allow the trial court to resume proceedings against the PTI chief.

Advocate Harris informed the high court that he had also filed a petition challenging the jurisdiction of the trial court. After hearing the arguments, Justice Farooq adjourned the hearing until June 14.

Unknown gunmen shot kills 3 persons including 2 policemen



Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Unknown miscreants on Thursday shot killed three persons including two policemen near Sabzi Mandi area in the premises of Mingora city police station Swat district.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Farman said, two police constables, deployed at Mingora police station were on duty near Sabzi Mandi when two unknown miscreants fired at them. As a result of firing, he said two police constables; named Umara Khan and Ashraf Ali were martyred on the scene.

A passerby identified as Musa Khan also received bullet wounds and died on the way to the hospital. The passerby, Musa Khan, was an employee of a private bank in Mingora. The assailants managed to flee the scene after the killing spree. SP said, it was an attack carried out by the terrorists adding that a search operation has been launched in the district to nab

them. All the exit points of the district have been sealed to prevent the escape of the terrorists from the district. Meanwhile, the relatives of the martyred police constables blocked the main Saidu Road in Swat in protest of the killing of policemen. They demanded early arrest of the killers of the constables.

Later, the protest was called off after talks with SP Farman Khan. DSP Atta Ullah, DSP Amjad, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sohail Khan. The funeral prayers of the martyred policemen were offered at Kabal Police Line, which was attended by Six Brigade Commander Sajid Akbar, DIG Malakand Nasir Mahmood Satti, DPO Swat Shafullah Gandapur and political and social personalities. Moreover, the funeral prayers of police constables and security guard of a bank that were offered in Javaid Iqbal Shaheed Police Lines Kabal. The funeral prayers

were attended by Regional Police Officer Malakand, Nasir Mahmood Satti, Commander 6th Brigade, Sajid Akbar, Deputy Commissioner, Irfanullah Wazir, District Police Officer, Shafullah Gandapur and large of police officials. A smartly turned out contingent of police presented salute to martyrs and afterwards bodies of martyred were sent to their areas with full honor. Floral wreaths were also put on coffins of martyrs and fateha was offered to rest the departed souls in eternal abode with peace.

RPO, Nasir Mahmood Satti said that sacrifices of martyred would not go vain and the culprits would be brought to court of law. He also paid tribute to martyred and expressed solidarity with bereaved family members.

Meanwhile, Swat Bar Association and High Court Mingora Bench Bar Association have called for a strike after the firing incident in Mingora. Both the bar associations will boycott court proceedings on Friday and will also register a protest against the incident. The banned organization has also claimed responsibility for the Mingora firing incident, in an alleged viral statement on social media, it has been said that our colleagues were killed in Banjoat area of Swat earlier for which we have taken revenge.

National budget of around Rs14 trillion to be presented today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The incumbent coalition government is all set to present the federal budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, with an estimated outlay of around Rs14 trillion, on June 09 (Friday).

The budget for fiscal year 2023-24 would be presented before the National Assembly by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. The budget had been formulated while considering the existing challenges being faced by the economy at domestic and international fronts.

Hence, mitigating people's sufferings, transforming agriculture sector, promoting Information Technology (IT), boosting exports, promoting industrial growth and bolstering businesses, would be the main focus of the document, the sources said. The government is firmly committed to presenting a pro-people, business-friendly and progressive Federal Budget FY 2023-24. It will pursue policies aimed at fiscal consolidation to contain budget deficit.

In addition to fiscal management, revenue mobilization, measures for economic stabilization and growth, reduction in non-development expenditures, job creation and people-friendly policies for the socioeconomic prosperity of the country, would feature in the budget.

Omission of liabilities under Army Act: PHC to hear on 13th June

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has adjourned hearing till 13th June in writ petition seeking omission of sections of Army Act imposed on civilian belongs to Mardan in First Information Report (FIR) registered against 9th& 10th May vandalism, on Thursday. PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah heard writ filed by Gul Raj while counsel for petitioner Shah Faisal Ottomankhel advocate and Additional Advocate General Danyal Asad appeared before the court on behalf of provincial government.

It is decided that the accused arrested for vandalism on 9th& 10th May after arrest of Imran Khan by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on corruption charges should be tried in

Military's court while seven activists had handed over to Army in this regard, the counsel argued.

The counsel added that civilian can't be tried in Military's court after 23rd constitutional amendment, however, Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim observed that it needs commentary of constitution because as per Official Secrete Act civilian can be court martialled.

Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim further inquired that how civilian can be tried under Official Secrete Act and added that it needs commentary of constitution while Additional Advocate General informed section under Army Act has already omitted from the FIR on recommendation of District Public Prosecutor (DPP) and added that DPP has provided his opinion on the subject matter. However, PHC has observed that the case should be heard on 13th June due to lawyer's strike and adjourned

further hearing.

Meanwhile, Special Anti-terrorism court adjourned till 21st June on interim bail petition of former Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Malak Wajid in 9th& 10th May vandalism and ordered police to submit record in this regard.

According to prosecution, former MPA and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Malak Wajid has allegedly involved in vandalism in Peshawar after arrested of Imran Khan by NAB in corruption allegation from Islamabad. Former MPA has allegedly damaged both public and private properties on 9th& 10th May while FIRs were registered against Malak Wajid at Khan Razzaq Shaheed and Chamkani police stations. PTI leader has approached ATC to obtain bail before arrest while court has ordered to submit record and adjourned further hearing till 21st June.

Restoring macroeconomic stability top priority: Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Launching the important pre-budget document of 'Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23' on Thursday, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said restoring macroeconomic stability was the top priority of the incumbent government.

Addressing the survey launching press conference, the minister said the national economy suffered huge damages during the PTI government's four-year rule, which dragged it to the brink of collapse. The launching ceremony among others was attended by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of State for Finance Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha and senior officers.

"Our condition is that the economy of Pakistan that was the 24th big economy [of the world] in 2017, unfortunately, it became the 47th economy in 2022," he said while stating the condition of the economy in one sentence. "Our objective is to restore macroeconomic stability," the minister said, adding there was a dire need to put the

economy on the path of progress at a fast pace, and the government would "try to get the same pace of national growth as was witnessed in 2017."

Initially, he said the government first wanted to take the national economy to the position of 2017 and then lead it towards further development and get it included in the G20 premium group, an opportunity that was lost due to unwise policies of the previous government. He said along with macroeconomic stability, the government intended to put the economy on an inclusive and resilient growth trajectory and ensure its sustainability.

He said the incumbent government assumed power in 2022 at a time when the economy was on the brink of collapse. So, the government had to face huge challenges, including shrinking fiscal space, inflation, and current account deficit, whereas financing needs were growing, he added. "Had the incumbent government not taken power at this crucial juncture, the situation for Pakistan would have been worst," Dar said.

The finance minister said the incumbent government, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, took tough decisions to recover the ailing economy by giving priority to "the state over politics," following which things had started moving in the right direction. Ishaq Dar said the biggest challenge for the government was to manage the external account, which was under control now.

"I have faith in the Almighty and we are also trying our best to make improvement and the decline in the economic growth has stopped now," he added. The minister said the current coalition government, which got only 14 months to serve, had inherited the economy in the worst condition, and with damaged credibility, no one was ready to make any deal with it. However, he said, by paying political cost, the coalition government managed to save the country from default. Despite all constraints, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate was recorded at 0.29% in the outgoing fiscal year.

(Continued on Back Page)



LAHORE: Senior Politician Jahangir Tareen announces his new political party 'Istehkaam-e-Pakistan Movement Party' during press a conference along with others politicians.

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)

A nonprofit organization invites sealed bids for supply and installation of walk-in tunnel (Farming tunnel) as well as supply of seeds (fertilizers, chemicals and other inputs needed in vegetable growing for one of its donor funded Project in District Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Interested bidders / suppliers having valid Registration, Past experience and registered with relevant tax authorities are requested to obtain ITB documents by sending email to procurementsection25@gmail.com, not later than 19th June 2023 at 02:00 PM.



Governor assures all out support to Gandhara Hindko Board's delegation

PESHAWAR (APP): A representative delegation of Gandhara Hindko Board headed by caretaker KP Minister for Trade and Industry, Adnan Jalil on Thursday called on Governor Ghulam Ali here at the Governor's House.

The delegation consisted of General Secretary Gandhara Hindko Board Muhammad Zia Uddin, Joint Secretary Ahmad Nadeem Awan, executive members Sharafat Ali, Zia Ul Haq Sarhadi, Haji Ehsan Ali, Gul Arbab, Professor Samina Iffat and others.

The delegation apprised the governor of efforts made by the board for the promotion of the Hindko

language on national and international levels.

Shedding light on the promotion of the Hindko language, Muhammad Zia Uddin said the Gandhara Hindko Board was formed some 30 years ago with efforts of the then board members and financial support of the provincial government. An academy of the board was working on the diffusion and promotion of the Hindko language for the last eight years.

The governor was told that Gandhara Hindko Board and the academy had so far released and published 500 books for the promotion of the Hindko language.

The governor on the

occasion lauded the performance of the Hindko Board and its members and said that languages spoken in Pakistan were like a bouquet. These languages were not only the custodian but the identity of the local people and their culture.

He assured complete support to the delegation on the part of the government and said the KP government would double the grant allocated for the academy. He said Hindko was the identity of Peshawar and its acclaim was much necessary at all levels.

The delegation also presented a copy of the Holy Qur'an and books to the governor as gifts.

Clean Campus Drive held at UET Peshawar



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A seminar on Clean Campus Drive was held at UET Peshawar, organized by the Directorate of Clubs and Societies, UET Peshawar in collaboration with WSSP. The chief guest of the seminar was Prof. Dr. Sahar Noor, Dean Mechanical, Chemical and Industrial Engineering, UET.

In his address, he said, WSSP's services are commendable which has been proved by their commitment UET Peshawar being the first ever university in Peshawar that had signed the MoU with WSSP a few years ago have seen a positive response from WSSP and their team members.

He assured cooperation with WSSP on conducting joint research and development in the fields of "plas-

tic and packaging", solid waste management and water resource management", he added.

Hafiz Muhammad Ismail, Manager Community Liaison Cell (CLC) WSSP said, Clean Campus Drive is aimed to sensitize the students and teaching community on their role in helping WSSP to improve the environment through cleaning efforts and scientific solid waste management.

He said, at present we have 63 union councils where WSSP is offering its services while enabling 42 model streets, 251 wash clubs that are active in 43 union councils. He said that pet plastic bottle recycling is a big challenge and urged support of faculty and researchers for handling this issue on a technical basis.

Dr. Imad Ullah Khan,

Chief Proctor UET Peshawar gave a presentation on "Coal Briquettes" highlighting the importance of coal biomass briquetting technology developed by UET Peshawar contributing to the SDGs goal 6. Dr. Samad Baseer Director Clubs presented the vote of thanks.

Later, an awareness walk was arranged on Campus in which the students and WSSP team participated in large numbers. Mr. Farman Ali, Zonal Manager Zone D WSSP presented shields to Dr. Sahar Noor, Dr. Imad Ullah Khan and Dr. Samad Baseer Director Clubs. Dr. Sahar Noor later on, gave away UET certificates to the community development officers of WSSP including Abdullah, Community Development Officer WSSP, Taimur Ali, Field Officer WSSP and others.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing 6th meeting of Caretaker Cabinet.

Zardari in field to manage economy: PPP

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Information PPP, KP Amjad Khan Afridi has said that former President Asif Ali Zardari is in the field to manage the national economy.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, the former provincial minister said that the PPP leadership has presented the Charter of Economy while maintaining the continuity of Pakistan Khapay.

He said that achievements made by the PPP government are today proving to be the backbone of the economy. He said that the country requires the charter of democracy and long-term economic policies. The PPP activist said that 18th Constitutional Amendment is a manifestation of the people-friendliness and Pakistan-likeliness of the pro-democratic forces of Pakistan.

He said that PPP will come to power soon and it has already prepared a master plan for the country. Under this plan, Pakistan will achieve prosperity and development by providing basic facilities to the residents of cities, villages and towns of the country.

He said that the PPP leadership is fully capable of steering the country of the prevailing situation, saying history has proved whenever it has come to power it brought the country out of crises.

He said that PPP has always guaranteed rights to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and beside the passage of the historic 18th Constitutional Amendment it has also renamed the province as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to grant identity to its people.

He said that Asif Ali Zardari has made achievements during his stint in the government, which could not be achieved by the leadership of other political parties.

CJ PHC inspects barrack; ordered fast track disposal

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musart Hilali visited District Jail, Judicial Lockup and district courts, Hangu while inspected each barrack personally and heard problems of the prisoners in detail, on Thursday.

The District and Sessions judge, Senior Civil Judge (Admin) and District Police Officer, Hangu accompanied her ladyship during the jail visit. Some of the prisoners complained about their non-release due to the non-availability of sureties despite they being admitted to bail therefore directions were issued for completing their trials at the earliest.

Her ladyship directed the judicial officers for paying surprise visits to the judicial lockup and disposal of petty nature cases at the earliest. Judicial officers were further directed for keeping the cases of under-trial prisoners and family cases on fast track for their early disposal.

Chief Justice then and there issued directions to the Deputy Commissioner and District Police Officer, Hangu for the operationalization of newly constructed district Hangu jail as the judicial lockup is presently overcrowded and lacks facilities. Directions were also issued for the proper medical facilitation and treatment of the inmates. The Chief Justice presided over a meeting with the Judicial Officers of the district judiciary Hangu.

The District & Sessions Judge, Hangu briefed Hon'ble the Chief Justice regarding the pendency and disposal of the district judiciary and steps are so far taken for the operationalization of District Jail Hangu. The chair appreciated the performance of the district judiciary regarding disposal of the undertrial prisoners and family cases.

It was further directed that the judicial officers shall pay surprise visits to the police stations so that innocent people may not be illegally detained and tortured. Her ladyship



emphasized that cases of Under Trial Prisoners and family matters must be given priority and shall be expeditiously disposed of.

It was stressed that judicial officers shall maintain discipline and observe the court timings and official dress code, as per directions issued by the Peshawar High Court. Chief Justice while speaking to the Judges appreciated efficient, hardworking and dedicated judicial officers and said that they will be rewarded for their best performance.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Ayaz appointed as new MD KTH

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The former Medical Director, Dr. Muhammad Siraj, resigned due to his personal commitments and to further utilize his services as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Orthopaedics. During two years as the Medical Director, he played a significant role in the development of Khyber Teaching Hospital, including the shifting of all departments to the newly established OPD, commissioning of modern modular operation theater, new ICU complex and various facilities. Along with the transfer of wards, also involved in the establishment of new sub-specialities/departments.

Dr. Muhammad Siraj was the Chairman of Institutional based Practice of Khyber Teaching Hospital along with the important position of Medical Director.

Thanks to his valuable services, Khyber Teaching Hospital has priority among all hospitals in IBP.

Dr. Mohammad Siraj is honored as the first Fellow of Pakistan Orthopedic Association in Hand Upper Limb and Microsurgery, and is currently the first and only Supervisor of Hand and Upper Limb Surgery in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He is also a CPSP accredited supervisor in the discipline of orthopedic surgery.

In view of quality healthcare services and his tireless efforts, implementation of (ISO 9001: 2015) policies became possible and Khyber Teaching Hospital was awarded ISO 9001: 2015.

On dated 7th June 2023, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan took charge of

Medical Director Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar.

Professor Muhammad Ayaz Khan is Professor of Orthopedic and Spine Surgery, Khyber Medical College, Peshawar. After MBBS from KMC he did FCPS Orthopedic Surgery from Queen Medical Center Nottingham England in spine surgery from College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan Fellowship.

Professor Ayaz is also the CPSP Supervisor in Orthopedic and Spinal Surgery. He established the Spine Surgery specialty and was instrumental in getting it approved by the CPSP for FCPS Spine Surgery at KTH. Also made 60 publications in national and international journals.



According to Prof. Ayaz, I believe in teamwork and will leave no stone unturned to take Khyber Teaching Hospital towards further improvement and provide all possible services to the patients. He further said that he will fulfill the vision and mission of the Board of Governors and also thanked the Board of Governors and Dean KMC Professor Mahmud Aurangzeb for their trust.

Education vital for eradicating Extremism, says Dr. Ayaz



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Ayaz Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism Chief Coordination Officer has said that education plays an important role in eliminating violence and extremism from the society and promoting peace and tolerance.

He expressed these views while addressing a seminar organized at the Institute of Education and Research Peshawar. Director of the

Prof. Dr. Inamullah Khan and senior educationists also addressed the seminar while faculty members and students participated in the seminar. Director of Administration Mr. Waqarullah of Centre of Excellence and Assistant Prof. Amjad Rebaa was also present on this occasion.

Dr. Ayaz Khan said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism has been established under the National Action Plan (NAP), a historic document signed by the consensus of all stakeholders to eradicate extremism and terrorism from the country.

He said that today our country and region are facing the challenges of extremism and violence, which has threatened the peace and stability of the society. Education and educated youth can play an important role in ending extremism and violence.

Director of the institute Prof. Dr. Inamullah appreciated the efforts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on countering Violent

Extremism for promoting peace and eradicating intolerance and extremism in society. He assured that students of the Institute of Education and Research will be benefitted from the seminar.

Earlier, Director of Institute of Education and Research Prof. Inamullah Khan welcomed the Chief Coordination Officer of Centre of Excellence Dr. Ayaz Khan and appreciated the role and efforts of the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism for creating awareness among the youth and promoting tolerance and peace in society. Dr. Inam assured all possible support from the Institute of Education and Research in achieving the goals of the Centre.

Describing the seminar as a very useful opportunity for both the faculty and students of the institute, Dr. Inam said that cooperation between the two institutions will be further strengthened for the promotion of tolerance in society. At the end of the seminar, Dr. Ayaz Khan distributed certificates among the participants.

Muqam condemns firing on police

PESHAWAR (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister, Engr Amir Muqam here Thursday strongly condemned the firing on police cops in Mingora Swat district.

The Adviser expressed profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of two policemen and Mosa Khan, the cousin of political and social personality Ajab Khan at the vegetable market firing case.

He demanded inquiry into the said incident and awarding exemplary punishment to the accused.

Polio Vaccine strengthens immune system against Polio Virus in children

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Polio Vaccine is strengthening the immunity system against the Polio Virus in children and protects children from the deadly and incurable disease of polio. So, administering polio drops to children up to 5 years of age is the primary responsibility of not only parents but each and every member of the society.

These views were expressed by the District Coordinator EPI Kohat Dr. Mohabbat Khan Bangash in Pakhtunkhwa Radio Kohat's program "Health Studio".

Dr. Mohabbat Bangash while rejecting the negative propaganda against the

polio vaccine clarified that there is no side effect of polio vaccine and after regular tests from the laboratory established in Islamabad, children are administered Anti Polio Drops. He said that by the grace Allah Almighty, no case of Polio had been reported in Kohat since 2014 due to which Monthly Polio Campaign is now held after every 3 months in Kohat.

In response to a question, he said that the number of refusals in Kohat have been decreased to 300 hoping that it would be brought to zero with active participation of parents and civil society for bright future of the next generation. In response to another question, he said

except Pakistan and Afghanistan, this deadly disease has completely been eradicated from the whole world and InshaAllah we will also get rid of it soon with the cooperation of the parents and society.

Referring to the preventive measures from polio, the District Coordinator said, washing of hands with soap each time is the only way for safety from Polio.

Dr. Bangash appealed the parents to vaccinate their children also to protect them from other 12 dangerous diseases like measles, diphtheria, cough, tetanus and typhoid, which were given from birth to 15 months of age free of cost in Vaccination Centers.

PDA demands action against MTI's BOGs for maltreatment of servant

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Doctors Association (PDA) argued Director General (DG) Health Services Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to take notice of irrational behavior exhibited by the board and the unauthorized conversion of sanctioned posts within the Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs). As civil servants are offering tirelessly their services in all MTIs of the province at various level positions from the very beginning but since reinforcement of MTI ACT 2015 (amended time to time) civil servants are treated as aliens in their own parent institution by these relevant Board of Governors (BOGs) and compelled to address following issues in the interest

of fairness, transparency, and adherence to the law.

Firstly, the Board's behavior towards civil servants has been increasingly irrational and detrimental to the smooth functioning of the department. There have been instances where arbitrary decisions have been made, includes biased decision-making, favoritism, and discrimination against certain individuals based on personal prejudices without proper consultation or consideration of the expertise and experience of the civil servants involved. This has led not only to a sense of demoralization and frustration among the dedicated professionals working tirelessly to serve the public but also compromise the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the MTI. It is essential to establish a

healthy work environment where decisions are made based on merit, collaboration, and adherence to established protocols.

Secondly, there are serious concerns regarding instances where sanctioned posts of health department have been converted/re-designated into MTI Posts by these BOGs without following due process and against the existing laws and regulations. Any conversion that deviates from the legal framework could lead to improper allocation of resources, favoritism, and corruption. This not only compromises the integrity of the department but also undermines the public's trust in its ability to provide quality healthcare services.

This illegal misutilization/conversion of all cadre's civil servants budg-

etary sanctioned posts for recruitment of MTI Fix Pay Employees has resulted in a lack of proper manpower in critical areas and has placed an undue burden on the existing staff, largely affecting their seniority, promotions, posting/transfers even civil servants service survival, delivery of quality healthcare services to the public. It is crucial to ensure that all actions regarding personnel and post allocations, conversion of sanction posts should be carried out in compliance with the relevant regulations and guidelines set forth by the government are carried to maintain the integrity and credibility of the health department.

In light of these concerns, undersigned kindly requests:

Only a civil servant will

be posted against the sanctioned budgetary book post, no MTI can recruit MTI employee against this sanctioned post neither can convert this into MTI Post (nomenclature).

Any civil servant relieved from services by BOGs of MTI, shall be repatriated along with the budgetary book sanctioned posts to Health Department. Any civil servant planned to repatriate from MTI by BOGs, shall be done after taking consensus from Health department, also keeping in view above mentioned point 1 & 2.

BoGs shall stop at once irrational unacceptable attitude towards civil servants, which is totally unacceptable. No civil servant shall be relieved before completion of due period. Moreover, per MTI Act

BOG does not have any such powers to have any kind of interference in civil servants matters as per law the competent authority for civil servants is Secretary Health and shall not convert any budgetary book sanctioned post to MTI Post and shall create their own posts. Additionally, a thorough review of the conversion of sanction posts should be conducted to ascertain its compliance with the applicable laws and regulations. This review should include an assessment of the justification, transparency, and overall impact of such conversions on the department and its workforce.

All cadre's civil servants budgetary sanctioned posts in MTIs which are illegally abolished, converted or mis-utilized for any other purpose is largely affecting

civil servant's seniority, promotions, posting/transfers and even civil services survival, should be restored immediately & should only be occupied by civil servants. Moreover, per MTI Act BOGs don't have such powers as well because for civil services matters secretary health is competent authority. Those civil servants who repatriated to health department while retaining & using their posts (salaries budgets illegally for other purpose) in MTIs, from where they will get their salaries as no new creation in budget for them in health Deptt., so they will suffer a lot.

Furthermore, the press statement stated that undersigned urge you to establish a mechanism for the effective and unbiased resolution of grievances raised by

civil servants. This could involve the creation of a dedicated committee or ombudsman's office that can address complaints, mediate disputes, and provide a platform for open communication between the board and civil servants. A system that encourages feedback, suggestions, and constructive dialogue will help foster a more productive and harmonious work environment within the department.

PDA would be grateful if you could keep me informed about the actions taken in response to this complaint. It is my sincere hope that by addressing these concerns, we can work together to create a Health Department that upholds the highest standards of professionalism, ethics, and adherence to the law.



In brief

RUJP delegation meets Nadeem F.P. Report

LARKANA: Regional Union of Journalists Pakistan (RUJP) Sindh Provincial President Adil Ali met Information Secretary Nadeem-u-Rehman Memon and informed about the concern the media personnel, on Thursday. According to details, Regional president uphold issues including mistreatment of journalists in Sindh and the central delegation of Journalists Union. On this occasion, Information Secretary Nadeer Rehman Memon appreciated the efforts of RUJP and assured all possible cooperation. On this occasion, the central leadership of the Regional Union of Journalists of Pakistan informed that The Union delegation will visit Sindh next week in which important meetings are expected with government officials including political parties. The agenda of the visit is to highlight the problems of the journalist community at all levels across the province and to make every possible effort to solve them.

Balochistan CM new initiative F.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo on Thursday took an important initiative of imposition of ban on holding opening ceremonies of development projects. He also instructed that provincial ministers, members of provincial assembly (MPAs) and government officials should avoid holding the foundation stone laying or inauguration ceremony of government projects. "Public projects are made with public resources, the credit of these projects belongs to no one else, only the people", he said adding that inauguration of projects of a public nature was a waste of resources and government missionaries. He said that publicity or photos of the inauguration of the projects would not create a good impression, the solution of the basic problems was important instead of external appearance and exhibition. Our first responsibility is to pass on the fruits of the development process to the people, he said and added that development projects were the right of the people and we were not giving them any favor. He also directed the concerned authorities that the formal opening ceremony of the Chief Minister's Health Card Program must not be held.

Academic items distributed Zahir Shah Kamal

BARIKOT: Al-Khadmit Foundation distributed school's bags along with note books, pencils, pen and other academic material among orphan and poor students enrolled at different government schools in Barikot tehsil, on Thursday. According to details, Al-Khadmit Foundation president Muhammad Zahir Khan, Fida Muhammad Khan and Dr. Sultan-e-Rome addressed the ceremony while stressed upon learning with modern equipment. They claimed that usage of modern technology in academia will lead nation to compete contemporary situation in the global village era. During the ceremony large number of students and teachers as well as civil society members including Ziad Khan, Fahad Khan, Atta Ullah, Shah Jahan and Israr Ahmad were present. The participants appreciated Al-khadmit Foundation efforts for welfare of humanity especially during crisis both manmade and natural disasters.

Late Rescue 1122 official laid to rest in Jamrud

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Emergency service of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Rescue 1122), Khyber official who passed away last day was laid to rest in his ancestral graveyard in Sur Kamar village of Jamrud on Thursday.

It is to be mentioned here that last evening, the deceased Rescue 1122 official identified as Ikram Khan who executed his duty as medical technician was killed in gun firing in his office, Director General Rescue 1122 Dr. Khatir, Director General academy/operation and coordination Dr. Muhammad Ayaz, District Emergency Officer Syed Shoaib Mansoor, Baryal Mukhtyar besides a large number of Rescue 1122 workers, relatives of the deceased, locals and people from different parts of life attended his funeral prayer.

The officials put floral



wrath on the coffin of the dead Rescue 1122 official. Dr. Khatir Ahmad paid tribute to the killed official and said that the department was deprived of honest and hardworking volunteers who provided medical aid during hundreds of emergencies.

Being part of the medical team of Rescue 1122, Shaheed Ikram Khan rendered great service for the

welfare of the people and would be remembered for long, he added. The official assured that efforts would be made to extend possible assistance to the family of the martyred personnel. Later on the Shaheed official was buried in his ancestral graveyard. On the other hand, investigation had been called on to probe causes of the death of the official.

Delegation of KCCI calls on KUST VC

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan met with delegation of Kohat Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the presence of Head of the Departments, on Thursday.

During the discussion, the Vice Chancellor briefed the delegation about the innovative research Activities and project undergoing in different Departments/Institutes. The Vice Chancellor emphasized KUST impactful role



in bridging the gap between Industry establishment in the area, the Investors and tge Academia to create opportunities that will have commercial impact on the society.

The delegation after meaningful and productive talks with Vice Chancellor

and HODs, appreciated the role of Kohat University in uplifting the area especially under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan and assured to continue support in terms of starting different projects between Kohat Chamber of Commerce and KUST.

30th Syndicate meeting of KKKUK held

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKUK) held its 30th Syndicate meeting, under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Sardar Khan, on Thursday.

The meeting was also attended by members including the nominee of HEC Chairman Islamabad Prof Dr. Khan Bahadar Khan, Justice Muhammad Daud Khan, Dr. Muhammad Riaz Khan, Dean Qurtaba University, Peshawar Principal GPGC Karak Prof Ajmal Khan, Principal Girls Post Graduate College KDA Karak Falak Naz, Director Karak KKKUK Muhammad Shah Din, Treasurer Hafiz Ismail Khan, Registrar Muhammad Rashad Khattak, HoD Computer Science & BI Dr. Muhammad Inamul Haq, Lecturer Dr. Abdul Latif, Deputy Registrar Meetings KKKUK Abdus Salam, Deputy Director Audit Farid Jalal, besides nominees of



the Secretary Finance Department, Secretary Establishment Department and Secretary Higher Education Archives and Libraries Department Peshawar as well as Superintendent Budget KKKUK Tahir Gul.

The Syndicate deliberated upon the budget of the Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak and recommended revised Budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023, along with the Budget estimates for 2023-2024, to the Senate. The Syndicate also disposed of employee's medical claims, leave encashment cases and fund

deposit committee recommendations.

Speaking at the 30th Syndicate, Vice Chancellor of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak, Prof Dr. Sardar Khan expressed his satisfaction on the active participation and valuable contributions from all members of the Syndicate. He emphasized the importance of careful management of the University and transparent decision-making processes in achieving long-term objectives. The members also expressed full confidence on the vibrant leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Sardar Khan.

RPO directs crackdown against drug dealers

F.P. Report

BANNU: In a significant development, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Qasim Ali Khan took charge of a comprehensive police gathering, known as a Darbar, in the Bannu Police Lines. The event witnessed the participation of top officials, including District Police Officer (DPO) Iftikhar Shah, Additional SP Sanaullah Khan, SP Investigation Majib-ur-Rehman, and ASP Haseeb Khan, alongside a substantial number of SDPOs, SHO's, and police personnel.

During the gathering, RPO Qasim Ali Khan addressed the attendees, emphasizing the paramount importance of protecting the lives, property, honor, and dignity of citizens. Stressing that safeguarding public interests was their fundamental duty, he applauded the Bannu police for their consistent positive role in combating terrorism and other criminal activities.

Notably, the sacrifices made by numerous officers and young personnel have significantly contributed to a reduction in the overall terrorism rate. However, given the prevailing security situation and the existing threat of terrorism, RPO Qasim Ali Khan highlighted the necessity of prioritizing the personal safety and security of police officers.

RPO called for an intensified crackdown on drug dealers, particularly those involved in the trade of ice and heroin, as they pose a severe threat to society. RPO Qasim Ali Khan urged zero tolerance towards these criminals and emphasized the dismantling of their networks. He stressed the importance of employing all available means to control crimes, specifically addressing the issue of murder. RPO Qasim Ali Khan urged officers to assume the role of protectors of the public and to foster a sense of security among the community.

RPO emphasized the significance of maintaining

a respectful and empathetic approach when dealing with citizens, ensuring their self-esteem remains intact. He also assured the officers and young personnel that his office doors are always open to address any concerns or issues they may have.

Robbers held F.P. Report

SWABI: The police arrested two robbers on Thursday and recovered stolen items, cash and arms from their possession. Two robbers robbed a shop in jurisdiction of Topi police station of Swabi the other day.

A police team was constituted under the supervision of DSP Topi Ijaz Ahmed and headed by SHO Syed Aminul Khan. The police team traced and arrested the robbers including Ahmed Ali hailing from Gandaf and Rahimullah, a resident of Zarobi besides recovering the stolen items, 40,000 rupees cash, a CCTV camera and pistol from their possession.



HYDERABAD: Activists of All Revenue Sindh Employees Association holding a protest against price hike.

Anti-polio vaccine boost immune system in children F.P. Report

KOHAT: District Coordinator EPI Dr. Mohabbat Bangash said that anti-polio vaccine is strengthening the immunity system against the polio-virus in children to protect from the deadly and incurable disease. So, administering polio drops to children up to 5 years of age is the primary responsibility of not only parents but each and every member of the society.

These views were expressed by the District Coordinator EPI Kohat Dr. Mohabbat Khan Bangash in Pakhtunkhwa Radio Kohat's program "Health Studio". He condemned the negative propaganda against the polio vaccine clarified that there is no side effect of polio vaccine and after regular tests from the laboratory established in Islamabad, children are administered Anti Polio Drops.

The coordinator said that by the grace Allah Almighty, no case of Polio had been reported in Kohat since 2014 due to which Monthly Polio Campaign is now held after every 3 months in Kohat. In response to a question, he said that the number of refusals in Kohat have been decreased to 300 hoping that it would be brought to zero with active participation of parents and civil society for bright future of the next generation. In response to another question, he said except Pakistan and Afghanistan, this deadly disease has completely been eradicated from the whole world and Insha Allah we will also get rid of it soon with the cooperation of the parents and society.

Referring to the preventive measures from polio, the District Coordinator said, washing of hands with soap each time is the only way for safety from Polio. Dr. Bangash appealed the parents to vaccinate their children also to protect them from other 12 dangerous diseases like measles, diphtheria, cough, tetanus and typhoid, which were given from birth to 15 months of age free of cost in Vaccination Centers.

5 killed in road mishap F.P. Report

CHITRAL: At least five people were confirmed dead and twelve others badly injured when a double cabin mini truck coming from Upper Dir to Damil-Nasar area of Chitral met with an accident at Kochhangul near the police station Ashariat.

The Rescue 1122 Emergency Officer Zafar Uddin told on Thursday that the road mishap occurred at around 01:30 a.m. in which five people were killed and twelve others sustained critical wounds. He said the bodies and injured have been shifted to the nearest hospital in Drosh. He said 20 people were onboard the mini truck when it met with an accident.

The rescue officers feared that the death toll from the incident may raise as condition of some of the injured was much critical. He said the mishap took place during midnight and was reported a little late.

MMC wards facing shortage of beds

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Patients and their family members have complained about shortages of beds in cardiology and Medical-A wards of Mardan Medical Complex hospital (MMC), it has been learnt. Residents of Mardan district and other adjacent areas who were visiting along with parents to MMC hospital for treatment on Thursday told they were suffering in the health facility owing to shortage of beds.

The residents alleged that their patients were laying for about 10 to 12 hours on stratures in cardiology and Medical-A wards as they were waiting to find a vacant bed as a result of discharging of an already admitted patient. They said that they were forced to face the said situation, adding, they were told by relevant officials of the health facility that they had no other option in this connection whenever they complained about the said problem.

They also blamed that the hospital officials told them that they could take their patients to peshawar hospitals if they were not satisfy from the MMC hospital administration. When this scribe contacted Medical Director of MMC hospital Dr Imaad Hameed for his comments in this regard, he told that the work load was very high in the hospital.

He claimed that they had inaugurated a new medical-B ward of 200 beds in the hospital few months back. He said it also became insufficient due to visiting of huge quantity of patients hailing from around 12 districts to the health facility. He claimed that patients from mostly other districts were visiting to MMC hospital.

Book fair kicks-off: Secretary Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Anila Mahfooz Durrani has said that books are like a good friend and teacher, they guide us best and through it we learn. Allah says in the Holy Quran that acquiring knowledge is a duty for every Muslim man and woman. Knowledge can only be obtained through books, in today's age of modern technology, students have abandoned the habit of reading non-text-books apart from textbooks due to which their mental capacity is weakening.

She expressed these views while addressing the opening ceremony of the Book Fair organized by Divisional and District Administration Mardan with the support of National Book Foundation at Pakhtunkhwa House Mardan, Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim, City Mayor Mardan, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdul Rehman, Director Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Iqbal

Khan also addressed the ceremony. President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zahir Shah, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Farqan Ashraf, Additional Commissioner Mardan Naem Akhtar, DPO Swabi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mardan Finance, ACs, Additional Assistant Commissioners, students and a large number of people participated in the ceremony. In his address, Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim said that due to the use of electronic and mechanical devices, we are moving away from books, it is welcome to return to books due to which their mental capacity is weakening.

Addressing the event, Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim said that we are moving away from books due to the use of electronic and mechanical devices. It is welcome to return to books. Public libraries in Mardan Division will be developed on modern lines and the number of books will be increased in them, apart from this, book fairs will also be organized to overcome the lack of tendency to read books due to the use of modern technology can be done and bring back students and general public towards book reading. In this regard, weekly book reviews will be organized in schools and colleges, and writing and quiz competitions will also be organized. He said that knowledge is obtained from books and experiences.

Today is the era of electronic and social media. Since there is progress with time, we must also update the books. A hundred libraries will be established so that people can benefit from them. These libraries will be further expanded. Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdul Rahman said in his address at the event that the aim of the book fair is to revive the book culture. No nation can develop without knowledge, 50 years ago the number of book readers was quite high, but due to the use of modern media and gadgets, this habit is becoming less and less due to which the ability to analyze and think is enough.

There has been damage and weakness in intelligence, so there is a great need to promote the culture of book reading and practical steps will be taken in this regard. At the end of the ceremony, Secretary Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Anila Mahfooz Durrani, Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim, and Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdul Rehman cut the ribbon and officially inaugurated the Mardan Book Fair, and inspected the book stalls set up by the National Book Foundation.

Stray dogs bite 10 children in Lower Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Stray dogs bit more than 10 people most of them children in parts of Lower Dir district. The victims included Shahid, Muhammad, Zigrawar from Balambat, Hifzan, Talha, Yaseen, Abdaal from Malakabad and three others from Khazana.

All the injured were taken to District Headquarter (DHQ) hospital Timergara where they received the required treatment, Ijaz Hussain an official of the health department told this scribe that Medical Superintendent (MS) DHQ hospital Timergara Dr Asghar Ali and Deputy Medical Superintendent (DMS) Dr Tariq Hassan had directed the health professionals at the emergency unit of DHQ hospital Timergara to arrange anti-rabies as well as ARVs for all victims.

The parents of the victims strongly criticized the district administration and TMAs for its failure to control the situation. Babo Hussain, Zigrawar Khan, Amanullah and others parents of the victims appreci-

ated the in-time services of health professionals and strongly criticized the district administration and TMA Balambat and TMA Timergara for its failure to have taken precautionary measures to control the situation. They demanded the district administration to immediately start anti-stray dog operation in the affected areas to save the precious lives.

Jirga settle blood feud between Dir and Mardan families: A grand jirga and local politicians resolved a blood feud between two families; one from Toormang Lower Dir and the other from Katlang Mardan wherein the victim family pardoned the accused family unconditionally. One Rahimud Din, a worker of the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf, was killed during political arguments with fellow passengers in a Timergara-bound coach at Katlang area of Mardan on Oct 5, 2022.

Several protests and demonstrations had been held in Lower Dir and Mardan for the arrest of the killers. The area elders from both the Lower Dir and Mardan started efforts

to resolve the feud and reach an out-of-court settlement. Eventually the jirga succeeded in bringing both the families to the negotiating table. A function in this regard was held at a local hotel in Timergara here the other day which was attended by the jirga members, elders from Katlang Mardan and Lower Dir.

The function was addressed by the Jamaat-i-Islami provincial deputy chief and nominated candidate for NA 7 Maulana Muhammad Ismail, JUI-F former provincial minister Hafiz Akhtar Ali, chairman Dir Quami Jirga and former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, tehsil chairman Hammadullah Yousafzai, JI district chief Izazul Mulk, Timergara tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanul Din, president Anjuman Tajiran Timergara Haji Anwarud Din, PTI former district president Fakhr uz Zaman, PPP district secretary information advocate Alam Zeb and others. The speakers highlighted the importance of the jirga system in Pukhtun society and thanked the parties for accepting the jirga's decision.



Sudan orphanage evacuated after 70 children

CAIRO (AP): An orphanage in Sudan's war-torn capital has been evacuated following the deaths of more than 70 infants, toddlers and older children from hunger and illness over the past couple of months, the UN children's agency and a local charity said. The tragedy at the Al-Mayqoma orphanage made headlines late last month as fighting raged outside between Sudan's military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

The deaths have highlighted the heavy toll inflicted on civilians since mid-April when the clashes erupted between forces loyal to Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan and RSF forces led by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. About 300 children at the Al-Mayqoma orphanage in Khartoum were transferred to a "safer location" elsewhere in the northeastern African nation, said Ricardo Pires, a spokesman for the UN children's agency, UNICEF. Sudan's ministries of social development and health have taken charge of the children, while UNICEF has provided humanitarian support including medical care, food, educational activities and play, Pires said in an email to The Associated Press. He said the children had received medical checks following their long journey to their new location, adding that "any child requiring hospitalization will have access to healthcare."

The International Committee of The Red Cross, which helped the

evacuation, said 70 caretakers had also been transferred with the children to the new facility. "They (the children) spent incredibly difficult moments while fighting has been raging, without access to proper healthcare," the ICRC said on Twitter. It attached a photo showing a woman on a bus feeding a baby formula. Neither UNICEF nor the ICRC gave further details, including where and when were the children taken. However, Nazim Sirag, an activist who heads the local charity Hadhreen, said in a phone interview that they were ferried to a newly established facility in Madani, the capital city of Jazira province, about 135 kilometers (85 miles) southeast of Khartoum. Sirag, whose charity led humanitarian efforts to help the orphanage and other nursing homes in Khartoum, said at least 71 children died at the Al-Mayqoma since the war in Sudan began on April 15. Among the dead were babies as young as three months, according to death certificates obtained by the AP. The certificates listed circulatory collapse as a cause of death, but also mentioned other contributing factors such as fever, dehydration, malnutrition, and failure to thrive. Their relocation followed an online campaign led by local activists and international charities, which intensified after the death of 26 children in two days at the orphanage in late May. The children had been trapped in the fighting for over seven weeks as food

and other supplies dwindled. The facility was inaccessible because of the war had turned the capital and other urban areas into battlefields. "The safe movement of these incredibly vulnerable children to a place of safety offers a ray of light in the midst of the ongoing conflict in Sudan," Mandeep O'Brien, UNICEF Representative in Sudan, said in a statement. "Many millions of children remain at risk across Sudan."

The fighting has inflicted a heavy toll on civilians, particularly children. More than 860 civilians, including at least 190 children, were killed and thousands of others were wounded since April 15, according to Sudan's Doctors' Syndicate which tracks civilian casualties. The tally is likely to be much higher. The conflict has forced more than 1.9 million people to flee their homes, including around 477,000 who crossed into neighboring countries, according to the UN's migration agency. Others remain trapped inside their homes, unable to escape as food and water supplies dwindle. The clashes have also disrupted the work of humanitarian groups. There have been reports of sexual violence, including the rape of women and girls in Khartoum and the western Darfur region, which have seen some of the worst fighting in the conflict. Almost all reported cases of sexual attacks were blamed on the RSF, which didn't respond to repeated requests for comment.

Iran's leader to visit Latin American countries

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will visit Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela next week, Iran's state news agency IRNA announced, adding that the upcoming tour stemmed from invites from the presidents of each of the Latin American nations. IRNA said documents to expand bilateral cooperation will be signed between Iran and the three countries during Raisi's visit, mentioning economic, political and scientific issues, but without going into further detail.

The state news agency said Raisi will leave Tehran on June 11. The three-country tour will give Raisi face time with three regional allies, each of whom lead leftist governments that have been accused by critics of human rights violations. Iran and Venezuela are both members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Papua tribe raises hopes for climate

JAKARTA (Agencies): Striding barefoot through the emerald green jungle with a long wooden bow slung over his shoulder, Josep Ogoney points up at the tropical vegetation surrounding him and his remote riverside village. "This is my pasar," said the 37-year-old, using the Indonesian word for a market. "I can take animals to eat, plants for medicine and wood to build my home."

But this stretch of pristine rainforest is rather different from conventional markets. "It's all free," grinned Josep, who is a member of the Ogoney, an Indigenous clan from Indonesia who inhabit the far-eastern, richly-forested province of West Papua. That is not entirely true. The Ogoney have cultivated the forest for centuries, living off the fruits of their labour. Here, they grow pineapples, sago and sweet potatoes, they hunt deer and pigs, and they use endemic plants to nourish and heal themselves. But while parts of the Ogoney's forest have been set aside for sustainable use of the abundant natural resources, much is considered sacred according to their traditional beliefs and, therefore, it is not only left untouched, but fiercely protected. "We depend on the forest," adds Josep. "We will reject anyone who tries to exploit it." Indigenous peoples and local communities, like the Ogoney, manage half the world's land and 80 percent of its biodiversity and have been effective custodians and defenders of nature for generations. Forests on Indigenous lands, which store 37.7 billion tonnes of carbon globally, play a major role in stabilising the earth's climate.

But only recently have Indigenous peoples and local communities begun to receive mainstream recognition for that role. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2021, also known as COP26, world leaders pledged to provide \$1.7bn to support these communities, citing evidence that they reduce deforestation. "By using sustainable practices taught from one generation to another, they actively safeguard forests, preserving biodiversity and keeping a delicate balance essential for both the environment and their own sustenance," said Emmanuelle Bérenger, lead for sustainable forest management at the Rainforest Alliance, a global nonprofit. "To effectively protect forests, they need to be supported through legal recognition." Lessons for supporting Indigenous-led conservation can be learned from Indonesia, which, in 2016, began legally recognising Indigenous "customary forests" in order to both bolster land tenure rights and better manage the nation's natural resources. To date, Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry, which oversees the third largest tract of rainforest in the world, has recognised the customary forests of more than 100 tribes, reallocated 153,000 hectares (591 square miles) of land previously under state control.

Russia accused of shelling rescue workers amid dam evacuations

MOSCOW (Agencies): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Russian forces of shelling Ukrainian emergency workers who are trying to rescue people from floodwaters caused by the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam.

Speaking in his nightly address, Zelenskyy said that more than 2,000 people have been rescued so far from flooding in the Kherson and Mykolaiv regions which, he said, contrasted starkly with Russian-occupied regions where he accused Moscow's forces of simply abandoning people to the flood. "Evacuation continues. Under fire!" Zelenskyy said. "Russian artillery continues to fire, no matter what. Savages," he said.

"Our military and special services are rescuing people as much as it is possible, despite the shelling," Zelenskyy described conditions in Russian-occupied parts of the Kherson region as "absolutely catastrophic" and called on international humanitarian organisations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, to immediately deploy to and help people abandoned in occupied areas now hit by flooding from the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam. "The occupiers simply abandoned people in these terrible conditions. Without rescue, without water, just on the rooftops in flooded communities," Ukraine's president said.

"It is even impossible to establish for sure how many people in the temporarily occupied territory of Kherson region may die without rescue, without drinking water, without food, without medical care," he added. Reporters said that artillery booms could be heard as people scrambled to leave affected areas with the help of rescue workers. Zelenskyy said he was disappointed that the UN and the Red Cross had so far failed to respond rapidly to the dam disaster, according to comments published by media outlets. "Each person who dies there is a verdict on the existing international architecture and international organisations that have forgotten how to save lives," he said later in his evening address.

"If there is no international organisation in the area of this disaster now, it means that it does not exist at all, that it is incapable of functioning. All the relevant appeals from Ukraine



and our government are in place," he said. Commenting for the first time on the blowing up of the dam, Russian President Vladimir Putin repeated Moscow's line that Ukraine was to blame. In a call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Putin alleged that Kyiv authorities, encouraged by Western supporters, had destroyed the dam and were escalating "war crimes, openly using terrorist methods and staging acts of sabotage on Russian territory", the Kremlin said in its account of the call. Erdogan has proposed a commission of inquiry into the dam's destruction, the presidential office in Ankara said, following separate telephone conversations with Putin and Zelenskyy.

It remains unclear how the dam disaster would affect the war and Ukraine's planned counteroffensive against Russian forces, but Kyiv said that its troops had advanced more than 1km (just over half a mile) around the ruined city of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine. Reports of the advance were the most explicit claim of battlefield progress by Ukraine since Russia said that the Ukrainian counteroffensive had begun - unannounced - earlier this week. Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's national security council, said assaults under way were still localised, and the full-scale offensive has yet to begin, adding that the public would know when the counteroffensive starts. "Our troops have switched from defence to the offensive in the direction of Bakhmut," Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said on Telegram. Russia's defence ministry confirmed eight Ukrainian attempts to attack

near Bakhmut but said that all had been repelled. Addressing the issue of the dam's destruction as Kyiv and Moscow trade blame, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a Washington, DC-based think tank, said Russia has "a greater and clearer interest in flooding the lower [Dnipro] despite the damage to their own prepared defensive positions".

Believing that Ukraine had already begun its counteroffensive, the ISW said, Russian forces may have thought breaching the dam could cover their possible retreat and delay Ukraine's advance. However, the flooding is now heavily disrupting Russia's prepared defensive positions along the occupied bank of the Dnipro river, the ISW said on Thursday. "The flooding has destroyed many Russian first-line field fortifications that the Russian military intended to use to defend against Ukrainian attacks," the ISW added. Authorities are now warning of the impact on global hunger and the environment due to the dam's destruction with the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) warning that the flooding could destroy crops and lead to greater hunger worldwide. Ukraine's agriculture ministry said that it expects about 10,000 hectares (38.6 square miles) of agricultural land on the northern bank of the Dnipro river in the Kherson region to be flooded, according to initial estimates. On the southern bank, in the Russian-occupied region, this area will be flooded many times, the ministry said on its website. Environmental organisation Greenpeace also warned of enormous damage to the country's water supply and food security.

Scientists find 'lost world' in Australian rock

SYDNEY (Agencies): Scientists have discovered a "lost world" of ancient organisms in billion-year-old rocks from northern Australia that they say could change the world's understanding of humans' earliest ancestors. The microscopic creatures, known as Protosterol Biota, are part of a family of organisms called eukaryotes and lived in Earth's waterways about 1.6 billion years ago, according to the researchers.

Eukaryotes have a complex cell structure that includes mitochondria, the cell's "powerhouse", and a nucleus, its "control and information centre". Modern forms of eukaryotes include fungi, plants, animals and single-celled organisms such as amoebae. Humans and all other nucleated creatures can trace their ancestral lineage back to the last eukaryotic common ancestors (LECA), which lived more than 1.2 billion years ago. The new discoveries "appear to be the oldest remnants of our own lineage - they lived even before LECA," said Benjamin Nettersheim, who completed his PhD at the Australian National University (ANU) and is now based at the University of Bremen in Germany. "These ancient

creatures were abundant in marine ecosystems across the world and probably shaped ecosystems for much of Earth's history." The discovery of the Protosterol Biota is the result of 10 years of work by researchers from ANU and was published in Nature on Thursday. ANU's Jochen Brocks, who made the discovery with Nettersheim, said the Protosterol Biota were more complex than bacteria and presumably larger, although it is unknown what they looked like. "We believe they may have been the first predators on Earth, hunting and devouring bacteria," the professor said in a statement. The researchers, from Australia, France, Germany and the United States, investigated fossil fat molecules found inside a rock that had formed at the bottom of the ocean near what is now Australia's Northern Territory for the study.

Northern Australia is known for having some of the best preserved sedimentary rocks dating from Earth's Middle Ages (the mid-Proterozoic period), including the oldest biomarker-bearing rocks on Earth. "The molecular fossils entrapped in these ancient sediments allow unique insights into early

life and ecology," Nettersheim said. The researchers found that the molecules had a primordial chemical structure that hinted at the existence of early complex creatures that evolved before LECA and had since gone extinct. "Without these molecules, we would never have known that the Protosterol Biota existed. Early oceans largely appeared to be a bacterial world, but our new discovery shows that this probably wasn't the case," Nettersheim said. Brocks said the creatures probably thrived from about 1.6 billion years ago up until about 800 million years ago. The end of this period in Earth's evolutionary timeline is known as the Tonian Transformation, when more advanced organisms, such as fungi and algae, started to flourish. But exactly when the Protosterol Biota went extinct is unknown. "The Tonian Transformation is one of the most profound ecological turning points in our planet's history," Brocks said.

"Just as the dinosaurs had to go extinct so that our mammal ancestors could become large and abundant, perhaps the Protosterol Biota had to disappear a billion years earlier to make space for modern eukaryotes."

Ukraine ramps up operations

KYIV (Agencies): A surge in Ukrainian military operations, a flurry of cross-border raids by drones and armed groups and a mystery over who blew up a dam that flooded swathes of land along the Dnipro River. Events are moving fast in Russia's war on Ukraine, now in its 67th week. The commander of Ukraine's ground forces, Oleksandr Syrskiy, said his soldiers were advancing in Bakhmut after a lull of a few days.

"The Bakhmut direction remains the epicentre of hostilities. There we are moving along a fairly wide front," Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar confirmed on Telegram. Maliar said Ukrainian troops advanced as much as 1,600 metres (5,250 feet) north of Bakhmut and as much as 700 metres (2,300 feet) to the south in a flanking

manoeuvre. Russia claimed victory in Bakhmut on May 21, and nine days later, Ukraine admitted the city was in Russian hands after 10 months of bloody warfare. The Russian defence ministry said Ukrainian forces launched a "large-scale offensive" across five sectors of the eastern front. Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russian forces repelled all the attacks and killed 3,175 Ukrainian soldiers in three days. "Russian sources have previously attempted to paint Ukrainian counteroffensive actions as immediate failures and Russian sources are likely attempting to do the same with what they view as the start of the announced Ukrainian counteroffensive," said the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War, a think tank.

Ukraine did not announce its counterattack

had begun, but Maliar posted a video on her Telegram channel showing Ukrainian soldiers holding their fingers to their lips. Her caption read, "Plans love silence. There will be no announcement of the start."

There were other signs of an imminent counterstrike. The Washington Post reported Ukrainian armed forces were carving out corridors through their own minefields in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia to enable units to go on the offensive. And in an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said "we are ready" for the counteroffensive. "We firmly believe that we will succeed. I don't know how long this will take. To be honest, it could go in different ways, completely different. But we are going to do this," Zelenskyy said.

Canada's record wildfires should be 'wake-up call', experts warn

TORONTO (Agencies): "Do you smell smoke?" That's the question people in Canada have been asking each other this week as hundreds of wildfires are burning in what has been described as an "unprecedented" start to the 2023 Canadian fire season. Tens of thousands of people in communities across the country have been forced to evacuate as firefighters battle to contain the blazes that have scorched more than 3.8 million hectares (9.4 million acres) so far.

But the emergence of smoke-filled, discoloured skies in parts of Canada that typically aren't affected by wildfires has spurred widespread public concern and calls for authorities to better prepare for a problem that experts say is only going to get worse. "There's this eerie sight of very smoky skies. It puts a yel-

low, greyish filter over the sun and the sky. There's also a smell of wood-fire burning," Caroline Brouillette, executive director of Climate Action Network Canada, said in an interview from Ottawa, the Canadian capital. "It does really bring home that the climate crisis is happening here and now," Brouillette told Al Jazeera. Images shared on social media this week showed orange-tinged skies over Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto, where a thick haze obstructed views of the CN Tower and the downtown skyline of Canada's largest city. In New York City and Washington, DC, hundreds of kilometres from the fires burning north of the United States-Canada border, smog has filled the air. Air pollution advisories have been issued in places across Canada as well as in states

in the US Northeast and Midwest, fuelling questions about the wildfires' effects on the health of millions of people in North America.

"From the gloom over Yankee Stadium to the smoky haze obscuring our skyline, we can see it, we can smell it and we felt it. And it was alarming and concerning," New York City Mayor Eric Adams told reporters. "This is an unprecedented event in our city, and New Yorkers must take precautions," said Adams, who urged residents to stay inside, close their windows and limit outdoor activity. "While this may be the first time we've experienced something like this on this magnitude, let's be clear: It is not the last. Climate change [has] accelerated these conditions. We must continue to draw down emissions, improve air quality and

build resiliency." Jill Baumgartner, an associate professor in the School of Population and Global Health at McGill University in Montreal, said pollution levels in the city and in Canada more generally have been three to four times higher than usual as a result of the wildfires. "The biggest health threat from wildfire smoke are from these very small, microscopic particles that you breathe in," Baumgartner said, explaining that they can lead to a variety of problems from burning eyes and runny noses to chronic heart and lung diseases.

The Canadian government said that more than 400 wildfires were burning across the country, including 239 that were considered out of control. More than 20,000 people remained displaced as a result of the blazes.

The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.
Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573
E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com
Lahore Office: 0335-4026284
Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com
Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253
Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com
Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907
Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com
“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

May 9 violence, national legacy, and next

THE recently held 81st Formation Commanders Conference of Pakistan Army, unanimously called for a tightening of the noose of law around the planners and masterminds that launched a politically motivated rebellion against the state and state institutions on May 9 this year. According to the Pakistan Army Media Wing, the elite commanders of the Pakistan Military stressed that the legal trials of perpetrators and instigators have commenced, and it is time that the noose of law is also tightened around the planners and masterminds who mounted the hate-ripened and politically driven rebellion against the state and its institutions to achieve their nefarious design by creating chaos and anarchy in the country.

The May 9 mob violence and attacks against state institutions including military personnel, installations, and government properties is undoubtedly a dark chapter of Pakistan's political history. On that day, a particular political group declared its political philosophy a battle between the good and bad, a crusade between Muslims and infidels as well as a struggle between proclaimed patriots and self-defined traitors, waged a war by instigating its followers/ supporters to destroy each and everything that disagree with their ideology and resembles with their proposed enemy. Unfortunately, thousands of innocent Pakistanis men, women, and young students fell victim to this tactfully articulated campaign against the LEAs and government institutions that was directed at achieving a well-defined political agenda through pressure and intimidation of state institutions. After all, the words became insufficient and worthless to narrate the events of May 9 and manifest condemnation of those heinous crimes to the nation. The military leadership time and again condemned the May 9 attacks and reiterated its resolve to protect the veneration of martyrs' monuments, and other military installations that is surely the duty of the military commanders to boost the morale of the troops and maintain the prestige of the institution.

Although the military was the prime target of May 9 violence, it displayed utmost patience and stoicism by not responding to the violent rioters who invaded military installations, equipment, and vehicles in the guise of political workers and the so-called public. However, as an institution military must leave this business to the incumbent government and focus on its professional matters, internal security and rapidly changing geostrategic situation in the region and beyond. Still, the military is under continuous hybrid propaganda war by a certain faction and things are persistently being manipulated for some hidden motive thus the Pakistan Army must share the irrefutable evidence regarding May 9 violence with the public, so no agent provocateur could further misguide the public and cause misperception between the public and national institutions. At the helm of this political anarchy and social polarization, the military must disassociate itself from the controversial issues and the political government has the responsibility to ensure the delivery of justice and maintenance of the writ of the law in the country.

Realistically, there had been the utmost public uproar and criticism from the civil society and intelligentsia regarding the conduct of national institutions, bureaucracy, and judiciary amid an ongoing political tussle, make and break of the contesting groups in the country. Earlier, the Bureaucracy started Project Imran in the past decade, that now has been taken up by the judiciary, now the former hatches a new team of pure that will presumably play a role in national politics in the future. Currently, the common protestors and leg workers are being prosecuted in the military courts while the handlers and high-ups are being released after a mere condemnation or change of loyalty that portrays a very negative image of the ongoing legal action against the May 9 rioters. In fact, there are so many things that need a policy shift for the streaming lining of national affairs, while the theory of necessity and self-defined national interest and security hazard must be paused at this stage if we really seek to revive our national prestige in the community of nations in the globe.

Pakistan's foreign policy under Bilawal Bhutto

FOREIGN Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari returned home after a successful diplomatic voyage of the Republic of Iraq that laid the foundation for a sustainable economic, and trade partnership between the two nations. During the visit, Mr. Zardari held extensive interactions with the Iraqi leadership, including meetings with the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Speaker of the Parliament, and Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Bashir Al- Najafi. These high-level interactions showcased the mutual desire to strengthen diplomatic ties and foster fraternal cooperation in diverse fields between the two brotherly nations. Both nations signed several MoUs aimed at promoting economic cooperation, strengthening cultural ties, easing the visa regime, and promoting travel and tourism between the two countries.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari represents young Pakistani talent in the field of global diplomacy. He owes multiple personal traits including enlightened moderation, tolerance, broadmindedness, and respect for others, however, his measured diplomacy has revived the legacy of former Prime Minister ZA Bhutto's all-time kinetic foreign policy in the 1960s. Realistically, his grooming in a political family and good education has certainly given him an edge to better represent Pakistan at the global level. It had been so much better if he was not carrying the alleged corruption baggage of his father. Bilawal will certainly be part of family dynasty politics in the coming days. The experience and contacts he has gained in the last year will definitely help him in the long run. Mr. Zardari dreams to see Bilawal as a future Prime Minister and preparing him for that role while the current portfolio will boost his statesmanship in the future.

Bilawal is definitely a top contender for the top slot in the next setup and this one year of job in the current role gave him a good platform to get his face familiar with the international world, intelligentsia, and global media. Among the current competitors, Maryam Nawaz, Imran Khan, and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Bilawal could be the top contender for Premiership because of his soberness, maturity, and clean personality, which gave him an advantage over both adversaries who personally face court cases and indictments on various grounds. To hold the throne of PM will be a challenge for him but it will not be something that his family has not seen in the past. All political groups are lobbying to win the upcoming general elections, however, the public verdict would be important in the election of the next leader.

AS the United States-Saudi-sponsored ceasefire negotiations between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) ground to a halt at the end of last week, the African Union (AU) stepped in. Its proposed Expanded Mechanism on the Sudan Crisis, a body made up of AU officials and experts conceptualised in April, is preparing to take charge of negotiating a solution for the conflict in Sudan.

There is a positive angle to this development, indicating a regional proactiveness that has characterised the AU and regional bodies, such as IGAD in East Africa and ECOWAS in West Africa, in recent decades. They have spearheaded peacemaking and peace-keeping on the continent and worked to foster and safeguard democracy. But there is also another angle to this development: "international dumping". The international community usually champions peacekeeping when it seems promising and "delegates" to a regional body when things do not look so good.

It appears that this is now happening in Sudan. After the conflict broke out, Saudi Arabia and the US - part of the self-constituted "Quartet" (along with the United Arab Emirates and United Kingdom) - took charge, trying to negotiate a ceasefire. Their intervention came from nowhere as did the suspension of the talks last week. Thus, the AU is stepping in amid an obvious "dumping", which was made even more obvious by the recent exodus of diplomats and other foreign nationals from Khartoum and which underlines the failures of previous initiatives by the international community.

The recent conflict was precipitated by an abortive UN-led process that sought to return the country to civilian rule after the October 2021 coup carried out by SAF. The UN sponsored December's shaky Framework Agreement between the army and civilian forces, which failed to put the country back on the transition path. Volumes can be dedicated to the ineptitude, hubris and desire for short cuts that turned the promised "civilian rule" into competition for supremacy among military factions. That is the legacy the fleeing "international community" left to Sudan and its people.

Both the UN and the AU have shown a tendency to allow their desire for quick success and personal glory to push them towards shoddy deals that generate instant applause but precipitate long suffering for the countries involved. The flawed power-sharing deal between the military and civilian factions included in the Constitutional Declaration of August 2019, which the AU sponsored, is a case in point. It left many important issues undressed, including the investigation of the June 2019 massacre, the assignment of roles to rival military outfits and the inclusion of constituencies that were left out of the deal.

Like the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, which ended the Second Sudanese Civil War and paved the way for South Sudan's independence, the August 2019 agreement was marked by "gradualism", which involved papered-over commitments to incompatible goals and agendas and which results in "war by other means". The AU's recently announced Roadmap for the Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan has

Abdelwahab El-Affendi

similar inbuilt problems that need to be tackled. It has four main objectives: an immediate unconditional ceasefire, a well-coordinated humanitarian response, the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and an inclusive political process. But the steps outlined in the roadmap seem to misconstrue the most pressing problem. The Sudanese capital, Khartoum, has become uninhabitable, and the Sudanese state has lost control.

While the problem for civilians at first was the inability to leave home because of the fighting, assaults on homes have now forced residents onto the streets, often at gunpoint. Hundreds of thousands have left for the countryside or the periphery of the capital. Those who could afford the exorbitant cost have found their way to Port Sudan or the Egyptian border, seeking refuge abroad. The RSF is the main culprit in reported incidents of rape, kidnappings and home violations. It is also guilty of raiding and occupying hospitals, power stations and water-pumping facilities and attacking universities and cultural sites, such as the National Museum.

Apart from Khartoum and the western region of Darfur, the rest of the country has no RSF presence, or it has been contained; in those places, people feel safe to go about their business. In this context, the characterisation of the Sudanese crisis as a fight between too equally legitimate or equally evil parties is certainly misleading. That is why the demand for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire would not achieve any of the AU's other objectives, including a

successful humanitarian response, the protection of civilians and infrastructure, and the resumption of any political process, whether inclusive or not. In fact, an unconditional ceasefire would leave civilians completely at the mercy of RSF barbarism. Speaking of a political process in an atmosphere of terror, and with almost the whole of the professional, intellectual and political elite on the run, is unrealistic.

What is needed is strong international pressure on the RSF to vacate hospitals, private homes and other facilities it has illegally occupied and to desist from robbing banks, stealing private property, intimidating, detaining, raping, torturing and killing civilians. Credible threats must be used and not just meaningless punishments, such as visa denials. War criminals are not that eager to obtain visas to New York in their real names. The threats should include providing assistance, including intelligence or equipment, to the Sudanese state to protect civilians and civilian facilities, private property, embassies and international missions.

The Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan signed on May 11 has committed SAF and the RSF "to vacate and refrain from occupying, as well as to respect and protect all public and private facilities, such as hospitals and water and electricity installations, and refrain from using them for military purposes". This must be a condition for any future ceasefire. The lawlessness promoted by the RSF has practically precipitated a temporary paralysis of the state that could soon descend into total collapse, leading to the fragmentation of the country and break-

down of law and order. The cost of such a scenario would be staggering, not only for the Sudanese people, but for the region and the world.

Lessons from past AU and UN failures in Sudan and elsewhere should be learned and applied to the negotiations process. This means excluding from the process inept AU officials and UN bureaucrats, especially those who have a record of serial failures. There is no need to "recycle" the blunders of one mission in another. As it is proposed, the fuzzy Expanded Mechanism threatens to be more of an obstacle than a facilitator. It is led by AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki, supported by a couple of AU officials and a Sudan Task Team of African experts.

However, the cumbersome structure prioritises interstate diplomacy and appeasing potential rivals. There are at least 28 parties to engage, including regional states, UN Security Council members, organisations and regional bodies. The potentially conflicting agendas makes consensus difficult to achieve and may constrain flexibility if achieved. The suffering Sudanese population cannot afford the anticipated haggling. In this regard, the AU has to rethink its cumbersome Extended Mechanism and assign only a handful of competent officials to a lean and efficient team that can go directly to work on an effective de-escalation process. They should focus on sending monitors on the ground to observe and report on violations, recommending remedies and intensifying international pressure on the RSF to withdraw from civilian areas.

This would pave the way for mediating a credible ceasefire that would confine

the RSF to defined locations outside metropolitan Khartoum, thus permitting the Sudanese state to restore a semblance of law and order. The police, medical staff and civil servants could then resume their duties, and businesses, banks, shops and markets would be able to function properly again. Schools and universities should open again. This is the first time in Sudan's recent history when not a single school is open in the whole country! The next step would be a sustained international effort to restore services, rehabilitate hospitals, and permit Khartoum residents to return to their homes and resume their lives. Finally, the Sudanese should be supported in organising an inclusive national conference with representatives of all political and civil society groups to debate and resolve key issues about the political future of the country. The process should be Sudanese-led. It should exclude the military and ensure that no single political faction or coalition can monopolise it. Foreign meddling, including UN and AU interventions, should also be minimal.

The tasks of the national conference should include the election of a national unity government that oversees a two-year transitional period with a focus on passing a transitional constitution, appointing an electoral commission, passing an electoral law, and conducting free and fair elections to restore democracy and peace to the country. If the AU decides to keep going down the well-trodden path and repeat the same mistakes of the past, its efforts in Sudan would be doomed to failure. For the Sudanese people, this would mean only more suffering, death and destruction.

Aljazeera

Canadian democracy is on edge - and China isn't to blame

Andrew Mitrovica

CANADA has lost its mind. To be precise, much of official Ottawa has abandoned the remnants of its already questionable faculties. A faux scandal, manufactured by the nexus of scoop-thirsty reporters and hyperbole-addicted politicians - is there any other kind? - has gripped the capital like a drug-resistant psychosis.

These fulminating reporters and politicians have been reduced - figuratively speaking - to parading around newsrooms and parliament in a critical-thinking-sapping state, carrying signs that read: The end of democracy is nigh. Bit by devious bit, Chinese agents and their proxies have eaten covertly away, they say, at the vulnerable foundations that gird Canada's democratic institutions.

All that stands between apocalypse and possible salvation are the patriots working inside Canada's always law-abiding spy services who apparently belt out "O Canada" at breakfast and at bedtime with hands on maple-leaf-forever-tattooed hearts. That, discerning international readers, is only a slightly exaggerated portrait of the hysteria that has paralysed a once-sedate city for months. I wouldn't be surprised if more than a few of its jittery occupants who hold public office have checked under their desks to see if a Beijing-compro-

mised, fifth columnist is lurking there. I live in Toronto. So, happily, I have been able to avoid succumbing to the "yellow peril"-induced madness. Still, I had more than a disconcerting taste of it over the past few weeks while appearing three times as a witness before two House of Commons committees probing Chinese influence campaigns.

Given my long history of reporting on Canada's cavalier security services and Chinese influence efforts, I reluctantly agreed to attend via Zoom in the faint hope that my testimony might act as a brake on the prevailing panic and the rampant, McCarthyite guilt-by-association accusations poisoning Ottawa. How wrong I was. I came away convinced that China poses less of a threat to Canada's democratic institutions than the sad, pedestrian members of parliament - with one exception - I encountered, who purport to defend those ever-so-fragile institutions now allegedly under siege. My overarching message did not register.

While I agree that Chinese interference is troublesome, a hunt-witch-like fever has infected law-makers and reporters intent on "unmasking" so-called "seditious" Canadians reminiscent of the shameful purge of public servants only a few generations ago as a result of their left-wing politics and homosexuality. It is dangerous and corro-

sive. People's lives, livelihoods and reputations are being damaged by inept spies and their grateful conduits in the media and on Parliament Hill. Indeed, I watched, sometimes with bewilderment, often in disgust, as a string of parliamentarians debased themselves and the country they supposedly represent, in search of a "gotcha" moment that might attract a reporter's ephemeral attention or the approval of their party leaders who are more interested in stoking fear and conjecture rather than encouraging sobriety and the truth.

In this deplorable regard, members of the opposition Conservative Party, the separatist Bloc Quebecois (BQ) and the pretend socialist party of Canada, the New Democrats (NDP), distinguished themselves. Without fail, Tory MPs channelled every disagreeable aspect of Pierre Poilievre, their stunt-prone, smug demagogue of a leader who believes that anger and ignorance are essential prerequisites to becoming prime minister. Each of these rabid partisans tried to out-smear the other to curry favour with a jejune politician who makes the Borg-like former Conservative Party leader, Stephen Harper, seem almost genteel in comparison. The nadir of this ugliness occurred when a Conservative MP asked a witness and publisher of

Sinophobic tracts whether former Governor General of Canada David Johnston was an "elite capture" of the People's Republic of China (PRC) "based on his ties to China". Predictably, the conspiracy-consumed pair forgot that Johnston was appointed Canada's titular head of state in 2010 by none other than Harper. Oh, never mind. In any event, the witness said that of course Johnston was an "elite capture" since "over his 40-year career [Johnston] has had a positive predisposition to China and the PRC." It was a disgraceful question and reply and I said so. Incidentally, the sorry exchange went some way towards suggesting that the Conservative Party's email address these days should be: conservatives@inthegutter.ca.

Johnston is in the Conservatives' ferocious crosshairs because he was appointed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as a "special rapporteur" to examine a slew of selective leaks concerning Chinese interference in Canadian politics and two recent elections. In an interim report, Johnston found that China's influence campaigns had no impact on those elections, that media reports surrounding the scope and nature of that interference were overblown or "false," and that, as a sinister by-product, loyal Canadians were being tarred as disloyal.

None of it mattered, such was the disfiguring intensity of the animus in the hearings towards an honourable man who has served Canada in a variety of important capacities. Meanwhile, the separatist BQ was too busy bowing before the "expertise" of a couple of spooks-turned-boy-scouts to remember that not too long ago the very same security services set ablaze a barn where separatists planned to meet. Or that the security services were responsible for at least 400 illegal break-ins in Quebec (including the offices of a separatist press agency), and that they stole the membership list of the separatist Parti Quebecois. The BQ's amnesia is as halting as its naivete. A starry-eyed member of Canada's pretend socialist NDP allowed the two spies to claim - without a word of pushback - that the secrecy-drenched and accountability-allergic agencies they work for are committed to openness, transparency and the rule of law.

I had to stifle the urge to laugh. The criminally ill-prepared NDP MP was not aware, it appears, that a succession of federal court judges has, in the recent past, slammed the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) for withholding information from the court, lying and routinely breaking the law. If the derelict legislator had done an ounce of research, she would have discovered that in July

2020 Justice Patrick Gleeson excoriated CSIS for having an "institutional disregard for - or, at the very least, a cavalier institutional approach to - the duty of candour and regrettable the rule of law". Examples of CSIS's subterfuge abound. In an effort to deport a Canadian it suspected of being a "terrorist" in 2009, the spy service not only lied to, but kept exculpatory information from, a judge deciding the man's fate.

In 2016, another incensed federal court judge blasted CSIS for failing to disclose that it had, for more than a decade, illegally gathered and stored metadata unrelated to national security investigations involving scores of unsuspecting Canadians. The solicitous NDP MP did not recall any of it. Like her flippant, sound-bite-happy leader, Jagmeet Singh, she capitulated to the hysteria, rather than make an informed effort to cauterise it.

Only Matthew Green, an Ontario NDP MP, struck me as having the gravitas to approach this delicate file with the calmness and intelligence it requires. I should have listened to my instincts and stayed far away from Ottawa and the largely vapid politicians who populate it. In the remote chance that I receive another emailed invitation to appear before a committee after this column is published, I will press delete.

US' provocative moves will not solve its problems

Liu Qiang

THE United States has been putting immense pressure on China by imposing economic restrictions and increasing military presence in and around the South China Sea, East China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait, sending regional security into a vicious spiral. First, the US has been trying all means possible to contain China. The US knows that a stable peripheral security environment is necessary for a country's development. That's why it has been stirring up more and more troubles in the Asia-Pacific region by taking overt and covert measures against China and forming security alliances with some countries in the region with the aim of curbing China's rise.

China has major strategic interests in the East China Sea, South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait

including safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Using the East and South China Seas issues and the Taiwan question, the US is trying to destabilize the region in order to force China to exhaust its resources to deal with the US-created troubles. Second, the strategic pressure in the three territorial waters of China may stress out the country. Yet geo-advantages will help China overcome the stress unlike what the US expects to see. True, the use of resources to counter the US will increase the burden on China. But China has worked out a long-term plan to prevent the US from manipulating countries in the region and ensure Washington's geopolitical strategy in the region doesn't succeed.

Also, China's growing national strength has made it more confident of safeguarding its national inter-

ests. In contrast, the US will have to keep spending increasing amounts of money, which at present it cannot afford to, to further its nefarious design of forming anti-China cliques in the region to contain China. Besides, the impacts of the US strategy will wane with the passage of time. Third, some US politicians are playing a dangerous game by pushing for "a war between China and the US" by calling for increased US activities in China's waters. But despite the US' multiple miscalculations deteriorating China-US ties, bilateral strategic stability has been maintained, with the two sides showing a certain amount of restraint. China-US relations have reached a crossroad. In this delicate situation, the bellicose statements of some US politicians, including some sen-

ior military officials, and their call for military buildup in the region before 2025 reflect their hostility toward China. If the US escalates its military activities in the region, China will be forced to respond in a bid to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity and development interests. Since the US knows China will take decisive measures to safeguard its national interests, Washington's belligerent strategies will not do any good to any country, including the US and its allies. For the sake of regional and global stability and development, the US should eschew its geopolitical strategy in the Asia-Pacific. By embroiling other countries in its geopolitical game to maintain its global hegemony, the US will cause itself unimaginable harm. And countries

and regions falling into the US trap risk suffering self-inflicted damage. That is the reason why US President Joe Biden said the US seeks to vigorously compete with China, not seek conflict.

If the White House is aware of the global disaster a Sino-US conflict would be, it should seek common ground while shelving differences, and hold negotiations to resolve disputes with China instead of taking aggressive actions. It is normal for countries to compete with each other, but they should avoid confrontation. However, the US' efforts to turn China's territorial waters into a zone of contention have hindered communication between the two sides. China follows the peaceful development principle, because it is beneficial to the Chinese people's well-being, and promotes co-

development with other countries. China will continue to make contributions to global economic growth, and avoid the "Thucydides trap" unless the US forces it into a conflict. Therefore, the US would do better to stop treating China as a geopolitical rival, because China doesn't seek hegemony. The US' provocative strategies such as increased military presence in China's waters will not help resolve the differences and disputes between the two sides. Instead, they will further deteriorate bilateral relations, possibly leading to a grave crisis. In short, China and the US need to hold talks to resolve their disputes, seek common ground while shelving differences, and establish effective crisis management mechanisms to prevent miscalculations from triggering a conflict.

The China Daily

Labour Party risks losing votes by promising to make Brexit work

Mohamed Chebaro

MANY people in Britain cannot wait to see the back of the current government and the end of Conservative Party rule, which has lasted for 13 years so far and has largely been characterized by austerity policies that damaged society and the economy, the historic 2016 referendum on leaving the EU, and the UK's subsequent exit from the bloc via a less than favorable trade and cooperation agreement. This has taken its toll on everything in the country and has increasingly pushed Brits on all sides of the political spectrum to express reservations about the whole Brexit project, according to recent polls.

And while the opposition Labour Party is performing better in the polls, with a long-held lead of several points over the ruling Conservatives, the declaration by its leader Sir Keir Starmer that "Britain's future is outside the EU" - confirming that Labour, when in power, will not seek to rejoin the bloc - might play against the party and make some part of the electorate hesitant to back Labour at a time when it will need every vote to win a comfortable majority.

Starmer, in a bid to appeal to Middle England's ex-Labour voters, insisted in an article published in the Daily Express last week that, under his leadership, Britain's future will not be "in the single market, not in the customs union, not with a return to freedom of movement," which was afforded to EU citizens when the UK was part of the EU. Instead, he wants to make Brexit work by delivering "a better health service, better jobs, better wages, more security" and, of course, fewer migrants. But in so doing, Starmer risks alienating the large part of the electorate that believes Brexit has been a mistake.

He also risks failing to seize the moment and the political opportunity to show his leadership mettle and fixing Brexit by putting forward a plan to maybe consult the nation on potentially rejoining. Starmer is missing the chance and Labour might regret it. The opinion polls have been showing that a clear majority of respondents think Brexit was a mistake. Even key Brexiteer Nigel Farage admitted recently that "Brexit has failed." A recent YouGov poll found that just

it," alluding to a mindset that the project was good in essence but had only suffered due to mismanagement at the hands of euroskeptic Tories. Not a single day passes British people by without them hearing news about the damage caused to their lives as a result of Brexit. Lately, British factories have reported a 16th consecutive month of falling exports, with manufacturers saying that obstacles to trade in post-Brexit Britain are undermining business relation-

into believing, wrongly, that the country's tax burden would be lowered, that the NHS would benefit from the hundreds of millions of pounds that were being sent to the EU every week and that the wages of skilled workers would go up, as the EU citizens taking British jobs would not be there any longer. However, many have since noticed that voting for Brexit has merely given a slim section of society some meaningless sovereignty at the expense of economic prosperity for all.

The leader of the opposition is also banking on the goodwill of Europeans to fix the damage caused by Brexit if and when he forms a government. And, yes, maybe he was right that Brexit has been badly executed due to the problematic leaderships of successive Conservative prime ministers, from Theresa May to Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak.

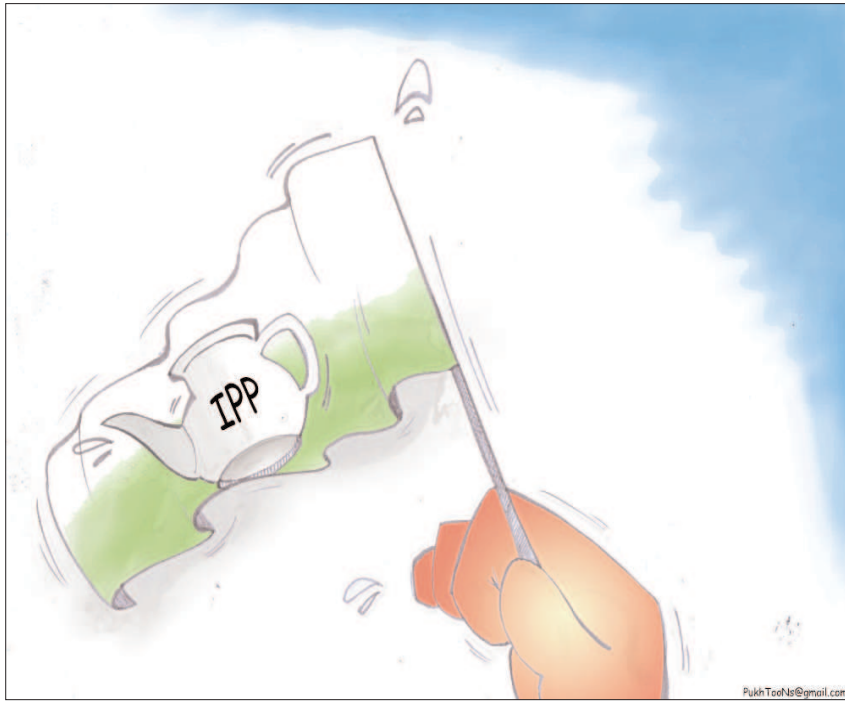
However, unfortunately the situation does not simply need another deal or a review of procedures in Brussels. It needs a shift in mindset to undo this wrong and a leadership unafraid to share the truth with the electorate about the way forward. Brexit was a radical step and, to undo that, maybe Starmer should adopt what Prime Minister Sunak, an avid Brexiteer, said to the unionists in Northern Ireland: That, by being in the UK while still having access to the EU's single market, the province has the best of both worlds. That is what Britain had when it was in the EU - the best of both worlds - and Starmer should not shy away from expressing the benefits of that abandoned union now that its adversities are in plain sight and are only likely to intensify further when the next stage of trade barriers come into force at the end of this year.

Ahead of the Brexit referendum, a large section of voters were duped into believing, wrongly, that the country's tax burden would be lowered, that the NHS would benefit from the hundreds of millions of pounds that were being sent to the EU every week and that the wages of skilled workers would go up, as the EU citizens taking British jobs would not be there any longer.

a fifth of Brexiteers think Brexit has been "more of a success," while 62 percent of those polled believe that it has been "more of a failure." In ruling out something that could help the country rebound after the self-inflicted wound of Brexit, Starmer is risking disappointing the 86 percent of Labour voters who say that the UK was wrong to leave in the first place.

In his Daily Express article, Starmer sounded more like one of the many disgruntled Conservatives who believe that their successive governments have failed to manage Brexit properly or have lacked a vision for what to do after exiting the EU. He claimed that, "if we are to make Brexit work, we need a government with the vision and the focus to deliver

ships with firms on the continent. In his article, Starmer acknowledged that "British businesses and households need stability and certainty." He highlighted warnings from the UK car industry that their future was under threat, while he has also admitted that scientists and researchers face uncertainties, just like we have heard over previous months from farmers, the fishing industry and the hospitality and service sectors. The shortfalls of Brexit were always there for the world to see and the latest to call Brexit a "historic economic error" was former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, who said that it had damaged the UK economy and helped to drive inflation higher. Ahead of the Brexit referendum, a large section of voters were duped



A Love Letter from Russia to America

Anonymous

WE had a wonderful honeymoon. It lasted slightly more than a decade. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the sweet and scary 1990s had us both reveling in Russia's newfound innocence. The floodgates were open. Sounds, images and experts from the West flooded in. Advisors, investors, humanitarians and carpet-baggers arrived. They shared your culture, institutions and financial practices and we began to ape. Not always with success, but sometimes.

The Pepsi monopoly was broken, McDonalds showed up, Disney and CNN were on broadcast TV - along with a host of copycat American television shows. Our humor came out from underground. We could now display our sacred leaders as puppets on prime time, to mock and cuddle. Levis became freely available. Even now you can look at any street scene and see eight out of ten Russian men wearing jeans. I made American friends while working for American companies and publications. A generation of young people learned capitalism and corporate culture and implemented best practices as they built their own empires. We developed common interests: arms reduction, space exploration and a shared distrust of the Chinese, to name a few.

But you failed to notice something. We appeared to you as a venerable culture that had just been down on its luck for 70 years. But in fact, we were, and in some ways still are, an out-of-control hormone-pumped teenager behind the wheel who is orchestrating his own slow-motion wreck. You are the frustrated middle-aged parent, struggling to understand and manage us. Europe has been the doting grandparent, offering platitudes without discipline - while it makes a fortune off of our elites with their stolen money and high-profit business deals. This has been the world order. Our first democratically elected leader, a goofy old politician, handed the reins of power to a serious young security officer in 1999. We love our strong men here. At first, Putin was enamored of you. When he said in the early 2000s that he saw America as our "best partner" he meant it. When he said that the break-up of the USSR. was a tragedy, he used the term literally: massive human suffering. That line was followed by a far less quoted clause: "Anyone who wants to restore it is brainless." Don't get me wrong. I'm not justifying his lust for power and destruction of Russia and Ukraine. I'm just sharing our perspective on a lost opportunity and the origins of the current nightmare.

Meanwhile, we, the people, were too busy spending our petro-dollars on the new comforts you taught us to enjoy as we formed a large lower-middle class. We neglected to take the time to create institutions to protect our rights. We didn't comprehend the relationship between a decent standard of living and the values necessary to maintain and grow it. Democracy isn't something we are used to or are willing, en-masse, to fight for. The electoral system degenerated from something resembling the cheap tricks of Tamany politics, to something resembling the cheap tricks of Tamany politics.

ities in 19th century New York City to a totally rigged system. Employees of state and state-dependent companies (easily half of the electorate) go to the polls, take a selfie with their ballot and send it to the human resources manager at their place of employment... or face consequences. Why did we let this happen? Part of the answer lies in our cynicism. For us, rights are like happiness. Something we never really expect, therefore not difficult to part with. This trait is more prevalent in the older generation. The very same elders

Now, we're getting used to enjoying our daily routines while our country conducts a forever-war. Our boys commit atrocities. We go to the hairdresser and the health club. There is a "homefront," but it's easily ignored. Some of us realize that our city upon a hill, our Russian exceptionalism, is tarnished in the eyes of our remaining partners and former family members. Why doesn't this happen to you? Is it due to global dependence on your currency and your market potential, or is it more about your awesome soft power? I concede that Tolstoy or Rasputin action figures are not nearly as marketable as Luke Skywalkers. The legendary diplomat and Russia specialist Jack Matlock once said relations between the two countries are like a pendulum. They eventually swing back. But what will we look like by the time you are ready to embrace us again? For decades, we have indisputably been the two greatest space-faring nations. Though that arena remains our last realm of cooperation, we are probably beginning to lag there, too.

ers, with personal or familial memory of World War II, will tell you the most important thing is to never let another war happen. Such thinking, it turns out now, is easily manipulated to justify why it should happen. There are young people who feel differently. They have a thirst and understanding for freedom and peace and don't believe in tales of Western plots to destroy the fatherland. Unfortunately, they were compelled to demonstrate those values by leaving the country before and during mobilization. We are now a million citizens short. More to come (well... go). They are not cowards. They just didn't drink the Kool Aid. They don't want to kill or be killed without reason.

They are braver than any of us for taking action. Unlike those admirable kids in Iran, Egypt and even China, after some feeble efforts at public (and illegal) dissent, instead of marching on the Kremlin, they headed for the borders. They understand how hopeless things have become here. Now, we're getting used to enjoying our daily routines while our country conducts a forever-war. Our boys commit atrocities. We go to the hairdresser and the health club. There is a "homefront," but it's easily ignored. Some of us realize that our city upon a hill, our Russian exceptionalism, is tarnished in the eyes of our remaining partners and former family members. Why doesn't this

Important Notice

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

Facebook owner has moral obligation to compensate Rohingya

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

THE Rohingya crisis, characterized by widespread violence, displacement and human rights abuses, has been one of the most severe humanitarian emergencies of our time. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected through social media platforms, it is crucial to hold technology companies accountable for their role in amplifying hate speech and misinformation and facilitating violence against vulnerable communities. In this context, Meta, the owner of Facebook, should take responsibility and provide compensation to the Rohingya people for the harm caused by the misuse of its platform.

Meta's platform was instrumental in the spread of hate speech and incitement to violence against the Rohingya population in Myanmar. During the peak of the crisis in 2017, Facebook was used as a tool to disseminate anti-Rohingya propaganda, fueling hatred and enabling the coordination of attacks against Rohingya communities. The company's algorithms and recommendation systems exacerbated the problem by amplifying divisive and inflammatory content, contributing to the escalation of violence and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people.

The consequences of this misuse of technology have been devastating. The UN has referred to the Rohingya crisis as a textbook example of ethnic cleansing, with reports of mass killings, sexual violence and the destruction of entire villages. More than 700,000 Rohingya have been forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh, where they live in overcrowded refugee camps, deprived of their basic

rights and dignity. Many Rohingya continue to suffer from trauma and struggle to rebuild their lives.

Meta, as the owner of the platform that enabled this harm, has a moral obligation to take action. The company has made public commitments to addressing hate speech and misinformation on its platform, but mere policy changes and increased moderation are not enough. Meta must go beyond lip service and take concrete steps to provide compensation to the Rohingya people. There are also significant legal implications. As I have previously argued in Arab News, Gambia's unprecedented action at the International Court of Justice was long overdue. However, it is widely understood that establishing genocide accountability poses a formidable challenge, as the plaintiff must prove genocidal intent. The burden of proving intent is commonly regarded as one of the most difficult standards to meet in legal proceedings.

The Gambian legal team has taken a logical step by requesting a US court to compel Facebook to provide data pertaining to the key Myanmar army officials responsible for ordering the "clearance operations" against the Rohingya. Among these officials is Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the commander-in-chief of Myanmar's armed forces and now the de facto ruler. This strategic move aims to obtain crucial evidence that can support the case against those involved in the atrocities committed against the Rohingya, which can lead to compensation of some form. Most recently, joining the chorus of voices supporting compensation was Pat de Brun, head of big tech

accountability and deputy director of Amnesty Tech. De Brun strongly emphasized the urgent need for Meta to act during its annual shareholder meeting, when a series of shareholder resolutions challenging the company's business practices will be addressed. De Brun said in a statement: "It is way beyond time that Meta fulfilled its responsibilities and provided an effective remedy to the Rohingya people of Myanmar. It is reprehensible that Meta still refuses to repair the harms it contributed to despite the overwhelming evidence that the company played a key role in 2017's ethnic cleansing."

Compensation would serve several important purposes. First and foremost, it would acknowledge the harm inflicted upon the Rohingya community and demonstrate a commitment to accountability. Compensation would also contribute to the material and psychological recovery of the survivors, enabling them to rebuild their lives and communities. Furthermore, it would send a strong message to other technology companies about the consequences of neglecting their responsibilities in preventing and mitigating the negative impacts of their platforms. The argument against Meta paying compensation often centers on the notion that the company is merely a neutral platform, not directly responsible for the content shared by its users. However, this argument fails to recognize the active role that Meta plays in shaping the user experience through algorithms and content curation. By designing systems that prioritize engagement and maximize user attention, Meta

bears a significant responsibility for the consequences of its platform's impact on vulnerable communities.

Moreover, Meta's responsibility goes beyond legal obligations. While it may not be directly liable under existing laws, it cannot escape its ethical duty to address the harm to which it has contributed. Companies like Meta wield immense power and influence over public discourse and they must be held accountable for the consequences of their actions. Meta has the financial means to provide compensation to the Rohingya people. As one of the wealthiest technology companies in the world, it has a moral obligation to allocate a portion of its resources to repair the damage caused. This compensation should be directed toward initiatives that support the welfare, rehabilitation and empowerment of the Rohingya community, including education, healthcare, infrastructure development and livelihood opportunities.

Meta, as the owner of the platform that facilitated the spread of hate speech and violence against the Rohingya people, should accept responsibility and provide compensation for the harm caused. Compensation would acknowledge the harm inflicted, support the recovery of survivors and demonstrate Meta's commitment to accountability. It is time for Meta and other technology companies to recognize the impact they have on vulnerable communities and take meaningful steps to rectify the damage caused by their platforms. By doing so, they can contribute to a more responsible and ethical technology ecosystem that prioritizes human rights and the well-being of all.

Europe's technocracy is killing its global dreams

Katerina Kolozova

SINCE December 2019, the European Union has been defining itself and the broader continent as "geopolitical". Arms of the European Commission have been renamed, ostensibly to propel the continent - including countries that are not members of the EU - towards becoming a global geopolitical force, from energy, research and education to trade and finances. Among the biggest early proponents of the vision of a "geopolitical Europe" has been French President Emmanuel Macron.

A central part of that vision is Macron's idea of a European Political Community (EPC), which includes the EU's 27 nations and 17 neighbours - some of whom want to join the EU, including Ukraine and Turkey, and others like Britain, which have left it. However, the reality of what on the surface looks like an enlargement policy is rather underwhelming. The second EPC meeting, held in Moldova on June 1, 2023, was an occasion to once again express support for Ukraine and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, while promising North Macedonia, an EU candidate for 18 years already, that it will finally join the Union - by 2030. This is far too slow and careless, considering the growing influence of Russia in North

Macedonia. At the end of the day, the EPC sounds and looks like a pompous name for a series of international events, conferences, cultural festivals and gatherings of leaders from the 44 participant countries. It is not an entity of any sort but a platform for this "community" to meet. Expecting anything more from this initiative would be as naive as expecting the EU's investment and funding schemes to, by themselves, meaningfully enliven Europe's "global competitiveness". To understand why, look no further than the European Research Area (ERA), an initiative that seeks to integrate the scientific resources of the EU. Its strategic document offers a road map for achieving geopolitical relevance through "technological competitiveness".

The document underscores how innovation, economic growth premised on technological competitiveness and global geopolitical relevance are inextricable. The ambition is clear: to become an independent competitor to China and the United States as well as to the rest of the rising global forces in the realms of technological innovation, digitalisation and green energy. Yet the results, at least so far, have once again been under-

whelming: Technocracy, bureaucracy and presumed expert (academic) oversight delay every effort to become a geopolitical force to reckon with. The EU remains far behind the US and China when it comes to tangibly transforming itself into a competitive geopolitical player by building an innovation-based economy. Bold ideas and research plans are dragged down and suffocated by review panels that look for NGO-styled project proposal writing and follow grant-awarding models of the golden era of neoliberalism in the 1990s. Ambitious proposals under the EU's leading innovation initiatives are looked down upon as unrealistic.

This fosters a research environment totally lacking in the go-getter approach of the EU's global competitors. Unless all of this changes, the idea of a geopolitical Europe driven by research and development will stay stillborn. At the moment, project proposals are scored through a technocratic process that takes almost a year on average. And at the end of that cumbersome process to seek funding, the money on the table is also far from competitive: the European Commission invested 100bn in research and innovation for 2021-

27, below the US, China and even multinational companies such as Amazon. All the talk of a geopolitical Europe will remain toothless if the political community it seeks to build is an NGO-styled platform to meet, greet and talk - rather than a political force and legal entity that can actually transform the union and the commission into a global power.

If it remains a club that a country can join or leave - it is neither political nor geopolitical. Geopolitics is territorially defined: it requires citizenship that can identify with a social and political system - its imagined political community. Likewise, competition through innovation must be executed at an ever-accelerated pace whereby an idea that can transform reality is not beaten down by the sophistry of technocrats and professors in ivory towers, detached from the stampeding speed of global transformation. Without that, the ambition to compete with Silicon Valley or China is a joke. In other words, the "geopolitical commission" is but a dream imploding under the weight of the EU's stifling technocratic grip on the continent's social, economic and territorially shaped reality. If Europe is to compete - in geopolitics and technology - the technocrats need to step back.

The Moscow Times



KARACHI: GM Shared Services PPL Brig. (Retd) Syed Mahmood ul Hassan presenting donation cheque to Executive Director JPMC Professor Shahid Rasool for renovation of library at JPMC, Karachi.

Last date for encashment of withdrawn prize bonds extended

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Federal Government has given another opportunity to the public to get the withdrawn prize bonds of Rs.7500, 15,000, 25,000 and Rs. 40,000 redeemed/encashed by June 30, 2023. Earlier, the government had fixed deadline of June 30, 2022, for redemption/encashment of these prize bonds, however, considering that some

of the prize bond holders could not get their bonds redeemed a final opportunity has been given for encashment of prize bonds till 30th June 2023. The investors of aforesaid prize bonds have following options of encashment or exchange.

Encashment at Face Value
Conversion to Premium Prize Bonds of Rs. 25,000 and/or Rs. 40,000

(Registered) Replacement with Special Savings Certificates (SSC) or Defense Savings Certificates (DSC)

The prize bonds can be redeemed from SBP Banking Services Corporation office and branches of commercial banks across the country till 30th June 2023. The SBP has issued necessary instructions to commercial banks to accept requests from general public

for encashment or exchange of the prize bonds till the extended date.

The general public holding these bonds is encouraged to avail this final opportunity and get their holdings redeemed before 30th June 2023.

These prize bonds shall not be en-cashable or exchangeable after the expiry of the extended deadline, thereby rendering them worthless.

Blue World City's recognized with 2 Asia Pacific Property Awards

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Blue World City, the world's largest purpose-built tourist city, has garnered international acclaim at the Asia Pacific Property Awards. Acknowledged by the esteemed UK-based International Property Awards, Blue World City received two awards during the ceremony held in Bangkok, Thailand. The world's largest under-development

tourist city has achieved distinction for the exceptional development design of Water Theme Park and the awe-inspiring construction of the World's Tallest Horse Mascots and earned two discerning Asia Pacific Property Awards. Blue World City's Chairman Saad Nazir and CEO Ch. Nadeem Ejaz, along with industry professionals from across the globe, participated in the International Property Awards show.

Chairman BWC Saad Nazir expressed his pride stating that he views Blue World City's global recognition as a testament to Pakistan's rising eminence and acceptance on the international stage. He added that it was a profound honor to present their splendid achievements before the world and represent Pakistan in this grand forum. He emphasized their mission of not only to illuminate Pakistan's name in

the realm of real estate but also to provide Pakistani residents, whether at home or abroad, with a symphony of world-class amenities. He underscored that Blue World City stands ready to embrace the desires of discerning tourists from every corner of the globe.

CEO BWC Ch. Nadeem Ejaz highlighted that Blue World City is going to be a global sensation, thanks to its unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional service. He said that the rapid development work in Blue World City sets an unprecedented example on the global stage that has transformed the project into not only a sought-after tourist destination but also a veritable heaven of excellence for those seeking extraordinary residential experiences, adorned with state-of-the-art amenities. He further added that through their unwavering dedication to crafting distinctive developments, Blue World City pledges to play a momentous role in propelling the progress and prosperity of their beloved nation, resonating on a global scale.



'Businessmen must be taken onboard about market timings'

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has stressed upon the government for taking the business community onboard to determine the working hours of the markets instead of imposing a unilateral policy in difficult business conditions which will not be beneficial.

He said that the business community supports the measures taken to save energy, but without consultation, the measures will harm the country's economy. Construction and repair works have been started in the markets of Islamabad with the efforts of Islamabad Chamber, CDA has decided to carry out development work, and Market Committees should cooperate with Chamber and CDA to make the project successful.

These views were expressed by him on Thursday while addressing a ceremony organized in honor of Abdul Ghaffar Chaudhry, former Vice President Chamber and General Secretary of Trade Welfare Association G-8/1. On this occasion, construction works in markets, problems faced by traders were also discussed.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that as the President of Islamabad Chamber, solving the problems of the businessmen of Islamabad is my first priority. He said that with the efforts of the Chamber, our long-standing demand for development works in the markets of Islamabad has been fulfilled. The work has started to solve all the problems that we mentioned to the Chairman CDA. Tender for development works has also been issued, G sectors have been included in the project on priority basis. Street lights, sewage and sanitation are the main issues in the markets, all the issues have been submitted in written form to CDA.

that with the efforts of the Chamber, our long-standing demand for development works in the markets of Islamabad has been fulfilled. The work has started to solve all the problems that we mentioned to the Chairman CDA. Tender for development works has also been issued, G sectors have been included in the project on priority basis. Street lights, sewage and sanitation are the main issues in the markets, all the issues have been submitted in written form to CDA.

that with the efforts of the Chamber, our long-standing demand for development works in the markets of Islamabad has been fulfilled. The work has started to solve all the problems that we mentioned to the Chairman CDA. Tender for development works has also been issued, G sectors have been included in the project on priority basis. Street lights, sewage and sanitation are the main issues in the markets, all the issues have been submitted in written form to CDA.

Stocks mixed as rate hike worries return

LONDON (APP): Major stock markets diverged Thursday as investors bet on whether the Federal Reserve would keep raising US interest rates to combat stubbornly-high inflation.

Eurozone indices were higher in early afternoon deals despite data showing the bloc entered recession at the start of the year.

Asian equities closed mixed, while the dollar weakened against main

rivals and oil prices gained. Tokyo finished down as the yen bounced on data showing Japan's economy expanded more than initially thought in the first quarter.

Market watchers were taken by surprise this week by rate hikes from the Australian and Canadian central banks. With the pair still concerned by elevated inflation, there is concern that the Federal Reserve could prolong its tightening at its policy meeting next week, heaping more pressure on a struggling global economy.

"Canada and Australia don't often have a central role in moving the markets but the decision by both countries' central banks to resume rate hikes this week has reverberated through the financial system and helped stoke fears about sticky inflation," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

PPL funds library renovation at JPMC

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), one of the leading National E&P Companies and largest corporate donors, has recently funded the repair and renovation of a 66-year-old library at Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC). This support aims to improve teaching and training facilities at JPMC.

JPMC is a public sector hospital in Karachi and established in its current form in 1963, providing much needed healthcare for the under privileged and poor citizens. The institution also provides higher medical education, training and research for enhancing the capacity and skills of the doctors.

Brig Syed Mahmood Ul Hassan (Retd), General Manager Shared Services of PPL presented the donation cheque amounting to Rs4.9 million to Executive Director, JPMC, Professor Shahid Rasool.

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility programme, PPL remains committed to contributing in Health Sector, for the underprivileged community.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Maersk Pelepas, MSC Tian-ping, Al-Karama, Orange Victoria and Kanha carrying Containers, Coal, Gas oil and LPG, berthed at Container Terminal, Bulk Terminal, Oil Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively.

A total of 11 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, Maersk Pelepas, MSC Tian-ping, Milaha Ras Laffan, LNG Ogun and Kanha sailed out on Thursday morning, MT RSG, Haj Mohammed and Ji-Li-669 are expected to sail on today.

Cargo Volume of 149,257 tonnes, comprising 108,056 tones imports Cargo and 41,201 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,484 Containers (636 TEUs Imports and 1,848 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Dona BIBI, Saver-I and Alexandra Kosan & two more ships, APL South Hampton and MSC Pegasus carrying Canola Seed, Palm oil, Chemicals and Containers are expected to take berths at FAP, LCT EVTL and QICT respectively on Thursday & another containers ship, Al-Safat is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Friday.

IT registers upward growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over the past 5 years, a phenomenal upward growth of 178 percent in Information Technology and ITes exports has been witnessed at compound annual growth rate of 30 percent, the highest growth rate in comparison to all other local industries in services.

According to the Economic Survey 2022-23 launched by Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar here on Thursday Pakistan's IT and ITes industry is exporting its services to 170+ countries and territories.

The USA is the largest market accounting for 54.54 percent of the export remittances receipts, followed by the UK (7.99 percent), UAE (6.91 percent), Ireland (6.73 percent) and Singapore (4.95 percent), respectively. The top 20 IT and ITes export destinations accounted for 97.05 percent of export remittances, while the rest only accounted for 2.95 percent only.

Pakistani freelancers contributed foreign exchange earnings through remittances of US\$ 269.8 million (IT: US\$ 156.9 million and non-IT: US\$ 112.9 million) during July-March FY2023. Pakistani freelancers are earning valuable foreign exchange and impacting remote and rural communities.

PBF backs NEC's energy conservation program

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has backed the decision of the National Economic Council (NEC) to close markets and commercial centres at 8:00 P.M. to save energy.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, PBF Vice President and Chief Organiser, Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad said steps for energy conservation recommended under this plan, such as the closure of shops and commercial centres by 8pm, switching to LED lights and upgrading geysers to make them more energy efficient, could help the country save up to \$1 billion annually.

He stated that neither Europe nor the United States could afford the luxury of keeping commercial areas open till 12:00 in the night.

He added that circular debt is eating the country like termites and this move will save electricity and that the provinces have agreed to implement this decision as well which was appreciated.

The PBF also suggests that the district administration make it a point to ensure that the shops open at 10 A.M. giving traders enough time to conduct their daily operations.

Rupee gains 08 paises

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 08 paises against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 286.80 against the previous day's closing of Rs 286.88.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 300 and Rs 303 respectively.

The price of the Euro went up by Rs1.12 to close at Rs 307.62 against the last day's closing of Rs 306.50, according to the SBP.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 2.05, whereas an increase of Rs 1.74 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 357.73 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 355.99.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 each to close at Rs 78.08 and Rs 76.47 respectively.

Hashmani met with Chairman Gohar Group

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Convener of Karachi Zone Business Forum Sindh Pakistan Muslim League (Functional) Abdul Qadir Hashmani met with the well-known businessman Muhammad Hanif Gohar Chairman of Gohar Group of Companies in a pleasant environment. On this occasion, Abdul Qadir Hashmani presented a gift of gratuity and flowers to Hanif Gohar.

Hashmani discussed Hanif Gohar for the Business Forum Sindh (PML-F), and Hanif Gohar appreciated the efforts of Abdul Qadir Hashmani regarding the Business Forum Sindh (PML-F) and gave useful suggestions.



Total PARCO organizes university day at GCU

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Total PARCO Pakistan Limited, one of the largest multinational energy company in Pakistan, recently organized an event titled "Transforming Lives with Positive Action in New Reality" at Government College University (GCU) in Lahore.

The event featured Mehmet Celepoglu, Chief Executive Officer of Total PARCO Pakistan Limited (TPPL), who delivered an inspiring speech to the young students and enthusiastic audience from various walks of life.

During the event we witnessed Mr. Mehmet Celepoglu engaging with the audience, both in-person at a packed auditorium and digitally, with thousands of participants

including students, business partners, customers, media personnel, brand ambassadors, and his own teams. It provided a platform for all the youth to learn from such an inspiring leader as him from his vast knowledge and experiences.

He shared insights into his unique leadership and management style, which has successfully guided TPPL through the challenges of the last three years.

During his speech, we got to know about TPPL's initiatives focused on positive diversity, women empowerment, safety, and sustainable development, showcasing the organization's transformative journey over the past three years. His speech offered valuable insights into TPPL's forward-thinking strategies.

Moreover, he emphasized his determination to prioritize diversity, inclusion, youth empowerment, and sustainable development, aiming to exemplify its role as an energy company that enables individuals to become effective leaders driving positive initiatives. Through these endeavors, Total PARCO seeks to create a lasting and positive influence in the communities it serves.

After the speech, Mr. Mehmet Celepoglu inaugurated the Miyawaki Forest at Government College University, Lahore along with Professor Dr. Ashgar Zaidi the Vice Chancellor of GCU Lahore.

TPPL demonstrated its proactive approach towards environmental preservation and conservation, aligning with its core value of "Care for the Environment."

LIPTON Teas hosts grand for 700 children



F.P. Report

KARACHI: LIPTON Teas & Infusions, the global leader in the tea industry, believes in creating value for all stakeholders. Recently, the organization reaffirmed its dedication to sustainable communities with hosting a breakfast for 700 children from under-served areas of Karachi, in collaboration with the HOPE Foundation. The event aimed to provide

nourishment, support, and a memorable experience for these young individuals.

As an organization deeply rooted in the belief of creating value for all, LIPTON Teas & Infusions recognizes the integral importance of building and supporting sustainable communities. The company's commitment extends beyond its consumers, farmers, shareholders, and even its own people, as it actively seeks to make a positive

impact on the planet.

More than 20 volunteers from LIPTON also participated in the breakfast in Karachi, who wholeheartedly engaged with the children, providing them with nourishing meals and spreading joy through their warm interactions. The volunteers, embodying LIPTON's values of compassion and social responsibility, shared smiles, laughter, and heartfelt moments with the young attendees.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 94/1?Institution 8/12/2022. Date of hearing 19/6/2023. Inayatullah VS Ahmed Nawaz Khan. Notice to No. 2. Tor Khan son. 4. Mst. Gul Pari. 5. Naz Bibi daughters of Bakht Nazera resident of Agaray thesl Mandanr district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8 a.m. dated 19/6/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Asian Youth Netball C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Netball Federation (ANF) has announced draws and schedule for the Asian Youth Netball Championship 2023 to be played from June 10 to 17 at South Korea. According to President, Pakistan Netball Federation (PNF), Mudassar Arain 11 teams from Asian countries were taking part in the championship which are divided into two groups. Group-A includes Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand while Group-B comprise Sri Lanka, Korea, Chinese Taipei, Brunei and Singapore. Schedule- June 10: Korea vs Chinese Taipei, Thailand vs India, Pakistan vs Japan, Singapore vs Brunei and Malaysia vs Hong Kong. June 11: Pakistan vs Thailand, Japan vs Malaysia, Korea vs Sri Lanka, Brunei vs Chinese Taipei and India vs Hong Kong. June 12: Sri Lanka vs Brunei, India vs Malaysia, Pakistan vs Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei vs Singapore and Thailand vs Japan. June 13: Pakistan vs Malaysia, India vs Japan, Hong Kong vs Thailand, Sri Lanka vs Singapore and Brunei vs Korea. June 14: Japan vs Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei vs Sri Lanka, Malaysia vs Thailand, Pakistan vs India and Singapore vs Korea. June 15 would be a rest day. The semi-finals of the championship would be played on June 16, while final and position matches on June 17.

Gunathilaka to face rape trial

SYDNEY (Reuters): Sri Lankan cricketer Danushka Gunathilaka will stand trial on a rape charge stemming from an alleged incident which occurred while he was in Australia to play in the Twenty20 World Cup last year. The 32-year-old, who was suspended by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) immediately after his arrest last November, had three of the four sexual assault charges he faced dropped last month. Gunathilaka entered a not guilty plea to the remaining charge of sexual intercourse without consent at a local court in Sydney on Thursday, the Australian Associated Press (AAP) reported. The top order batsman, who played more than 100 times for his country in all formats, also attempted to have his bail conditions altered so he would only have to report to police three times a week rather than daily, AAP said.

DC visits IUB to inspect arrangements

B A H A W A L P U R (APP): Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa visited the Baghdad-ul-Jadeed Campus of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur to review the arrangements for the football trials of the Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth Sports League. Director Sports Islamia University Bahawalpur Amjad Farooq Waraich gave a briefing to Deputy Commissioner Bahawalpur. He told that these trials will be held on 16 June and 17 June. All the arrangements for the trials of the Prime Minister Program for Talent Hunt Youth Sports League have been finalized. Governor Punjab Engr Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman will be the chief guest at the occasion. Deputy Commissioner also called on Vice Chancellor Engr Prof Dr Athar Mahboob and discussed the arrangements for football trials and regional volleyball matches.

Stokes wants Ashes series to go 'beyond cricket'

LONDON (Agencies): England captain Ben Stokes says he wants to be involved in an Ashes series that goes "beyond cricket" as he prepares to face Australia in a five-match series. The swashbuckling all-rounder has led England to 11 wins from 13 Tests since being appointed captain alongside coach Brendon McCullum last year. Next week the skipper, who starred in the drawn 2109 Ashes series, will lead his men in the first Test against arch-rivals Australia at Edgbaston. England have achieved their recent striking success playing an aggressive style of cricket dubbed "Bazball" in reference to McCullum's nickname. Doubts persist over whether such an approach can succeed against Australia but Stokes is determined to produce a memorable series that can be compared with the 1981 and 2005 Ashes contests, which made all-rounders Ian Botham and Andrew Flintoff huge stars. "I've seen what it's like

when you get those moments that really ignite an audience and even create something that goes beyond cricket," Stokes wrote in a column for the Players' Tribune. "Flintoff in 05, Beefy (Botham) in 81 -- magical events that capture the public imagination and show what cricket can be all about. "Moments that even people who aren't normally into cricket stick on the telly for because it's so exciting and you feel like you're part of something that you may never get to see again." Stokes, who has won the 50-over World Cup and Twenty20 World Cup, reiterated his desire for the Test side to play without fear, even though he stressed his hatred of defeat. "Just because I say it's all right to fail, it doesn't mean I'm fine with losing," he said. "I hate losing. "But there's a bigger picture. You have to understand that the only way you ever succeed is by having that liberty to really give it a proper go." The global growth of

T20 franchise leagues, which offer players the chance to earn huge sums of money in much less time than when on international duty, has left many fans fearing for the future of five-day Test cricket. Stokes acknowledged the "landscape is changing" but the 32-year-old said he still believed Test cricket remains the ultimate challenge. "Cricketers have short careers and I know players are going to make decisions about which route they go down based on financial security for them and their families," he said. "It's natural. "I really want boards across the world to get their heads around this, which they seem to be having a hard time doing. "Rather than fight against it, we need to embrace it. Yes, we may lose a few talented players along the way, but the best way to keep Test cricket alive and at the pinnacle of the sport is to work harder to show players something that excites them and inspires them."

National hockey team's training camp fir Asian Champions Trophy from June 12

ISLAMABAD (APP): The training camp of national senior probables, preparing for participation in the Asian Champions Trophy will commence from June 12 at National Hockey Stadium, Lahore. The Asian Champions Trophy is scheduled to be played in Chennai, India from August 3 to 12. According to a Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) spokesman, on the recommendations of the National Selection Committee, the federation has invited the following probables and team officials to join the national training camp. The 18 members of the national junior team that exhibited standout performance at the recently-held Junior Asia Cup in Oman have also been included in the probables. PROBABLES: GOAL-KEEPERS: Abdullah Ishtiaq

Khan (MPCL), Akmal Hussain (WAPDA), Ali Raza (Punjab), M. Faizan Janjua (Customs), Waqar (WAPDA), Abdullah Sheikh (Sindh) & Bilal Khan (Balochistan) DEFENDERS: Arbaz Ahmad (MPCL), M. Sufyan Khan (KPK), Muhammad Abdullah (MPCL), Aqeel Ahmed (WAPDA) & M. Bilal Aslam (Customs) MIDFIELDERS: Junaid Manzoor (NBP), Ahtisham Aslam (MPCL), M. Murtaza Yaqoob (WAPDA), M. Baqir (Punjab), Arbaz Ayaz (Sindh), M. Nadeem Khan (KPK), M. Zain (Customs) & Muhammad Ammad (Customs). FORWARDS: Rana Abdul Waheed (WAPDA), M. Umar Bhutta (WAPDA), Afraz (MPCL), Abdul Hannan Shahid (WAPDA), Rooman (WAPDA), M. Shahzaib Khan (Customs), Usama Bashir (PAF), M.

Imran (PAF), Arshad Liaqat (MPCL), Abdul Wahab (Sindh), Abdul Rehman (WAPDA), Zikriya Hayat (Navy), Ali Murtaza (Customs), Basharat Ali (Navy), Abdul Qayyum (Customs), Bilal Akram (Punjab), Muhammad Adnan (Sindh), Rana Suhail Riaz (Customs), Waqar Ali (MPCL), Shoaib Khan (KPK), Abdul Wajid (Balochistan), Saad Shafique (Punjab), Taimoor Javed Khan (Punjab), Syed Shahbaz Haider (Navy) & Muhammad Arsalan (Punjab). TEAM OFFICIALS: Col (Retd) Umar Sabir (Manager), Olympian Muhammad Saqlain, Olympian Rehan Butt, Olympian Dilawar Hussain & International Abdul Haseem Khan (Coaches), Abdul Ghafoor (GK Coach) and Muhammad Shahid (Physiotherapist).



LONDON: Pat Cummins celebrates taking the wicket of Rohit Sharma lbw on the second day of the ICC World Test Championship Final.

Muchova stuns Sabalenka to reach French Open final



Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic celebrates winning her semifinal match of the French Open tennis tournament.

PARIS (Agencies): Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic saved a match point and battled back from 2-5 down in the final set to shock world number two Aryna Sabalenka and reach her maiden Grand Slam final at the French Open on Thursday. Muchova, ranked at 43, defeated the Australian

Open winner 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 7-5 in a thrilling three-hour 13-minute match and will face either defending champion Iga Swiatek or Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia in Saturday's final. "It's unbelievable. I just kept fighting. But I don't want to sound cocky, I just keep working on my game," said Muchova.

The 26-year-old added Sabalenka to an impressive list of victims in Paris which included eighth seed Maria Sakkari in the first round and 2021 runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in the quarter-final. For Sabalenka, defeat ended her run of 12 successive match wins at the Slams as she paid a heavy price for

53 unforced errors while the versatile Muchova saved nine of 13 break points. Muchova, playing in her second Grand Slam semi-final, dug deep to save two break points in the fourth game of the opening set. Her clever angles countered the raw power of Sabalenka, taking her to set point in the 10th game. She was unable to convert that opportunity but made no mistake at the second time of asking, a wrong-footing, deep backhand giving her the set via a tiebreak after 68 minutes on court. It was the first set Sabalenka had dropped at the tournament. Muchova was 2-0 ahead and sensing a shock triumph in the second set but Sabalenka battled back, overcoming double-faulting on a first set point in the tiebreak to level the semi-final on the second. Suddenly the momentum was with the Belarusian who broke for 4-2 in the decider after seeing four break points come and go in the second game. Muchova appeared doomed to wilt under the barrage.

1st Quaid-e-Azam National Squash C'ship: Anas, Mehwish annex U19 titles

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anas Ali Shah of the Pakistan Army annexed the Boys U-19 title, while Mehwish Ali of Sindh lifted the Girls U-19 title of the 1st Quaid-e-Azam National Squash C'ship here at PSF Squash Complex Islamabad on Wednesday. Anas beat M. Ammad of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in an epic five-set battle by a scoreline of 12-10,11-13,12-10, 11-9,11-7 in 59 minutes. While Mehwish defeated Sana Bahadur of Army 13-11,10-12,11-7,13-11 in 26 minutes. Squash legend Qamar Zaman was the chief guest at the closing ceremony and gave away prizes to the winners. Zubair Sheikh, GM Shell Lubricants, Pakistan also witnessed the final matches and attended the prize distribution ceremony. Matches of other categories were also played on Wednesday.

Detailed results are under : Boys U-9 (Final) Atif Ali Naz (KP) bt Rayyan Zaman (KP) 12-10, 8-11, 11-9,11-6 20 min Boys U-11 (Final) Harmas Raja (PB) bt Ahmed Ali Naz (KP) 5-11,11-4,8-11,11-5,11-8 30 min Boys U-13 (Final) M Fawad (KP) bt Sohail Adnan (PB) 11-8,8-11,6-11-9,11-6, 32 min Boys U-15 (Final) Azan Ali (Army) bt Nouman Khan (Army) 7-11,4-11,11-3,11-4,11-4 38 min Boys U-17 (Final) Abdullah Nadeem (PB) bt Huraira Khan (KP) 13-11,8-11,11-3,11-4 23 min Boys U-19 – PSA Event (Final) Anas Ali Shah (Army) bt M Ammad (PAF) 12-10,11-13,12-10, 11-9,11-7 59 min GU-15 (Final) Sehrish Ali (Sindh) bt Rania Qazi (KP) 11-8,11-6,9-11,11-4 20 min Girls U-19 – PSA Event (Quarter Finals) Mehwish (SINDH) bt Sana Bahadur (Army) 13-11,10-12,11-7,13-11 26min.

LAHORE (Web Desk): Pakistan midfielder Amina Hanif who is currently representing Chesham United has opened up about her experience playing football while wearing a hijab (a headscarf). "I used to think I stand out so badly wearing a hijab, and that lowered my confidence and distracted me from my game," Amina told The Guardian. She shared, initially, it was difficult for her to play with the hijab but things got better with time. "After a while, something just clicked and I stopped caring about pretty much everything. It feels really good when nothing affects you," she said. Amina, who recently

made her debut for Pakistan, wants to be an inspiration for young girls playing football. "I like being different – the hijab means I stand out on the pitch more. The only challenge I have nowadays is readjusting my headscarf after heading the ball or hiding my pins from the referee before the game. I've been offered a Nike hijab, but I'm counting on my own becoming iconic," she said. "My goal was always to play at the highest level. However, I had never heard much about the Pakistan women's team until the opportunity came along. It goes to show you never really know where life will take you.

"The Pakistani community in the United Kingdom is not recognised within a lot of sports. But by being a part of the team I am hoping this will inspire other girls to take up sports and follow their passions in both Pakistan and the UK." She also backed the local talent in Pakistan to come good if there was a proper football system in place. "Pakistan has such a huge population and trust me, there's talent out there – both boys and girls. It's just a shame there's no real setup or scouting in place. I hope by bringing more success with the national team, other girls will feel it's worth the time and effort to pursue their dreams," she said.

Jokic and Murray dominate as Nuggets take 2-1 lead over Miami

MIAMI (AFP/APP): Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray dominated the Miami Heat, both making triple doubles, as the Denver Nuggets took a 2-1 lead in the NBA Finals and regained their home court advantage with a 109-94 win in game three on Wednesday. Two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Jokic scored 32 points with 21 rebounds and 10 assists, an unprecedented triple-double combination in an NBA Finals game. Murray scored 34 points and grabbed 10 rebounds and 10 assists. It was the first time any team in the Finals had two players making triple-doubles in the same game. Miami simply could not find a way to handle the 6 foot, 11-inch (2.11m) Jokic and unless coach Erik Spoelstra can come up with

a plan before Friday's game four, the Heat are going to face an uphill battle. Jokic became the first player in NBA history to reach the 30 points, 20 rebounds, 10 assists mark in a Finals game but took little interest in that achievement. "To be honest, not much. I'm just glad that we won a game," he said. "It was a big one for us just because they won in our arena, so we just didn't want to go down 2-1," he added. "We were just, I think, more locked in, more focused ... We've got to win the next one, that's our mindset." After Miami's win in Denver on Sunday, the Nuggets provided the perfect response with the kind of imposing display that coach Michael Malone demanded, and which will have answered any doubts that may have emerged

after that loss. Neither team could get on top in the first quarter, which ended 24-24 after a wonderful turnaround, fadeaway, jump shot from Miami's Kyle Lowry. But the Heat struggled to contain Murray, who put up 20 points in the first half, while Jokic almost had a triple double by half-time - the giant Serbian claiming 14 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists in the opening two quarters. The Nuggets led 53-48 at the half, helped by Miami's lack of precision in the paint where they missed 16 of 25 attempts. Early in the third though, Denver took a grip on the contest, quickly opening up an 11-point lead. Miami couldn't find either the defensive answers or the offensive potency to get back in the game.

Saman Abbas, Fajr Fatima win 3km legendary Muhammad Ayub Memorial Road Race

PESHAWAR (APP): Saman Abbas and Fajr Fatima clinched the trophies of the 3-kilometre Road Race named after the legendary athlete late Sub Muhammad Ayub. The three-kilometre Road Race was held inside Wah Cantt to pay rich tribute to legendary Pakistan athlete of Pakistan Army Sub Muhammad Ayub, former international athlete Muhammad Iqbal told APP on Thursday. Over 102 youngsters in two different categories of Class 9th & 10th (Senior) and Class 7-8 (Junior Category) participated. The kids were so enthusiastic during the Road Race. Iqbal emphasised the need to organize such events

to get our youth aware of the achievement recorded by our athletes in the past. He said athletics should also be promoted in this way as Pakistan Muhammad Abbas won a gold medal in the 400m hurdle and after that, no Pakistani athlete has any medal in the Asian Games. He said in 1990 when Muhammad Abbas clinched the gold medal in 400 hurdles, none of the athletes could reach that height in the Asian Games. After Saman Abbas, Muhammad Hussain, and Rayan Wazir took second and third prizes. The other position holders including Syed Hasnain Shah, Muhammad Ammar Farooq, Faiz Ahmad,

Noman Ahmad, Ayan Umar Khan, Taiman Amir and Muzammil Khan while in the Junior category surprising Fajr Fatima won the title among boys competitors, followed by Rana Umair and Mubeen Ahmed. The winners in the Senior and Junior categories awarded Rs 5000 as cash prizes for first, Rs 3000 for second and Rs 2000 for third while 1000 each has been given to the first 10th position holders. Fajr Fatima was also awarded Rs 10,000 for her excellent performance by the chief guest former GM SNGPL Engr. Zahoor Ahmad and Muhammad Iqbal awarded her Rs 2000 and Rana Afzal awarded her Rs 1000 while all the

102 participants got a Race shirt inscribed with the name of the late Sub Muhammad Ayub. Muhammad Iqbal, who also remained as Director of Sports Mansehra University, said that along with a shirt, all the participants got a certificate as well. He disclosed that like Sub Muhammad Ayub, on August 14 Sub Abdul Khaliq Memorial Athletic Meet would be organized, followed by another Athletic Meet in September this year. He said the race was open for all and similarly the Athletic Meet would be open for all athletes where in the position holders athletes would be provided athletic shoes, sports kits and coaching facilities

under qualified coaches so that the game of Athletics could be popularized among youngsters. It is worth mentioning here that Muhammad Ayub (1932?2008), was a Pakistani athlete who represented Pakistan at international and national athletics. He was also an officer in the Pakistan Army, participated in the 1965 war and received a Medal. From 1952 to 1978 Sub Muhammad Ayub represented Pakistan. In 1970, 1972 and 1973 he participated in national Championships and won Gold Medals in Disc Throw, during this period he was also the Athletic Coach of the Pakistan Sports Control board.

Afterwards, he remained a coach for the POF Athletic Team and served in B-20 POF Weapons Factory from 1979 to 1990. He died on October 19, 2008. Muhammad Ayub finished 9th in the 1958 Commonwealth Games discus throw, 10th in the 1962 Commonwealth Games discus throw, and 12th in the 1966 Commonwealth Games discus throw. His personal best was 48.00 in 1967. He also represented the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and remained at 19th. Late legendary Muhammad Ayub's participation in national and International events is as under:- 1954 Asian Games, Manila 1956 Olympic Games, Melbourne was

Eliminated in the qualifying round 1956 First Indo-Pak Athletic Meet up, New Delhi 1957 International Meet, Tehran 1958 International Discus Championship, Hong Kong 1958 Asian Games, Tokyo 1958 Commonwealth Games, Cardiff 1962 Commonwealth Games, Perth 1962 Malaysian Open 1966 Commonwealth Games, Jamaica 1966 Int'l Discus Championship, Daun National Events Year Event Achievement 1954 National Athletic Championship 1956 National Games 1967 National Championship 1969 National Athletics Championship 1973 Punjab Athletics Championship.



In brief

IRSA releases 168,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 168,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 185,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.30 feet and was 28.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 66,400 cusecs and 63,600 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1134.70 feet, which was 84.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 54,200 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 86,000, 82,000, 61,500 and 22,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 35,400 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 10,400 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

200 Afghans arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): In view of the involvement of some Afghan nationals in May 9 riots, police and other law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) in Islamabad have rounded up 200 Afghans living in different parts of the federal capital in the last few days in a crackdown ordered by the interior ministry. Sources in the police stated that cases against Afghan nationals had been registered under the Foreign Act. Moreover, they disclosed, audit of all Afghan settlements in the federal capital had begun, and the report would be submitted to the interior ministry. They explained that the LEAs had even approached the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) in order to know the exact number of Afghans living in different parts of the country.

ANF recovers 37 kg drugs in 4 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in their ongoing operations against drug smugglers conducted raids in different areas and managed to recover over 37 kg of drugs besides netting two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that in an operation at a private courier company office here, ANF recovered 50 grams of weed, being sent to the UK. The parcel was booked by an accused resident of Jhelum. In another operation at Multan Airport, 986 grams of charras were recovered from the possession of a Dubai-bound passenger, a resident of North Waziristan, going through flight no PK-221. In the third operation, 129 litres of prohibited chemical was recovered from Toba Achakzai, Qilla Abdullah area. In the fourth operation conducted in a deserted Mazani area in Gwadar, 36 kg charras concealed under bushes were recovered.

PMD indicates chances of rain

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly hot and dry weather with chances of rain in a few parts of the country during the next 24 hours. According to the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country. A westerly wave was still affecting eastern and central parts of the country and was likely to persist during the next 24 hours. The PMD daily report said that mainly hot and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country.



ISLAMABAD: State Minister of Turkmenistan and Head of Turkengaz, Maksat Babayev and Minister of State for Petroleum of Pakistan, Dr. Musaddiq Malik signing TAPI Joint Implementation Plan meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses the signing.

Sherry calls for unity to tackle plastic pollution in oceans

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday urged the masses to unite this year to tackle the critical issue of plastic pollution in the oceans as the oceans produce 50 to 75 per cent of the earth's oxygen.

In her message on World Oceans Day, the federal minister said the Day was being celebrated all over the world including Pakistan.

Senator Rehman said the day aimed to raise global awareness of the importance of oceans and promote their conservation and sustainable management.

"The entire planet's ecology depends on the oceans. Plastic pollution is a serious threat to marine life and ecosystems. It is estimated that there are millions of tons of plastic in our oceans. Global reports indicate that 8 to 12 million metric tons of plastic waste enter the oceans every year," Sherry Rehman added.

"If this trend continues, one day there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans," she said. Nature has blessed Pakistan with a marine ecosystem, harmful effects of plastic waste on our own oceans should not be ignored as Pakistan pres-

ents a 7Rs road-map to combat plastic pollution, Sherry Rehman added.

"We have announced a phased ban on single-use plastic items, with the aim of reducing its consumption and encouraging the use of environmentally friendly alternatives. We have also introduced a Hazardous Waste Management Policy for hazardous waste. However, international cooperation is essential to tackle plastic pollution in the oceans," said the Minister.

She demanded that the nation take a pledge to protect the beautiful ocean on World Oceans Day.

Sadiq Sanjrani terms his visit to Russia a historic one

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Thursday termed his visit to Russia a historic one. During his four-day visit to Russia, Sanjrani held meetings with Russian Parliamentarians and Government officials to strengthen ties between the two nations. Notably, Chairman Sanjrani met with Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, Chairman of the state, VV Volodin, and paid respects at the monument of the unknown soldiers near the Kremlin wall by laying flowers.

In addition to these engagements, Chairman Sanjrani delivered a significant address at the plenary session of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, marking a new chapter in the development of bilateral relations.

During the meetings, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani emphasized the importance of Pakistan's historical and political relationship with Russia. He highlighted the role of regional relations in

promoting social and economic development and expressed Pakistan's commitment to the vision of regional progress. The purpose of the visit was to elevate bilateral relations to new heights.

During a meeting in Moscow, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, Alexander Novik discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations, including trade, investment, energy, defense, culture, and exchanges of delegations. Both leaders expressed satisfaction with the ongoing progress in Pakistan-Russia relations and underscored the significance of collaboration in addressing common challenges and promoting peace and stability.

Chairman Senate stressed the vast investment opportunities available in Pakistan and encouraged investors from both countries to capitalize on these prospects.

Furthermore, Sanjrani held detailed discussions with State Duma Chairman VV Volodin on issues of mutual interest. He highlighted the abundance of mineral resources

in Balochistan and other areas, as well as various sectors including CPEC, health, education, and information technology. The Chairman Senate emphasized the favorable investment environment in Pakistan, which has garnered interest from several countries. As part of the visit, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani visited the Moscow Cathedral Mosque, where he was received by the Grand Mufti Ginituddin.

The Grand Mufti provided insights into the history and activities of the mosque, as well as Russia's relations with the Muslim world. Chairman Senate commended Russia's commitment to respecting all religions and fostering inter-religious harmony. He reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to promoting peace in the region and emphasized the freedom enjoyed by all minorities in the country. Additionally, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani paid homage to the unknown soldiers at the memorial near the Kremlin Wall by laying flowers.

Pakistan Hajj Mission deploys 190 buses for transportation to Haram Sharif

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Pakistan Hajj Mission has deployed 190 modern buses near the doorsteps of Pakistani Hajj pilgrims' residences to provide round-the-clock transportation to the grand mosque, Haram Sharif.

These buses would be readily accessible to pilgrims at all eight sectors, operating around the clock to facilitate their transportation to Haram Sharif for prayer purposes. The bus fleet would be expanded in correlation with the increasing number of hujjaj.

Preliminary planning suggests that the bus count will be raised to 360 or potentially even more, in order to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims.

Spokesman Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony said that the buildings near the Haram Sharif were quite expensive.

The main purpose behind acquiring a five to six-kilometer radius around the Haram Sharif was to ensure that the expenses remained at a minimum level.

Additionally, the nearest buildings were situated in hilly areas, which posed a challenge for elderly hujjaj who wished to travel to the Haram Sharif on foot.

The acquisition of residence at Batha Quraish, located a mere 400 meters from

the Haram Sharif, serves a purpose beyond financial considerations.

In addition to being a cost-effective option, the area boasts an open and tranquil environment. Moreover, operating a shuttle service in this vicinity proves to be highly economical.

He said the designated pick-up times have already been communicated to the pilgrims in each building.

For the pilgrims residing in sectors 2, 5, 6, and 7, the pick-up point is the bus stop near the entry, exit point of the Haram Sharif known as Bab e Abdul Aziz.

Similarly, the pilgrims residing in sector 4 are being picked up from either Bab e Salam or the gates of Safa and Marwa.

As for the residents of sector 8, they are being picked up from the gate of Haram Sharif known as Bab e Abdul Aziz.

It is noteworthy to mention that a total of 50,603 pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, an additional 6,037 individuals are expected to arrive by Thursday evening. Approximately 14,910 pilgrims are staying in Madinah, while the rest of the pilgrims have arrived in Makkah. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has also welcomed the arrival of more than 4,000 pilgrims performing hajj under private hajj scheme.

Smoke-free Pakistan among government's priorities: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the incumbent government was striving to protect future generations from the unhealthy habit of smoking as a smoke-free Pakistan was among its priorities.

The prime minister, in a meeting with CEO of Chromatic Shariq Khan, lauded the services of the organisation for eliminating of smoking in the country. Shariq Khan apprised the prime minister of his firm's anti-smoking campaign as well as the Tobacco Control Alliance for Pakistan. He said that being held in cooperation with Bloomberg Philanthropies, the campaign was aimed at assisting the government to eliminate smoking from the country. Special assistants to prime minister Tariq Fatemi and Tariq Pasha and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Sheikh sees June 20 crucial for Pakistan's politics

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed predicted that political situation in Pakistan would be clear by June 20 as key decisions are expected during this phase. In a series of tweets, the former interior minister said PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman had asserted that elections would be held but PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif linked polls to, what he said, a level playing field. Lamenting that public and Constitution had been neglected, he said the "planners" had turned a blind eye to the ground realities. He said people were looking up to the judiciary. He said public opinion could not be changed by jail threats.

He said the World Bank had painted a bleak picture of the national economy but the government was celebrating it. Lashing out at Mr Zardari, he asked where was his economic expertise during his party's rule from 2008 and 2013. He said the IMF was reluctant to revive the loan programme and dollar continued to gain ground against Pakistani rupee. The AML chief said a handful of 100 people was suppressing millions of citizens of the country.

Pak-US to continue close partnership on health sector

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The United States and Pakistan held the second stand-alone U.S.-Pakistan Health Dialogue on Thursday. According to a press statement issued by the US Embassy Thursday, the dialogue was chaired by Abdul Qadir Patel, Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination and Isobel Coleman, Deputy Administrator, USAID.

Pakistan and the United States affirmed their mutual commitment to continue close partnership in the health sector to combat infectious and non-communicable diseases; reduce malnutrition; strengthen the primary health care system and expand quality health services across Pakistan; and support Pakistan's recovery from the devastating 2022 floods.

Both countries acknowledged their long history of bilateral partnership in the health sector. For decades, the United States has invested in Pakistan's health sector benefiting millions of Pakistanis.

The United States has extended technical and financial assistance for provision of clean drinking water and sanitation services to more than 300,000 people across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces. The United States has donated more than 79 million safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines in partnership with COVAX; responded to outbreaks of HIV, typhoid fever, and other diseases in Pakistan; and delivered health services to nearly 11 million women and children over the past seven years.

Pakistan has been a strong partner in efforts to improve access to quality health services, increase budget allocations for health, and invest in infrastructure to meet the health needs of the people of Pakistan.

Through the Health Dialogue, the two governments are committing to work together in the ensuing years to help Pakistan continue to recover from the 2022 floods; strengthen maternal and child health and nutrition services; advance international health regulations and global health security; and combat infectious and non-communicable diseases.

The United States remains committed to supporting shared priorities with Pakistan, including on immunizations, health security, and Pakistan's national public health institute.

Both governments also resolved to continue deepening their bilateral partnership to address the health impacts of climate change and other environmental issues such as air quality and explore how those can be mitigated through the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance – a framework to focus on food security, climate-smart agriculture, water management, and clean energy.

The delegations discussed the United States' recent announcement of \$16.4 million to combat malnutrition, as well as plans to invest \$30 million in already approved FY 2022 resources via USAID programs to support health sector programming in Pakistan. The delegations look forward to the U.S.-hosted bilateral Health Dialogue in 2024.

100,000 laptops will be given to youth this year: Bilal Kayani

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Economy and Energy Bilal Azhar Kayani has said that the federal budget to be presented tomorrow will envisage measures for increasing growth and employment opportunities and take the economy to the next stage.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Thursday, he said the budget will encompass special incentives for the IT start ups. He said one hundred thousand laptops will be given to the youth this year.

The Coordinator to the Prime Minister was confident that the budget will lay the foundation of a strong economy by increasing exports. He said our target is to enhance IT exports to 4.5 billion dollars.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has personally held consultations with different stakeholders on budgetary proposals.

Bilal Azhar Kayani said regardless of difficult situation, the government has extended relief to the people through enhancing allocations for Benazir Income

Support Program, Free Atta distribution, reduction in the prices of essential items at Utility Stores Corporation and Kissan package worth 1800 billion rupees. He said we have also reduced the prices of petroleum products.

Highlighting the performance of PML-N government during the period between 2013-18, he regretted that the PTI government reversed the process of development. He said the PTI Chairman has only caused political instability in the country.

Experts for exploring strategies reducing plastic waste, creating livable urban future in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts on Thursday called for exploring strategies for reducing plastic waste, and creating a livable urban future in the country.

A Twitter Space titled "Reducing Plastic Waste for a Livable Urban Future in Pakistan" was held on World Environment Day 2023. It was jointly organized by the Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and the School of Leadership (SoLF) with the support of the U.S. Embassy, a news release said. The virtual event brought together experts, policymakers, and concerned citizens to address the pressing issue of plastic waste and its impact on the urban environment in Pakistan. The event aimed to raise awareness, foster dialogue, and identify effective strategies for reducing plastic waste and creating livable urban spaces.

The panel included the Director General Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak EPA), Farzana Altaf Shah, Senior Manager Climate & Energy WWF-Pakistan, Nazifa Butt, Mome Saleem Senior Environmentalist, Dr Ejaz Ahmad Senior Program Fellow Institute of Urbanism (IoU), Mariyam Irfan Managing Director School of Leadership Foundation (SoLF), Mehreen Raza Founder and CEO She-Guard and Bilal Ahmad INT TECH GenUnlimited Global Winner. The space was hosted by Asmat Ullah, Anchorperson, a news release said.

The Twitter space commenced with a welcome note by Dr Ejaz Ahmad who emphasized the urgent need to take collective action to reduce reliance on single-use

plastics and explore sustainable alternatives. According to research, every year, 55 billion plastic bags are used and the rate is increasing drastically by 15% annually.

We need to come up with certain solutions to address this grave issue.

Farzana Altaf while speaking about ways to combat plastic pollution in Islamabad specifically, she emphasized the importance of initiating public-private partnerships to bring impactful change. She said, "We need more coordination amongst all the stakeholders involved to truly combat the issue of plastic pollution." Upon asking Nazifa Butt about the major industries involved in plastic pollution, she mentioned "All the FMCGs, food and beverages industry, and textile sector are the plastic producers as well as major contributors to the percentage of plastic waste in our waste generation."

She further shared that we cannot fully eliminate plastic from our lives but it's good to see that these big companies have launched pilot projects focused on plastic recycling, adding that the government needs to set out a clear path for these companies to get substantial results from these schemes. Responding to a question regarding youth involvement in a plastic-free sustainable future Mome Saleem said "Government of Pakistan's Green Youth Movement (GYM) program sounds like a commendable initiative! She established 137 GYM Clubs in different universities as a widespread commitment to environmental conservation and youth engagement to make cities plastic-free."



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAFM) on accountability, Irfan Qadir addressing a press conference at PID media center.

Minister meets top official
KABUL (Agencies): Acting Labor and Social Affairs Minister, Mullah Abdul Manan Omari met with Director of ILO. The ILO strives to transfer international standards and specialized experience in the field of work to Afghanistan, he said during the meeting with Minister Omari, according to a statement. For his part, Minister asked for further cooperation of the ILO with the Ministry in aim to provide ground opportunities for creation of jobs.

Delaware stressed start of plans
KABUL (Agencies): Acting Mines and Petroleum Minister, Sheikh Shahabuddin Delaware, discussed the start of practical work of the Mes Aynak copper mine project with Wang Yu the Chinese ambassador in Kabul on Thursday. The two sides exchanged views on investment opportunities in Afghanistan, mainly in the sector of mine and the start of practical work of the Mes Aynak copper mine project said a statement released by the Ministry.

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

Haqqani calls for nation to be ‘more united’



MAZAR-E-SHARIF CITY (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan’s Minister of Interior Sirajuddin Haqqani, called on Afghans living abroad to return home and on the nation to become more united. Speaking in Mazar-e-Sharif city of Balkh province, the ministry said: “Enemies are making many

conspiracies to divide Afghans, but the roots of prejudice here were never civil but brought by foreigners and only had a political aspect. “The enemies of Afghanistan tried to divide the country, but the Mujahideen of the North proved the deep roots of national unity, that we are a

united nation. Our real situation is that from Panjshir to the earthquake victims of Paktika and from Uruzgan to the people affected by the natural disaster of Badakhshan, the hands of help were extended. Our unity is natural, it has deep roots in our beliefs,” Haqqani said. Governor of Balkh, Haji

Muhammad Yusuf Wafa, welcomed his visit to Balkh province and said Haqqani’s trip was a “good step”. After voting Hazrat Ali shrine, Haqqani also visited the tomb of Wazir Muhammad Akbar Khan and other historical figures. He prayed for their souls and met with the administrators of the shrine, the ministry said. Haqqani said he will help in the reconstruction of Hazrat Ali’s shrine and the construction of a library for the religious seminary in the compound of the shrine. He shared some advice to solve some problems. According to the ministry, these visits were conducted on Sunday. On Monday, Haqqani met with officials, scholars and tribal leaders of Balkh province. Mawlawi Abu Edris, the deputy of Balkh province, said the people of the north were honored by

Haqqani’s visit. “This is the result of the sacrifices of the Mujahideen of Balkh Province and the great grace and mercy of Allah, that we see leaders among us,” Edris said. Edris further added that: “We have made great sacrifices in bringing the Islamic system and now the survival of the system requires the sacrifices of honesty, integrity and unity. We are one nation and we must be more united.” Sheikh Muhammad Saad Hashemi, Chairman of Balkh’s Ulema Council also made a speech at the event and said: “Security has been given priority in all religions, states and nations. The current security privileges are attributed to the Islamic Emirate, the efforts of the Islamic Emirate should be praised at the national and international level.” At the end of the meeting, Haqqani spoke and

said: “We got the power of the government when everything was chaotic and the situation kept me busy, so please accept my excuse for the delay in visiting Balkh.” Calling on Afghans who left the country, Haqqani said: “Those Afghans who were frightened by propaganda and left their homeland, should return; this country is a common and peaceful home for all.” He raised the issue of Jihad and said at the start, many people pointed out that conspiracy methods were being used instead of armed struggle, but due to the sacrifice and perseverance of the Mujahideen, they succeeded in all their “trials”. The interior minister once again reminded the public of the general amnesty. “Amir al Mum’ninin [the IEA’s supreme leader] announced general amnesty for peace, and after the

amnesty, if someone violated it, they were dealt with according to Sharia law,” he added. The interior minister also advised the security forces to remain disciplined and said he believes that the survival of the system lies in good morals. “The survival of the system lies in good morals. Power and status sometimes creates arrogance in a person, with arrogance, the intellect and thinking of a person is destroyed. The leader used to tell me that we have nothing but good manners, and we should treat our subordinates well,” Haqqani said. Haqqani also passed the IEA leader’s message on to the forces and Balkh officials. “The leader has sent a message of greetings and good manners to his subjects. My message to the Mujahideen is to be in the service of the people day and night, and even those

Mujahideen who are not officially on duty, are responsible to Allah and the Prophet (PBUH) for good deeds, to remain committed to the noble qualities of endeavor through high morals,” he added. He once again emphasized that the system is all-inclusive and has provided services to tribal leaders, scholars and other professional staff. “Scholars are our spiritual leaders and the success of this world and the hereafter lies in their guidance. The people share in our profits and losses, as our system is all-inclusive, providing service to tribal leaders, scholars and other professional staff,” Haqqani said. Haqqani, said: “In order to save the youth from the domination of this foreign culture, we must develop our Islamic and Afghan culture and thought and make it so beloved that people themselves accept it.”

UNICEF concerned by likely stop in operation of NGOs active in education

KABUL (TOLONews): The UNICEF said in a statement: “As the lead agency for the education cluster in Afghanistan, UNICEF is deeply concerned by reports that over 500,000 children, including over 300,000 girls, could lose out on quality learning through Community Based Education within a month if international non-governmental organizations working in the field of education are no longer allowed to operate and if handovers to national NGOs are done without comprehensive assessment and capacity building.” The organization urges

the “de facto authorities” to place the best interests of the child at the heart of all decision-making and reiterates that every child has the right to learn. TOLONews reached out to an education-supporting organization. “We are concerned that if these NGOs stop their operations, the education for the children in Afghanistan will be lost forever,” said Fazal Saberi, head of an NGOs. “Such suspension of (NGOs) operations will damage the education of Afghanistan and the Afghan children will be vulnerable,” said Suraya Paikan, a women’s rights

activist. This comes as female students urged the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools for girls in grades 7-12. “All of the girls had the dreams to become a doctor, engineer or a teacher for themselves, their family, and their society but since the schools have been closed, we cannot reach our dreams,” said Sitara, a student. “We cannot go to the schools, so I call for the reopening of our schools,” said Bahara, a student. This comes as reportedly dozens of education-supporting organizations have been closed across the country.

Minister Azizi meets businessmen

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Industry and Commerce Minister, Nooruddin Azizi, met with industrialists, businessmen and investors of Helmand province. Industrialists, businessmen and investors of Helmand province, while appreciating the supports of the Islamic Emirate, shared their problems and challenges and asked the ministry to provide ground opportunities for the export of their products. Meanwhile, they demanded building a cotton market and increasing of the electrical capacity for the industrial parks in that province, according to a statement. For his part, Minister Azizi said, Tax laws in other countries are strict, but in Afghanistan, in order to support the industrialists and businessmen, based on the direction of supreme leader of IEA, the tax issues, adjustments were made based on ease in 27 cases.

Canal Dept collects 340m Afghani

NANGARHAR (Agencies): Canal Department of the country’s eastern province of Nangarhar said in a statement, that it has collected 343 million Afghani in revenue in the current solar year. The Canal Department of the country’s eastern province of Nangarhar said in a statement, that has collected 343 million Afghani in revenue in the current solar year. Officials of the canal have said that from the rent of the farms and farmlands which have been created alongside the canal, an amount of 343 million Afghani has been collected in the current year. An official of the canal further said that four mechanized farms including olive and citrus groves (Malta, orange, lemon), dates, plums, and other groves have been built on 12,000 acres of land alongside the canal, according to the statement. Officials of the canal further added that land renters have also cultivated wheat on 22,292 acres of land in the current solar year, wheat worth over 340 million Afghani has been collected from the farmlands.

16 killed in blast

FAIZABAD (Khaama Press): 16 people were reportedly killed, and over 50 others were injured after an explosion struck a mosque in Faizabad, Badakhshan province, Afghanistan, on Thursday morning. The explosion targeted the memorial ceremony for the Taliban deputy governor of Badakhshan province, who was killed in a suicide bomb blast this week, according to the Sputnik Telegram Channel. So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack. Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi, the deputy governor of Afghanistan’s Badakhshan province, was killed in a car bomb along with his driver and six others were injured on Tuesday. The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack that killed the Taliban deputy governor and his driver. Since the Taliban took control of the county in August 2021, ISIS has been a significant security threat.



The militant groups have been responsible for several brutal attacks over the past nearly two years on the Russian Embassy, Pakistan’s diplomatic mission, and a Chinese-run hotel in the heart of Kabul. The attack faced widespread reactions by the Afghan politicians. Hamid Karzai, former president of Afghanistan, in

a tweet strongly condemned today’s attack in the Nabawi mosque in the Hesa-e Awal area of Faizabad, the center of Badakhshan province. Hamid Karzai in a tweet called it “terrorism” and “against human and Islamic standards” and expressed his sympathy for the affected families.

Abdullah, former HCNR chairman, in reaction to the explosion, tweeted that “attacking mosques and religious places is an act contrary to the rules of Islam and human principles and there is no justification.” The spokesman for Iran’s foreign ministry, Nasir Kanani, on Twitter, condemned the attack.

Afghanistan presents opportunity for investors



KABUL (Khaama Press): China can leverage Afghanistan’s geopolitical position for trade connectivity and economic development in the region and beyond, given the business opportunities. Forging ties with China, the world’s second-largest economy can help war-torn Afghanistan utilize the opportunity to attract Chinese investors’ attention in various fields including technology, innovation, education, agriculture, construction, trade, and industry. With the vast mountainous and rich natural resources such as water, wind, sun, oil and gas, Afghanistan presents a great business opportunity for Chinese investors to

engage in low-cost, high-production power generation in the country. China’s expertise and investment can contribute to Afghanistan’s mining sector, as Chinese investors have the capacity in this field. This collaboration could lead to the development of Afghanistan while benefiting Chinese industries to utilize an untapped market. During the China-Central Asian Summit which took place in Xi’an, Shaanxi Province from May 18 to 19, President Xi Jinping stressed the importance of coordinating efforts among Afghanistan’s neighbors to promote peace and reconstruction in the region. Additionally, given its

four seasons and moderate climate, agriculture is another promising sector for Chinese industrialists to invest in and export high-quality products to the global market, according to economic experts. Meanwhile, China has shown a willingness to exploit the unique business opportunity and invest in different sectors including mining, construction, infrastructure and more. China maintains close ties with Afghanistan’s de facto authorities, as the Chinese Ambassador to Kabul frequently meets with the Taliban senior authorities, stressing the need to increase continued cooperation with Afghanistan across fields.

Poppy cultivation reduced to zero

HELMAND (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan said on Thursday that poppy cultivation reduced almost to zero. According to the Ministry’s spokesperson, Hafiz Zia, poppy cultivation has been reduced to zero compared to 2020. During 2020, 56.2% of Helmand province’s land was cultivated, which was reduced to 0.4 in 2023. “In reality, it is much less,” Ahmad tweeted. This follows an edict that Hibatullah Akhundzada, supreme leader of the Taliban, issued in April of last year outlawing the production of poppies in the country. On Wednesday, Thomas West, the US’s special envoy for Afghanistan, stated that allegations that the Taliban authorities are stopping the growth of poppies are “credible and significant.” “Every country in the region and beyond has a shared interest in an Afghanistan free of drugs,” he said. Earlier this week, BBC reported that In April 2022, Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada decreed that cultivation of the poppy – from which opium, the key ingredient for heroin, can be extracted – was strictly prohibited. According to Sharia law, anyone violating the ban would have their field destroyed and be penalized. A Taliban spokesman told the BBC that the prohibition was put in place because it violates their religious convictions and is necessary to prevent the spread of opium obtained

from poppy seed capsules. More than 80% of the opium in the world used to be produced in Afghanistan. In Europe, opium from Afghanistan accounts for 95% of the heroin sold. The BBC has now been to Afghanistan and utilized satellite analysis to investigate the impact of direct intervention on the cultivation of opium poppies. The Taliban leaders seem to have succeeded more than anyone else in eradicating farming, BBC reported. We discovered a sharp decline in poppy growth in the main opium-producing areas; according to one expert, annual cultivation may be 80% lower than the previous year. Poppies have been replaced with less lucrative

wheat crops, and many farmers report experiencing financial hardship. Provinces visited by the BBC included Nangarhar, Kandahar and Helmand. Studies of satellite images were also done. “It is likely that cultivation will be less than 20% of what it was in 2022. The reduction scale will be unprecedented,” said David Mansfield, a leading expert on Afghanistan’s drugs trade, working with Alcis – a UK firm specializing in satellite analysis. According to Alcis’ analysis, Helmand’s poppy cultivation has decreased by more than 99%. According to David Mansfield, poppy cultivation in the Helmand province has decreased from 129,000 hectares the year before to fewer than 1,000 hectares.

Refugee family from Tajikistan faces uncertain future in Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): A Tajikistani family who has been in Afghanistan for the past three decades said they are facing an uncertain future, and that they lack access to identification papers and work opportunities. Members of the family said that they appealed to many departments during the former Afghan governments, but their problems have remained unsolved. Amir Hamza Halimov lives with his wife and two sons in Kabul. “We don’t have the right to work. We now call on the UN and current government to clarify our destiny. We are migrants – political migrants – and came to Afghanistan,” he said. Taj Nisa, wife of Halimov, told TOLONews that her husband was an opponent of the Tajikistan president and thus they were forced to leave their country.



“I want to be with my children. Currently, we are all spread everywhere,” she said. Halimov’s three sons were born in Afghanistan, and they studied at Habibia High School.

“It has been five years since I graduated from the school. But I have been deprived of further education. I tried a lot. I went to the ministries to continue my education but it didn’t

happen. Everywhere I was going, they would ask about national identification,” said Abdullah, son of Halimov. Halimov said that their life in Afghanistan has deteriorated.

Helmand residents in Washeer district leaving homes over lack of water

HELMAND (TOLONews): Residents of Washeer district of Helmand province left their homes due to a shortage of water in the district. Nearly 300 families have been displaced from just one village, named Grazan. The residents who remained in Grazan said they have to go for hours to get access to drinking water. “We have assigned two members of our family to bring drinking water via

motorcycle or donkey,” said Mohammad Anwar, a resident of Washeer. “The elders of the family are working and we assigned the children to bring water home,” said Rahmatullah, a resident of Foad village of Washeer. “Lack of water causes challenges. All residents of Washeer are forced to leave their houses,” said Abdullah, a resident of Washeer. The local officials con-

firmed the challenges of the water shortage in the district, saying that the issue will be addressed. Many water projects will be launched in the district in the near future. “Delegations have come here and they are planning to construct a dam in the Gul Baid area and we will help them as well,” said Abdul Hakim Sijad, provincial deputy governor. “All villages of Helmand

need water management projects because water levels have dropped and we want the organizations to help us in this regard,” said Mahmood Sani, head of provincial department of rural development. Earlier, the residents of Musa Qala district in southeastern Helmand province said they are facing a dire situation as the only river in the district recently dried up.

Pakistan rejects baseless allegations of human rights abuse

Muhammad Asad

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Foreign Office has categorically rejected the allegations of human rights abuses leveled by the US lawmakers, foreign NGOs, and foreign media regarding the handling of the rioters involved in the May 9 violence.

At her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zehra Baloch said that Pakistan was fully committed to global human rights standards and domestic laws regarding basic rights and civil liberties in its country, while accusation regarding alleged violations of basic rights of those involved in recent violence is baseless and untrue.

The foreign office strongly debated and termed those allegations unfounded and noted that Pakistan was complying with all global and domestic laws in its dealing with accused miscreants.

The Spokesperson maintained that Pakistan is a country that runs in line

with the constitution and the law, while all human and citizenry rights of the citizens are comprehensively covered and ensured by the constitution. However, the individuals involved in May 9 violence are being brought to justice according to the law, maintained Mumtaz Zahra Baloch.

To another question regarding US fashion designer Khadija Shah, the Spokesperson told the newsmen that US Embassy in Islamabad has requested counselor access to its citizen and that case had been sent to the Ministry of Interior (MoI) which takes the final decision in such cases.

While responding to a media query regarding Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that Dr. Aafia's case is an old case and the government of Pakistan and our mission in the United States is continuously providing all possible diplomatic and legal assistance to her.

To another question regarding the controversial mural recently installed outside the Indian parliament, the Spokesperson said that Pakistan

rejects the revisionist and expansionist vision displayed by New Delhi in the form of that mural and the statements being made by the leaders of the Indian ruling party in recent days.

According to her, such actions and statements reflect India's hegemonic ambition in the region and cause grave concerns in countries in South Asia.

To another question regarding Pakistan's Kashmir policy, the Foreign Office noted that Pakistan has had a consistent policy over the past 70 years on Jammu and Kashmir dispute. That states that it is disputed territory and India is illegally occupying Jammu and Kashmir and steps must be taken to resolve this issue according to the desire of Kashmiri people in line with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council.

The Spokesperson welcomed the normalization of relations and reopening of the Embassies of Saudi Arabia and Iran in each other countries and hope for booming ties between both brotherly nations.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a follow-up meeting on the rights and facilitation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for universities role in preventing extremism, violence in society

ISLAMABAD (NNI): President Dr Arif Alvi has called upon the universities to play an active role in preventing intolerance, extremism, and violence in society, particularly among students.

Addressing the two-day National Vice Chancellors' Peace Conference, which concluded on Thursday, the President said the universities should arrange regular capacity-building training sessions for their management and faculty members to inculcate in students the ability to address extremism. According to a press statement today, the conference was a joint venture by Shaoor Foundation for Education and Awareness (SFEA), National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and attended by 50 Vice Chancellors from across the country and policy stakeholders.

The conference with the theme "Academic Discourse on Countering Extremism - The Way Forward" is a significant milestone in the implementation of the Peace, Advocacy and Community Engagement through Transformation (PACT) for Tolerance project, which is built on a foundation of collaboration and cooperation

between SFEA, NACTA, HEC Pakistan and other policy-level stakeholders. Speaking at the occasion as chief guest, Dr. Arif Alvi highlighted the importance of working on countering violent extremism and praised the idea of collaboration between state institutions and civil society.

He further added that we must acknowledge that extremism is not born in a vacuum -- poverty, inequality, and lack of education and opportunity can make individuals vulnerable to extremist ideologies. As a nation, we must work to address these underlying issues and provide a better future for our citizens.

The president, while addressing the vice chancellors, who had gathered from across the country for the two days conference, said that the academia has a great responsibility to nurture traits of empathy, tolerance and coexistence among their students. At the end the President appreciated the efforts of Shaoor Foundation, NACTA and HEC towards realizing the dream of a peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

Syed Ali Hameed, Founder & Chairperson Shaoor Foundation for Education and Awareness thanked the chief guest for gracing the event and

said that we need a multisectoral approach to tackle the menace of extremism and intolerance. Shaoor Foundation has always focused on working with the stakeholders and developing well informed solutions, he said. Shaoor Foundation took the same approach under PACT for Tolerance project and collaborated with NACTA, HEC, policy stakeholders, parliamentarians as well as 70 partner universities across Pakistan. This resulted in development of the comprehensive report titled "Findings & Recommendations for Peace and Tolerance at university Campuses". Mr. Ali also presented a copy to the honorable President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi.

Speaking at the event, Chairman HEC Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed shared that HEC has always encouraged and supported efforts for mutual benefit, including conflict resolution within universities. It's our joint responsibility that universities are empowered and supported to create an enabling environment where difference of opinion is respected. He urged the Vice Chancellors to make use of the policy recommendations for promotion of Peace and Tolerance at universities and the society at large.

PTI chief's arrogance & ego cause party's disintegration: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting on Thursday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) disintegrated due to arrogance, ego and stubbornness of its chief who himself had destroyed his own politics.

She cited a famous couplet of an Urdu poet on her Twitter handle, referring to the current state of the PTI and its chief.

"Dil Kay Phapholay Jhal Uthay Seenay Kay Daghy Sy, Is Ghar Ko Aag Lag Gai Ghar Kay Chiragh Sy," the minister said in the tweet while calling out the PTI

chief for his arrogance and ego. "The house of cards based on the idols of arrogance, ego and selfishness has faced a sudden collapse. The PTI is now spiritless with the departure of those who had laid the party's foundations," Marriyum said.

She said the "arrogant man" had once stated that joining or quitting of the people did not matter for the party but he himself had now become a lesson for others (after the departure of his party leaders).

Marriyum takes notice of attack on journalist's residence in Islamabad:

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday took notice of an attack on the residence of a senior journalist, Baqir Sajjad, who claimed that his house in Islamabad was attacked by unidentified people and took away cash and jewellery. "I have just spoken to IG Police Islamabad regarding this incident. He has assured me that he will investigate this matter as a matter of priority and will speak to Baqir Sajjad shortly," the minister said in a tweet.

Irfan Qadir claims breakthrough in Al Qadir Trust case against ex-PM

ISLAMABAD (INP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Accountability Irfan Qadir claimed that government have got a breakthrough in some cases including Al Qadir Trust alleged corruption case.

Irfan Qadir was addressing a press conference here on Thursday vowed no one was a sacred cow in terms of accountability. SAMP on accountability said cases of superior judges would go to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC).

He asked judges to appear before the audio leaks commission case—where fellow judges were members of the judicial commission. Irfan Qadir pointed out that the Supreme Court judges stopped the proceedings of the Judicial Commission and alleged that like-minded judges formed their own bench and stopped the working of the audio leaks commission.

He alleged that a few judges of the Supreme Court are not even following the decisions of the Parliament. He claimed that 190 million pounds were brought to Pakistan that they belonged to the state, but that money went to an individual. SAPM Irfan Qadir said he did see any such evidence about retired general Faiz Hameed. "If something like this happens, I don't think that NAB will oversee it," he added.

Pervez Khattak mulls forming 'new political party'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Pervez Khattak, who recently resigned from the president of the party's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter over the May 9 violent protest, has decided to form a new political party, sources said on Thursday.

Sources privy to the development said PTI deserters are expected to join the new political setup led by senior politician Pervez Khattak. Khattak has claimed that more than 50 former members of parliamentarians (MPs) are in contact with him and would join his new political setup, say sources.

SC adjourns indefinitely hearing of Practice and Procedure Act case

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday adjourned hearing of the petition filed against Practice and Procedure Act for an indefinite time period due to non-availability of a judge.

An eight-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial, was due to hear the a number of petitions challenging the Supreme Court (Practice & Procedure) Act, 2023, which seeks to limit the powers of the CJP.

The bench comprised of CJP Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Waheed. But due to

the sickness of Justice Shahid Waheed, the hearing had to be postponed.

The same apex court bench had on April 13 suspended the bill before it was enacted as law. However, on April 21, the bill became law even as its implementation had been halted by the court.

The law envisages a three-member committee, comprising the CJP and two senior-most judges, which will via majority form benches as well as decide when to take suo motu action — powers that currently reside with the top judge alone.

In the previous hearing, the top court had decided to take a recess in hearing the case for a week after Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan had apprised

it of the government's intention to harmonize some "overlapping provisions" of the Supreme Court (Practice & Procedure) Act 2023 and the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023.

The review judgments law expands the jurisdiction of the court by giving a right to appeal under Article 184(3). According to the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023, the scope of a review will be similar to Article 185, which confers appellate jurisdiction to the top court. The CJP had welcomed the stance of the government and said that he was glad to know that the government and parliament would be reviewing the two laws to remove the overlapping of some provisions.

Govt economic team meets PM; presents Economic Survey report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government's economic team headed by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here and presented him a copy of the report on the Economic Survey 2022-23.

The prime minister lauded the efforts of the economic team for the stability and development of the national economy.

He said that the services of economic team to the country's economy were laudable, despite the economic challenges inherited from the previous government and the unprecedented floods.

The prime minister told the meeting that the government would hugely invest in agriculture and information technology sectors in the upcoming budget 2023-24. He said the farmers would be provided with high-quality seeds and automatic agriculture machinery.



ISLAMABAD: Security personnel with ballistic shields escorting Imran Khan, at High Court.

Pakistan's new budget is crucial to securing IMF board review

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan stands to secure one board review under the current bailout package of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) if measures in its budget, set to be unveiled on Friday, meet the lender's expectations, a Fund official said.

The statement from a senior Fund official comes ahead of the country's budget announcement scheduled for tomorrow (Friday). Today, the National Economic Survey, which assesses the state of the economy in the outgoing fiscal year, will also be unveiled. The IMF programme runs out this month with about \$2.5 billion in funds, under three prior reviews, yet to be released, as the country struggles to strike a deal with the lender while battling record inflation, fiscal imbalances and low reserves.

The funds are crucial for Pakistan to avert a balance of payments crisis, and most analysts believe that even after the expiry of the current programme, Pakistan will have to seek a bailout in the upcoming fiscal to avert defaulting on debt obligations. A general election is due by November, which the government will be hoping will end turmoil arising from a protest campaign former premier Imran Khan has led since he was ousted last year.

Passing a budget for fiscal year 2024 that meets programme objectives is key to paving the way for a final review under the current bailout, the IMF's resident representative for Pakistan, Esther Perez Ruiz said. "The focus of discussions over the FY24 budget is

to balance the need to strengthen debt sustainability prospects while creating space to increase social spending," she told a foreign news agency on Thursday.

More such spending would defray the impact of inflationary pressures on Pakistan's most vulnerable, Ruiz added, but it needed more progress to identify spending and revenue-generating measures in order to achieve this. The SBP reserves can cover imports for about a month. Inflation surged to 37.97pc in May, a record for the second consecutive month and the highest rate in South Asia.

With the general election looming, some analysts believe the government will announce vote-winning measures on Friday, even if the promises have to be scaled back later.

SC urged to quiz Imran, Murad, Vawda in Arshad murder case

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Mother of slain journalist Arshad Sharif filed an miscellaneous application in the Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday, seeking investigation of former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan, PTI leader Murad Saeed and ex-PTI leader Faissal Vawda in the murder case of her son.

In the application, she opined that firstly people in Pakistan should be questioned with respect to the case. "Several people have already made different claims about the murder and the conspiracy behind it," she said in the application, adding she and members of her family had been kept completely in dark about findings of the joint investigation team (JIT). She further said that the family members also had no idea as to how many people had been interrogated so far.

Restoring macroeconomic stability top priority: Ishaq Dar

(Continued from Front Page)

The current government, he said, made all structural reforms in various sectors, including power and gas sectors, fiscal and the Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) programme that were pending for several years. "These were the reforms in which the last government could not even take any prior action." After completing the due reforms in RISE programme, he added, Pakistan would also immediately receive \$450 million from the World Bank and \$250 million from the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank once the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme was resumed.

The finance minister said the Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation stood at 29.2% during the first 10 months of the outgoing fiscal year. However, he added, the core inflation during the

said period was 16% in urban areas and 20% in rural areas. He said the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) tax collection witnessed a growth of 16.1% in first 11 months of the current fiscal year as it increased from Rs 5,348 billion in the corresponding months of the previous fiscal year to Rs 6,210 billion.

Highlighting the FBR's efforts in broadening of the tax base, the minister said the Board had registered 912,394 new taxpayers by March 31 against the target of 700,000. He said the primary deficit of Rs 890 billion during the last year's 10 months had now turned into surplus of Rs 99 billion while the current account deficit during July-April 2022-23 witnessed an improvement of 76% as it reduced from \$13.7 billion last year to \$3.3 billion. Ishaq Dar said global scenario on the economic front had also dented Pakistan's progress during last few

years as the average global GDP growth of 6.2% in 2021-22 fell to 2.8% and global inflation increased also by 85% from 4.7% in 2021 to 8.7% in 2022.

Similarly, he said, the global trade growth also reduced by 5 times from 9.4% in 2021 to 1.7% in 2023.

Furthermore, he said, Pakistan also witnessed unprecedented floods last year. According to the international survey, the country incurred total losses of over \$30 billion. He added that efforts were underway to build the damaged infrastructure in the flood hit areas and the planning minister and his ministry were actively working in that regard.

With respect to the dollar exchange rate, the minister said it seemed that some hidden hands were involved in keeping the Pakistani rupee under valued artificially. When he took over the charge of the Finance Ministry, the dollar

plunged to Rs 217 in a single day but the price reversed mysteriously. However, he once again warned the hoarders to bring the dollars in market as its price was going to fall very soon. He said the PKR was undervalued by at least Rs 45 per dollar.

He also urged the media to play its role in creating awareness among the masses in that regard. The minister said during the last year, the government had repaid around \$6.5 billion public debts out of which \$5.5 billion were non-sovereign debts and \$1 billion was bonds payment. Highlighting the government's performance during the last year, Ishaq Dar said the government increased the BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme) stipend from Rs 360 billion to Rs 400 billion and 25% monthly stipend to each beneficiary was also increased in January this year.