

# CPEC significantly changed Pakistanis' lives: He Lifeng

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng has termed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) an important project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), saying that the multi-billion-dollar project has significantly changed the lives of the people of Pakistan.

The Chinese vice premier, who arrived in Islamabad a day earlier on a three-day official visit to Pakistan, remarked this while addressing a ceremony held in the federal capital on Monday to celebrate the 10th anniversary of CPEC. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, ministers, members of the Chinese delegation, parliamentarians, chief ministers, senior officials and relevant authorities were also present on the occasion.

The Chinese vice PM said that CPEC is an example of mutual trust and common development between the two countries, adding that the project became a corridor of progress and prosperity, involving huge investment and creating immense job opportunities, with the completion of various key projects thus transforming the local economy. Vice Premier He also said that CPEC was initiated under a principle of extensive cooperation for mutual interests, social and economic development of Pakistan through a network of regional connectivity.

He further said both countries are committed to high standards of CPEC projects in the second phase, adding that they would continue to work together. Enumerating different projects being initiated and completed under CPEC, he said that cooperation would further continue in IT, agriculture, training and special zones ventures.

The Chinese vice premier said that CPEC had "significantly changed lives of the ordinary people of Pakistan and proved as a win-win cooperation and become a corridor of friendship, bringing our people closer". He observed that even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the workers had ensured smooth progress of the different projects, writing stories of mutual trust and cooperation that transformed the vision into reality. He also reiterated Chinese support for peace, stability and national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan, its social and economic stability to build a better future. CPEC had a new engine of growth and was further deepening the relationship between the leadership and people of the two countries, he added.

A special ceremony was held here on Monday to celebrate the completion of the first decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). High-level leadership attended the event from Pakistan and China, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Xi Jinping's Special Representative, and the Vice Premier of the State Council of China He Lifeng.

Senior ministers of China and Pakistan, high-ranking officials from both countries and corporate executives of leading Chinese companies working in Pakistan also participated in the event. Addressing the event, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Vice Premier He Lifeng paid rich tribute to CPEC for its positive contribution to Pakistan's socio-economic development, and progress and prosperity of the peoples of the two countries. They underscored that as the flagship project of President Xi Jinping's

## Pakistan, China agree on CPEC's centrality for socioeconomic uplift

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China on Monday, expressing satisfaction at the steady development of CPEC projects in Pakistan, agreed on its centrality for Pakistan's socio-economic development. The bilateral ties including the CPEC were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and He Lifeng, Vice Premier of China and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. At the invitation of the Government of Pakistan, the Special Envoy of President Xi Jinping He Lifeng is visiting here to attend the 10th-anniversary celebrations of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Both sides expressed their firm commitment to continue working together for realizing the shared objectives of the CPEC. It was also agreed that 10th anniversary of CPEC celebrations constituted a fresh starting point to further expand CPEC as envisaged by the leadership of the two countries. The conversation was marked by traditional warmth and cordiality that has been the hallmark of Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on several aspects of bilateral relationship including CPEC and bilateral economic and financial cooperation.

Welcoming Vice-Premier He Lifeng to Pakistan, the prime minister congratulated him on being promoted as the Vice-Premier of China in March this year. Appreciating China's support for Pakistan's economic development, the prime minister observed that as strategic partners and trusted friends, the two countries have always stood by each other in difficult times, as evidenced by Chinese support to Pakistan in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic and devastating floods in Pakistan. Noting the unanimity of views between the two countries on regional issues, both leaders reiterated their resolve to support each other on all issues of their core interests. In his remarks, Vice Premier He conveyed President Xi Jinping's message of China's firm support to Pakistan's prosperity and development.

Vice Premier He Lifeng underlined that Pakistan-China friendship was unique and had withstood the vicissitude of time due to deep fraternal ties between the peoples of two nations. He reiterated that as an iron-brother and strategic partner, China would continue its existing economic and financial support to Pakistan. Welcoming the prime minister's vision for deepening trade and investment ties with Pakistan, the Chinese vice premier conveyed China's willingness to enhance Pakistan's agro and food exports to China. The Chinese delegation included Guo Wei, Deputy Secretary General of the State Council of China, Sun Weidong, Vice Minister of Foreign Ministry, Cong Liang, Vice Chairman National Development & Reform Commission, Xuan Changneng, Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China, Wang Keping, Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China, Wang Liping, Director General of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce, Pang Chunxue, Charge d'Affaires, Chinese Embassy Islamabad and other senior Chinese officials.

The Pakistan side included Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Commerce, Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Finance, Rana Sanaullah Khan, Minister for Interior, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Information, Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Khawaja Saad Rafique, Minister for Railways, Hina Rabbani Khar, MOS for Foreign Affairs, Syed Tariq Fatemi, SAPM and senior officials from relevant ministries. After the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Vice Premier He Lifeng signed the ceremony for signing of agreements, MoUs and other documents covering areas including agriculture; industrial cooperation; transport connectivity, etc. Later, the prime minister hosted a luncheon in honour of He Lifeng and the accompanying delegation.

Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC had transformed Pakistan's economic landscape by removing infrastructure bottlenecks and eliminating power shortages.

Expressing satisfaction at the remarkable achievements of CPEC, both leaders expressed their firm resolve to build upon the achievements of the last decade, and continue their cooperation for further developing it as a high-quality demonstrable project of the BRI. The leadership of Pakistan and China also appreciated the endeavours of Pakistani and Chinese experts, engineers and workers for their meritorious contribution to the timely completion of all CPEC projects in Pakistan.

On the occasion, Vice Premier He Lifeng also read a special message of President Xi Jinping, congratulating the government and the people of Pakistan on the completion of the first decade of CPEC. To mark the significance of the occasion, a special Postal Stamp, Commemorative Coin and First Day Cover, were also issued. Both sides also unveiled a First Decade of CPEC memento capturing its achievements made and

futuristic vision. During the event, special performances were organized to display multiple facets of Pakistan's pluralistic and progressive culture; and to highlight civilizational affinity and fraternal ties between Pakistan and China.

It may be recalled that Pakistan and China had kicked off CPEC projects in 2013, after the visit of the Chinese Premier to Pakistan. Under the rubric of CPEC, the two countries initiated and completed multiple projects in the past ten years in the energy sector, transport infrastructure, port/airport development and digital connectivity. CPEC brought huge dividends to Pakistan as manifested in the creation of over 200,000 jobs; addition of 8000 MW power to the national grid; building of 510 kilometers of highways and 932 kilometers of roads network; and laying of 820-kilometer long optical fiber line. Under Phase-II of CPEC, both countries have expanded cooperation to new areas, including rural revitalization; agricultural development; industrialization;

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presenting a memento of Rs. 100 coin to Chinese President Special Representative and Vice Premier He. He Lifeng at a ceremony to commemorate the 10th anniversary of CPEC.

## PM, Chinese VP discuss bilateral ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng on Monday met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here wherein both discussed bilateral relations and the way to further enhance mutual cooperation.

At the invitation of the Government of Pakistan, the Chinese vice-premier, along with a delegation, is visiting here to attend the celebration of the 10 years of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both sides also deliberated over the implementation of the second phase of CPEC for which both countries also signed documents on the occasion. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Prime Minister Shehbaz and Vice-Premier He Lifeng along with their respective delegations.

Earlier, as the foreign dignitary arrived at the PM House, he was warmly received by Prime Minister Shehbaz at the main entrance which followed the introduction of the delegations to each other.

## Chinese Vice Premier calls on COAS

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The visiting Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng met Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir here on Monday and discussed matters of mutual interest and defence cooperation.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, during the meeting, both dignitaries reiterated the desire to further enhance and strengthen bilateral relations in all fields.

## Bilawal calls on Fazl

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on the residence of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam leader, Maulana Fazlur Rehman and offered his condolences on the terror incident in the workers' convention of JUI in the Khar area of Bajaur in KP.

Chairman Bilawal also offered his condolences to Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Maulana Ata-ur-Rehman, Maulana Asad Mehmood and Zahid Akram Durrani. Syed Murad Ali Shah also accompanied Chairman Bilawal and offered condolences. Chairman PPP offered Fateha for the departed souls. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that he can feel the pain of the relatives and friends of the innocent citizens who lost their lives.

## NA passes Army Act amend bill

— proposing up to five years in jail for disclosing 'sensitive information'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Monday passed seven government bills including the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2023 which aims to amend the Pakistan Army Act 1952. Three bills were approved after the passage of a motion to suspend the rules for immediate consideration of these legislative proposals.

The bills include the Pakistan Sovereign Wealth Fund Bill, 2023; the National Commission for Human Development (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences and Technology, Islamabad (Amendment) Bill, 2023. Both bills were passed by the House. Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar moved the Defence Housing Authority Islamabad (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2023. The minister highlighted the salient features of legislation as both of these bills have been approved by the Senate. He also laid the annual report of the National Commission for Human Rights for the period from December 2021 to December 2022, as required by sub-section (2) of section 28 of the National Commission for Human Rights Act, 2012. State Minister for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan moved the Cantonments (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Board of Investment (Amendment) Bill, 2023 which were passed by the House.

The members of the National Assembly also strongly denounced the attack on the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) gathering in Bajaur and emphasized the urgent need to identify and expose the elements responsible for terrorist incidents across the country.

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## ECP seeks KP caretaker ministers' removal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has asked the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Chief Minister (CM) to remove ministers engaged in political activities.

The Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) taking notice of the political involvement of caretaker ministers, secretaries and assistants dispatched a letter to the KP caretaker CM seeking their removal. The letter stated ECP has come to know about the appointments of caretaker ministers based on political affiliations and former caretaker minister Shahid Khattak is proof of political appointment.

However, there are still several ministers who have expressed their political affiliation in media which is a violation of the Election Act 2017. Earlier,

the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) sought a report from the Election Commissioner of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding the participation and speech of caretaker minister Shahid Khattak in a public meeting.

In a statement, a representative of the ECP said the purpose of report is to assess the situation and decide if any legal action is necessary. The spokesperson emphasized that it is essential for all incumbent governments to adhere to the law and provide complete cooperation to the commission to ensure fair, transparent, and unbiased elections. The commission cannot grant permission to any incumbent government or minister to participate in any electoral campaign. In case of violation, legal action will be taken, concluded the spokesperson.

## Award conferred on Chinese vice-premier

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday conferred the Hilal-i-Pakistan award on Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng, in recognition of his contribution to the Pakistan-China friendship and promotion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

The award was conferred at a special investiture ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr and attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, services chiefs, National Assembly speaker, Senate chairman, federal ministers and parliamentarians.

Conferred on both Pakistanis and foreign nationals, the Hilal-i-Pakistan award is meant to recognize those people who have made a meritorious contribution to the national interests of Pakistan. At the invitation of the Government of Pakistan, the Special Envoy of President Xi Jinping, the Vice Premier of China and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, is visiting Pakistan to attend the 10th-anniversary celebrations of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He has played a prominent role in China's international economic relations and implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, of which CPEC is a flagship project. As the Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission (2017-23), he was instrumental in the planning and execution of multiple CPEC projects in Pakistan.

## SBP keeps policy rate unchanged

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) at its meeting here on Monday decided to keep the policy rate unchanged at 22 percent.

The Committee noted that the economic uncertainty has decreased since the last meeting, whereas near-term external sector challenges have been largely addressed and investor confidence has shown improvement. While some upside risks to the inflation outlook have emerged, the Committee also took note of the expected lagged impact of the accumulated monetary tightening so far, budgeted fiscal consolidation, and the tepid growth outlook for FY24. The MPC particularly noted that year-on-year (y/y) inflation is likely to remain on downward path over the next 12 months, which implies a significant level of positive real interest rate.

Since the MPC meeting held on June 26, several important developments have influenced the short-term macro-economic outlook. First, Pakistan has secured a nine-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF that has helped address immediate external sector stability concerns by supporting the foreign exchange reserves.

With disbursement of the first tranche under the SBA and \$3 billion in bilateral support, the SBP's FX reserves increased from \$4.5 billion at end June 2023 to \$8.2 billion as of July 21, 2023. Second, on top of the additional tax measures introduced at the time of approval of the budget, the government has notified an increase in electricity tariffs which would contribute to inflation in coming months.

Third, the global commodity prices have somewhat increased but are still lower than their recent peak. Fourth, the IMF in its July 2023 World Economic Outlook has slightly raised its projection of global growth this year while leaving the 2024 growth projection unchanged.

In light of these developments, the MPC stressed on maintaining an appropriately tight monetary policy stance with positive real interest rates on forward looking basis to keep inflation and its expectation on downward path so as to achieve the medium-term inflation target of 5 – 7 percent by end-FY25.

The latest high-frequency indicators

up to June 2023 continue to show weak economic activity, broadly in line with the provisional estimates of 0.3 percent real GDP growth in FY23; a sharp decline from around 6 percent growth in the previous two years. Looking ahead, barring unforeseen events, the MPC expects economic activity to moderately recover in FY24, supported by a rebound in rice and cotton output. The Committee further noted that improved business confidence and withdrawal of priority guidance on imports have improved the outlook for manufacturing, construction and allied services. Notwithstanding this improvement, the unfolding impact of accumulated monetary tightening and expected fiscal consolidation would continue to keep growth range bound. Taking these considerations into account, the real GDP growth is projected in the range of 2.0 to 3.0 percent for FY24.

With the current account balance recording a surplus for the fourth consecutive month in June, the cumulative current account deficit in FY23 substantially narrowed to 0.7 percent of GDP from 4.7 percent in FY22. The MPC noted that this improvement primarily stems from policy-induced compression in imports, which more than offset the decline in exports and workers' remittances during the year. Going forward, the current account deficit is expected to remain contained in the range of 0.5 to 1.5 percent of GDP in FY24. This assessment takes into account the impact of evolving domestic and global economic conditions. The MPC expects that current outlook for the global commodity prices along with moderate domestic economic recovery will keep the imports range-bound. On the financing side, the prospects of multilateral and bilateral inflows have considerably improved after the IMF SBA. This is important in the context of building external buffers and meeting the near-term external financing needs. Further, the market-determined exchange rate will continue to serve as first line of defense against external shocks and support reserve build-up.

The latest data indicates that both the fiscal and primary deficits may exceed their revised estimates for FY23. The Committee noted that this less than earlier anticipated fiscal consolidation could undermine the central bank's





## Legislation vital to end domestic violence

LAHORE (APP): Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB) Chairperson Sarah Ahmad said on Monday that child domestic labour was currently a crucial issue and requires effective legislation to be declared illegal.

She was speaking at a consultative session, organised by the CPWB and a non-government organisation (NGO), Search for Justice, here to propose reforms regarding legislation to declare child domestic labour as illegal.

The chairperson said that collaborative efforts with stakeholders would be made to eliminate violence against domestic workers. Sarah Ahmad emphasised that empowering child domestic workers through education was a vital step towards making them productive citizens of society.

Representatives of departments of Police, Social Welfare, Human Rights, Labour and various NGOs participated in the session.

## BISE Lahore to hold SSC 2nd Annual Exam

LAHORE (APP): The secondary school certificate (SSC) 2nd annual examinations-2023 will start from September 15, under the aegis of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary education (BISE), Lahore, sources told APP on Monday.

According to details candidates could submit their admission forms with single fee from August 1 to 12, while forms with double fee will be accepted till August 16, and with triple fee till Aug 19.

Meanwhile in the upcoming exam, the BISE administration has introduced new policy, according to which fresh candidates will also be eligible to appear in the second annual exam 2023.

The BISE Lahore announced the results of the annual matriculation exams on Monday (July 31). According to result statistics, this year, the board witnessed a success ratio of 74.57 per cent.

## Four zoos to be revamped

LAHORE (APP): The caretaker Punjab government has decided to revamp zoos according to the international standards in four districts, including the provincial metropolis.

In this regard, Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has sought proposals to improve the Lahore Zoo and Safari Park, and also tasked the authorities concerned to revamp zoos, the CM's spokesman told media here Monday. According to the plan, he added, an online ticketing system would be introduced to exactly determine the zoos' income. Meanwhile, unique and most modern recreational facilities would be introduced in the Lahore Zoo while the Safari Park in the provincial metropolis would be modernized on the Singapore model. Meanwhile, a proposal is also under consideration to run safari train and developing walking parks and play areas in the zoos.

# Sindh govt launches new route of electric bus in Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a significant move to improve public transportation, the Sindh government has announced the launch of a new route for the electric bus service in Karachi. The Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, revealed that the new route spans 18 kilometers, connecting Malir Cantt Check Post No. 5 to the Numaish Chorangi, Karachi.

The electric bus will traverse key areas such as Safoora Chowrangi, Mausamiyat, Kamran Chowrangi, Dalmia, Liaquat National Hospital, Jail Chowrangi, and MA Jinnah Road before reaching Numaish Chowrangi via Perfume Chowk Millennium Mall.

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that the newly introduced electric bus route will significantly enhance travel convenience for the residents of Karachi, the new route promises to offer an affordable and comfortable commuting experience for the public.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that The People's Party Sindh government is fully aware of the people's travel challenges, and our topmost priority is to provide accessible and comfortable transportation options for the citizens.

Meanwhile, in a commemorative event marking the 10th anniversary of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit in Sindh, paid heartfelt tribute to the visionary leadership of former President Asif Ali Zardari.

In a statement, Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted the pivotal role played by President Zardari during his tenure, as the early stages of CPEC Agreements were set into motion under his guidance. Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that it was President Zardari who conceptualized the ambitious CPEC project, envisioning it as a vital linkage between the western region of China and the strategic port of Gwadar in Pakistan.

Sharjeel Inam Memon acknowledged that it was President Zardari's foresight that led to the crucial decision of not relying on debt for any of the CPEC ventures. Instead, President Zardari introduced the innovative concept of "build, operate, and transfer," which laid the foundation for the financial framework of the projects.

Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon admired the foresight and leadership skills of former President Asif Ali Zardari, acknowledging that a project like CPEC became possible because of his vision. The nation is grateful to him for providing Pakistan with a game changer and a proud project.

Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon also emphasized that Asif Ali Zardari's initiative to implement a project like CPEC has effectively built a strong security fence around Pakistan's economy.

The historic CPEC project has not only bolstered Pakistan's economy but also further strengthened the friendship and bilateral relations between Pakistan and China.

## OGDCL achieves remarkable increase in oil and gas production

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: While successfully implementing cutting-edge technologies and industry's best practices, the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has recorded a substantial production increase during the month of July 2023. The company has achieved remarkable enhancements in oil and gas production across various exploration and development wells. These significant milestones mark the company's commitment to delivering excellence and strengthening Pakistan's energy landscape.

Notable accomplishments include the successful performance of the Nim East-1 exploratory well. Nim East-1, an exploratory well located in the Tando Allah Yar district of Sindh province, operated jointly by OGDCL (95%) and Government Holdings (Private) Limited (GHPL) (5%), has proven to be a significant success. Following the installation of a 6" -12.5 Km pipeline, the well has contributed an additional production of 585 barrels per day (BPD) of oil, 7.4 million standard cubic feet per day (MMSCFD) of gas, and 32 metric tons per day (MTD) of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

The injected gas is seamlessly integrated into the Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) network, starting from July 20, 2023, and has been continuously monitored until July 28, 2023. Similarly, OGDCL installed an



Electrical Submersible Pump (ESP) in its 100% owned Pasakhi Oil Field, Well -11, situated in the Hyderabad district of Sindh. This strategic intervention resulted in a remarkable incremental impact, enhancing oil production by 1010 BPD. Presently, the well is producing 1810 BPD of oil and is under observation to ascertain optimum flow rates. The enhanced production from Pasakhi-11 commenced on July 28, 2023.

Meanwhile, the Chak 2-1 exploratory well, operated jointly by OGDCL (62.5%), GHPL (22.5%), and Orient Petroleum Inc. (OPI) (15%), located in district Sanghar, Sindh province, demonstrated exceptional potential with a riskless intervention.

Through additional perforations, the well's production was boosted by 140 BPD of oil, 4.7 MMSCFD of gas, and 11 MTD of LPG.

As with Chak 2-1, the injected gas is integrated into the SSGCL network from July 20, 2023, and monitored until July 28, 2023. The Chak-V Dim South-3 well, situated in

Chak-5 Dim South Block, district Sanghar, Sindh Province, has shown impressive results as an on-production development cum exploratory well.

Under OGDCL's 100% working interest, a riskless intervention with new perforations contributed to an incremental production of 130 BPD of oil, 3.8 MMSCFD of gas, and 8 MTD of LPG.

The injected gas integration with the SSGCL network commenced on July 24, 2023, and observations were made until July 28, 2023.

The noteworthy increment production will lead to import substitution, resulting in a substantial annual reduction of the country's import bill by approximately USD 96 million. OGDCL remains steadfast in its commitment to harnessing innovative technologies and best practices to further enhance production capabilities, contribute to the nation's energy needs, and fuel economic growth.

These accomplishments signify OGDCL's continuous pursuit of excellence in the oil and gas industry.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Syed Amin-ul-Haq addressing during inaugurating Ceremony Free Digital IT Lab at Rashid Minhas Govt. Boys & Girls School Nazimabad at Rizvia Chowrangi.

## Delegation of 33rd Management Course in NIM calls on Wahab

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Monday called on a delegation comprising members of the 33rd senior Management course in the National Institute of Management (NIM) at Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) office here on Monday. Talking to the members of the delegation, he said that Karachi is the aorta and commercial capital hub of the country and the development of the country depends on the development of Karachi.

He said that we have to do positive marketing of our cities and the people of this city have mandated Pakistan Peoples Party. According to people's expectations, elected local body representatives are playing their role in solving urban problems, he added.

He said that development works are going on in the city and he is trying his best to make Karachi a city of lights again. On this occasion, Managing Director SSWMB Syed Imtiaz Ali Shah, Chief Executive Officer of

Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation Syed Salahuddin, Municipal Commissioner KMC Noman Arshad and other officers were also present. He said that it was necessary that we all take care of our city and cooperate with the provincial and city government in the works for improvement and development. We have to keep this city clean like our homes. Karachi is nothing less than a blessing for us, he said that ten to twelve thousand people come to Karachi even today and the city welcomes everyone with an open heart, he added.

He said that people from different cities of Pakistan come to Karachi and get free treatment in Karachi hospitals and patients from abroad use the latest cyber knife facility available in Jinnah Hospital Karachi. No such free facility is available anywhere in the world which is managed by the Sindh government in Karachi, similarly, free treatment of heart diseases is provided at the National Institute of

Cardiovascular Diseases, he added. He said that the Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation is also funded by the Sindh government while people from all over Pakistan are treated here.

He said an effective monitoring system ensures the timely completion of development works. This is the basic principle of management and the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party is taking practical steps to provide better quality facilities to citizens under this principle in all cities of Sindh including Karachi, this process of development and improvement will continue. On this occasion, Municipal Commissioner KMC Noman Arshad gave a briefing regarding the various departments of KMC and the municipal services provided to the citizens. The delegation thanked Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab for providing useful and informative details and presented him with shield on behalf of NIM.

## Rs 15bln to be spent on 28 major hospitals

LAHORE (APP): The Health Department has prepared a plan for improvement of public health facilities, proposing to spend Rs 15 billion on infrastructure and provision of medical equipment in 28 major hospitals across the province.

During a meeting held at the Civil Secretariat on Monday, officials of the Health Department briefed Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman regarding implementation of the plan. The meeting reviewed measures to improve healthcare in public hospitals and decided to hand over the parking of Lahore's all government-run hospitals to the Lahore Parking Company (LPC).

The chief secretary said that pro-

viding the best health and education facilities to people was a priority of the government.

He said that under the health insurance programme, the best healthcare should be provided to eligible patients, adding that quality of facilities should inspire patients to opt for medical treatment in the public health facilities. He asked the deputy commissioners to pay special attention to improve the health and education sectors in districts.

The chief secretary appreciated Deputy Commissioner Khanewal Waseem Hamid Sindh for getting ISO certification for DHQ hospital. He ordered that the deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners

as heads of district and tehsil health councils should perform their duties in an active manner and ensure 100 per cent attendance of doctors and staff in hospitals.

Secretary Health Ali Jan gave a detailed briefing at the meeting. He said that the revamping of DHQ and THQ hospitals would be completed by December. He mentioned that a digital record of patients is being maintained in all basic health units (BHUs). The administrative secretaries of various departments including finance and planning and development attended the meeting while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

## Mirza Adeeb remembered

LAHORE (APP): The 23rd death anniversary of renowned dramatist, short-story writer and playwright Mirza Adeeb was observed here on Monday.

His birth name was Dilawer Hussain Ali but he came to be known in the literary world as Mirza Adeeb. Today, various literary circles and forums paid tribute to Mirza Adeeb by organising sittings at Pak Tea House, Lahore Press Club and other places.

Talking to APP, PTV senior producer Agha Qaiser said that Mirza Adeeb was a legendary personality who wrote plays and short-stories in Urdu and Punjabi language which won him six prizes and awards from the Pakistan Writers' Guild.

It may be mentioned here that Adeeb was awarded the Presidential Award for playwriting in 1969, Pride of Performance Award for literature in 1981 and his play, Pas-e Pardah won him the Adamji Adabi Award. Other than dramas, his main works included stories and biographies, critical essays and commentaries on books.

Besides, he was also a regular column writer in newspapers. He was also the editor of magazines of which the most notable is Adab-e Latif.

He also translated some American stories to Urdu. Mirza Adeeb died on this day in 1999.

## IGP for strengthening investigation department

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Gulam Nabi Memon on Monday presided over a meeting to discuss the necessary steps regarding strengthening the Investigation Department of police and its coordination with the Crime Scene Unit.

The IGP Sindh instructed that taking care of the financial and administrative matters of the Crime Scene Unit would be the responsibility of the concerned SSP Investigation.

He said it will be the responsibility of the Station House Officer to immediately inform

the station Investigation Officer (IO) about the call received regarding any incident. After confirming the authentication of call, the SIO or IO along with the Crime Scene Unit will ensure immediate access to the crime scene with the objective of securing and collecting the available evidence related to the incident and making their forensic investigation process successful and effective. Gulam Nabi Memon said for the successful investigation of the cases or the successful completion of the cases, it was necessary to use the professional capacity, experience and expertise in the best way.

## PM coordinator reviews development projects

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator Khawaja Ahmed Hassan, during a meeting held at Aiwan-e-Iqbal Complex on Monday, reviewed the pace of work on the ongoing development projects, being carried out in the provincial capital.

He was briefed on the current and next financial year's development projects of Lahore by the officials of Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL), Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) and Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA).

Khawaja Hassan stressed the need for early completion of all development projects, as people of Lahore were still waiting for relief from relevant departments, saying that the government wanted to

bring comfort and facilitation in the lives of people through their public friendly projects.

The coordinator said that despite difficult circumstances, the government was providing resources worth billions of rupees to improve the quality of life to people whereas comprehensive reforms were being introduced for rapid development of the province.

Directing the MCL officials, he said that streetlights on the main roads of the city should be kept on continuously at night and maintenance work should be done simultaneously. He directed WASA to complete its ongoing pipeline repair projects within a stipulated time period, saying that citizens were facing hardships due to digging of roads. He said the department should complete repair work at the earliest.

He appreciated the PHA for maintaining the beauty of the provincial capital.

He directed all departments concerned to maintain a close contact with the public representative of the area regarding development projects so that public opinion and suggestions could be considered in the development process.

Later, the coordinator also listened to complaints of citizens and issued on-the-spot orders for redressing them at the earliest.

Former MNA Mehar Ishtiaq, MPA Chaudhry Shehbaz, Rabia Farooqi, Ramzan Siddique Bhatti, Syed Tauseef Shah, Chaudhry Baqir, MCL Chief Officer Mian Sadib Mehmood, PHA directors Jaleel Ahmad and Shah Nawaz Wattoo, WASA Director Rohail Ashraf and others were attended the meeting.



LAHORE: Labourers busy in crashing rocks of Pink salt into small pieces at their work place in Provincial Capital City.





# Security of public lives and property top priority of KP govt, says Minister

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Efforts are being made to end the scourge of terrorism, the caretaker Information minister visits the injured in CMH and LRH.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information, Auqaf, Haji, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel has said that the safety of people's lives and property is the first priority of the KP government.

The caretaker provincial government is trying to eradicate the scourge of terrorism while taking security measures by increasing the capacity of the police. He said that a detail report of the Bajaur incident will be revealed soon after completing the investigation.

The caretaker provincial minister expressed these views while talking to media representatives after visiting the injured in the Bajaur blast at Lady Reading Hospital. On

arrival at LRH, Hospital Director Dr. Muhammad Abrar Khan gave a detail briefing to the provincial minister regarding the treatment of the injured. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel met the injured individually and inquired about their health.

Later speaking to the media representatives, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that a total of 44 people martyred in the blast that took place in Bajaur yesterday. In total, around 200 civilians were injured, in which around 100 were admitted to different hospitals. He said that 17 seriously injured were brought to CMH by helicopters on the instructions of the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan. Last night, 3 of the injured under treatment at CMH lost their lives. Currently, 14 injured are under treatment at CMH, out of which 2 are in critical condition.

Barrister Feroze Jamal

Shah Kakakhel said that 16 injured are currently under treatment at Lady Reading Hospital, out of which 2 are in critical condition. The condition of other injured admitted in LRH is out of danger. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that he strongly condemns this tragic incident and shares his condolences with the bereaved families.

He further said that the Caretaker Chief Minister is on his visit to Bajaur today and is personally monitoring all the situation over there. Details related to the investigation of this incident will be revealed in the next one or two days.

The caretaker provincial minister expressed his determination that the safety of public lives and property is the top priority of the incumbent caretaker provincial government. No negligence will be tolerated in this regard,"he added "

He said that efforts are being made to eradicate the scourge of terrorism for which the capacity of the

police is being increased. Along with seven new police stations in the merged districts, around eight thousand police personnel will be given modern training. No Muslim can do such an act of barbarism. In response to a question, the caretaker provincial minister said that there should be SOPs for holding any political gathering for which, the caretaker provincial government has also called a meeting today.

Earlier, Caretaker Minister Information and Auqaf Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel also visited CMH to visit the injured of Bajaur blast and met all the injured individually and inquired about their health and well-being. He also met the medical staff and administration and assured them of providing all possible assistance/support and other facilities from the caretaker provincial government for speedy recovery of the injured in the Bajaur blast.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel inquire about health of an injured man of Bajour blast during his visit to CMH.

## Ministers visit LRH inquire blast injured

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistants to Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Prison Hidayat Ullah Khan Afridi and Malik Mehar Elahi on Monday visited Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar and met with the injured of Bajaur bomb blast and inquired about their health.

On the occasion Hidayat Ullah Afridi issued directives to the LRH doctors for providing proper medical treatment and all facilities to injured of the bomb blast.

Condemning the bomb blast at the workers' convention of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) in Bajaur, Special Assistant for Prison Hidayat Afridi said that such kind of attacks are cowardice acts which can never discourage the courage of our people.

He said that those are not loyal to Pakistan who are involved in anti-peace acts, adding that peace is established in the country after huge sacrifices.

He further said that it is the responsibility of everyone to perform their role in maintaining durable peace. Both the special assistants offered pray for the speedy recovery of the bomb blast injured.

## Facilitator given to police custody

PESHAWAR (APP): The Judge of Special ATC on Monday gave the alleged facilitator of the suicide blast at Ali Masjid in Jamrud last week to police custody on a 15-day physical remand.

The accused Abuzar was produced before the judge of the Special Anti-Terrorism Court here and the investigation officer requested his physical remand for further investigation into a suicide blast on a police officer at Ali Masjid in Tehsil Jamrud

# PHC order submission of record — otherwise petitioners' pleas to be accepted

## Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Kamran Hayat and Justice Shahid Khan ordered provincial government to submit record in bail pleas filed by 23 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers arrested under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) within three days, on Monday.

During hearing Alam Khan Adenzai and Shah Faisal Ottomankhel advocates appeared before court and argued that 23 PTI's workers from Chitral,

Shangla and districts are behind bars under MPO.

The counsel added that orally petitioners are informed but competent didn't producing on court's file. The counsel pleaded for bail relief if the competent authorities didn't submitting record before court.

The counsel further argued that neither public nor public properties are vandalized at Chitral and Shangla districts on 9th& 10th May protests by PTI's workers.

During hearing Justice Kamran Hayat inquired from Advocate General regarding availability of

record on court's file as well as timeframe of imprisonments of PTI's workers.

However, Additional Advocate General assured submission of record on next hearing while PHC ordered to submit within three days and observed that which offense is committed by petitioners that they are put behind the bars?

PHC further observed that court will grant bail to petitioners in case of failure regarding submission of record within three days and adjourned further hearing.

# Bid to smuggle narcotics to Punjab foiled

PESHAWAR (APP): The Excise Police on Monday foiled a bid to smuggle a huge quantity of narcotics from the Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab province and arrested two drug peddlers.

The spokesman of the Excise department said

that the SHO Police Station Excise Mardan acting on a tip-off intercepted a vehicle bearing registration number LEF-1493 at Charsadda Interchange towards

Ghani Khan Road and during checking recovered 4800 grams of hashish

from different compartments of the vehicle.

The Excise police arrested two accused from the spot and also took the vehicle and narcotics into custody.

Further investigation from the accused drug peddlers was underway.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistants to CM Hidayatullah Afridi and Malik Mehar Elahi talking with injured of Bajaur blast at Lady Reading Hospital.

# Civil Society demands justice for child abuse, educ to end child labour

PESHAWAR (APP): The Child Rights Movement (CRM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chapter and the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW/G) Alliance on Monday stand together in deep outrage and condemnation following the heinous incidents of brutal torture inflicted upon minors domestic workers.

The alliance members expressed anger and grief over the distressing images and video evidence of the victim, a 14-year-old girl, who has been left with alarming gashes, wounds and visible marks of torture on social media.

They called it a stark violation of her basic human rights and an affront to the principles of justice and humanity.

The Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2017-18 reported 13.7 percent of children aged 10-17 years as being engaged in child labour, of them, around 5.4 percent were involved in hazardous child labour. According to UNICEF, about 3.3 million Pakistani children are trapped in child labour, depriving them of their childhood, health and education, and

condemning them to a life of poverty.

"The sheer brutality inflicted upon this child is a tragic illustration of the wider issue of child labour and abuse which prevails in our society," stated Sana Ahmad, Coordinator of CRM-KP.

"Her painful ordeal serves as a grim reminder that our children are suffering at the hands of those who should protect them. This is not a singular incident but reflective of a pervasive crisis."

In response to this incident, CRM and EVAW/G Alliance demand immediate action and comprehensive investigation to ensure that the individuals responsible for this horrendous act are brought to justice. We call on the government to act decisively and swiftly.

Qamar Naseem Program Manager Blue Veins said "Without a doubt, free and compulsory education is our strongest weapon in the fight against child labour. Education unlocks potential and fosters empowerment. It provides children with opportunities and choices they might not otherwise have, paving the way for a future where they

are contributors to society, not victims within it."

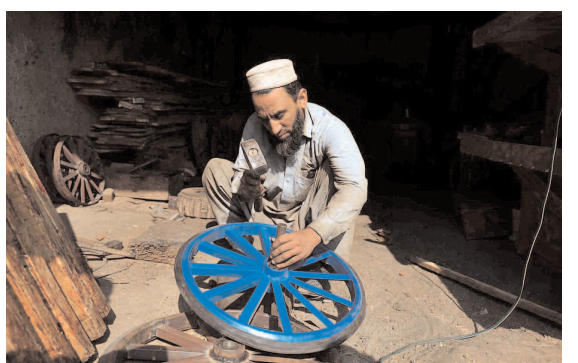
Imaran Takker, a member of the EVAW/G Alliance, insisted, "This is a clear case of not just physical violence, but also a glaring abuse of child rights. We demand that the government provides free and compulsory education for all children to discourage child labour in Pakistan."

Usman Afridi, another CRM member, expressed, "It is high time that our society and our government take proactive steps to eradicate the crisis of child labour and abuse. This incident is not just a test of our justice system but of our

commitment to our children's rights and their future."

CRM and EVAW/G Alliance affirm our commitment to championing the cause of child rights and ending violence against women and girls. We stand in solidarity with the victim and her family in their struggle for justice, and we extend our full support to them in this difficult time.

We implore our society, at large, to join us in advocating for the protection and promotion of children's rights, and together, let's ensure a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our children.



PESHAWAR: A man repairing hand cart wheel at his workplace near Dalazak Road.

## Kakar condoles with Ghulam Ali

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Balochistan Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the loss of innocent lives in Bajaur blast.

In a telephonic talk with Governor KP Ghulam Ali here Monday, the Governor, on behalf of himself and the people of Balochistan, condoled with the families of martyrs.

He prayed for the eternal peace of the martyrs and courage for the bereaved families to bear the loss with fortitude.

He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured persons.



PESHAWAR: Special Secretary Higher Education and Director Higher Education Academy of Research & Training presenting a shield to Caretaker Minister Irshad Qaisar.

# KP revenue authority to hold registration drive in province

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: To facilitate taxpayers at their doorsteps the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority has announced to hold a three days registration drive throughout the province starting from Tuesday, August 1 till 3.

On the directives of Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) Shah Mahmood Khan teams from KPRA would set up mobile registration camps at various locations in the province where anyone associated with the services sector can visit and register their business with the Authority.

Besides the mobile regis-

tration camps, teams of KPRA will conduct door-to-door visits to the business premises of people associated with the services sector to provide on-the-spot registration facilities to them.

"Taxpayers are our stakeholders and their utmost facilitation is our top priority. We are conducting the registration drive to facilitate our people and to ease their job. Anyone associated with the services sector can come and visit our mobile registration offices and get their businesses registered with the KPRA," said Shah Mahmood Khan in his message. He added that KPRA teams will personally visit the business premises, a

step to facilitate them in the best possible manner.

Teams of KPRA would be present at the mobile registration camps during the three days registration drive and anyone can easily come and seek help in registering their business or seeking any other information relating to registration, sales tax on services payment, and their monthly returns filing with KPRA. People can also directly contact KPRA through WhatsApp, telephone, or visit its website to get any information regarding registration or sale tax on services.

The locations of the mobile registration camps will be shared on the KPRA official website and social

media pages.

Under the KP Sales Tax on Services Act 2022, Sales tax on services is mandatory for every business owner providing services in the province. To pay sales tax on services it is obligatory to register the business first and this registration week is aimed at providing the facility to the business community of KP at their doorstep.

All they need to do is to come and visit the mobile registration offices which would be set up at various locations during the campaign. Your cooperation in this regard will be instrumental in the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and our future generation.



PESHAWAR: Advisor Finance Himayatullah Khan presiding over a meeting of NFC and NHP.

# ADB, AIIB teams stresses timely completion of WASH projects

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A joint delegation from Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) emphasized the importance of maintaining quality and ensuring early completion of projects under KP Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP).

The delegation, led by Senior Project Officer Umar Ali Shah and representative from AIIB Ghufan Syed, held a progress review meeting here on Monday.

During the meeting, Project Director KPCIP

Syed Zafar Ali, Director Compliance Amir Alam Khan, Director Technical Mian Shakeel Ahmad, and Director Finance Qazi Raees attended the meeting. Additionally, chief executive officers from Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Swat and Abbottabad water and sanitation companies and construction supervision consultants (PMSCS) were also present.

Each City Implementation Unit (CIU) provided a detailed briefing on the status of all ongoing, proposed, and recommended projects. Furthermore, the Project Management Unit

(PMU) team, led by the project director, briefed the delegation on the technical, financial, administrative, and operational aspects of the projects being carried out in five division cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, namely Peshawar, Mardan, Mingora, Kohat, and Abbottabad.

The consultants updated the delegation on the progress of work for each project. Following the briefing, the senior project officer emphasized that there should be no compromise when it comes to the quality of work. He

stressed the importance of completing each project within the stipulated timeframe to ensure that the benefits reach to the general public on time.

The provincial government with financial assistance from the ADB and AIIB has been implementing various projects in the cities including modernization of water and sanitation delivery system so that people have access to clean drinking water and the cities have a sustainable environment-friendly wastewater treatment and waste management systems.





## In brief

Visitor drowned to death  
F.P. Report

BUNER: A visitor has been drowned to death while other critically injured at famous Charh waterfall in Eelum mountainous valley area of Buner, on Monday. The deceased identified as Sami-ul-Haq age 28 and the injured visitor named Imtiaz Ahmed age 35 belonging from Swat district. Rescue 1122 conducted operation and shifted dead body and injured one Rural Health center Jowar for autopsy and treatment respectively. As per rescue source both of them were swimming in the popular Elum Ghar Charh waterfall. Deputy commissioner Arshad Qayum Barki in response to the reports of casualties and injuries at the scenic cold deep waterfall at various visiting spots in the hilly areas especially the Elum Ghar and its localities has impose section 144 of the Cr. PC and banned swimming there for two months period. It's pertinent to mention here that there were several natural waterfalls in the popular Elum Ghar and its limits besides such natural waterfalls in other parts of Buner mountainous series and large number of visitors from parts of Buner and other districts pour there during summer season and sometimes casualties reported too while injuries during swimming reported regularly.

Tehsil status for Bادهh city sought  
F.P. Report

LARKANA: The residents of Bادهh, a suburb of Larkana district, and representatives of civil society held a protest in front of the press club to give the status of Tehsil to Bادهh city. Zeb Ali Sario, Comrade Qadir Brohi, Anwar Askari and others said that more than four years have passed for their long-standing demand to give the status of Tehsil to Bادهh city, but it is being postponed due to the indifference and indifference of the rulers. He further said that the elected representatives have reneged on the promises made for the last 15 years, while not giving the status of taluka to the second largest city of Larkana district and the large population of Larkana is unfair to the citizens. Assemblies will be dissolved in a few days, so the government should officially announce the status of taluka to Bادهh city and issue a notification, otherwise we will be forced to boycott the vote in the next election.

## 3 held in murder case

SARGODHA (APP): Police on Monday arrested three accused in a murder case. According to a police spokesman, Bhagatnawala police team conducted a raid and arrested Asif, Nazim and Sabir, who had allegedly killed one Kashif over a minor dispute. Police have started interrogation of the accused, he added.

## 2 injured as roof collapses

FAISALABAD (APP): Two persons received multiple injuries in a roof collapse incident in the area of D-Type Colony police station. A spokesman for Rescue-1122 said here on Monday that old and redundant roof of a house caved in while repairing it in Gulshan-e-Ali Town. As a result, 30-year-old Mehwish and 32-year-old Afzal received serious injuries and were shifted to Allied Hospital by Rescue-1122, where doctors were trying to save their lives, he added.

## Country puts on fire by terror's attacks, says Siraj

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq has said that the country is on fire as terrorist acts and suicide blasts are happening daily in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan by targeting mosques, markets, public gatherings and seminaries. He urged the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to step down instead of wait-

speedy recovery of the injured.

"Our rulers are corrupt, they have created offshore companies abroad and transferred national wealth to other countries", Siraj said, adding that the apex court and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had failed to hold the present and former 'looters' accountable. The JI chief said that it was only the JI that could hold the

public holiday and Urdu will be made an official language. He said the JI would provide free of cost education to all, end extra privileges of judges, generals and bureaucrats, strengthen local bodies' institutions and would try to implement the 'Umar Abni Khitab' model of governance in the country if given a chance to rule.

JI chief said that the previous government did not pay any attention to the development of Malakand division, the promises to establish CPEC route, economic and industrial zones in the region were forgotten. He said the 45MW Koto Hydro Project was supposed to be completed in 2019, but the project was still in limbo. He pointed out that nine points had been identified for promoting border trade from Malakand and Chitral to Afghanistan and Tajikistan but not a single one had been built.

He said the government bought electricity for Rs 2.5 per unit and sold it to the public for Rs 50 per unit. "If the electricity produced in Malakand division is given to the people here, load shedding will end in the area", he said, adding the Wapda employees, government officers and bureaucrats utilized free of cost electricity the price of which was taken from consumers. Siraj said the overseas sent remittances worth 31 billion dollars, but they were viewed with suspicion by authorities at airports. He said that special initiatives would be taken for facilitating the overseas when the JI came into power. "The country is divided on the basis of Sindh, Balochi, Punjabi and Pakhtun", Siraj said, adding that thousands of talented youths had left the country to seek jobs abroad. Sirajul Haq congratulated the organizers for arranging a massive gathering and said it would change the fate of Malakand division.

'thieves' accountable as none of its leaders was involved in bad practices. "They (rulers) have bought properties and palaces, secured the future of their princes and princesses and destroyed the children of the nation", Siraj said, adding the present rulers had come only to squash their cases in courts. He said both Zardai and Nawaz Sharif were struggling to make their children as prime ministers.

"The same people go to assemblies because of their 'haram' wealth and then start looting", he said, adding that all the institutions had failed to hold them accountable. "JI has started a movement for mass awareness and it was the first rally in that connection", Siraj said, adding that his party would hold such rallies in other parts of the country.

Presenting his party manifesto, the JI chief announced that VIP culture, interest-based economy will be ended, Islamic Sharia and justice system will be introduced, prayers' leaders will be regularly paid, women and minorities' rights will be ensured, Friday will be restored as



ing for August 14 as his government had failed to provide security to the masses.

This he claimed while addressing the first ever night public rally in the history of Dir as chief guest at Chakdara. JI provincial chapter organized the 'Huquq e Malakand rally' which was attended by thousands of party workers, traders and transporters from all districts of Malakand division.

The rally was also addressed by the JI provincial chief Prof Ibrahim Khan, deputy provincial chief Maulana Muhammad Ismail, MNA Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Chitrali, former parliamentarian Inayatullah Khan, former MNA Sahibzada Tariqullah, JI general secretary Abdul Wasi and party district chiefs. JI chief strongly condemned the suicide blast at the JUI-F's workers' convention in Bajaur and asked the federal and provincial governments to immediately step down for their failure to protect the masses. He expressed his heartfelt sympathy to the JUI-F leaders and prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and



HYBERABAD: A view of Indus River at Jamshoro after recent rain.

## Tribesmen demands repatriation of Koki Khel at Tirah

## Amjad Ali Afridi

JAMRUD: Koki Khel tribe argued competent authorities to start 2nd phase of repatriation Koki Khel tribesmen at Rajgal valley located in Tirah area of district Khyber, on Monday.

Addressing to a crowded press conference held here in Jamrud press club, Malik Naseer Ahmad Koki Khel and others said that since long they had been advocating for starting the second phase of the repatriation of the displaced people of Tirah Valley.

Dwellers of Rajgal, Koki Khel in Tirah Valley had suffered a lot for the sake of the country therefore it was obligatory to compensate them and adopt necessary initiatives for their early return to their hometowns, they added. Malik Naseer



and his co-tribesmen further said that land dispute over the possession of Regi Lalma, had erupted between the government and the Koki Khel tribes and they had offered peaceful resolutions of the conflict but to in avail that was injustice to them.

In addition, they asked for a supply of six hours electricity to them round the clock to meet their daily routine business. Number of protest sit-ins, demon-

stration and rally, organized but could not attract the attention of the concerned officials to address their demands, they regretted.

They threatened that if the above mentioned demands were not met, they would commemorate August, 14 as black day and black flags would be hoisted at their homes besides all the tribesmen of Koki Khel would fasten black ribbon around their hands to file their protest.

## Tribesmen condemns Bajaur bomb blast

## F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The tribesmen condemned bomb blast on Jammat Ulema Islama Fazal (JUIF) worker convention at Khar, on Monday.

The tribesmen condemned blast while addressing an emergency press conference at Parachinar Press Club

including Qazi Syed Ifitkhar Hussain, tribal leader Malik Syed Asghar and Haji Jameel Hussain have said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially Terrorism in tribal areas is alarming. He expressed his sympathy and condolence to the families of the martyrs and JUI(F) and expressed regret for

the loss of precious lives.

Ali Turi, Human Rights Organization HRCPC Kurram Co-ordinator Azmat Alizai directed the youth of Parachinar to reach Lady Reading Hospital to take care of the injured and collect blood donations. Prayers were also prayed for his recovery.



LOWER DIR: KP Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan visiting Timergara hospital to inquire the health of Bajaur blast victims.

Corps Commander inquires health of blast victims  
F.P. Report

KHAR: Corps Commander Peshawar, Lt General Hasan Azhar Hayat on Monday visited district headquarters hospital (DHQ) Khar Bajaur district where he inquired about health of the injured of JUIF convention blast.

He met with injured of the blast and inquired about their health. He directed for ensuring best medical facilities to all injured. The Corps Commander also met with heirs of martyres of the Bajaur blast and praised their high courage. He also prayed for eternal peace of the martyres of the blast.

Wheelchairs lying in tehsil complex Mardan  
F.P. Report

MARDAN: Due to the carelessness of the district and tehsil administration, the wheelchairs brought for special persons (disabled persons) of tehsil Rustam have been lying in the offices of Tehsil Complex Rustam for a year are getting polluted, the village council chairman and secretaries have received the forms from the deserving people and submitted them to the respective village councils, but so far not even a wheelchair has been provided to any special person.

Chairman Village Council Rustam Ijaz Shaikh Rustam Press Club President Uzair Noumani was told that a year ago former member of the National Assembly Mujahid Khan had provided wheelchairs for the disabled people of NA Base constituency through the federal government but unfortunately, he resigned and later his government too. Now these wheelchairs will be distributed among the disabled people of Rustam tehsil and NA base district, for which after the survey, the forms of the eligible people have also been submitted to the respective village councils, but so far as no disabled person has received a wheelchair.

According to an employee of Tehsil Complex Rustam, about fifty wheelchairs have been transferred to Mardan on the order of Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Mardan, but who has the right and where to provide these wheelchairs. Chairman Ijaz Sheikh has requested the Commissioner Mardan and Deputy Commissioner Mardan to take immediate notice in this regard and provide wheelchairs to the deserving persons as soon as possible.

## City council Mardan passes surplus budget

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: City Council Mardan approved a surplus budget of more than one billion, 71 crore and sixty lakhs rupees of City Council Mardan for the financial year 2023-24 by majority opinion here on Monday. The budget was presented by the City Mayor Himayat Ullah Mayar in the budget session.

The meeting was held in the city council hall under the chairmanship of presiding officer Babar Khan. At the beginning of the meeting, the house strongly condemned the explosion in Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-F political gathering in Bajaur and expressed concern on the loss of precious human lives there.

Qari Junaid, a member of the House, prayed for the elevation of ranks of the martyrs and the speedy recovery of injured political workers of JUI-F. Participating in the debate

on the budget, council members Qari Junaid, Naveed Ahmed, Rahim Shah, Muhammad Arsalan Khan, Alamgir Khan and others described the budget of the city council for the fiscal year 2023.24 as constructive.

The council demanded an increase in the allocation for installation and repair of street lights as well as urged that development fund should be spent equally in all the councils. They also highlighted the problems of their respective areas and demanded its early solution.

City Mayor Himayat Ullah Khan Mayar said that the estimated expenditure in the budget is 1 billion 69 crore 49 lakh 83 thousand rupees, which is expected to save more than 1 crore 66 lakh at the end of the year. He welcomed the suggestions of the members and said that these suggestions will be included in the budget.

He said that the develop-

ment fund will be spent equally in all the councils. He said that work is going on many projects for the development of Mardan Tehsil. He said that under the Asian Development Bank, work was underway on water treatment plant at a cost of one and a half billion rupees, while 4.5 billion rupees is being spent on Garbage disposal plant through Water Supply and Sanitation Services Company.

Similarly, an amount of Rs.58 crore Will be spent on construction of green belt and plantation. Mayar strongly condemned the Bajaur blast and demanded that the elements responsible for it be brought to justice. He said that the recent wave of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is worrisome and the federal and provincial government and related institutions should deal with it sternly. Later, the council members also took to street to protest to condemn the Bajaur blast.

## Officials hail for peaceful observance Muharram

## F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Yaum-e-Ashur was observed, on Saturday across the district with due solemnity to pay homage to the supreme sacrifice rendered by Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A) and his devoted companions in Karbala.

In this connection, 36 mourning processions were taken out in Hafizabad, Pindi Bhattian, Jalapur Bhattian and other towns of the district. Public meetings were also held at different Masjid and other places throughout the district.

While addressing the public meetings and Sham-e-Ghareeban, Ulema and Zakireen highlighted the bright and candid teachings of Hazrat Imam Hussain (R.A.) and various aspects of Karbala tragedy.

Addressing the congregations held at Darbar Syed Shabbir Hussain Shah Hafizabadi, Aastana Aalia Wihwan Sharif, Markazi Jammia Masjid Noor Sukheki Mandi, Barrister Syed Waseem-ul-Hassan Shah, Syed Faiz-ul-Hassan Shah, Moulana Irfan Saddiqi respectively said that Youm-e-Ashur gives us the message of unity and fortitude.

The whole Muslim Ummah should follow this message to get united and not fight with each other whereas it also gives us a message to lead our lives according to teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the lifestyles of his companions (RA), they added.

District administration and Police made three tier security arrangements to

provide peaceful atmosphere to devotees in processions, Majalis and other congregations. DC Umar Frooq Waraich and DPO Dr. Fahad Ahmad Tarar were visited routes and places of processions and Majalis to review security and other arrangements.

DC and DPO said that all processions and majalis and congregations concluded peacefully in the district and any untoward incident was reported due to positive and responsible role of members of peace committees, Ulema, representatives of media, civil society, personnel of police enforcement agencies and district administration. Meanwhile, Rescue 1122 and staff of health department was provided first aid to 5690 devotees in processions in the district.

## Interfaith dialogue held at Islamia varsity Bahawalpur



## Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: The dialogue was organized by the Department of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony in the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The Islamia University of Bahawalpur has a special importance in the country because of its academic and research work.

Under the direction of Chancellor Islamia University Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, the Department of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony is trying to make the society a cradle of peace and harmony. Dr. Sajela Kausar, Chairperson the Department of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony and her team has organized an interfaith dia-

logue. On this occasion, along with prominent Muslim scholars and professors of universities and colleges of South Punjab, Christian and Hindu religious leaders and scholars of the region also participated. In this regard, the members of the National Peace Committee and scholars of various fields have also been made part of the board.

The purpose of the dialogue was to review the role of religion in peace and interfaith harmony. Interfaith dialogue, problems faced by minorities and majorities in Pakistan, peace promotion and study of religions pave the way for the world. This dialogue will have a historical status for South Punjab.

On this occasion, the need and importance of inter-faith dialogue for peace, the prob-

lems faced by the minorities and majorities of Pakistan and their solution, the role of religious communities in maintaining peace and the importance of studying religions for peace were discussed in detail.

## Car lifter held

QUETTA (PPI): Quetta police on Monday claimed to have recovered a stolen vehicle and arrested a car lifter in an operation in the precincts of Police Station Shaheed Ameer Muhammad Dasht in the metropolis. Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, a Police Station Shaheed Ameer Muhammad Dasht team, under the supervision of Naseebullah Nasar, Station SHO, recovered a stolen Vitz vehicle.





# Trump could be indicted soon in Georgia

ATLANTA (AP): A Georgia prosecutor is expected to seek a grand jury indictment in the coming weeks in her investigation into efforts by Donald Trump and his allies to overturn the former president's 2020 election loss. Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis began investigating more than two years ago, shortly after a recording was released of a January 2021 phone call Trump made to Georgia's secretary of state.

Willis has strongly hinted that any indictment would come between July 31 and August 18. One of two grand juries seated July 11 is expected to hear the case. If Trump is indicted by a Georgia grand jury, it would add to a growing list of legal troubles as he campaigns for president. Trump is set to go to trial in New York in March to face state charges related to hush-money payments made during the 2016 presidential campaign. And he has another trial scheduled for May on federal charges related to his handling of classified documents. He has pleaded not guilty in those cases. The Justice Department is also investigating Trump's role in trying to halt the certification of 2020 election results in the run-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the US Capitol. Trump said he's been told he's a target of that investigation, which likely has some overlap with the one in Georgia.

Details of the Georgia investigation that have become public have fed speculation that Willis is building a case under the Georgia Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, which would allow her to charge numerous people in a potentially wide-ranging scheme. Here are six investigative threads Willis and her team have explored: The Georgia

investigation was prompted by the Jan. 2, 2021 phone call Trump made to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. Trump suggested the state's top elections official could help "find" the votes needed to put him ahead of Democrat Joe Biden in the state. "All I want to do is this: I just want to find 11,780 votes, which is one more than we have," Trump is heard saying on a recording of the call, which was leaked to news outlets. "Because we won the state." Trump has insisted he did nothing wrong and has repeatedly said the call was "perfect."

Trump also called other top state officials in his quest to overturn his 2020 election loss, including Gov. Brian Kemp, then-House Speaker David Ralston, Attorney General Chris Carr and the top investigator in the secretary of state's office. US Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican, also called Raffensperger shortly after the November election. Raffensperger said at the time that Graham asked whether he had the power to reject certain absentee ballots, which Raffensperger has said he interpreted as a suggestion to toss out legally cast votes. Graham has denied wrongdoing, saying he just wanted to learn about the signature verification process. Biden won Georgia by a margin of fewer than 12,000 votes. Just over a month after the election, on Dec. 14, 2020, a group 16 Georgia Democratic electors met in the Senate chamber at the state Capitol to cast the state's Electoral College votes for him. They each marked paper ballots that were counted and confirmed by a voice roll call. That same day, in a committee meeting room at the Capitol, 16 prominent Georgia

Republicans - a lawmaker, activists and party officials - met to sign a certificate falsely stating that Trump had won and declaring themselves the state's "duly elected and qualified" electors. They sent that certificate to the National Archives and the US Senate. Georgia was one of seven battleground states that Trump lost where Republican fake electors signed and submitted similar certificates. Trump allies in the US House and Senate used those certificates to argue for delaying or blocking the certification of the election during a joint session of Congress. Prosecutors in Fulton County have said in court filings that they believe Trump associates worked with state Republicans to coordinate and execute the plan. The multi-state effort was ultimately unsuccessful. Despite public pressure from Trump and his supporters, then-Vice President Mike Pence refused on Jan. 6, 2021, to introduce the unofficial pro-Trump electors. After the attack on the US Capitol put a violent halt to the certification process, lawmakers certified Biden's win in the early hours of Jan. 7, 2021.

At least eight of the fake electors have since reached immunity deals with Willis' team. And a judge last summer barred Willis from prosecuting another one, Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, because of a conflict of interest. Republican state lawmakers held several hearings at the Georgia Capitol in December 2020 to examine alleged problems with the November election. During those meetings, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani and other Trump allies made unproven claims of widespread election fraud. They alleged that election workers tallying absentee ballots at State Farm Arena

in Atlanta had told outside observers to leave and then pulled out "suitcases" of unlawful ballots and began scanning them. The Trump allies played clips of surveillance video from the arena to support their allegations. State and federal officials investigated and said there was no evidence of election fraud at the site. Some Trump allies also said thousands of people who were ineligible - including people convicted of felonies, people under the age of 18, people who had voted in another state - had cast votes in Georgia. The secretary of state's office has debunked those claims.

Two of the election workers seen in the State Farm Arena surveillance video, Ruby Freeman and her daughter Wandrea "Shaye" Moss, said they faced relentless harassment online and in person as a result of the allegations made by Trump and his allies. Giuliani last week conceded that statements he made about the two election workers were false. In a bizarre episode detailed by prosecutors in court filings, a woman traveled from Chicago to Georgia and met with Freeman on Jan. 4, 2021. The woman initially said she wanted to help Freeman but then warned that Freeman could go to prison and tried to pressure her into falsely confessing to committing election fraud, prosecutors wrote in court filings last year.

Trump-allied lawyer Sidney Powell and others hired a computer forensics team to copy data and software on election equipment in Coffee County, some 200 miles southeast of Atlanta, according to invoices, emails, security video and deposition testimony produced in response to subpoenas in a long-running lawsuit. The county



Republican Party chair at the time - who also served as a fake elector - greeted them when they arrived at the local elections office on Jan. 7, 2021, and some county elections officials were also on hand during the daylong visit. The secretary of state's office has said this amounted to "alleged unauthorized access" of election equipment and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation is looking into it at the secretary of state's request. Two other men who have been active in efforts to question the 2020 election results also visited Coffee County later that month and spent hours inside. US Attorney BJay Pak, the top federal prosecutor in Atlanta, abruptly resigned two days after Trump called Raffensperger and a day after a recording of that call was made public. During that conversa-

tion, Trump called Pak a "never-Trumper," implying that he didn't support the president.

In December 2020, then-US Attorney General William Barr asked Pak to investigate allegations by Giuliani and other Trump allies of widespread election fraud. Pak, who had been appointed by Trump in 2017, reported back that he had found no evidence of such fraud. In August 2021, Pak told the US Senate Judiciary Committee, which was investigating Trump's post-election actions, that he resigned on Jan. 4, 2021, after learning from Department of Justice officials that Trump did not believe enough was being done to investigate allegations of election fraud and wanted him gone as US attorney.

## Poland raises alarm as Wagner forces move closer to border

WARSAW (Agencies): Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has expressed concern about the movement of Russian Wagner forces in Belarus towards the Polish border. "We have information that more than 100 Wagner mercenaries have advanced towards the Suwalki Gap, not far from Grodno in Belarus," Morawiecki told a news conference. This makes the situation on the border "even more threatening", Morawiecki warned during a visit to an arms factory in Gliwice in southern Poland.

Grodno is located in the west of Belarus, about 15km (nine miles) from its border with NATO members Poland and Lithuania. The Suwalki Gap is a narrow strategic land corridor on their territory between Belarus and Russia's Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad. Poland, a member of both the European Union and NATO, has worried about its security with Russian ally Belarus and Ukraine on its eastern border. Those fears have grown since Wagner group mercenaries arrived in Belarus after the group's short-lived rebel-

lion earlier this year. The Poland-Belarus border has already been a tense place for a couple of years, ever since large numbers of refugees and migrants from the Middle East and Africa began arriving, seeking to enter the EU by crossing into Poland, as well as Lithuania.

Poland's government accuses Russia and Belarus of using the migrants to destabilise Poland and other EU countries. It calls the migration a form of hybrid warfare, and has responded by building a high wall along part of its border with Belarus. Earlier this month, Poland began moving more than 1,000 troops to the east of the country amid rising concerns that the presence of Wagner fighters in Belarus could lead to increased tension on its border. Morawiecki noted that 16,000 attempted border crossings by migrants from Belarus had been recorded so far this year. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin wanted to "push them through to Poland," he said. "The situation is getting

increasingly dangerous ... Most likely they [the Wagner personnel] will be disguised as the Belarusian border guard and help illegal migrants get to the Polish territory [and] destabilise Poland," he said.

Poland's governing party chairman, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, said that Wagner fighters "are not in Belarus for fun". "They are there to create various types of crises, primarily directed against Poland," Kaczynski said, adding that Poland has been building up its defence capabilities "so that these provocations, these activities, fail". Kaczynski's comments came on the same day that Lithuania's deputy interior minister warned of the possibility of his country closing its border with Belarus. Arnoldas Abramavicius told reporters that Wagner mercenaries could disguise themselves as asylum seekers trying to cross Belarus's borders with EU member states, or stage provocations involving refugees. "It could be some groups of refugees, irregular migrants being transferred in order to cause some kind of unrest," Abramavicius said.

## Palestinian rival govts form body

CAIRO (Agencies): Rival Palestinian political leaders meeting in Egypt have decided to form a committee on intra-Palestinian reconciliation. President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh met for rare face-to-face talks in the coastal city of El Alamein along with representatives of most Palestinian political factions.

The latest attempt at reconciliation aims to bridge the gap between the parallel governments of Hamas in the blockaded Gaza Strip and of the Palestinian Authority - controlled by Abbas's Fatah movement - which administers Palestinian-run areas of the occupied West Bank. "I consider today's meeting of the general secretaries of the Palestinian factions a first and important step in continuing our dialogue, which we hope will achieve the desired goals as soon as possible," Abbas said in a statement after the meeting. The 87-year-old president announced "the formation of a committee to continue the dialogue ... end divisions and achieve Palestinian national unity". "We must return to a single state, a single system, a single law and a single legitimate army," Abbas added. Haniyeh called on Abbas to end "security collaboration" with Israel and "political arrests", according to participants at the meeting.

The Hamas leader also said "a new, inclusive parliament must be formed on the basis of free democratic elections". Hamas won the Palestinians' last legislative elections in 2006, but became the de facto ruler in the Gaza Strip a year later after wresting control from Fatah, which had attempted a pre-emptive coup to replace the Hamas-led government. Several weeks of violent fighting followed, resulting in Hamas ruling over the coastal enclave while Fatah - the dominant party in the Palestinian Authority - exercises limited self-rule in the occupied West Bank. A later statement from Abbas said he "hopes for an upcoming meeting soon in Egypt to announce to our people the end" of the 17-year split "and the return to Palestinian national unity". Palestinian political scientist Moukhaimeer Abu Saada told AFP news agency that the formation of the committee was no cause for celebration. "The best way to kill something is to form a committee for it," he said, speaking from Gaza. He said he doubted the move would produce any progress towards "ending the division or setting a date for Palestinian elections". Haniyeh called for "the restructuring of the Palestine Liberation Organization", the umbrella institution promoting Palestinian statehood. The PLO includes most Palestinian political factions, but not Hamas or Islamic Jihad.

## Israeli protesters keep pressure on Netanyahu over judicial overhaul

BAGHDAD (Agencies): Tens of thousands of flag-waving Israelis have staged new nationwide protests days after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pushed through a highly-contested law that limited some Supreme Court powers. Protesters beating drums and blaring horns took to the streets in cities including northern Galilee and central Tel Aviv for the 30th consecutive week, in a show of opposition towards the judicial overhaul.

The first part of Netanyahu's reform package, which has become known as the "reasonableness clause" bill, was ratified by the Knesset - Israel's parliament - on Monday sparking an unprecedented crisis and opening up a deep social divide. Political watchdog groups have appealed to the Supreme Court to strike down Monday's bill, which removes the high court's authority to void what it deems "unreasonable" deci-

sions by government. The court said it would hear arguments in September, setting the scene for a constitutional showdown. Al Jazeera's Bernard Smith, reporting from Tel Aviv, said protests had been organised across 150 towns and cities "so people don't necessarily have to converge to Tel Aviv or Jerusalem".

Despite the lower turnout in the capital compared to earlier this week, Smith said people were determined to make their opposition known. "Now [they] realise that the government is pressing ahead with its reform," he said. Protesters have been keeping up the pressure on the government to prevent additional plans for reform that could be pushed forward after parliament's summer recess. They include major changes to laws shaping the balance of power between the Knesset and the High Court of Justice, splitting the attor-

ney general's role and limiting the ability to petition against government actions. Critics have said Netanyahu is threatening Israel's democratic principles and independence of the courts, possibly with an eye to a corruption case he is facing. One proposed reform would allow the government to appoint more members to a committee that oversees appointees to the Supreme Court, giving Netanyahu the power to pack the court with more friendly judges. The prime minister has denied the claims, as well as the charges against him. He says the new law was one of several needed to balance government branches.

Should the government succeed in its plans, some former officials such as one-time Interior and Health Minister Aryeh Deri could be reinstated by the prime minister despite criminal convictions. After his stunning success in the 2022 elections, Netanyahu

formed a coalition with several far-right parties that have a long history of using incendiary rhetoric against Palestinians, oppose Palestinian statehood and support extending Israeli control over the occupied West Bank. Israel has occupied the West Bank since the 1967 Middle East war and has since pursued a programme of expanding illegal, Jewish-only settlements in the territory. The Palestinians want the West Bank to form part of a future state, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Critics have said that the Israeli government's policies in the occupied West Bank could cause a security escalation there. Last year was the deadliest for Palestinians in the West Bank since the United Nations began keeping track of fatalities in 2005, with 150 people killed, including 33 minors. Officials have warned that 2023 was likely to see a higher number of fatalities.

## French embassy in Niger is attacked

NIAMEY (AP): Thousands of people backing the coup in Niger marched through the streets of the capital denouncing France, the country's former colonial power, waving Russian flags, and setting a door at the French Embassy ablaze before the army broke up the crowd.

Demonstrators in Niger are openly resentful of France, and Russia is seen by some as a powerful alternative. The nature of Russia's involvement in the rallies, if any, isn't clear but some protesters have carried Russian flags, along with signs reading "Down with France" and supporting Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Russian mercenary group Wagner is operating in neighboring Mali, and under Putin Russia has expanded its influence in West Africa. The new junta's leaders have not said whether they intend to ally themselves with Moscow or stick with Niger's Western partners.

French President Emmanuel Macron said that attacks on France and its interests would not be tolerated and anyone who attacks French citizens will see an immediate response. Niger, a French colony until 1960, had been seen as the West's last reliable partner battling jihadists in Africa's Sahel region. France has 1,500 soldiers in the country who conduct joint operations with the Nigeriens. The United States and other European countries have helped train the nation's troops. At an emergency meeting, the West African bloc known as ECOWAS said that it

was suspending relations with Niger, and authorized the use of force if President Mohamed Bazoum is not reinstated within a week. The African Union has issued its own 15-day ultimatum to the junta in Niger to reinstall the democratically elected government.

Shortly after the ECOWAS meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, Chadian President Mahamat Deby arrived in Niger to lead mediation efforts, according to the Chad state radio station. ECOWAS has struggled to make a definitive impact on the region's political crises in the past but Bazoum was democratically elected two years ago in Niger's first peaceful transfer of power since independence from France in 1960. Members of the Niger military announced that they had deposed Bazoum and named Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani as the country's new leader, adding Niger to a growing list of military regimes in West Africa's Sahel region.

Some leaders of the mutiny said they overthrew Bazoum because he wasn't able to secure the nation against growing jihadist violence. But some analysts and Nigeriens say that was a pretext for a takeover driven by internal power struggles. "We couldn't expect a coup in Niger because there's no social, political or security situation that would justify that the military take the power," Prof. Amad Hassane Boubacar, who teaches at the University of Niamey, told The Associated Press. He said Bazoum wanted to replace the head of the presidential

guard, Tchiani. Tchiani, who also goes by Omar, was loyal to Bazoum's predecessor, and that sparked the problems. Boubacar said, Niger's dire security situation is not as bad as that in neighboring Burkina Faso or Mali, which have also been battling an Islamic insurgency linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Last year, Niger was the only one of the three to see a decline in violence, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.

Some taking part in rally warned outside bodies to stay away. "I would like also to say to the European Union, African Union and ECOWAS, please, please stay out of our business," Oumar Barou Moussa said at the demonstration. "It's time for us to take our lives, to work for ourselves. It's time for us to talk about our freedom and liberty." Niger has the most at stake of any country in the Sahel if it turns away from the West, given the millions of dollars of military assistance it has received from abroad. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the continued security and economic cooperation with the US hinges on the release of Bazoum - who remains under house arrest - and "the immediate restoration of the democratic order in Niger." Macron said he'd spoken to Bazoum and his predecessor France suspended all development and financial aid to Niger.

The 15-nation ECOWAS bloc has unsuccessfully tried to restore democracies in nations where the military took power in recent years.

like a ceasefire - but Ukraine is advancing, they're on a strategic offensive, how do we hold our fire when they're advancing on us?" Putin told reporters. "This can only be a bilateral initiative. But the [African] initiative in my opinion can become the foundation of certain processes towards a peaceful resolution, just like China's initiative, there's no competition or contradiction here," he said.

Kyiv, too, has previously poured cold water on the African plan. The Chinese proposal, unveiled earlier this year, is a 12-point position paper that calls for a de-escalation and eventual ceasefire in Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the Ukrainian president, has rejected the idea of a ceasefire now, which would leave Russia in control of nearly a fifth of his country and give its forces time to regroup after 17 grueling months of war. He has also said that

peace talks would require Moscow to withdraw its forces from occupied Ukrainian territory, something Russia has said is not negotiable. Commenting on the subject of peace talks, Putin said, "We did not reject them", but that "in order for this process to begin, there needs to be agreement on both sides". The Russian president also appeared to downplay not attending an economic summit in South Africa's Johannesburg next month amid the controversy over the ICC arrest warrant, issued over war crimes relating to the abduction of children from Ukraine.

Asked about his reasons for not going, Putin told Russian journalists that he was "in contact with all colleagues" from the bloc of developing economies known as BRICS, and said he did not "think my presence at the BRICS summit is more important than my presence here, in Russia,

right now". He added that he will take part via video link and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will travel to the August 22-24 gathering, which will bring together leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. South Africa is a signatory to the Rome treaty that formed the ICC and is therefore obligated to arrest the Russian leader if he sets foot on South African territory. South Africa had given strong hints that it would not arrest Putin if he attended but had also been lobbying for him not to come to avoid the problem. Although Moscow dismissed the warrant, Putin has not travelled to a country that is a signatory to the ICC treaty since his indictment. Analysts have said that the public debate about whether the Russian leader would travel to South Africa was in itself an unwelcome development for the Kremlin.

## Iran to 'pursue rights' over disputed gas field

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran's oil minister has said Tehran would "pursue its rights" to a disputed natural gas field also claimed by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait if negotiations fail, the ministry's news agency has reported. The offshore zone of the resource-rich Gulf, known as Arash in Iran and Dorra in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, has long been a focal point of contention between the three countries.

"Iran will pursue its rights and interests regarding exploitation and exploration" of the field "if there is no desire for understanding and cooper-

ation", Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji was quoted as saying by the official Shana news agency. He said Tehran has sought "the path of negotiation and understanding with our neighbours", according to Shana. "Iran will not tolerate any violation of its rights," Owji added. Earlier this month, Kuwait had invited Iran for another round of maritime border talks after Tehran said it was ready to start drilling in the field.

Sky News Arabia quoted Kuwait's Oil Minister Saad al-Barrak as saying his country would begin

"drilling and production" at the gas field without waiting for a border demarcation deal with Iran. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, who share some maritime gas and oil resources, last year signed an agreement to jointly develop the field despite objections from Iran, which branded the deal as "illegal". The dispute over the field stretches back to the 1960s, when Iran and Kuwait each awarded an offshore concession, one to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the forerunner to BP, and one to Royal Dutch Shell. The two concessions overlapped in the

northern part of the field, whose recoverable reserves are estimated at some 220 billion cubic metres (nearly eight trillion cubic feet). Iran and Kuwait have held unsuccessful talks for many years over their disputed maritime border area, which is rich in natural gas. Iranian drilling of the field in 2001 spurred Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to agree on joint offshore projects. Saudi Arabia and Iran ended in March a seven-year rift with a Chinese-brokered rapprochement deal, raising hopes for reduced tensions between the Middle East powers.



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# Flourishing terrorism, a great defiance for Pakistan

**A** bomb blast killed at least 44 people and injured more than 150 when a suicide bomber set off explosives at the political rally of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) in the Bajaur district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP). According to the Inspector General of K-P Police, the bomber was among the attendees seated in the front rows of the convention, who blew himself up as soon as JUI-F District Amir Maulana Abdul Rasheed reached the stage. As said, Senior JUI-F leader Hafiz Hamdullah was scheduled to participate in the convention, but he changed his travel plans at the last moment due to personal reasons. According to sources, the blast targeted the JUI-F, a government ally at the centre as hundreds of supporters had gathered in the convention. The investigations are currently under way and geo-fencing has been started from the scene to collect evidence, while no terror outfit has claimed the attack so far.

There has been a sharp upsurge in terrorist activities across Pakistan, particularly Erstwhile FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) had been the prime target of anti-state activities by the proscribed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) after the banned outfit called off ceasefire in November last year. The defunct group is currently camped inside Afghanistan and wages a blatant war against Pakistani public and state institutions, as Law Enforcement Agencies, Mosques and temples, Public rallies and recreational places are not secure from terrorists' attacks of brutal arsonists. The recent attack at JUI-F workers' convention in Bujur is one of the most severe terrorist attacks after the Peshawar Police Line massacre that cost over hundred lives of Policemen and innocent civilians in early 2023. Realistically, the frequency and the intensity in the terror attacks has gradually ramped up by the terror outfit in recent months after the Pakistani LEAs intensified their Intelligence based Counter Terrorism Operations against TTP sleepers cells in Erstwhile FATA and settled areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Recently, United Nations Security Council has released a report that revealed the nexus between the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and the Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which became more robust and strong in the modern era after the ideological mentors of Pakistani splinter group took control over the neighboring Afghanistan. The reports suggest that the linkages and cooperation of these trio-Cosa Nostras had increased their maneuverability and operation capabilities many fold. The fourth report of the Analytical Support and Sanction Monitoring Team of the UN Security Council further revealed that strong nexus between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP has posed significant challenges and negative implications to regional and global peace, particularly it has grave repercussions for Pakistan, which has been the prime focus of TTP terrorist activities during this time. Meanwhile, the Islamic State has also stretched its claws in former Tribal areas and is currently carrying out terror attacks against selected targets in Pakistan. Unfortunately, a particular faction still exists in the Pakistani society that owes the idea of so-called Islamic Khalifat/ Islamic Emirate in the country. This sect has a soft corner for the TTP and Taliban, it provides them shelter, facilitates their movement and operation and accommodates their recruitment from the society. However, Pakistani LEAs and Security Agencies have not yet recognized the actual breeding ground and root cause of the flourishing terrorism in this nation that has endangered the national security and Country's sovereignty for their mihopic ideology and narrow sightedness.

Amid heightened internal and external security risks, the ongoing tussle between the civic groups and political uncertainty further augmented the current situation more gruesome and complex. The political leadership in the country is totally unaware of the grave challenges and engaged in playing ping pong with each other which put the country into an unceasing turmoil and provided the terror outfit an ideal opportunity to regroup and realign themselves in certain areas. In fact, Pakistan faces the risks of a four-front war in the near future, if those terror groups or Indian agencies manage any terrorist activity against India from Pakistani soil that would not only endanger Pakistan's security but likely to cause grave embarrassment for Islamabad at the global level.

In the current scenario, Pakistani policymakers need to be very careful as prudent. Whereas, security forces and counter terrorism operations are not sufficient to eliminate this grave threat effectively which has taken deep ingress in Pakistani society. A nationwide awareness and indoctrination campaign should be launched to sensitize the masses about nature and extent of the threat which is crucial to achieve cooperation from the masses to defeat the menace of terrorism. Meanwhile, the LEAs, Police and Intelligence Agencies have to modify their operational methodology while sparing more time for operational activities than administrative jobs and service of their departmental high ups.

For that end, Political leaders and religious scholars can play a vital role in indoctrinating and mobilizing the public to initiate a wholehearted nationwide drive to eradicate this menace from our society once and for all.

### Important Notice

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## Let's agree Westminster badly needs reform

Andrew Rawnsley

**I**N the rich - but not always happy and glorious - history of our legislature, there's been an Addled Parliament, a Bad Parliament, a Barebones Parliament, a Mad Parliament and a Merciless Parliament. Will the current one, which began with the big Tory win in December 2019 and must be dissolved by December 2024, be remembered as the Worst Parliament? Exhibit one for the prosecution is the debauched reign of the moral vacuum called Boris Johnson.

He is the only prime minister to be found guilty of committing a criminal offence while at Number 10. Doubly ignominious, he is also the first to have held that great office and been catapulted out of the Commons after being found guilty of serially lying to parliament. Though the charge list begins with the debaucheries of the former prime minister, it does not end there. While most periods have their examples of low behaviour in high places, this one stands out for the profusion of them.

In the past nine months alone, we have seen defenestrations from cabinet of a deputy prime minister, a party chair who had previously been chancellor and a home secretary. This unimpressive trio is made up of Dominic Raab, Nadhim Zahawi and Suella Braverman. After the latter was forced to quit because she committed a security breach, she wrote: "I have made a mistake; I take responsibility; I resign." Her supposed remorsefulness lasted less than a week. She was resurrected as home secretary just six days later because Rishi Sunak thought he needed her support to secure the premiership, making ridiculous his pieties about upholding "integrity, professionalism and accountability" in public life. "Sir" Gavin Williamson takes the palm by being ejected from the cabinet not once, not twice, but thrice. Theresa May sacked him as defence secretary because she didn't believe his denials of responsibility for leaking a discussion inside the National Security Council. Mr Johnson brought him back as education secretary only for him to perform so woefully that he was sacked again. He was recklessly restored to the top table by

Mr Sunak only to be forced to quit soon afterwards pursued by complaints of bullying and accusations from a former deputy he employed of "unethical and immoral" methods when he was chief whip. It is not just cabinet names who have brought our politics into disrepute. The rollcall of shame also includes an alarmingly high number of junior ministers and backbenchers. It is a startling fact that more MPs have been sanctioned by the Commons and/or resigned their seats in disgrace in this parliament than in any other in history. The fallen Tories include Owen Paterson for a lobbying scandal and Neil Parish who quit as an MP after admitting to watching porn in the Commons. Imran Ahmad Khan resigned from parliament after he was sentenced to 18 months in jail for sexually assaulting a 15-year-old boy. It hasn't been all Tories.

Several Labour MPs have been sanctioned for bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct, and the SNP's Margaret Ferrier was given a 30-day suspension from the Commons for busting Covid rules. The number of MPs who have been suspended by their respective parties as a result of, or pending, misconduct investigations has at times been larger than all the Lib Dems in the Commons put together. It was a good idea to introduce the Recall of MPs Act, which puts any member penalised with a suspension of 10 or more days in peril of being booted out by their constituents at a special byelection. But this clearly has not been the deterrent against unethical or even illegal behaviour that its authors anticipated.

So is this "the worst parliament in our history"? An answer in the affirmative comes from the Labour MP Sir Chris Bryant in a forthcoming book entitled Code of Conduct. He delivers a lively, forensic, engrossing, sometimes entertaining, often disturbing and always unflinching interrogation of what's gone wrong with our legislature. Sir Chris is the chairman of the committees on standards and privileges, and his previous works include a masterly biography of parliament. So he knows his way around its pinnacles and its sewers. He also has firsthand experience of how grotesquely some fellow MPs can

behave. First elected in 2001, when Labour was in power, he reports: "I remember very clearly in my first few weeks seeing the look on a young female colleague's face when a drunken cabinet minister lunged at her, hugged her tight and felt her bottom in the division lobby against her will."

She looked sickened - and frightened." He continues: "Things were little better for gay men. Over the years five male MPs have felt my bottom uninvited. One of them, who was not out, did so repeatedly. Another, who is still in the House and still does not accept that he is gay, pushed me against a wall and felt my crotch. Another rubbed himself behind me in the queue to vote." There's scope to quarrel with his verdict that this parliament is the worst of all time. There were plenty of sexual predators, liars, crooks, bullies and other malefactors in previous eras and rogue politicians had a better chance of getting away with it then. If you want to be optimistic, you can argue that the record number of members who have been sanctioned in this parliament is at least in part due to the Commons becoming less tolerant of misconduct and more effective at investigating and punishing it. That said, there's no disputing Sir Chris's overarching thesis, which is that there's something rotten about the state of parliament and it needs fixing.

No political era is without scandal. The distinguishing characteristic of this one is that there has been such a deluge of them. A first, vital step is for political parties to radically improve the quality control of their candidate selection processes. This year, Jared O'Mara, the former Labour MP for Sheffield Hallam, was sentenced to four years in prison after abusing his position in parliament to make fraudulent expense claims to fund his consumption of cocaine and alcohol. Charlie Elphicke, the former Conservative MP for Dover, was sentenced to two years after being found guilty of three counts of sexual assault. The parties clearly need to make more strenuous efforts to scrutinise the characters of the people they put up for parliament.

Even with that done, it will be sensible to assume

that some bad actors will always make their way into the Palace of Westminster. So another thing we must do is consign to oblivion the "good chap" theory which holds that we don't need hard and fast rules governing the conduct of politicians because we can presume that they are all decent people who will behave honourably. Even supposing that has ever really been true, that theory has now been tested to destruction.

When it comes to the behaviour of politicians, we can hope for the best, but we need to guard against the worst. That means establishing truly robust rules and strict policing of them. There's a long list of things to be done. One is to deal with gaping loopholes in the controls on lobbying. The limp-wristed changes proposed by Mr Sunak's government in the wake of the Greensill scandal are deeply inadequate. We need a lot more transparency about which vested interests are getting privileged access to ministers and for what purposes. Eric Pickles, the former Conservative cabinet minister and chair of one of the watchdogs, is right to demand heavier sanctions on those who flout the rules when former ministers and civil servants land lucrative roles with commercial entities hoping to profit from their insider knowledge and networks. The "independent adviser" who is supposed to influence ministerial behaviour will never be properly independent for so long as their ability to investigate rule-breaking is entirely dependent on the say-so of the prime minister. The role needs to be empowered with the right to initiate investigations and determine breaches of the ministerial code.

I agree with Sir Chris when he says that politicians are not all "equally dire" and depicting the lot of them as scumbags threatens to "subvert democracy itself". The decent types should be alarmed that the rotten ones are poisoning the collective reputation of politicians. Polling suggests that a big majority of the public have become deeply cynical about their elected representatives. MPs as a body desperately need to restore public respect and trust. The voters do not expect parliament to be a communion of saints, but it is extremely toxic for our democracy when they think of it as a cesspit of sin.

## Democratic Party's internal struggles to be laid bare in primaries

Dalia Al-Aqidi

**A**S the 2024 US presidential race is on the horizon, the Democratic National Committee finds itself facing a critical decision: Who will be its standard-bearer in the next election? The recent hint by Rep. Dean Phillips that he would seek the Democratic nomination adds a new dimension to the contest.

This development sheds some light on the internal struggles within the ranks of the Democratic Party, as the far left is looking to replace President Joe Biden, while the DNC is trying to distance itself from Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who is running for the presidential nomination against his colleague. The prospect of the party replacing the current president points to the dissatisfaction of the far left with the administration's policies and actions.

Biden's tenure has been marked by an expansion of government, a surge in public spending and a significant departure from conservative principles. As those on the left wing of the Democratic Party seek a more progressive candidate, they aim to push for policies such as the Green New Deal and increased government intervention in various sectors. While Biden has implemented some progressive policies, they continue to perceive him as being too moderate and compromising with the Republicans. In their view, Biden's attempts at bipartisanship have hindered the full implementation of their ambitious agenda. Consequently, they yearn for a candidate who would be more aggressive in pushing for their vision of America's future as a socialist country.

The apparent reluctance of the left to support Kennedy as a candidate might surprise some, given his family's historical legacy within the party. Kennedy, the son of the iconic Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, holds a prominent position within the party. However, his political stances and controversies might have influenced the left wing's hesitancy. His views on some issues, particularly vaccine hesitancy and environmental policies, have put him at odds with mainstream Democrats. While he might be appealing to some sections of the party, his stance on these matters has raised concerns among others. Additionally, his involvement in certain legal battles, including his efforts to challenge vaccination mandates, and his controversial statements may have contributed to the skepticism surrounding his candidacy. The DNC, including Biden, is using former President Donald Trump as a scarecrow to mobilize its base and provoke American donors to raise more funds for the Biden campaign. In the midst of the campaign video he released in April, President Biden strongly warned of the lingering menace to American democracy emanating from the specter of Trump, thus laying the groundwork for a potentially turbulent and high-stakes rematch between these two adversaries. "Every generation of Americans has faced a moment when they've had to defend democracy, stand up for our personal freedoms, and stand up for our right to vote and our civil rights," Biden said.

Should Biden continue to center his campaign on the

perceived threat Trump poses, it could lead to a complex scenario if the latter does not secure the Republican Party's nomination. In such a situation, Biden's campaign strategy might face challenges in recalibrating its message and direction. Focusing heavily on the former president as a primary target could leave Biden's campaign vulnerable to criticism and accusations of fear-mongering or of lacking a clear vision for the future. It might also alienate potential voters who are not aligned with Trump's policies but are also not enthusiastic about the Democratic agenda. The absence of Trump as the opponent could also affect voter enthusiasm and turnout. Trump's presidency elicited strong emotions on both ends of the political spectrum and his candidacy could have motivated voters to rally around Biden. With a different Republican nominee, the election dynamics might change and voter enthusiasm could fluctuate.

Nevertheless, the current president has been facing challenges since his first day in office, failing to address many of them correctly. However, many American people on both sides are ready for a change, which is definitely not Vice President Kamala Harris. Biden is also facing other serious issues that he cannot ignore. His son Hunter's legal case has been a significant discussion and controversial topic. While the full details and implications of the case are yet to unfold, it undoubtedly has the potential to impact his presidential campaign if not handled honestly and carefully.

Hunter Biden's business dealings and allegations of ethical impropriety have been a cause for concern. The Republican Party has pointed to potential conflicts of interest and questioned whether the Biden family used their political connections for personal gain. As the legal case continues, Republicans will undoubtedly attempt to use it as a tool to undermine the president's credibility and character. However, the impact of Hunter Biden's legal situation on his father's campaign depends on several factors. If the case remains isolated to his own personal actions and does not implicate the president directly, it might not significantly affect the campaign. On the other hand, any direct involvement or severe accusations against Biden could create challenges for his reelection bid.

That being said, liberal media outlets are trying to simplify and justify this legal case in an attempt to shift America's attention while whitewashing Biden's presidency and performance. Historically, it has not been uncommon for potential challengers from within the same party to consider running against an incumbent president, especially if there were divisions or disagreements within the party regarding policy direction or leadership. These primary challenges can serve as a way for different factions within the party to voice their concerns or advocate for different policy positions. Both parties will closely watch the Democratic primaries, eager to see how the candidate selection process unfolds and how it shapes the political landscape for the race to the White House in 2024.

## Ukraine must prepare to lose the White House

Richard Kemp

**T**IME is not on the side of the Ukrainian armed forces in their long-running counter-offensive. They are battling not just against the strongest Russian defences but also the clocks of eastern European weather and US electoral politics.

Despite frustration at the slow pace of Ukraine's advance, no one can question the need for extensive "battlefield shaping", in military language, before attempting to break through the heavily defended Surovikin line and striking deep into Russian controlled territory. After all, before attacking into Iraq in 1991, the US-led coalition conducted a shaping air campaign that lasted almost as long as the Ukrainian advance has so far. Denied any comparable ability to soften up enemy defences with airpower, Ukraine's preparation has had to rely on reconnaissance in force, missiles and artillery to whittle down front line positions and hit headquarters and sup-

ply lines while probing for weaknesses to exploit with ground forces. Now it looks like the Ukrainians have identified the most favourable axis of attack, from south of Zaporizhia towards Melitopol, and they seem to be committing elements of the Nato-equipped and trained 10th Operational Corps. Of the various options, that would be the most productive, potentially enabling Kyiv to break Russia's land corridor from the east, isolating Crimea and cutting off forces in the west of the country.

But if and when Ukrainian troops succeed in smashing through the first line of defences - which they have not yet achieved - the road ahead will be very long and very bloody. They face mile after mile of obstacles including tank traps, barbed wire and minefields, plus dug-in infantry, pillboxes, machine guns, tanks, artillery fire, combat planes, attack helicopters, drones and missiles. War is more

unpredictable than any other human activity, and no one, not even those directing events in Kyiv or Moscow, can possibly know whether or to what extent Ukraine will succeed. But after spending two precious months trying to shape the battlefield, as the autumn mud approaches, there remains only a matter of weeks before any armoured advance will become bogged down. That means major offensive operations will have to pause at least until the onset of the winter freeze in November and possibly even until next spring.

This is well understood and will be built in to battle plans by both Ukraine and Russia. But there is an even bigger problem to contend with than the capricious General Winter, which can work for either side, and that is the American general election, which will almost certainly work against Kyiv. Biden will be wishing for

this war to end before the election season gets under way in earnest, because he knows that, among much of the US population, war is something to campaign against rather than campaign for. Continued fighting is more likely to lose votes than to win them, especially if things go wrong for Ukraine, for which Biden will be blamed at the ballot box.

There is, of course, another American anxiety; one that is perhaps greater than the fear of drawn-out battle. That is a level of Ukrainian victory that could lead to collapse in the Kremlin and possible fragmentation and chaos across the country with potentially catastrophic geostrategic consequences and untold global economic harm. This immediate vision of doom may or may not be right - but it endures in the back of the minds of White House officials. It also goes some way to

explaining why the US has been generous only up to a point on military aid for Ukraine. Far more could and should have been provided and much more quickly. Instead the administration has supplied just enough to achieve a certain level of success but not sufficient to inflict outright defeat on Putin's regime.

F16s and long range missiles are a case in point. Both would have given Kyiv a much greater strategic edge in its fight back, despite the extraordinary claims by US national security advisers that neither is critical to Ukraine's war effort but may be of use for its long term defence. This is the same thinking as Biden's recent opposition to fast-tracking Ukraine for Nato membership: such things are to be used as bargaining chips for the peace talks that we can expect to see pushed forward from Washington by the autumn. The ground has apparently been laid over many months, with some

suspecting secret channels between the head of the CIA and his opposite number in Moscow.

US electoral politics may mean that peace talks are inevitable, but they are nevertheless ill-judged. Even if Ukraine does manage to retake significant territories before any ceasefire, negotiations can only hand a form of victory to Russia, which will neither pull back from the ground it has taken nor accept any Nato security conditions.

As we saw previously when Moscow occupied substantial areas of Georgian territory in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, the Kremlin's imperial ambitions will not be over when the fighting has ended. Unless it is vanquished on the battlefield, it will only be a matter of time before Russia resumes its aggression. But perhaps the current US administration can only see as far as November 2024, when Americans go to the polls.

The Telegraph



# Middle East’s tricky relationship with its ‘demographic dividend’

Ehtesham Shahid

**I**N demographic analyses, data speaks louder than words. Such studies on the Middle East are often taken with a pinch of salt due to inadequate data. Sometimes, data is too shallow or too close to call; sometimes, it even deludes us into believing in an alternate reality. Yet, when these studies surface, they tell multifarious stories, sometimes complementary, often contradictory.

The region's rapid population growth in the last 50 years has coincided with improving living standards and growing urbanization, industrialization and consumption. However, this demographic change, characterized by the growing youth population, is also described as an economic burden rather than an asset. The population pressure presents challenges, such as water shortages, and sometimes limits growth. Most studies narrate advantages related to the Middle East's so-called demographic dividend, which is defined as a "favorable age structure" where working-age people proportionately exceed the dependent population. The projection range is primarily promising. However, the operational part boils down to one essential argument - what matters for a region is what you make of the demographic dividend and what you turn it into.

For instance, what is known as the "youth bulge" projects a growing working population and is good news, but it could also be a disaster if adequate opportunities are not built around it. Let us consider some public data on the

Middle East's demography. Almost a fifth of the population of the Middle East and North Africa is aged between 15 and 24 (55 percent is under 30), growing by about 2 percent a year, which is higher than the world average. Anyone drawing inferences from such projections cannot afford to look at just one side of the story. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the demographic transition will present an opportunity as the region's youth regiment grows older. It also indicates the need for renewed efforts and investments into "their transition to an autonomous life and participation in economic, social, and public life." Almost all studies, including the OECD's, recommend using the demographic dividend appropriately rather than just hailing it.

The criticality of this observation becomes evident in a UN Refugee Agency report, which posits that "high youth unemployment and informality rates, alongside 15 million displaced people, many of them young, do not make ideal circumstances." Another study suggests that the Middle East is now entering a phase where working-age people make up a disproportionately large population segment, while the young and elderly are relatively small in number. For all intents and purposes, the condition indicates a demographic dividend, as taxpaying wage earners outnumber the retired and those outside the labor market. But this is still not the complete picture.

Moreover, even if that is the case, it will change if not adequately responded to.

Other determinants present a slightly different reality. A World Bank study says land is now scarce and a valuable resource across the MENA region. It emphasizes that the projected rise in land demand due to demographic trends and decreasing supply due to climatic and governance factors indicate "a looming crisis" as the region grapples with "dramatic social and political transformation." While analyzing a diverse and often turbulent region, such alarmist projections cannot be swept under the carpet. The World Bank report also suggests that land cultivation reserves in the region are almost exhausted. At the same time, the total built-up area will need to expand to accommodate the high demographic growth. Other studies conclude that demographic transformations influence power relationships, which will shift considerably in many regions, including the Middle East.

Sometimes, inferences from statistics transcend a demographic analysis. For instance, the UN forecasts that Turkiye and Iran's populations will decline by 2100. Iraq's population, currently 75 percent of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries combined, will be 33 percent larger than the GCC's by the end of this century. Population explosions in Yemen and Iraq will "presumably increase their geostrategic importance." Yemen's population is projected to increase

from 34 million to 74 million, i.e., from being less populated than Saudi Arabia to having 50 percent more people than the Kingdom, making its populace 90 percent as large as the GCC's combined and close to Iran's or Turkiye's.

Such demographic shifts might create what Jon B. Alterman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies calls "a labor transition." It may reorder the economics, politics and society of "the entire Middle East, from Casablanca to Tehran," Alterman cites data on startlingly high youth unemployment throughout the Middle East and the often-long wait between people ending their education and starting their first job. "To an unusual degree, the Middle East is entering a period when people of working age are a disproportionately large part of the population, with relatively small numbers of young and elderly," says Alterman. While those are the hallmarks of a demographic dividend, Alterman's analysis points toward a more extensive picture where such an advantage does not bring much when organizations do not become more productive.

The demographic dividend promises to be a sumptuous dish for the Middle East; but the recipe and ingredients must be handled carefully to make sure the end product is palatable, if not delicious. In other words, the region will need to adapt its economic, social and political institutions to the changes brought about by the unprecedented numbers of young people as they move into adulthood.

# Meloni meets Biden as Italy poised for big decision on China

Andrew Hammond

**G**IORGIA Meloni last week made her first visit to the White House as Italian prime minister. Although the Ukraine war shows no sign of relenting, it was China that topped the agenda of her meeting with President Joe Biden. While Rome is not always seen as being among the top-tier global powers, the reason why the Meloni-Biden relationship could have significant implications is Italy's systemic importance in Europe and the wider West. It is not only a key G7 country, but it will also hold the chair of this club of Western powers next year, when the conflict in Ukraine could still be underway.

Seismic shock waves were sent out across the Western world when Italy, the eurozone's third-largest economy, became the first (and so far only) member of the G7 to sign up to China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2019, under the administration of Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. This provoked a strong rebuke from the Trump administration, with Garrett Marquis, the US National Security Council spokesman at the time, asserting that there is "no need for the Italian government to lend legitimacy to China's infrastructure vanity project." America's concern about the more than &euro;1 trillion (\$1.1 trillion) BRI plan stems from its immensely ambitious nature, which lies at the center of a geopolitical struggle between Beijing and Washington. China has big plans to boost trade and stimulate economic growth across Asia, Africa and beyond by building massive amounts of infrastructure and connecting it to countries around the globe.

While the Trump team was vexed with Italy over the BRI, concern about China's influence in Europe is bipartisan in Washington, given the concerns of many Democrats about growing Chinese international influence. This was underlined during the Obama administration, when US officials raised concerns about the degree to which the UK was at that time perceived to be

cozying up to Beijing under the government of David Cameron. However, it is not just Washington that is concerned by Italy's involvement in the BRI, but also Brussels. EU officials are increasingly conscious of China's influence across the continent, with a growing number of EU states having signed memorandums of understanding on this, including Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Greece, Malta and Portugal.

Like Washington, Brussels has reservations about the BRI, not least given its wider frustrations over Beijing's perceived slowness in opening up its own economy and a wave of Chinese takeovers of European firms in key industries. EU officials also have concerns over Beijing's 16+1 initiative with key countries in Eastern and Central Europe. However, Meloni, who came to power last October, is giving signals that an Italian U-turn on the BRI may be underway, including acknowledging that there "are ongoing evaluations ... the issue must be handled carefully and respectfully, also involving the parliament." The agreement that Rome inked in 2019 will be renewed automatically for five years in March 2024 if neither side withdraws by giving three months' notice. Meloni has claimed that Biden has never challenged her on the issue of Italy's participation in the BRI. However, the White House would, without question, welcome a reversal from Rome.

The rationale for U-turning on this issue is not just related to Western security. In addition, there is so far little evidence that Italy has benefited economically from the deal.

Over the last four years, Italian exports to China have risen to about &euro;16.4 billion from a baseline of &euro;13 billion. However, Italy's overall trade deficit with China has increased. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said any Italian withdrawal from the BRI would be a short-sighted decision. He last week asserted that, "despite Italy's

repeated claim that the development of ties won't be thwarted without BRI, announcing (Meloni's) decision in the United States will be seen as a clear signal that Italy is leaning closer to Washington."

Chinese Ambassador to Italy Jia Guide echoed these warnings from Beijing. He said that, if Italy chooses to withdraw from the BRI - a platform that he asserts demonstrates mutual political trust and strategic cooperation with China - it would have a negative impact on the country's image and credibility.

So, it was this big forthcoming decision for Italy that shaped the Biden-Meloni meeting. In a related vein, the two leaders discussed the Ukraine war and Italy's emerging preparations for the G7 in 2024, which is also a big US election year. Meloni has already declared that a priority will be "working on the reconstruction of Ukraine as a way to bet on a future of peace, freedom and Euro-Atlantic prosperity for this nation." While Biden and Meloni do not see eye to eye on every issue, he is delighted by her apparently steadfast support not just for Ukraine, but also NATO too, despite significant unease within the Italian populace about the war. The US president is also aware that, within Italy, anti-establishment political parties like The League - which forms part of the government coalition - had, prior to the Ukraine conflict, sought a reevaluation of Rome's relationship with Moscow, including calling for the lifting of pre-2022 EU sanctions. Meloni also discussed Africa with Biden, which will be another key feature of the Italian G7 presidency. She argues that more help for nations such as Tunisia is needed to prevent migrants from making perilous attempts to cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

Taken overall, Thursday's meeting could be the first signal of a strengthened Italian-US relationship. While the two nations have long been allies, any withdrawal from the BRI by Italy would be broadly welcomed in Washington, across both sides of the political aisle.

# The chips are down

Wei Zongyou

**T**HE Joe Biden administration believes that sci-tech competition is the lynch-pin for the United States to maintain its economic and military dominance, and to win the strategic competition with China. Its strategy of technology competition against China has three aspects.

First, to upgrade the US' sci-tech competitiveness. Since the end of World War II, the US has been the dominant economic, military and technological power. However, over recent years, its leadership positions in emerging and critical technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum technology, supercomputers and 5G have been weakened, or risk being overtaken by China. Viewing sci-tech competitiveness as the key to maintain the US' hegemony, the Biden administration has scaled up investment in science and technology. Second, to preserve the US' military advantage. Military supremacy is the keystone of the US hegemony. Having a technology advantage is indispensable to ensure the US retains its military edge. Biden believes that high-end chips, AI, quantum technology and supercomputers play irreplaceable roles in modern information warfare and the high-tech warfare of the future, and seizing the commanding heights of emerging and critical technologies will give the US military advantages on battlefields. Therefore, the Biden administration aims to enlarge the US' lead in science and technology and thus preserve the US' military dominance through its sci-tech competition with China.

Third, to slow China's technology progress. In September 2022, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in a policy address that "the strategic environment "of global sci-tech competition has changed, and the US must "maintain as large of a lead as possible". This speech proved to be a watershed. Since then, the US has tightened its squeeze on China's high-tech sector, and stepped up export controls and suppression targeting China to preserve its lead in key sci-tech areas.

The Biden administration has adopted a three-pronged strategy to thwart China's technology development.

First, to ramp up investment in and support for high-tech areas. In the face of China's rapid development in the high-tech sector, the Biden administration is convinced that government support is essential to maintain the US leadership in science and technology. Given the foundational nature of certain technologies, such as memory chips, the Biden administration has prioritized research and development efforts in these areas. In August 2022, Biden signed the CHIPS and Science Act, showing its strong resolve to maintain the US' sci-tech edge through huge investments and policy support. He also signed the Inflation Reduction Act, which aims to bolster the clean energy sector and bring advanced manufacturing industries back to the US through government subsidies. Second, to intensify high-tech export controls and investment restrictions vis-a-vis China. Since taking office, Biden has escalated the previous government's control of high-tech exports to China. In October 2022, the US Commerce Department announced a sweeping set of more aggressive export controls aimed at limiting China's access to the most advanced chips and the tools needed to develop its own. Moreover, the Biden administration mulled imposing investment bans targeting China's high-tech industries, and put many Chinese high-tech companies on a list of entities subject to export controls citing national security reasons.

Third, to form small anti-China cliques. The US has enlisted its allies in a bid to contain China's technology development using coercive measures. On the one hand, the US has formed the so-called Chip 4 alliance with Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Chinese island of Taiwan to block the development of the Chinese mainland's semiconductor industry and shut the Chinese mainland out of the high-end chip supply chain. On the other hand, the US has roped in the Chinese island of Taiwan, Japan, the

Netherlands and the ROK to join its export controls on advanced chips and chip-making equipment targeting the Chinese mainland in an attempt to cut its access to high-end chips and chipmaking tools. Driven by its zero-sum view of China-US relations and China's technology development, the Biden administration has adopted a series of strategies and policies that will hinder the technology development of both countries and the world at large. First, it has worsened the already strained China-US ties. Two and a half years into the Biden administration, bilateral ties, rather than being improved, have continued their downward spiral. Biden's attempt to turn the US' comparative advantages in technology into absolute advantages by suppressing China's high-tech sector has further soured bilateral relations and increased the risk of confrontation. Second, it has disrupted the global semiconductor industry chain, and hindered the global development of technology. The Biden administration is endeavoring to ensure the control of the whole supply chain for high-end chips is in the hands of the US and a few of its allies. This will disrupt the division of labor in the supply chain, impede the growth of the high-end chip industry and the progress of global technology development, and waste resources. In fact, these measures will not stop China's technology development, rather it will deal a heavy blow to the development of the chip technology of the US and its allies and the global chip industry.

Third, it has fueled a technology Cold War. Science and technology are meant to benefit humanity. But the United States, putting its narrow interests first, has gone to great lengths to suppress China's technology progress, severely disturbing normal technology exchanges and cooperation among countries. By weaponizing the US' leading position in the supply chain for high-end chips, the Biden administration is pushing for technology decoupling from China and waging a technology Cold War against China.

The China Daily

# For Sri Lankan Tamils, the Black July pogroms live on, 40 years later

Ambihai Akilan & Archana Ravichandradeva

**T**HE Tamil community from Sri Lanka commemorates the 40th anniversary of Black July this week. The anti-Tamil pogroms which occurred throughout the island in July 1983 were the culmination of years of systemic violence and discrimination.

Politicians, including then-president JR Jayawardene, the uncle of current President Ranil Wickremesinghe, chose to fan the flames of ethnic violence instead of addressing the legitimate concerns of the Tamil people. Weeks before Black July, Jayawardene stated in an interview with the Daily Telegraph in the United Kingdom: "Really, if I starve the Tamil people out, the Sinhala people will be happy."

During the pogrom, Sinhalese mobs killed several hundred Tamils, according to government numbers, though activists have long insisted that the evidence suggests the true death toll was in the thousands. The mobs also destroyed Tamil businesses and displaced tens of thousands of Tamils. The violence was targeted and intentional, while police and government officials either failed to stop the violence or actively encouraged it. This has led to allegations that the events of Black July represent genocide. The pogroms did not occur spontaneously, whipped up in a flash of ethnic tension and violence. Black July occurred after years of similar anti-Tamil pogroms in 1956, 1977, after the burning of the Jaffna Library in 1981 - destroying more than 95,000 historical Tamil texts and manuscripts - and after months

of violence from May to July in 1983.

The 1977 parliamentary election was a tipping point. After years of nonviolent protest by Tamil politicians and civil society, the Tamil United Liberation Front - a coalition of Tamil parties - won a resounding electoral victory in the country's northern and eastern provinces on the political promise of creating an independent Tamil state. Yet, instead of trying to address the concerns driving that sentiment, the Sri Lankan government responded with more state violence. By 1983, tired of what they deemed the futility of non-violent protests, nascent armed Tamil groups were beginning to engage in attacks against the state.

Days after the horrific anti-Tamil violence of Black July, on August 4, 1983, the Sri Lankan government, instead of passing constitutional changes to protect Tamils, passed the 6th amendment to Sri Lanka's constitution which criminalised the advocacy of a separate state. This amendment in combination with the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), which is still in effect, continues to be used as a tool of violence to arbitrarily detain and terrorise Tamils. The PTA has been used to target members of the Muslim community as well, especially in recent years. The political underpinnings of Black July still characterise the state today. The hardening of the state's ethnocentric foundation on the basis of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism set the stage for the violence which would even-

tually lead to a 30-year-long armed conflict in Sri Lanka during which the state has been accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

In the 40 years since Black July, there has been a striking absence of accountability. This has allowed an environment of impunity to flourish and thrive, emboldening individuals who stand credibly accused of perpetrating or abetting crimes throughout the armed conflict to assume prominent roles as political, economic, and military leaders. Fifteen years following the end of the armed conflict, the echoes of Black July still resonate. The northeast of the island, where most Tamils live, remains developmentally and economically deprived, their plight exacerbated by the significant presence of the Sinhalese-dominated military.

The ethno-nationalist ideology continues to echo through the corridors of power, shaping policies and governance in ways that further marginalise the Tamil people. As long as this ideology remains interwoven with governance, the country cannot claim true progress or unity. The lack of political will of successive Sri Lankan governments to engage their Sinhalese electorate on these issues has only further entrenched Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. In the years after Black July, the government established the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence in 2001, mandated to investigate the ethnic violence against the Tamils that took place between 1981 and 1984. However, this commission,

like other truth commissions established in Sri Lanka, failed to bring any semblance of justice or accountability for the victims. Since the 1970s, Sri Lanka has set up more than 15 such commissions. But their limited mandates, lack of transparency and lack of political will have contributed to a justified mistrust of domestic-led mechanisms, perpetuating the sense of injustice and marginalisation experienced by the Tamil people, and leading to demands for international investigations.

The government is now touting a new initiative through a proposed National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. This has rightly been called out by various Tamil civil society organisations as being yet another disingenuous means for the Sri Lankan government to pretend to move forward on 'reconciliation' without addressing the lack of accountability and acknowledging the root causes of Tamil disillusionment. Tamil calls for internationalised justice mechanisms should be heeded, and Tamils must be able to fully exercise their political demands for self-determination. The twin demands of accountability and a sustainable political solution have remained unaddressed since Black July, and it is only by meaningfully engaging with both of these issues that there is the possibility for change in Sri Lanka. As Tamils in the northeast continue to mobilise and demand their grievances be addressed, now more than ever, sustained international pressure on Sri Lanka's government to address Tamil concerns will be crucial for any semblance of a brighter future.

Aljazeera

# The lesson from the Greece wildfires? The climate crisis is coming for us all

Nesrine Malik

**A**SURREAL video filmed by a tourist in "the most perfect location in Greece" last week, posted to show how "a weekend trip turned into survival mode in 24 hours", could easily pass for a TV climate crisis awareness-raising campaign. It brings to mind two harrowing adverts released by Save the Children in 2014 and 2016, showing what life would look like for a British girl if war came to our shores and she became a refugee.

The brief Greece video unwittingly follows the same script of rapid unravelling: an idyllic waterside scene is instantly transformed, overshadowed by looming fire and smoke, then abandoned for boats, buses and waiting holding pens as hundreds of tired and bewildered people seek shelter and fail to secure flights out. The tourists get to go home, eventually. But the extreme heat and weather events that have characterised this summer in southern Europe, the internal displacement they caused and the disruption to tourism and the local economy they are wreaking, brings the continent ever closer to what is now a global experience. Over the past decade, almost 22 million people have been displaced every year by weather-related events. The projection is even more staggering. By 2050, the forecast is that 1.2 billion people will join the ranks of climate migrants, most of them from the countries with the lowest capacity to deal with the fallout from global heating.

They will not all be fleeing a fire or a flood. The climate crisis is not

about a single photogenic weather event. The climate crisis is war, it is poverty, it is radicalisation, it is the disappearance of the habitat families have lived in for generations, and it is the geopolitical and security fallout of collapsing ways of making a living. The result is a movement crudely summed up as a "refugee crisis" - a description that makes a constant churn of displacement sound like an exotic temporary phenomenon that will abate, or can be quarantined to other countries, if only the barriers are raised high enough. But people displaced due to the climate crisis are rarely fleeing a temporary weather-related event - rather, the complicated, permanent repercussions of these events. In the Sahel, dwindling rainfall in Cameroon drove cattle herders into competition for water sources with fishing communities, triggering armed conflict that instantly sent thousands of people across the border to Chad, and ultimately created a stream of migrants making their way northwards to the Mediterranean and its perils.

In Micronesia, fresh water and fish supplies are dwindling as sea levels rise, storms become stronger and salt the farming earth, and beaches erode. The result is the devastation of entire communities and rising migration to the US. Across rural Iraq and Syria, members of struggling farming communities have swapped "backhoes for assault rifles" after droughts and unseasonal bouts of cold and heat made them easy targets for Islamic State recruitment. These

calamities seem remote and unrelated to anything that could happen in the developed world. What we experience as freak weather events, erratic temperature fluctuations and a dystopian few days of New York under an orange smoke cloud are less alarming than they should be because they feel temporary and, ultimately, absorbable. They occur in relatively affluent urban economies with robust physical and financial infrastructures, ones that can cushion the mass movement of people, and their food and water provision in times of crisis. However briefly, though, these climate crisis-related events should act as a window on to a scenario where slow, small changes accumulate until a sudden, devastating impact permanently ejects you from your home and reshapes your ability to make a living. And yet this window is slammed shut by what has become, in the UK and Europe, a cruel political determination that other countries' issues are not our problem. Most crucially, they don't look like our problems.

What that ignores is that the refugee crisis increasingly is everywhere, even in the global north. "It just looks different," says Jake Bittle, author of The Great Displacement: Climate Change and the Next American Migration. Having traced population moves in the US following extreme weather events and wildfires, he found that even those who have been displaced there due to storms, flooding and fires don't see themselves as climate migrants. "They feel

really secure in the global north because they feel like there is, if not a social safety net, then at least a financial safety net and access to liquidity and credit - they feel they will be disrupted temporarily. The reality is that your life can be derailed for years, even for people who are relatively well resourced." As an example, Bittle cites the fact that multiple major home insurers have withdrawn from California. Wildfires have been so devastating that they were struggling to make money in the state. The result is that "the financial architecture of home ownership is falling apart. These sophisticated systems aren't really built for an era where you're seeing giant disasters every year. You're not really any more protected than someone in the global south who has no formal home ownership structure at all". This is especially true as these weather-related events start to become "chronic features of life". It is an observation borne out in the reporting of the Institute for Economics and Peace. It concluded that Europe and North America would be better able than some to cope with ecological threats, but that the majority "will not be immune from wider impacts".

When it comes to the threat of more displacement, it is a warning that most likely will not land with policymakers in the US and Europe, urge them act faster on the climate crisis or make them take kindly to those fleeing so many of its complex outcomes. Because being forced to move is something that happens to others, but not to us.

The Guardian





# RMB to become parallel int'l currency soon: Dar

— welcomes BOC's another branch

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday while welcoming the opening of Bank of China's second branch here said Renminbi (RMB) would soon become an internationally adopted parallel currency.

Addressing the opening ceremony of Bank of China, Ishaq Dar said that it was a historic movement as six years ago he had handed over the license for opening of the bank's first branch to its President in Belgium.

Now, it's a big coincidence that BOC was opening its second branch, which he said was a great privilege for him to witness.

The minister congratulated BOC President and his team for extensive efforts in opening the branch and also appreciated cooperation by Pakistan authorities and finance ministry in this regard. The minister also congratulated Deputy Governor Peoples Bank of China, his team and officials of China embassy.

Ishaq Dar said that BOC, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), China Development Bank and Peoples Bank of China were all great financial partners of Pakistan.

He said Pakistan had been passing through a turbulence phase during the last one year and extended heartfelt appreciations to Chinese Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peoples Bank of China and Chinese Commercial Banks for supporting Pakistan to overcome difficulties. He said Pakistan was out of the turbulence phase as recently one of the rating agencies had upgraded ratings for the country, which he said was now moving from stability to growth again.

He expressed the hope that Renminbi (RMB) was going to be internationalized soon adding five countries have already formalized the currency and more countries were planning to do so. He said it would become a parallel international acceptable currency and congratulated Deputy Governor BOC in advance.

He said that BOC Deputy Governor shared that Pakistan was already benefiting from RMB adding that during his (Dar's) last visit to China under the leadership of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, he had proposed enhancement of facility upto RMB 40 billion.

He expressed the hope that cooperation between the two countries in terms of economic and diplomatic ties would reach to new heights.

He said both the countries were helping each other on all international and domestic issues in the world forum like United Nations Security Council, UN General Assembly and all other forums.

**IPU delegation calls on Ishaq Dar**

Duarte Pacheco, President Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), along with a delegation of representatives of the International Parliamentarians' Congress (IPC), called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar warmly welcomed Duarte Pacheco on his visit to Pakistan and shared that Pakistan valued its partnership with the IPU and provided regular support through its candidacy at International Organizations in pursuit of global peace, prosperity and economic stability, said a press release issued here Monday.

The finance minister also informed about the recent economic and financial measures taken by the government which have put the financial position of the country on an upward trajectory. He also mentioned that keeping in view its strategic position in the

region, Pakistan's vision was to make the country a regional hub for trade and energy corridors as well as a destination of choice for industrial production and IT services and for this reason, Pakistan valued its trade ties with all the regional countries.

The President IPU appreciated the role that Pakistan and its parliamentarians had been playing through the platform of the IPU and IPC in ensuring the common aspirations of people across the world, particularly in terms of peace, security, human rights, and sustainable development.

He further expressed the resolve of IPU to further strengthen the engagement of Parliamentarians and ensure adequate representation from across the globe for the betterment of the world in terms of peace, security, and economic development.

The delegation thanked the finance minister for his support and cooperation.

The delegation was consisted of Abdel Rehman Maaia Member IPC from Jordan Parliament, Saran Traore Member IPC from the Guinea Parliament, Nagiyev Arzu Member IPC from the Azerbaijan Parliament, Sitara Ayaz Former Member IPC from Senate of Pakistan.



FAISALABAD: State Minister for Industries & Production Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi addressing business community at Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Port shipping activity was recorded at the port where two ships namely, APL Antwerp and MSC Tia-II carrying Container, berthed at Qasim International Terminal on Sunday.

Meanwhile, two more ships, Andrea Victory and Rhine with 66039 tonnes of Palm oil also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 09 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Maersk Phuket, and APL Antwerp sailed out to sea on Monday (today) morning on 31st July, while four more ships, MSC Tia-II, BBC Plata, Rotterdam Eagle, and Young Chang Shun-hang are expected to sail on the same day.

The cargo throughput of 193,753 tonnes, comprising 110,750 tones imports Cargo and 83,003 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,927 Containers (2,141 TEUs Imports and 2,786 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, San Antonio, Andrea Victory, Emma Grace, and Kithira & three more ships, CL Lindy, Maersk Brooklyn, and MSC Mumbai scheduled to load/offload Cement, Palm oil, Soya bean oil, Chemicals, Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at Multipurpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Engro Terminal, Bulk Terminal, and Container Terminal respectively on 31st July, while two more containers ships, Maersk Sentosa and MSC United-VIII are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

## Tokyo stocks end higher

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks ended higher Monday as export-related shares were boosted by a weak yen, while 10-year Japanese government bond yields surged to a nine-year-high.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock index, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average, advanced 412.99 points, or 1.26 percent, from Friday to close at 33,172.22. The broader Topix index finished 31.95 points, or 1.39 percent, higher at 2,322.56.

Following the Bank of Japan (BOJ)'s decision to modify its ultra-loose monetary policy last week, 10-year Japanese government bond yields surged to a nine-year high of 0.605 percent.

pared with \$2,839,582 during the same period of last year. To make up for the decline, about 30 companies from China and Pakistan further shared their views at the webinar to promote Pakistani pink salt export to China.

They agreed that to cater to the Chinese market, Pakistani salt exporters should take steps to ensure the quality and authenticity of their products; extensive quality control measures need to be implemented to maintain the high standards that Chinese consumers expect; in addition, efforts should be made to promote the unique characteristics of pink salt through various marketing channels, including social media platforms and trade shows.

Investment Counsellor in China, said at the webinar that pink salt lamp, a major product of Pakistan's export of pink salt to China, works like an air purifier, killing bacteria and removing dust, allergens, smoke, odors and mold spores. It can also be used as decoration and a night light to create a tranquil atmosphere, which is popular among Chinese consumers. He added that besides lamps, BBQ salt, bath salt, and decorative salt are Pakistan's advantageous products which have huge potential in the Chinese market.

In the first half of this year, Pakistani Himalayan pink salt to China reached \$2,694,493, a slight decrease of 5 percent com-

## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 957 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 957.60 points, a positive change of 2.03 percent, closing at 48,034.60 points against 47,077.00 points the previous trading day.

A total of 491,874,957 shares were traded during the day as compared to 455,106,081 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 17.884 billion against Rs 17.879 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 358 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 188 of them recorded gains and 144 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 26 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 49,335,324 shares at Rs 1.36 per share; K-Electric Ltd with 39,447,916 shares at Rs 2.42 per share and Cynergico Pk with 32,410,155 shares at Rs 3.48 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 1,050.00 per share

price, closing at Rs 23,850.00 whereas the runner-up was Nestle Pakistan with an Rs 60.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 6,950.00.

Sanofi-Aventis witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 30.40 per share closing at Rs 720.00, followed by Pak Services with Rs 24.79 decline to close at Rs 725.21.

**Rupee sheds 19 paise against US Dollar**

Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed a devaluation of 19 paise against the US Dollar in the inter-bank trading as it closed at Rs 286.64 against the previous day's closing of Rs 286.45.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 289.5 and Rs 292.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 2.55 to close at Rs 316.15 against the last day's closing of Rs 318.70, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen lost 03 paise to close at Rs 2.01, whereas a decrease of Rs 3.38 paise was witnessed in

the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 368.43 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 371.81.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 05 paise each to close at Rs 78.03 and Rs 76.41 respectively.

**Gold rates decrease by Rs2,500 to Rs222,200 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,500 and was sold at Rs.222,200 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 224,700 on the previous trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.2,143 to Rs.190,501 from Rs. 192,644 whereas 10 gram 22 karat gold was sold at Rs.174,626. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.50 to Rs2,800 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.42.86 to 2,400.54.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$16 to \$1,959 from \$1,975, the association reported.

## SECP publishes diagnostic study on Motor third-party insurance

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has released a diagnostic study providing a holistic synopsis of Motor third-party insurance in the country.

The objective of this study was to present an in-depth overview of the legal framework applicable to motor third-party insurance, the current state of motor insurance, impediments in implementation and enforcement, recent initiatives taken by SECP and a way forward containing recommendations, said a press release issued here.

The study intended to serve as a starting point for

discussion and collaborative action planning on the implementation of Motor third-party insurance among key stakeholders, including central and provincial authorities, SECP, and the insurance sector.

As per this study, motor insurance coverage in Pakistan is merely 3 percent, which is way lower compared to other major countries within the region.

The current status of motor third-party insurance in Pakistan demands immediate attention. To increase motor insurance coverage and implement existing mandatory motor third-party insurance, the study provides policy recommen-

dations for a multifaceted reform agenda.

The initiation point has to be the effective implementation of the existing laws while at the same time galvanizing the process of amendments to the Motor Vehicles Act of 1939.

The study is the outcome of extensive data collection and consultations with insurance companies through the Insurance Association of Pakistan.

The diagnostic study can be accessed at <https://www.secp.gov.pk/document/diagnostic-study-on-the-status-of-motor-third-party-insurance-in-pakistan/?wpdmid=48683&refresh=64c7a76096bde1690806112>.

## Asia joins WS rally on US rates, China hopes

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Markets rallied Monday, tracing another bump on Wall Street, where investors cheered a further slowdown in US inflation that stoked optimism the Federal Reserve will not have to hike interest rates again.

The gains built on last week's broad advance and were boosted by more pledges by China of measures to stimulate its stuttering economy.

The yen, however, remained under pressure against the dollar as traders weighed the Bank of Japan's decision Friday to loosen its grip on government bond prices, which saw the currency swing wildly. US equities charged higher Friday after data showed the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation fell again last month to its slowest pace in two years.

The news follows a string of upbeat readings out of Washington that appear to show the central bank's long-running campaign of rate hikes is bearing fruit, while the economy remains in rude health.

On Wednesday, officials tightened again but said future decisions would be data-dependent, suggesting

it may have come to the end of its cycle.

A key reading on job creation at the end of this week will be closely watched for a better idea about the bank's plans, while rate decisions are also due by the Bank of England and Reserve Bank of Australia.

Hong Kong and Tokyo gained more than one percent while there were also healthy performances in Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Mumbai, Wellington, Bangkok and Jakarta. However, London was flat at the open while Paris and Frankfurt fell.

China announced fresh measures Monday to boost consumption, providing further support to markets, after the government on Friday unveiled a number of initiatives for light industry.

Authorities released a 20-point plan that includes more support for housing demand, the culture and tourism sector, and green consumption such as electric vehicles.

The move comes as spending by China's army of consumers remains subdued even after the lifting of strict Covid containment

measures late last year.

A fresh round of figures showed the country's manufacturing activity continued to shrink in July, albeit at a slightly slower pace than last month.

Hopes for a government drive to kickstart the economy have provided much-needed support to markets over the past week, even as some observers warn the large-scale measures seen in the past were unlikely.

"While the actual implementation and depth of these policies remain untested, the meeting, combined with the recent series of policy announcements, has created a significant psychological impact," Tommy Xie, at Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation, said.

"This shift has redirected investors' perspectives from seeing the glass as half-empty to viewing it as half-full."

Still, Robert Carnell, at ING, added: "While the authorities have been vocal in their support for the economy, so far, that has not translated into the sort of sizeable fiscal policy stimulus many in the market have become used to expecting."

## SCCI official inaugurates 'UMC Overnight Service'

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Departmental Committee on Post Office and Telecommunications Chairman Saleem Akhtar Bhutta inaugurated the new postal service, 'UMC Overnight Service', along with chief postmaster Sialkot.

He said efforts were being made to establish better relations between the Post Office and the Sialkot industry. He said the serv-

ice was initially launched in nine districts of Pakistan including Sialkot and it would provide services to customers 24 hours a day. He urged the Sialkot Post Office to take special measures to improve facilities for industrialists and lessen their difficulties.

Bhutta said shipping rates were increasing due to which the industry was badly affected. He said Sialkot exporters had set unique examples of self-

help by completing several mega projects on self-help basis including Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL), Sialkot Dry port and own private airline namely AirSial Airline on self-help basis.

**SBP Sialkot official visits WCCI**

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Development Finance Division Senior Deputy Chief Manager BSC-Sialkot Nisar Ahmed visited Women Chamber of

Commerce and Industry (WCCI) on Monday.

WCCI President Dr Marian Nouman welcomed the guest.

During the meeting, issues related to challenges and barriers being faced by women entrepreneurs in getting financial support in Sialkot were discussed.

The two officials also discussed actionable steps to address the identified challenges facing businesswomen.

## MCB, VISA collaborate to create seamless payment experiences

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: MCB Bank, a leading financial institution, is delighted to announce its strategic partnership with Visa, the global payments technology company. This collaboration will accelerate the development and adoption of digital payment solutions by leveraging cutting-edge technology and a shared vision of enhancing overall customer experience.

MCB Bank and Visa aim to create seamless and secure payment experiences, empowering customers to transact conveniently and offer enhanced accessibility to make payments effortlessly, both domestically and internationally through a series of new technological solutions.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Shoaib Mumtaz, President & CEO, MCB Bank, expressed, "At MCB Bank, we are continuously developing financial solutions, using state-of-the-art technology, to serve



our customers better. Our customers deserve seamless, secure and user-friendly digital banking services. Therefore, with a "digital-first" approach, we are committed to driving innovation and continuously enhancing the financial lives of our customers. Our partnership with Visa is a testament to our customer focus."

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Leila Serhan, Senior Vice President and Group Country Manager North Africa, Levant and Pakistan, Visa praised the

existing relations between Visa and MCB Bank in Pakistan and welcomed the opportunity to strengthen the partnership and bring it to new heights. She added, "Visa is always committed to improving and driving greater access to digital payment experiences for everyone, everywhere. Pakistan is an important market and one whose consumers and businesses have an immense appetite for digitization. We look forward to bringing locally relevant and innovative solutions with MCB Bank

for our Pakistani consumers." MCB Bank, is one of the Largest & Most Innovative banks in Pakistan. The Bank operates a strong and vast network of Over 1,450 branches and over 1,450 ATMs in Pakistan and 11 overseas branches. With a customer base of over 8 million, MCB leads the banking & financial services sector in Pakistan and customers across the globe have 24/7 access to MCB Bank via our innovative and accessible Digital Banking Services.

## Pakistani pink salt products attract buyers in Chinese market

BEIJING (APP): The popularity of Pakistani Himalayan pink salt products, including salt lamps and bath salt, has been growing in recent year in China, said Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, Hussain Haider.

"Pakistan can further expand its export of salt products to China by enhancing its marketing and packaging," he said while addressing a webinar on the promotion of Pakistani pink salt jointly held recently by the Consulate General of Pakistan in Shanghai and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan.

According to General Administration of Customs of China, Pakistani Himalayan pink salt to China reached \$4,968,223

in 2021 and \$5,747,492 in 2022, a year-on-year increase of 15.68 percent, which shows the gradually expanding market and promising prospects of pink salt exports to China.

The improvement in Pakistani can be attributed to a combination of factors, including increased awareness among Chinese consumers about the health benefits of pink salt, marketing campaigns, and establishment of strong trade partnerships between Pakistani exporters and Chinese importers.

The rise in its exports has not only boosted the Pakistani salt industry but also provided a much-needed economic boost to the country. Increased demand has created new jobs in the

mining and processing sectors, contributing to the overall growth of the local economy.

Ismail Suttar, chairman of Salt Manufacturers Association of Pakistan (SMAP) and president of Employers Federation of Pakistan, pointed out at webinar that as the popularity of pink salt continues to grow, the Pakistani government, in collaboration with industry stakeholders, is actively exploring ways to expand production capacity and improve infrastructure.

These efforts are aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the salt industry and maximizing its potential in meeting rising demand from China and other international markets.

Wang Zihai, Pakistan's





In brief

Rashid Khan out of The Hundred

LONDON (Agencies): Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan has pulled out of playing in The Hundred on the eve of the tournament through injury. The 24-year-old was due to play in Trent Rockets' first three games before leaving for international duty. The number one-ranked T20 bowler in the world will be replaced by Pakistan's Imad Wasim before New Zealand's Ish Sodhi comes in as announced last week. Rockets start their title defence against Southern Brave on Tuesday. Rashid said: "I'm really disappointed to have to withdraw from The Hundred through injury. It's been great to play in the competition the first two years. "Trent Rockets is a great team and I hope to be back again next year." The announcement is another blow for the tournament after Australia's Ellyse Perry and Alyssa Healy were forced to pull out of the women's competition with injuries last week.

Bumrah back from injury

NEW DELHI (Reuters): India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will return from a lengthy injury absence to lead the side against Ireland in the Twenty20 series next month, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Monday. The 29-year-old right-arm seamer has not played international cricket since last September and underwent rehabilitation following back surgery in March. Bumrah also missed last year's T20 World Cup in Australia and the Indian Premier League. India face Ireland in three T20s, starting on Aug. 18. Squad: Jasprit Bumrah (C), Ruturaj Gaikwad (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Sanju Samson (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Shahbaz Ahmed, Ravi Bishnoi, Prasidh Krishna, Arshdeep Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Avesh Khan.

Stokes drops Smith in Ashes finale

LONDON (Agencies): Ben Stokes gave Australia's Steve Smith a potentially match-changing reprieve after early wickets revived England's hopes of a series-levelling win on the last day of the final Ashes Test at The Oval on Monday. Australia were 238-3 at lunch, needing 146 more runs to reach a mammoth target of 384 runs, with rain threatening to intervene. Smith, then on 39, gloved off-spinner Moeen Ali onto his thigh in the last over before lunch. The ball looped to England captain Stokes at leg gully, who grabbed it one-handed above his head. But as his arm came down, his hand clipped his leg and he dropped the ball. Star batsman Smith was initially given not out and an England review confirmed Stokes's error. At lunch Smith, averaging over 93 at The Oval, was 40 not out and Travis Head unbeaten on 31. Earlier, Chris Woakes removed Australia openers David Warner and Usman Khawaja in a dramatic burst of two wickets for one run in seven balls on an overcast morning and with a pitch freshened by rain – classic English conditions for swing and seam bowling. Express quick Mark Wood then had Marcus Labuschagne caught in the slips for 13 to leave Australia, who have already retained the Ashes at 2-1 up, 169-3. Australia, bidding for a first Ashes series win in England since 2001, resumed on 135-0. Warner was 58 not out and Khawaja 69 not out.



THE OVAL: David Warner's final Test innings in England was ended by Chris Woakes, England vs Australia 5th men's Ashes Test.

# Broad seals England win as Ashes series ends 2-2

LONDON (Agencies): England beat Australia by 49 runs to win the fifth Test at The Oval on Monday and end the Ashes series all square at 2-2 after the tourists suffered a dramatic collapse. Australia, chasing a mammoth 384 to win, collapsed from 264-3 to 334 all out, with England's retiring paceman Stuart Broad taking the final wicket. England did the bulk of the damage when, after a rain break of more than two hours, they took four Australia wickets for 11 runs in 19 balls. Off-spinner Moeen Ali (3-76) and all-rounder Chris Woakes (4-50) led the way before Broad, England's all-time leading Ashes bowler polished off the tail. "It was absolutely wonderful," Broad told Sky Sports. "I thought Chris Woakes and Moeen Ali set the tone absolutely unbelievably. "Woakesy picked up a couple of wickets, particularly Steve Smith, who has just been a wonderful player to play against all these years. "Once we got a couple we really started to believe. The crowd were unbelievable. It was so loud and we just jumped on the back of that. To contribute

to the team with two wickets is very special. "When you make that decision you wonder what your last ball will be so to take a wicket to win an Ashes Test match is pretty cool." Australia, as the holders, had already retained the Ashes but they remain without an Ashes series win in England since 2001. When play resumed after the rain delay, the tourists were 238-3, needing 146 more runs for victory. Steve Smith, dropped at leg gully by England captain Ben Stokes just before the interval, was 40 not out and left-hander Travis Head 31 not out. - Moeen triggers collapse - The pair had extended their fourth-wicket stand to 95 when off-spinner Moeen, in what could be his last Test appearance, turned a ball out of the rough. Head, on 43, tried to drive, with Joe Root holding a routine catch at first slip. Australia then lost their star batsman when Smith fell for 54, edging an excellent full-length delivery from paceman Woakes to Zak Crawley at second slip. The tourists slipped to 274-6 when Moeen had all-rounder Mitchell Marsh

brilliantly caught by diving wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow before Woakes and Crawley combined to dismiss Mitchell Starc for a duck. Captain Pat Cummins was next to go, caught by Stokes off Moeen for nine. But with Australia needing 55 to win, Broad, who on Saturday made a shock announcement that he would retire after the match, produced a brilliant delivery to take tailender Todd Murphy's outside edge, with Bairstow holding another fine diving catch to leave Australia on the brink of defeat at 329-9. Broad then had Carey edging behind only for Crawley to drop a tough low chance at second slip before the 37-year-old ended his career in fairytale fashion by having the wicketkeeper caught behind. Earlier, all-rounder Woakes, often one of England's unsung heroes, reduced Australia to 141-2 by removing openers David Warner (60) and Usman Khawaja (72) in a stunning burst of two wickets for one run in seven balls. Express quick Mark Wood then had Marcus Labuschagne caught in the slips for 13 to leave Australia 169-3.



## Asian Champions Trophy Pakistan hockey team likely to participate without coach

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistani hockey team may be without their coach Shahnaz Sheikh during Asian Champions Trophy as he is yet to get his Indian visa. According to sources, Sheikh hasn't received his visa yet. He will not be able to travel alongside the national squad to India. All the squad players received their visas after the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) was issued No-Objection Certificate (NOC) by the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB). Sheikh's visa was applied after his appointment last week. The national team will travel to the neighbouring country via Wagah Border tomorrow (Tuesday). They will travel to Chennai from Amritsar by road. Chennai will host the Asian event from August 3 to 12. Pakistan are scheduled to play their first match against Malaysia on August 3. The green shirts will lock horns with arch-rivals India on August 9. Squad: Muhammad Umar Bhatta (c), Akmal Hussain, Abdullah Ishtiaq Khan, Muhammad Abdullah, Muhammad Sufyan Khan, Ehtsham Aslam, Osama Bashir, Aqeel Ahmed, Arshad Liaquat, Muhammad Imad, Abdul Hanan Shahid, Zakaria Hayat, Rana Abdul Wahed Ashraf (Vice Captain), Roman, Muhammad Murtaza Yaqoob, Muhammad Shahzaib Khan, Afraz, Abdul Rahman, while the stand-by includes Ali Raza, Muhammad Baqir, Muhammad Nadeem Khan, Abdul Wahab, Waqar Ali, Muhammad Ahsan and Abdul Qayyum. Pakistan's schedule August 3 - vs Malaysia August 4 - vs Korea August 6 - vs Japan August 7 - vs China August 9 - vs India.

# Shamyl's 57\* anchors Shaheens' nine-wicket win

DARWIN (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Shaheens thrashed ACT Comets by nine wickets at the DXC Arena today at the back of a half-century by opener Shamyl Hussain. The left-handed batter made 57 not out off 44balls, hitting nine fours, to help his side overhaul the 123-run target at the 15.2 overs mark. This was Pakistan Shaheens' second game in the 2023 Top End T20 Series. Shamyl laid solid foundation for the run chase with a 66-run stand with Dera Murad Jamali-born Basit Ali, who struck two fours and a six in his 27-

ball 28, before adding the remaining runs with captain Rohail Nazir, who made 39 not out at a sparkling rate of 185. The wicketkeeper-batter smashed four fours and a six. Pakistan Shaheens had opted to bowl after Rohail called correctly at the toss and put up a disciplined show with the ball. Faisal Akram, the left-arm unorthodox, returned two for 22 and Sajjad Ali and Arafat Minhas picked up a wicket each as ACT Comets managed 122 for seven. Nicholas Broes top-scored with 37 off 34 (two

fours), Zak Keogh made 23 off 31 and Hanno Jacobs made 20 off 17. Pakistan Shaheens take on Renegades at TIO Stadium tomorrow. The first ball will be bowled at 1800 local time. Scores in brief: Pakistan Shaheens beat ACT Comets by nine wickets ACT Comets 122-7, 20 overs (Nicholas Broes 37, Zak Keogh 23, Hanno Jacobs 20; Faisal Akram 2-22) Pakistan Shaheens 125-1, 15.2 overs (Shamyl Hussain 57 not out, Rohail Nazir 39 not out, Basit Ali 28).

# Pakistan Street Child Football team qualifies for second round of Norway Cup



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Street Child Football team outplayed Arvoll IL club in their second match of the World Youth Football Cup 'Norway Cup' and qualified for the next round of the extravaganza on Monday. Pakistan Street Child Football team beat Arvoll IL club by 2-1 and qualified for the second round of the tournament. The

two goals for the Pakistan Street Child Football team was scored by skipper Tofail Shinwari and Abdul Wahab. Pakistan Street Child Football team would face Skjold IL club in the third match on August 1 (Tuesday). The Pakistan squad includes Forwards: Tofail Shinwari, Faisal, Shamir Ali, Saud; Midfielders: Abdul Wahab, Muhammad Ali, Ali Asif,

Ahmed Raza; Defenders: Muhammad Adeel, Abid Ali, Obaidullah, Asad Nasir; Goalkeeper: Abdullah, Sahil. It should be mentioned that Pakistan Street Child Football Team has been runner-up in the Street Child Football World Cup held in Qatar and has secured the second position in Norway Cup 2015 and third position in Norway Cup 2016.

# Sponsorship plays key role to uplift squash; says Farhan Mehboob

ISLAMABAD (APP): Eight times Asian squash Champion Farhan Mehboob has expressed concerns over the non-availability of funds to the young players due to which they are unable to showcase their talent on international forums. Talking to APP here on Monday, Farhan said that Hamza Khan earned the World Junior Champion Title for the country after 37 years and motivated the players to perform in the upcoming Asian games. Highlighting the roles of the Squash Federation, Farhan said that the players received support including rackets, tickets, traveling tickets and sponsorship for other such expenses at the international level. He said that in Pakistan, players even pay member-

ship fees from the own pocket which declines their motivation and performance. Farhan said that Hamza Khan had no sponsorship before leaving the country and only Pakistan Squash Federation and his department supported him. Private sector should come forward to support their athletes, he added. He said to perform at the international level, the players need to be trained at a similar level, but Pakistani players are getting trained on the courts of Peshawar, Islamabad and Lahore. "Besides the on-ground training, the diet of athletes is also important which includes multi-vitamins, high proteins and proper nutrients and bearing all the expenses are difficult for the players",

he added. Talented players win the matches in sequence but if they lose one game, they receive heavy criticism, Farhan said adding that various talented players decide to settle abroad after getting discouraged. Answering a question, Farhan said that Egypt had excelled in squash due to its strong roots and basic training. He said that there were 21 squash clubs only in El Gouna city, where 200 players were being trained in each club. Appreciating the new world champion, Hamza, Farhan said that he had secured the title for the country without sponsorship and with the support of his family. He said that Hamza revived the lost fame of squash and the whole country is proud of him.



MELBOURNE: Hayley Raso #16 of Australia celebrates her first goal with teammates during the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023 Group B match between Canada and Australia.

# Australia, Nigeria into World Cup last 16 but Canada dumped out

MELBOURNE (Agencies): Co-hosts Australia surged into the Women's World Cup last 16 on Monday with Hayley Raso scoring twice in a 4-0 battering of Canada as Nigeria joined them in the knockout phase. Olympic champions Canada were dumped out at the hands of a fired-up Australian team who knew they had to win in Melbourne to progress. They did it in style, their big victory putting them through as Group B winners, meaning they will probably avoid European champions England in the next round. That is likely to fall on Nigeria, who were held 0-0 by already eliminated Ireland in Brisbane and finished second. Tony Gustavsson's Australian team came into the clash with Canada under huge pressure following a stunning 3-2 loss to Nigeria that left their tournament hopes on a knife-edge. But rather than wilt, the Matildas thrived, to the delight of a raucous 27,706 fans who were kicking every ball. "In the press conference yesterday someone asked if this was legacy-defining, a crossroads moment for this team, and yes it was," said their coach Tony Gustavsson. "But we didn't shy away from it." Star striker Sam Kerr, who missed Australia's first two games with a calf injury, declared herself fit but remained on the bench as her team-mates more than compensated for her. Real Madrid's Raso put them ahead in the ninth minute, then made it two half an hour later with a close-range tap-in. A shell-shocked Canada made four changes at half-time as coach Bev Priestman attempted to salvage their World Cup. But the comeback never materialised and

Mary Fowler bagged Australia's third from a counter-attack before Steph Catley sealed victory with an injury-time penalty. - Japan thrash Spain - Japan sent a World Cup warning with a clinical 4-0 thrashing of Spain. The 2011 champions were 3-0 up by half-time in Wellington as they romped to a victory that allowed them to finish top of Group C and set up a last-16 tie against Norway. Hinata Miyazawa scored twice either side of a Riko Ueki goal, with Mina Tanaka wrapping up a stunning win late on. Their first victory in five attempts over Spain was so comprehensive it suggests 11th-ranked Japan may be contenders to win the tournament. They finish the group stage with 11 goals, more than any other team, while they are yet to concede. Miyazawa, who was substituted at half-time, is also now the tournament's leading scorer with four goals. "I never imagined it. All of the goals are because of the other players giving me the right passes. So it's everybody's goal, not just me," she said. Spain, who like Japan had already qualified for the last 16 before this game, finish as runners-up in their group and now play Switzerland in Auckland on Saturday. In the other Group C game, Zambia won a Women's World Cup match for the first time with 3-1 victory over Costa Rica as they ended their tournament on a high. - US, England next - On Tuesday the United States and England will look to seal their last-16 spots. The Americans are pursuing a third World Cup title in a row but have been far from their best and were held 1-1 by the Netherlands last time out. The USA may need a big win to finish on top of

Group E ahead of the Netherlands, but a shock defeat would almost certainly end their tournament. "The most important thing obviously is getting in the knockout stage first and foremost and that is our main focus right now," said their coach, Vlatko Andonovski. "We don't want to look two, three or four steps forward. If we start thinking too far ahead, our chance may never come." The Dutch face already eliminated Vietnam in the other match in the group. Also on Tuesday, England only need a draw against China to be sure of going through but will be without key midfielder Keira Walsh due to a knee injury. Denmark, who are in pole position to get out of Group D with England, face Haiti. If England top the group they will face Nigeria while the team that comes second in Group D meets Australia. Netherlands keen to avoid Sweden in World Cup knockouts DUNEDIN: Netherlands coach Andries Jonker wants to avoid Sweden in the Women's World Cup last 16 but warned his side against taking Vietnam lightly in their final group game on Tuesday. The 2019 runners-up need only a draw against the winless Vietnamese in Dunedin to advance, having beaten Portugal 1-0 and held holders the United States to a 1-1 draw. The US and Dutch sit level in Group E on four points but the Americans boast a superior goal difference of two going into their own final group game, against Portugal. A sizeable win over Vietnam could propel Jonker's team to top spot, with the coach fully aware the second-placed side will almost certainly meet red-hot Sweden in the next round.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 363,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 363,800 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 451,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1536.15 feet and was 138.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 252,100 cusecs and 208,600 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1228.20 feet, which was 178.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 54,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 288,300, 363,400, 461,400, and 400,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 60,000 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera, and 68,900 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### ANF seizes 1565 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting two operations managed to recover 1565 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF spokesman here on Monday. He informed that in an operation conducted near Yaro area in Quetta, ANF recovered 1550 kg charras concealed in a container of cotton bales. The drug traffickers were trying to smuggle charras from Afghanistan to Karachi via Chaman. Two accused residents of Chaman were also rounded up during the operation. In another operation conducted in Jarobi area in Khyber, 15 kg charras concealed in a deserted area was recovered. Cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

### Bus on M-2 catches fire

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Lahore-bound bus on Islamabad-Lahore Motorway (M-2) caught fire near Bhera Interchange on Monday. According to National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) spokesperson Motorway Police personnel reached the spot in time and rescued all the passengers safely. Due to timely action of the NHMP, there was no loss of life reported in the incident. Several fire tenders were called on the spot, with the help of which the fire was brought under control, he said. According to preliminary information, the fire in the bus started due to bursting of the rear tyre. A heavy contingent of Motorway Police was present at the spot and further investigation is ongoing.

### Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday notified 2-day power suspension programme for Tuesday and Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Tuesday From 07:00 am to 12:00 noon, Rawalpindi City Circle, Khanna Road, New Milpur Feeders. On Wednesday From 07:00 am to 12:00 noon, Rawalpindi City Circle, Azizabad, People's Colony, Nogzi, Bajnial Feeders and surrounding areas.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of Awami National Party Aimal Wali khan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Capital Police puts security on high alert amid foreign delegation visit

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police is taking proactive measures to bolster security during the visit of a foreign delegation to the capital city, utilizing cutting-edge technological resources for enhanced surveillance and monitoring. Through the use of Safe City smart cars, drones, and cameras, the police force aims to ensure a safe environment for the esteemed guests, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, in accordance with the directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police is employing advanced technical resources to fortify security in the high-security zone during the foreign delegation's visit to Islamabad.

Additional police

forces have been deployed around the delegation's residence, maintaining constant readiness to address any potential law and order challenges. While verification of the hotel staff has been completed along with deployment of reserve police personnel around the hotel.

The security of the foreign delegation will be further reinforced by the presence of the Anti-Terrorism Unit personnel, equipped with modern equipment will accompany the convoy. In collaboration with the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the green belt along the routes is cleared to ensure unobstructed visibility and safety.

Bushes have been removed by CDA and sweeping is done by bomb disposal squads on both sides of the routes.

Search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas. Traffic plan has also been devised to maintain smooth flow of traffic in the city. Keeping in view the convenience of the public, alternative routes have been provided at various interjections.

While certain areas, including Margalla Road and Marriott Hotel entrance, will be temporarily closed for two days. However, Express Chowk remains open for public use.

The safety of the foreign delegation members will be closely monitored by Islamabad Capital Police through drones, and cameras integrated within Safe City Islamabad. For centralized coordination, a dedicated control room has been established at Safe City Islamabad.

## Departments asked to hold flood damage assessment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Monday instructed relevant departments to carryout flood damage assessment and gather accurate data.

The Chairman NDMA presided Special National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) session with key stakeholders on the current monsoon situation. The session was attended by representatives of Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Federal Flood Commission (FFC), Provincial, State and Gilgit Baltistan disaster management authorities (PDMAs, SDMA, GBDMA respectively), Federal Flood Division (FFD), Space and Upper

Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARO), Tarbela and Mangla Dam Management, a news release said.

The Chairman NDMA reviewed the situation of damages caused by the recent spell, the situation of major Dams and the regulation of river flows during the ongoing monsoon spell.

The PMD briefed about the rainfall observed in the areas of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Balochistan and Kashmir. They also informed about the expected rainfall in the Northern parts of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa (Malakand Division) and in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) from July 31 to August 6.

The PDMAs briefed about the current situation in the respective

provinces and highlighted the rescue and relief work carried out during the recent spell.

The FFD reported that no high flood situation is expected in any major rivers in the coming week. However, a fresh spell of moderate intensity with heavy rainfall at scattered places is expected from August 5 to 7.

The Mangla and Tarbela Dam management briefed that the dams were filled at 85% and 86% of their capacity respectively.

The Chairman NDMA also instructed PDMAs, GBDMA and SDMA to conduct mock exercises and increase awareness among the masses about the remedial measures to be taken during the season and to monitor the changing situation vigilantly.

## World Anti-Trafficking Day SSDO calls for justice, action against child servitude, human trafficking

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the eve of World Anti-Trafficking Day (WATD), Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) organized a demonstration at the press club Rawalpindi to demand justice for a 14-year-old girl child who has endured unspeakable suffering in the clutches of bonded labor and inhumane treatment as a house helper.

During the demonstration, the protestors demanded that this harrowing case of child servitude and brutality demands immediate attention, and call upon the public, authorities, and concerned to raise their voice, strengthening and effective implementation of the child protection laws. "The 14 years old, has suffered unbearable physical and emotional abuse while trapped in a cycle of bonded labor. Her condition is now critical, underscoring the urgent need for action and support to save her life and ensure her recovery. Child servitude and human trafficking are abhorrent violations of human rights that leave a lifelong impact on the victims and stain the conscience of society," the protestors said.

The incident at hand reminds us of the pressing need to eradicate these heinous practices from our communities. Collectively raise our voices to demand

immediate medical attention and protection for the survivor.

Call on law enforcement agencies to conduct a swift and thorough investigation into this case of child servitude and human trafficking, bringing the perpetrators to justice. The protestors and SSDO members also demanded for a suo moto notice on this matter on the part of honourable respected chief justice of Pakistan, and also section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018 be added into the FIR.

"We urge the government and relevant authorities to strengthen existing laws and policies aimed at preventing and combating trafficking in persons, especially concerning child labor. This World Anti-Trafficking Day, let us stand united to declare that child servitude and human trafficking have no place in our society. We must work together to protect the most vulnerable among us and create a safe environment for every child to thrive. Together, we can create a world where no child lives in fear or faces such horrifying exploitation," they said.

Chairperson Namood-e-Sehir organization Robina Akbar, EX PMA Shameen Akhtar. Akhter syed former national coordinator CRM (child rights movement) were present on the occasion.

## CTO urges to use helmet for safety

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan on Monday urged the motorcyclists to use safety helmets for their own safety.

The motorcyclists must wear helmet to avoid fatal accidents, said a news release issued here.

He said that traffic wardens had been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against the violators.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khansaid wearing a helmet could save a driver's life in case of an accident. "Sometimes it's the only difference between life and death," he added.

The CTO said all traffic issues could be resolved by observing traffic rules which are for the safety and protection of road users.

On the other hand, the City Traffic Police have issued thousands of challan tickets during ongoing drive and also imposed fines to motorcyclists not wearing helmets. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan also impounded a number of motorbikes in different police stations due to violations.

## Senate body on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety meets

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety was held at Parliament House on Monday with Senator Naseebullah Bazai in the Chair.

The Committee considered the private member bill titled "The Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (Amendment) 2022 introduced by Senator Sania Nishtar in the Senate sitting held on 10th October, 2022 and referred by the House to the Standing Committee for Consideration and report.

The committee considered the Bill clause by clause where majority of the members voted against the proposed amendments. However, clauses 15 and 16 of the proposed bill were supported both by Ministry and the Committee. After detailed deliberation the bill was opposed by the Committee with a majority vote.

The Committee was briefed on the budgetary allocation of Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and

its attached departments for financial year 2023-24. Officials apprised that the total budget of Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety is approximately 252.22 Million rupees.

However, as far as the budget of attached departments is concerned, 1500 Million rupees is allocated for National Poverty Graduation Programme, 419 Million Rupees for Sehat Tafauz Programme, 80,870 Million Rupees for Social Protection Delivery Unit, 471,683 Million Rupees for Benazir Income Support Program and around 7,674,620 Million Rupees has been allocated for Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal. The meeting was attended by Senator Keshoo Bai, Senator Kamran Murtaza, Senator Sania Nishtar, Senator Danesh Kumar, Senator Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar, Minister of State for Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi and others senior officers of relevant departments were also in attendance.

## Every party wishes to have its own caretaker PM but awaits permission: Rashid

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed says every party is ready to install its own caretaker prime minister but awaiting permission.

In a message on social networking site X (formerly Twitter), Rashid said that in the next eight days, not only the decisions relating to promotions, changes, appointments and more uplift schemes would be made, but also the affairs pertaining to party's infighting and issues with powerful quarters would be sorted out.

He said the ruling parties wanted a caretaker prime minister who would be their puppet, act as a stooge and would do everything exactly according to their wishes and demands.

Rashid said a prime minister who could not execute his plan to bring his brother back to the country despite having a diplomatic passport in 15 months, how could he solve problems of the poor country fellows.

The former interior minister said when the PDM

would go to public without protocol, they would come to know how popular they were. "Who would like to make investment in a country where 60 people are killed in terrorism in a day?" he stated. The AML chief said silence of Maryam Nawaz and Asif Zardari was not without purpose. He said, "The rift among PML-N leaders is widening. It seems there is something wrong," he said. These 10 days would shape the future political course of the country and all important decision would be taken in this short period. "Those who are hoodwinking others will also face betrayal and then they will repent their deeds," Rashid said.

The senior politician said he was seeing a bleak picture of political landscape. They (rulers) would face humiliation and disgrace as their destiny. He said neither they (rulers) earned respect in the privileged class nor could they win hearts of the masses. "They are destined to be doomed, it's writing on the wall now," Rashid concluded.

## Rank Pinning ceremony of newly promoted SSP held

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan along with CPO Headquarters Awais Malik on Monday pinned the badges to the newly promoted Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Capt (R) Syed Zeeshan Haider, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, the ICCPO congratulated the officer on his promotion and wished him all the best for his future endeavors. He said that promotion and increase in rank in the police service actually reflects an increase in responsibilities therefore, the promoted officer should make equal implementation of law, observance of merit and best service delivery and protection to citizens their motto and goal, he added. He further said that the role of supervisory officers is of paramount importance in maintaining the writ of state, eradication of crime and ensuring timely measures for the service of the citizens adding that the promoted officer should play the role of best team leader.

## HEC resumes ranking universities to foster academic excellence

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan has announced the resumption of university rankings after an eight-year intermission. This transformative process has been renamed the "HEC National University Ranking 2023" which aims to foster transparency, accountability and academic excellence within the higher education sector.

In this connection, the HEC organized a comprehensive training session for focal persons nominated by 33 universities from the Federal, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Rawalpindi regions. These dedicated focal persons were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the ranking data collection proformas and provide substantial evidence.

In his address to the participants here Monday, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said that the government was keen on the ranking of universities to assess their performance through key performance indicators.

"The ranking process will help universities become acquainted with their strengths, identify areas of improvement and drive excellence in academia. It is a collective effort towards creating a data-driven higher

education landscape in Pakistan," he underlined. Earlier, in the inaugural ceremony, Executive Director Dr. Shaista Sohail said that the ranking process would serve as a compass guiding the trajectory of Pakistani higher education institutions. She said, "It will provide valuable insights into the performance and contributions of our universities, both nationally and globally."

She said that the presence of focal persons of the higher education institutions exemplified the commitment of higher education community to fostering a culture of transparency and data-driven decision making.

In her remarks, Managing Director National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) Ms. Noor Amna Malik said, "Our evaluation framework comprises 69 parameters strategically weighted to provide a comprehensive assessment of university performance. It reflects our commitment to academic precision, research, financial prudence, and societal engagement. I am delighted to share that the HEDR Division will provide you with comprehensive training on understanding the ranking data collection proformas and providing substantial evidence to support your university's ranking. EduStats, a software

familiar to many of you, will streamline the data submission process, enhancing efficiency and accuracy. "Director Technical, Higher Education Data Repository Division (HEDR) Abdullah Fayyaz Chattha said, "The resumption of university rankings is a pivotal moment, symbolizing our shared commitment to academic excellence and research. We will provide comprehensive training on effectively utilizing the EduStats software for seamless data uploading. The software will streamline the process, ensuring efficiency and accuracy in ranking data collection."

The HEC National University Ranking 2023 criteria were finalized after incorporating feedback from universities and national/international experts, ensuring a robust and inclusive ranking process that aligns with the diverse needs of our higher education community.

This training session marks the beginning of a transformative journey towards promoting academic excellence and driving positive change in the higher education landscape of Pakistan. For more information and updates on the HEC National University Ranking 2023, the people can visit the HEC website, i.e., www.hec.gov.pk.



ISLAMABAD: President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Duarte Pacheco calling on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House.



### IEA condemns explosion

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan condemned explosion in a meeting of Jamiat-Ulema Islam in the Bajaur. The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Zabiullah Mujahid said that the Islamic Emirate condemns the tragic incident and shares his deep condolences to the affected families. He prayed for the souls of the martyrs and for the rapid recovery of those injured and stated that such acts cannot be justified in any words.

## The Frontier Post

Muharram 13, 1445 — Tuesday, August 01, 2023

### UN Day marked in Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): The 8th of Asad is the UN's World Day to End the Trafficking of Persons. Lal Mohammad has experienced human trafficking at the hand of smugglers. "People are trafficked, they are handed over to the group, they faced with cruelty, harassment, and they can't do anything," said Lal Mohammad. Meanwhile, other Afghans said that they witnessed beatings, torture, and even the disappearance of their companions on the way.

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

# 1,000 tuberculosis cases in Kandahar

KANDAHAR CITY (TOLOnews): More than one thousand people have been infected with tuberculosis in Kandahar in the last six months.

Health officials in the province said that children, women, and elderly people are included in this number.

"In the last six months, we had approximately 1,160 tuberculosis patients, which has decreased by six and a half percent compared to last year, and overall, the level of the disease among women is higher," said Jamaluddin Azimi, head of the tuberculosis section in Public Health Department in Kandahar.

According to the officials, the main reason for

the spread of tuberculosis is the lack of treatment.

Khan Mohammad, 70, a resident of Shahjoy district in Zabul province, said that he has been in treatment for several months and has been struggling with the challenges of the disease.

"It has been 12 months since I was in treatment, but it did not benefit me. When I came here to the Doctors Without Borders center, I was treated, the doctors said that I will get well," said Khan Mohammad.

"I came here, the doctors treated me and helped me with everything, and now I am fine," said Abdul Ahad, a Helmand resident.

Currently, 75 people suf-

fering from tuberculosis are being treated at the Doctors Without Borders Hospital in Kandahar, most of whom are women and children.

"In the last six months, we have newly diagnosed and registered 415 people with tuberculosis in Mirwais Hospital in Kandahar and Sarpouzeh Prison," said Mujeeb Rahman, deputy of the Doctors Without Borders center in Kandahar.

Cough, fever, and weight loss are the main symptoms of tuberculosis.

According to the information of the World Health Organization, many people in Afghanistan die every year due to this deadly disease.

## Foreign organizations' drive aimed for brain drain from Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Zabiullah Mujahid says that a number of foreign organizations including International Organization for Transitional Justice and Peace have launched a campaign to evacuate professional individuals from Afghanistan.

International Organization for Transitional Justice and Peace and some other foreign organizations in the United States have recently launched a campaign in order to transfer 1,500 Afghan prosecutors and their families to third countries, under the pretext of threats to their safety.

Spokesman of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that the concerns of American organizations regarding the safety of Afghan prosecutors in Afghanistan is totally baseless, criticizing the campaign as an attempt for promoting brain drain from the country and human trafficking.

He said that there are no any threats to former prosecutors in Afghanistan and reports released by a number of foreign NGOs on the regard are biased and intended for spreading propaganda to create an atmosphere of fear among Afghans.

The Islamic Emirate calls on Afghans not to be deceived by these dubious organizations and not to leave their country. The general amnesty of Islamic Emirate is granted to everyone and no one is allowed to violate it, he said.

## Modernization of border markers underway

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Borders and Tribal Affairs announced Monday that the implementation of the plan to modernize Afghanistan's border markers with five countries has begun.

Acting Minister of Borders, Tribes and Tribal Affairs Noorullah Noori said during the accountability report program that according to the order of the leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the plan to modernize the border markers with Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and China has been implemented at some points.

The Ministry of Borders has also organized 34 large public meetings under the title of "Unity and solidarity among ethnic groups" with the participation of thousands of ethnic elders, influential people, and clerics in 34 provinces.

The ministry's officials announced that they were able to resolve 133 major conflicts and 300 minor conflicts between tribes and families over various issues.

# Organs directed to urgently reach to flood-affected people in Urgon: Depy PM



KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister of the IEA for political affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with a number of scholars, influential people, and tribal elders of Urgon district, Paktika province, said, he has directed relevant departments to provide urgent assistance to the flood affected people in the region.

According to a statement released by the office of the

Deputy Prime Minister, scholars and elders of Urgon while expressing satisfaction with the strengthening of the Islamic system in the country, assured their support, and said that there have been significant positive changes in the country over the last two years.

The participants of the meeting also shared information regarding the losses

caused by the recent floods in the district and expressed concern that necessary measures have not been taken to help flood-affected families in the region.

They also shared their demands and suggestions regarding the expansion of services in fields such as education, health, and reconstruction in the Urgon district. Mawlawi Abdul Kabir expressed his sym-

pathies to Urgon elders for the damage caused by the recent floods and stated that the organs concerned have been requested to reach out to individuals impacted immediately and focus on methods to prevent such disasters in the future.

He assured the elders that their demands and suggestions would be forwarded to the appropriate authorities for consideration.

## Work on dams in Sar-e-Pul, Uruzgan to begin soon: Officials

KABUL (TOLOnews): The economic commission of the Prime Minister, led by the first deputy of the Prime Minister, Muallah Abdul Ghani Baradar, said that the construction of two water dams in Sar-e-Pul and Urozgan provinces will begin soon.

Based on the statement of the commission, the construction by the National Development Corporation and the projects are scheduled to "commence shortly."

"Two dams which are due to be constructed will benefit the economy with the creation of jobs and an increase of harvest for the farmers... This is a good opportunity and we can also produce power," said Sakhi Ahmad Payman, deputy head of the Afghanistan Chamber of

Industry and Mines.

During the cabinet meeting, the statement said "under the guidance of the Ministry of Water and

of Mines and Petroleum, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and the National Development Corporation."



Energy, the Economic Commission entrusted a joint committee comprising representatives from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry

"Their task, in line with the decree of His Excellency Amir Ul Mo'mineen, is to formulate a practical strategy for the

construction of Sultan Ibrahim Dam in Sar-e-Pul province and Agha Jan Dam in Chinarto district of Uruzgan, utilizing mines as a resource."

"The mines contribute the major (income), and their revenue is being allocated, in addition to the national budget, to infrastructural projects," said Homayoun Afghan, a spokesman for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. The Afghanistan Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock said that the dams will benefit the country's agriculture products.

"The country has always relied on imports, the country can turn into an exporting country through the foundation of such dams," said Mirwais Hajizada, the acting head of the ACAL.

## IEA works to address issues of religious scholars, schoolteachers

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi in a meeting with a group of visually impaired Quran memorizers and teachers of religious schools in Faryab province, said that the Islamic Emirate is trying to solve the problems of religious scholars and schoolteachers.

According to a statement released by his office, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi met with a group of blind guardians and teachers of religious schools in Faryab province. During the meeting, Qari Jan Mohammad, one of the professors of Darul-Hefaz (Quran Memorization Center) in Maimana City, the provincial



capital, spoke on behalf of others and expressed his satisfaction with the security and establishment of the Islamic system in the country.

He said that during the previous administration, the education sector was

neglected and that there is a need for more work for the improvement of education, particularly in Islamic schools.

Deputy Prime Minister praised the hard work and efforts of teachers of reli-

gious schools for the training of citizens of the country with an Islamic spirit and said that Islamic Emirate is actively working to solve the problems of the people, especially religious scholars, and schoolteachers.

## Traffic accident kills 3, injures 5 in Samangan

SAMANGAN (Khaama Press): At least three people died, and five others were injured in a traffic accident in the Northern Province of Samangan, Afghanistan.

The incident occurred after the vehicle turned turtle on the Samangan-Baghlan highway.

According to Sayed Usman Hamidi, a provincial health official, three dead bodies and five

injured, including three in critical condition, have been taken to the local hospital. A similar incident occurred in the Badghis province, killing three people, including the truck driver.

"The deadly accident occurred at 8:00 a.m. local time when a fast-driven truck turtle was in the Band-e-Sabzak area outside of the provincial capital Qala-e-Naw," a state-

ment said.

In the last few weeks, many traffic accidents in different provinces have resulted in the deaths of over 33 people and the injury of 45 others.

The current increase in traffic accidents is directly linked to reckless driving, dilapidated road, poorly maintained vehicles, and lack of attention to traffic regulations.

## Continued humanitarian aid to Afghanistan essential: ARCS



KABUL (Agencies): The President of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) in a meeting with the President of the Saudi Red Crescent Authority said that continued and fur-

ther humanitarian aid to Afghanistan is important for responding to current economic crisis in the country.

According to a statement from ARCS, the Acting

President of Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) Mawlawi Mati-ul-Haq Khalis met with President of Saudi Red Crescent Authority Dr. Jalal Al-Owaisi, on the sidelines of

the fifth consultative meeting of national Red Cross societies, which was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

In the meeting, Mawlawi Muta-ul-Haq Khalis stated that continued and increasing international help to Afghanistan is critical to alleviating the country's current economic crisis. He also requested for cooperation in the health sector of Afghanistan.

Acting President of ARCS Mawlawi Muta-ul-Haq Khalis also met with Faiz Ali, the deputy president of the Tajik Red Crescent and his accompanying delegation and discussed signing a memorandum of understanding for strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. For Better Communication between Gov't and Public, 1259 Religious Scholars Appointed.

## Tabian center grateful for security during Muharram days

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Tabian Social and Cultural Center of Afghanistan expressed happiness about the security during the Muharram days in the country, however some Shia community elders

meanwhile criticized the restrictions on their ceremonies for Ashura.

The head of the center told a press conference that the interim government provided special security measures during the Ashura ceremonies.

"All of our gatherings were held amid complete security; the government and security forces took special security measures," said Sayed Isa Hossieni, head of the center.

The head of the center called on

the interim government to pay more attention to the situation of the Shia community.

"If the Islamic Emirate wants to stay and rule and wants to remain for years in Afghanistan and introduce Afghanistan as a symbol for other countries, it should support the followers of Imam Husayn and stick by the Shia," he said.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate's spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said that the Islamic Emirate considers solving the challenges of the citizens its responsibility.

"The Islamic Emirate is responsible for providing better security. There were some problems in some



areas by some opportunist circles and some circles were trying to misuse Muharram ceremonies and create disturbances," Mujahid said.

This comes as some of the mourners of Ashura complained of the imposition of restrictions by the Islamic Emirate on their ceremonies.



# Bajaur blast death toll mounts to 54

KHAR (APP): The horrific suicide explosion at JUIF convention at Khar that killed about 54 people and wounded around 150 others have left many painful stories of the victims in Bajaur tribal district. The 20-year-old bridegroom, Ejaz Ahmad who tied the knot 11 days ago, was also martyred in the deadly suicide explosion and was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard amid touching scenes.

The eldest child of his parents, Ejaz Ahmed was running a furniture shop at Khar bazaar and came to JUIF convention where he was immortalized forever. "My loving nephew was apolitical. He was busy in routine furniture work at his shop on Sunday working against the time to fulfill the placed orders. Upon request of his co-fellows, he visited JUIF convention at Dubai Mor at 4pm where he left for eternal abode," said Irfanullah, uncle of Ejaz Ahmed while talking to APP.

"Ejaz was an obedient son and loving husband who tied the knot 11-days ago with great pomp and show at his native town Khar," he said. Fond of chicken biryani and Chappli Kabab, Ejaz Ahmad had told his younger brother on phone that he was attending JUIF public meeting with friends and keep his favourite dish in refrigerator before his phone call was disconnect-ed.

"The entire family rushed to Dubai Mor after hearing about a huge blast at JUIF convention. Shahid Khan, the childhood friend of Ejaz informed us at the

blast site that Ejaz was critically injured and was shifted to hospital in ambulance in precarious condition and pray for his safety," he said. Later, "we were informed that Ejaz had embraced Shahadat and his body was brought late Sunday night at Khar where he was laid to rest in native graveyard amid moving scenes.

Abuzar Khan, who was the lone son of his parents and brother of seven sisters was also killed in the explosion. The ill fated Abuzar, who was selling potato chips, became victim of the suicide attack and left for eternal abode. Like Shaheed Ejaz Ahmad and Abuzar Khan, the 46 other martyrs have left many painful stories that put people of Khar teshil in deep shock and sorrow.

The funeral prayers of all martyrs including five children were held in their respective villages and towns in Bajaur amid moving scenes and later laid to rest. Meanwhile, First Information Report (FIR) of Bajaur suicide blast, was registered by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police. SHO Police Station Khar, district Bajaur Niaz Muhammad Khan lodged the FIR against unknown militants under section 302, 324, 427 and 7ATA.

Meanwhile a special investigation team of KP police visited the blast site and collected evidences besides recorded statements of the eye witnesses and the injured persons. SP CTD Bajaur Amjad Khan told reporters that investigation team had already

completed the geo-fencing of the area and 12 kilogram explosive was used in the attack. CTD Additional Inspector General Shoukat Abbas told reporters that 83 injured are currently undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

"The convention began at 2pm while the explosion occurred two hours later at 4:10pm," he said, adding that ball bearings and other stuff used in making the explosives had been found at the site of the explosion. Shoukat Abbas said the terrorist group behind the attack had been identified, which had tried to target someone specific in the gathering.

He said the initial probe had led the CTD to close to the attack's perpetrators. Abbas said many pieces of evidence have been found at the site of the explosion, and forensic reports are being expected soon. He said statements of the injured had been recorded while the process of geo-fencing at the site of the explosion completed.

Meanwhile, Governor Balochistan Abdul Wali Khan Kakar contacted Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on phone and expressed grief and sorrow over loss of innocent lives in Bajaur blast. The governor of Balochistan on behalf of himself and the people of Balochistan condoled with the families of martyrs. He prayed eternal peace for the martyrs and courage for the bereaved families to bear the loss with fortitude. He also prayed early recovery of the injured persons.

LPG prices increased by Rs 23.86 per kg

ISLAMABAD (INP): Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Monday increased the prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by Rs23.86 per kg. According to the regulatory authority, the price of LPG was increased by Rs23.86 per kg after which the its price is fixed at Rs201.15 per kg.

Meanwhile, the domestic cylinder rate has been increased by Rs57.70. The new rates of LPG with increased prices will be Rs2,759.89 per domestic cylinder. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) fixed the prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) at Rs177.29 per kg in July.

The LPG prices increased by Rs281.51 for the 11.8 kg cylinder and the price now reaches to Rs 2373.64. Earlier on July 26, Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) increased the prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by Rs10 per kg. According to the notification, the price of LPG has been increased by Rs 10 per kilogramme to Rs240 per kilogramme.

Meanwhile, the domestic cylinder rate has been increased to Rs2830, while commercial cylinder prices soared to Rs10,900. In far-flung and mountainous regions, the LGP price has increased to Rs370 per kg while the price of home LGP cylinder stood at Rs4,130.

**Crops destroyed as rivers burst their banks**

ISLAMABAD (INP): There is no end in sight to flood situation in the country as persistent monsoon rains and water released by India into rivers has made things even worse on Monday.

Raging River Sutlej at Arifwala has claimed the life of a 14-year-old boy besides washing away two protective embankments and developing cracks on Bahawalnagar road. Similarly the river continues to wreak havoc at Chishtian in south Punjab as it has washed away a protective embankment besides inundating several localities and crops sown over thousands of acres of land forcing people from their homes in search of safe places.

Area residents have complained that nobody from the administration has come to rescue them, and they have to safe locations on their own. They have appealed to Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi to take notice of the situation.

Hundreds of acres of precious land was flooded after water from River Indus spilled over into nearby localities at Karor Lal Isan. The situation has forced people to move to safe places. Locals have said that the situation is getting worse by the day. On the other hand, rising water level in River Indus at Qadirpur in Ghotki (upper Sindh) has set off alarm bells ringing as Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Usman Abdullah has asked the concerned officials to remain prepared in order to deal with any emergency.

The DC has cancelled the leaves of all irrigation department staff and directed the executive engineer irrigation and director water board to keep an eye on the Bacha embankment. He has also asked the people living in the vicinity of the river to move to safe locations along with their cattle immediately. Currently 400,000 cusecs of water is passing through the river at Ghotki. River Indus, which is in medium flood at Obaro, has flooded 20 more villages of katcha area. The DC has said that the administration is fully prepared to deal with any emergency.

Although River Ravi is in low flood at Sarai Mughal. But the water level is rising and has already inundated neighbouring localities. The inflow of water in the river has been recorded at 74,270 cusecs while the discharge at 58,870 cusecs. Rescue 1122 staff have been put on high alert in order to deal with any untoward situation.

On the other hand, a road built recently in Azad Jammu and Kashmir's Havelian district at the cost of Rs60 million has been washed away by floodwater. The situation has forced area residents to carry patients on their shoulders.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi conferring the award of Hilal-e-Pakistan upon the Vice Premier of State of China, He Lefeng, at a special investiture ceremony.

## KP CM inquires after health of injured

**F.P. Report**

KHAR: The caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Monday paid a visit to the District Headquarters Hospital Khar in tribal district Bajaur where he inquired after the health of injured persons of Bajaur bomb blast that had claimed dozens of human lives and left many other injured.

The chief minister was accompanied by provincial caretaker cabinet members Matiullah Khan Marwat, Hamid Shah and Dr. Riaz Anwar, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur.

The chief minister met the injured persons one by one and inquired about their health and treatment facilities being provided to them in the hospital. He on the occasion directed the authorities concerned to leave no stone unturned in the treatment and said that he and his team are personally monitoring the whole treatment process.

Moreover, Muhammad Azam Khan said that the provincial government stood by the bereaved families adding that he was deeply saddened to learn about the loss of precious human lives due to the heartbreaking blast the other day. "Targeting peaceful citizens was a highly inhumane and heinous act that can't be justified at all" he remarked.

While paying tribute to

### KP Governor visits LRH

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali, visited Lady Reading Hospital for the second time on Monday and inquired the injured of the Bajaur blast.

Accompanied by Mayor of Peshawar, Haji Zabair Ali, and former provincial minister Amanullah Haqqani and elected mayors from merged districts were also present. During the visit, Governor Ghulam Ali met with the injured of the Bajaur blast and prayed for their speedy recovery.

The Governor instructed the hospital administration to provide the best medical facilities for the treatment of the blast victims. He also met with the team of caregivers attending to the injured and offered them words of encouragement to boost their morale.

Governor Ghulam Ali emphasized efforts to ensure the complete recovery of the injured from the Bajaur tragedy. The entire nation is saddened and distressed by the tragic incident in Bajaur, said Governor Haji Ghulam Ali. He extended his condolences and support to the families of the martyrs and injured, acknowledging their resilience and strength.

the martyrs, the chief minister said that citizens of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially tribal people and our security forces have rendered matchless sacrifices for reinstating and establishing peace in the region; we will not let those sacrifices go in vain, he said.

Meanwhile, the chief minister also met the elders of district Bajaur and heirs of the martyrs and expressed his heartfelt sympathies over the irreparable loss of human lives. He prayed for the higher ranks of martyrs and early recovery of the injured ones.

He made it clear that the purpose of his visits to district Bajaur and Dir Lower was to condole with the bereaved families and to inquire about the health of injured persons adding that

ever since this tragic incident was reported, not a single moment has passed in peace and contentment.

Later, the chief minister also paid a short visit to district Dir Lower and inquired after the health of injured persons who are under treatment at Timergara Teaching Hospital. He directed the hospital administration to pay special attention to the treatment of injured persons of Bajaur blast so that they can recover as early as possible.

Responding to a question during his brief media talk, the chief minister termed establishing sustainable peace as the top most priority and said that the caretaker provincial government has taken all possible steps to this end.

## ATC extends judicial remand of Khadija, Sanam and Ejaz

LAHORE (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Monday extended the judicial remand of Khadija Shah, Sanam Javed and other

staunch PTI supporters and workers in Jinnah House attack case by 12 more days. The court ordered the police to produce the suspects on

August 12. Earlier, the suspects were brought to the court on the completion of their judicial remand.

Informing the court that the case's challan was being prepared, investigation officer (IO) prayed to the court to extend judicial remand of the ladies and others. ATC judge

Abhar Gul Khan heard the case. A case had been registered at Lahore's Sarwar Road police station. Thousands of people took to streets to register their protest against the arrest of former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan on May 9.

## NA passes bill

(Continued from Page 1)

During a point of order, Sheikh Rohsail Asghar, a member of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), condemned the attack and requested the suspension of the question hour to discuss this grave and tragic incident. He highlighted that a similar incident occurred on May 9, intended to weaken the institutions responsible for protecting the country.

Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali, while addressing the House, regarded the attack as an assault on Pakistan, all political parties, the Constitution, and democracy itself. He pointed out that such incidents of terrorism had already resulted in the martyrdom of numerous law enforcement personnel, police officers, and civilians. He emphasized the urgency of revealing the hidden hands behind these brutal acts. Minister for Communication, Maulana Asad Mehmood, expressed his condolences for the loss of JUI-F workers and stood in solidarity with the bereaved families. He stressed that the attack wasn't merely targeting a specific party but was an attack on the entire nation,

its economy, democracy, and innocent citizens. He lamented that political workers who stood firmly for the constitution and democracy were continuously becoming targets of violence.

Maulana Asad highlighted the alarming number of JUI-F leaders who had lost their lives in the past two years due to similar incidents in various regions, including Khyber Agency, Tarah Valley, Tribal areas, and Balochistan. He strongly stated that they would not compromise on Pakistan, Islam, and democracy, striving to make the country economically and politically robust. Rana Tanveer Hussain, a senior leader of PML-N and federal minister, expressed sympathies for the tragic incident and the bereaved families. He reminded the House of the sacrifices made during the war against terrorism, which had cost the lives of over 80,000 individuals, including law enforcement personnel. He mentioned attempts to sabotage Pakistan's development during the Chinese President's visit in 2014 and was of the view that the recent terrorist incidents

were aimed at hindering the country's progress, particularly during the visit of the Chinese Deputy Premier.

Rana Tanveer Hussain stressed the necessity of unity and the formulation of a concrete strategy to tackle such situations effectively. Minister for Water Resources, Syed Khurshheed Shah, also strongly condemned the incident, pointing out that his party's leadership had been a major victim of terrorism. He attributed the root cause of such incidents to a non-democratic mentality.

PTI lawmaker Sardar Riaz Mehmood Khan Mazari also condemned the tragic incident in Bajaur and criticized the policies of previous governments during the Afghan war, which he believed resulted in chaos and unrest in the country. He called for accountability of those who received dollars during the war, stating that Islam is a religion of peace that promotes brotherhood and discourages violence against others. He expressed solidarity with the families of the victims and the JUI-F leadership.

Later, the House was adjourned to meet again on August 1, 2023 (Tuesday) at 11 am.

## Imran approaches SC against IHC verdict

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan on Monday filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the Islamabad High Court decision in the Toshakhana case.

The Supreme Court had ordered the Islamabad High Court to decide the Toshakhana case but the IHC rejected the PTI chairman's pleas against the case proceedings by a trial. In his petition, PTI Chief Imran Khan prayed to the Supreme Court to allow him not to record his statement in the Toshakhana case under section 342. He also beseeched the court to stop the trial proceedings by sessions Judge Hamayun Dilawar till the high court's decision on his plea regarding the court's jurisdiction.

The petitioner said that in light of the SC decision, the verdict on the court jurisdiction must be decided first. The Toshakhana trial could not be held until the final decision by the high court on this matter was pronounced, he added. The PTI chief's legal team members Barrister Gohar and Shoaib Shaheen appeared before the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Umar Ata Bandial.

They told the CJP that they were filing a petition against the Toshakhana proceedings by the trial court. They said that they requested to fix their petition for hearing at the earliest. The chief justice, however, remarked that they should first file the petition, then the SC would look into it. He said everything is done according to a set procedure.

## Condition of teenage maid critical

LAHORE (INP): Medics at the Lahore General Hospital (LGH) on Monday declared the condition of a teenage maid, who was tortured allegedly by the wife of a judge as critical and said that next 48 hours crucial for her life.

The maid Rizwana 14, has been under treatment in the intensive care unit (ICU) of the LGH since July 24. Chief Executive of the hospital, Prof Al-fareed Zafar declared the next 48 hours highly crucial for Rizwana, saying a special board treating her fears that she may need the ventilator support.

He said the girl's mother had suspected that Rizwana had been poisoned by her employer(s) during domestic violence in Islamabad. Her blood sample had been sent for laboratory test after her complaint, Dr Zafar added. Rizwana, a resident of Sargodha, was shifted to the LGH in critical condition on July 24.

Dr Zafar said an emergency meeting of the board was called when the duty doctors informed him about the deteriorating condition of the girl. According to the board, her wounds were severely infected. Bronchoscopy examination revealed that one of her lungs was infected and the other had blood clots due to which breathing was difficult for her. That's was why oxygen saturation level in her blood was falling. He said the girl had an infection in her blood which had spread throughout the body.

## ATC remands Ali Masjid blast facilitator

**Hamayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: Special Anti-terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar hand over facilitator allegedly involved in Ali Masjid suicide blast to Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) for 15-days physical remand, on Monday.

During hearing CTD Investigation Officer requested the court for provision of physical of alleged culprit named Abu Zar

because he has facilitated the suicide bomber whose was exploded himself inside Ali Masjid. Special ATC Peshawar judge accepted CTD plea by granting 15-days physical remand for further investigation and adjourned further hearing.

Meanwhile, Judicial Magistrate Peshawar Shafiq-ul-Aman sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf worker named Younus Zaheer to jail for 14-days

on judicial remand. Investigation Officer argued that Younas Zaheer is active worker of PTI while involved in 9th& 10th May vandalism and requested for further investigation.

However, Judicial Magistrate Peshawar Shafiq-ul-Aman turnaround Investigation Officer plea for custody of petitioner for further investigation while sent Younus Zaheer behind bar for 14-days on judicial remand.



KHAR: People carrying the coffin of Bajaur blast victim for burial.

## CPEC significantly

(Continued from Page 1)

green development; and science and technology.

**Pakistan, China sign documents on CPEC phase-II; further enhance cooperation:** Pakistan and China on Monday signed six documents that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said would further enhance bilateral cooperation and help undertake the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under a new model.

Held at the PM House, the signing ceremony was witnessed by Prime Minister Shehbaz and Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng, who, along with a delegation, is visiting here to attend the 10th-anniversary celebrations of CPEC. Both countries signed Document on the Joint cooperation Committee on CPEC; MoU on establishing an export exchange mechanism within the framework of CPEC; a protocol of phytosanitary requirements for the export of dry chilies from Pakistan to China and a Document on the final report on the feasibility study of realignment of KKH Phase-II.

Both sides also signed

through diplomatic channels an MoU on the industrial workers exchange program as well as minutes of the 21st conference of a technical committee to promote the strategic ML-1 project. The prime minister, in his remarks at the signing ceremony, expressed pleasure over the signing of documents and thanked Chinese Vice-Premier He Lifeng for visiting Pakistan to celebrate 10 years of CPEC.

He recalled that 10 years ago, CPEC was signed between that time Prime Minister Nawaz and President Xi Jinping and implementation was started within no time. "Today we can claim that under CPEC above \$25 billion investment took place in power, road, hydel power, and public transport. Now we are entering the second phase. Today, we signed certain important documents which will further enhance cooperation and undertake the second phase of CPEC under a new model," the PM said.

He said the second phase of CPEC would feature the B2B investment in agricultural and information technology to enable Pakistan to export its products

according to Chinese standards and requirements. The prime minister also thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for sending his special envoy to Pakistan and showing solidarity for people-to-people friendship and showing to the world that both countries were bound in a great and unique relationship.

"We are all-weather friends and iron brothers. This friendship will continue and will not tolerate any kind of obstacle in its way," he remarked. He said Pakistan was absolutely ready to contribute to President Xi's vision of shared prosperity. Highlighting the importance of ML-1 and Karachi Circular Railway, the prime minister expressed the hope that both projects would be successfully executed to make Pakistan stand on its own feet through the hard work and untiring efforts of both countries.

"It is the Chinese model. It is President Xi Jinping's model, and will emulate it under the vision of our Pakistan's founding father late Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to promote prosperity and peace in this country," he commented.