

Official martyred, 3 injured

MIR ALI (INP): In the latest attack on security personnel, one law enforcer was martyred while three police cops were injured on Tuesday when unidentified gunmen attacked checkpoints in the Mir Ali general area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's North Waziristan district. Injured police officers were promptly transferred to the Mir Ali Hospital for immediate medical attention.

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PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif distributing laptops among high-achieving students under the PM's Youth Laptop Scheme 2023.

No decisions taken about seat adjustment, polls: Sana

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Senior leader of Muslim League (N) and Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, while reacting to PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's reservations, said on Tuesday that no decision had been taken in Dubai.

In a statement, Rana Sanaullah said that politicians discuss political situation together and no decisions were taken regarding seat adjustments or elections in Dubai. There was no such scheduled meeting in Dubai, he elaborated. "Pakistan Muslim League-N has a definite and clear stance on political issues," he said. The interior minister said the elections should be held under a caretaker setup.

"Elections to all four provincial assemblies and the National Assembly should be held simultaneously. Assemblies shall be dissolved on completion of their term," said Rana Sana. The PML-N leader said, "There is already a caretaker setup in place in two provinces. In the remaining two provinces, the caretaker setup will also be installed."

Sana said Nawaz Sharif would return and lead the election campaign. He would be back as soon as the elections campaign started. The interior minister further said that action should be taken against the mastermind of May 9. "We believe that the mastermind is one man, he is PTI chairman," he said. The PML-N leader said the prime minister had the stance that investigative agencies should carry out their investigation on merit and the process of investigation was ongoing.

IMF Executive Board to meet today

ISLAMABAD (INP): THE Executive Board of the IMF is scheduled to meet today, where a newly approved standby arrangement loan program of \$3 billion with Pakistan is expected to be approved.

Officials of the Finance Ministry are optimistic that Pakistan may get \$1.2 billion as the first tranche from the standby agreement. However, the Fund has not yet included Pakistan's name in the Executive Board calendar on its website.

Islamabad has assured the IMF of the financing gap of \$8.2 billion, the officials said further. They claimed that the IMF is satisfied with Pakistan's proposed financing plan.

Apart from the IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank will also extend help to the country. Moreover, financing will also be obtained from China, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. The officials said there is also a likelihood of receiving financing of \$3.5 billion from China this year.

KP will never vote for Fitna and plotter

PTI chief now opposing probe into his own cases, says Marriyum Aurangzeb

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said once desperate for probe into the purported cipher related to the regime change, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was now vehemently opposing investigations into multiple cases, including the Toshakhana theft, foreign funding, and Al-Qadir Trust case.

Addressing a news conference, the minister said the PTI chairman created a fake narrative by waving the so-called cipher during his last address to a public gathering in Islamabad as prime minister just to give an impression that he was ousted from power as the result of a regime change operation. Ironically, he was the only prime minister in the country's history who was removed from his office through a no-confidence motion, she added.

She said he created hype of the so-called conspiracy, based on the cipher, and blamed the former army chief for that at first place and eventually shifted its to acting Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. "Today, this person is pleading before the courts to halt the trial in the prohibited funding case and asserting that he did not know what was inside the closed envelop which had 190 million pounds and brought up before his cabinet for approval," she remarked.

The minister said the PTI chief was opposing investigations into the Toshakhana theft and wanted his military secretary at that time to answer before the court. "He received the gifts from the Toshakhana and sold them then why the military secretary should be held accountable?" the minister questioned. On the other hand, she said, the three times prime minister (Nawaz Sharif) had faced the courts courageously and proved all the allegations against him wrong.

The people knew that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had

done nothing wrong and had answers against all the allegations hurled against them by the PTI chief, she added. "We have never hid ourselves in canister or boxes, nor we ran away from accountability," the minister maintained. Recalling lofty promises made by the previous government with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Marriyum said they once claimed to transform the KP into Switzerland, but ironically the provincial accountability commission was rendered dysfunctional during their tenure.

"They (PTI) leveled allegations of theft against others, but they themselves turned out to be thieves. They promised to build universities and hospitals but did not even construct a single room in any hospital during their government tenure," she regretted. She asserted that the PTI got stay order from the apex court in the BRT Peshawar corruption case and made all-out efforts to stop probe into the matter.

There is not a single Muslim country on the planet that allows to the desecration of the holy text of other religions, he said adding such an act is unthinkable to any Muslim. "It is forbidden by faith, by culture and by law," he said.

She pointed out that the "foreign agent" responsible for masterminding the May 9 tragedy had recently tweeted, asking who benefited from the mayhem. "Only the enemies of the country benefitted from the acts of vandalism and arson," the minister claimed. Marriyum said those who set the PTV on fire and attacked the Radio Pakistan as well. They set ablaze the building of Radio Pakistan, parked vehicles there and above all its precious archives, she added.

(Continued on Back Page)

Saudi Arabia deposits \$2 billion with SBP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said here on Tuesday that the brotherly country Saudi Arabia has deposited \$2 billion with State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), increasing the total foreign exchange reserves to around \$11.7 billion.

"Our brotherly country Saudi Arabia had made an announcement recently that it would deposit its \$2 billion with State Bank of Pakistan. They have placed the deposits and the amount has been credited to SBP," the minister said at a press conference.

He said, this would be a straight away increase in the country's foreign exchange reserves that stood at around \$9.7 billion on last Friday he said, however added the new position of exchange reserves would be reflected from coming Friday.

The Minister on behalf of Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff, Asim Munir, and the nation thanked Saudi Leadership particularly King Salman, Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman for this support. He said Saudi

Arabia has been playing role of a brother for Pakistan and stands with it at every occasion.

The minister said that some more good developments would follow and lead the economy towards growth, adding that the economy of the country has already been stabilized with the efforts of the incumbent government. It is pertinent to mention here that on Monday the Fitch Ratings has upgraded Pakistan's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to 'CCC' from 'CCC', indicating a positive development towards the betterment of the country's economy.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a tweet said it was another positive development towards current economic revival journey. The rating agency has identified key indicators that contributed to the positive development rating for the country which include improvement in easing external financing risks.

The upgrade in ratings reflects Pakistan's improved external liquidity and funding conditions following its Staff-Level Agreement

(SLA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on a nine-month Stand-by Arrangement (SBA) in June.

PM thanks Saudi Arabia: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday extended his "deep gratitude" to the leadership and brotherly people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the US\$2 billion deposit with the State Bank of Pakistan.

"I would like to especially thank my brother Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman for ensuring this financial support to Pakistan," he wrote on Twitter.

The prime minister hoped that the deposit would strengthen Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves and reflected the growing confidence of the brotherly countries and the international community in the country's economic turnaround. "We remain committed to making all necessary efforts to improve Pakistan's economy," he said. He lauded Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and army chief General Syed AsimMunir for the valuable efforts they made in this regard.

World must stand united against hatred: FM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday called upon the world to stand united against hatred, discrimination, intolerance, and promote mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance.

Virtually addressing a session of an urgent debate held by Human Rights Council on acts of religious hatred including the incident of the desecration of the Holy Quran, the foreign minister said unfortunately, the deliberate desecration of the Holy Quran had continued under government sanction and with the sense of impunity. Increasingly, he said these acts were designed to maximize propagating hate. "We must see this incitement to hatred, discrimination and attempts to provoke violence. We must join hands in condemning it, we must isolate those who stroke hatred," he said.

He said three months ago the first international day to combat Islamophobia was observed where the first ever session was held to mark the occasion at the UN General Assembly. The minister said the Holy Quran was a spiritual anchor for two billion Muslims. "It is important to understand the deep hurt that at public and premeditated act of Quran's desecration causes to Muslims," he remarked.

Terming the desecration of the Holy Quran as an attack on the Muslim's faith, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said the call in the draft text presented before this council for prevention and accountability was reasonable and necessary. The minister said the hate speech and free speech must be segregated as the free speech was as indispensable as hate speech was indefensible.

There is not a single Muslim country on the planet that allows to the desecration of the holy text of other religions, he said adding such an act is unthinkable to any Muslim. "It is forbidden by faith, by culture and by law," he said.

FO rejects Israel's criticism

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad on Tuesday termed a statement by Israel that was critical of the human rights situation in Pakistan during a United Nations (UN) session "politically motivated" and "fundamentally at variance with the positive tone" of the meeting.

She added: "Israel believes that it is essential that Pakistan heeds our recommendations to take all appropriate steps to prevent arbitrary arrests, torture and other ill-treatment and bring perpetrators of such acts to justice and end the widespread use of the death penalty, especially against children and persons with disabilities." The envoy said Israel also called for Islamabad to "decriminalise same-sex activities" in line with international human rights standards and adopt a "comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation" in this regard. She further mentioned that Israel was also concerned over the National Assembly passing amendments in January to tighten the blasphemy law in Pakistan, which she claimed was "often used to target and persecute religious and other minority groups".

"Several states and civil society organisations commended Pakistan on the progress achieved in promoting human rights," the statement said, adding that Israel's "politically motivated statement is fundamentally at variance with the otherwise positive tone of the sessions and the statements made by a vast majority of states". "Given Israel's long history of oppression of Palestinians, Pakistan can certainly do without its advice on protecting human rights," the statement added.

PM launches Laptop Scheme for KP students

— inaugurates first phase of FATA University in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here Tuesday launched the Prime Minister National Laptop Scheme for the talented students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including merged areas enabling them to continue their studies and contemporary research.

The laptop distribution ceremony was held at Governor House and attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan, Federal Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb, Deputy Speaker National Assembly ZiyadAkramDurrani, Special Assistant for Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima, PM Adviser Engr Amir Muqam, Federal and Provincial Ministers, Chairman HEC and students in large number.

The prime minister distributed laptops among the position holder students of different universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the laptops scheme was launched for all the talented students of the country including KP that was being distributed strictly on merit. No favouritism or nepotism would be tolerated in its distribution, he added.

The prime minister said that 100,000 laptops would be distributed among students in the country this year. A total of one million laptops were distributed so far among students under the PM scheme in the country. He said the laptops would help students to excel in their studies and get dignified jobs in the competitive IT market.

The prime minister said that the laptops distributed by the PML-N Government had greatly helped students to continue their studies during the testing time of COVID-19. The prime minister said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the land of brave people who played a key role in saving the country from the menace of terrorism and held the sacrifices of law enforcement agencies, police, doctors, engineers, traders and people in high esteem.

He said that the deal with IMF was made in compulsion for the economic stability of the country. Pakistan has all natural resources including precious lands for agriculture, mineral wealth and only strong will was required to take the country's out of existing challenges, he added.

Imran's sister booked

LAHORE (PPI): Dr Uzma Khan, sister of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, was booked in yet another corruption case on Tuesday. The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) of Punjab registered a case against Uzma for transferring 310 kanals of land in Jhang in her name through forgery. Police also arrested the naib tehsildar and patwari of Athara Hazari in connection with the case.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Marriyum Aurangzeb addressing a press conference at Press Club.

Kurram clashes claim two more lives

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Ongoing fighting between two tribes over a piece of land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram tribal district claimed two more lives on Tuesday, taking the total number of casualties to 11.

The clashes started five days ago in the Boshhehra Dandar area and spread to other areas including Khar Kallay, Balashkhel, Pewar, Gidu, Teri Mengal, Karman Para Chamkani, Maqbal and Kunj Alizai. People in the affected areas are facing a persistent shortage of food items, medicine and fuel due to the blockade of roads. Educational institutions have been closed and normal life has also been hit.

Govt leaves no stone unturned to avert law & order situation in Kurram: Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is

leaving no stone unturned to avert law and order situation in Kurram and to permanently resolve the long-standing land disputes, in this regard Department of Home and Tribal Affairs issued a press statement, on Tuesday.

Department Home and Tribal Affairs press release stated that recently, due to land disputes, armed clashes have occurred between tribes of district Kurram resulting in regrettable casualties. Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has made every effort to resolve the longstanding land disputes in Kurram and to normalize the situation well before the 7th July 2023 clash between inhabitants of Dandar Sehra and Boshhehra.

It is pertinent to mention here that there are 8 different land disputes going on in central, lower and upper

areas of district Kurram most of which date back to pre-independence time. Recently, on 7th July 2023 exchange of fire took place between inhabitants of Dandar Sehra and Boshhehra over construction on disputed Shamilat at Dandar Sehra upper Kurram where in regrettably 7 individuals were killed and 37 got injured. Section 144 has already been imposed in that area.

Immediately, after the clash, the District Administration with the support of Police and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) engaged prominent elders to cease fire and started negotiations with both parties. Furthermore, section 144 of CrPC was imposed on the disputed land with deployment of LEAs to normalize the situation and avoid further losses or casualties.





## PFA wastes unwholesome milk

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) continued its operation in Punjab and disposed of 700 litres of milk during a raid on Khalid Dairy in Khuddiyan Khas on Tuesday. PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said, in a statement, that PFA's dairy safety team raided a unit and caught the milk adulteration mafia red-handed producing fabricated milk besides confiscating a vehicle and machinery.

The team also lodged an FIR against the culprits on account of adulteration in the nearest police station after discarding tainted milk, 25kg powder, 16-kg ghee and prohibited chemicals, he added.

He said that fabricated milk was being produced with the help of whey powder, vegetable oil, and harmful chemicals. The DG PFA said the Punjab Food Authority was bringing an international-style policy for supply of pure milk.

## Rangers, Police conduct operation

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police conducted a joint search and combing operation against drug peddlers, criminal elements, and those involved in the clash between two drug peddler groups on July 9 this year in the Irani Camp area of Orangi Town.

During the operation, the accused involved in various crimes were arrested and weapons and ammunition were also recovered, said a news release on Tuesday. According to the details, on July 9, 2023, during a clash between two drug dealers groups in the Irani Camp area of Orangi Town, Karachi, weapons were displayed and freely used and the police were also fired upon. The Rangers and Police conducted the operation against the criminals under a joint action plan.

During the combing operation, weapons, ammunition, and a large quantity of drugs were also recovered from the accused. The arrested suspects along with arms, ammunition, and drugs had been handed over to the police for further legal proceedings.

## 12 killed, 1,216 injured in 1,156 accidents in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least 12 people were killed while 1,216 injured in 1,156 road accidents in Punjab during last 24 hours. Of whom, 673 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 543 people with minor injuries were treated on the spot by rescue medical teams, said a spokesman for Rescue 1122 here on Tuesday.

Analysis showed that 583 drivers, 25 underage drivers, 148 pedestrians, and 497 passengers were among the victims of road crashes. Statistics showed that 233 accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 248 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 82 in Multan with 85 victims and at third Faisalabad with 80 accidents and 97 victims. As many as, 986 motorcycles, 69 rickshaws, 119 cars, 29 vans, 11 buses, 30 trucks and 114 other vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the traffic accidents.

## Walk held to mark Population Week

RAWALPINDI (APP): To mark World Population Day "Population Week" is being celebrated in a befitting manner by organizing competitions, demonstrating walks and other activities to promote the spirit of family planning which was necessary for proper upbringing of kids and ensuring health of couples.

In this connection an awareness walk was organized by the Population Welfare Department in collaboration with the District Health Authority here on Tuesday at Benazir Bhutto Road. Addressing participants of the walk, District Population Welfare Officer, Shireen Sukhan said the issue of rapid population growth could only be resolved with cooperation of the masses and Population Welfare Department was taking all measures to create awareness.

# CM vows to eliminate dacoits, foresees Bilawal as next PM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the newly elected representatives of the local bodies have taken over, therefore he has decided to announce the next Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) for the vertical distribution of available resources.

"We have started spade work to design the next PFC and it will be finalized within a month."

This he said while talking to media just after performing the concluding ceremony of the three-day Urs of Abdullah Shah Ghazi at his Mazar on Tuesday.

Replying to a question, CM Sindh said that the cabinet had decided to announce the PFC award within a month of the formation of local bodies. "Now the elected representatives of the local bodies have taken over and we are going to form the commission and then the commission decides the formula of the award," he said and added that his government would financially strengthen the third tier of the government. It may be noted that the PFC ascertains the share of available resources between provincial and local bodies, generally known as vertical distribution. It also formulates a criterion for the distribution of allocated funds to local government horizontally among different tiers and

local councils. This mechanism of distribution is known as Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) Award.

To another question, the chief minister said that the digitalization of the salaries of the KMC and some other local bodies' employees have unearthed a large number of employees who were drawing double salaries – from KMC and another provincial department.

"This is a crime and punishable under the law," he said and added his government has decided to dismiss such employees after fulfilling the legal requirements.

He said that similar pension cases have also been found which were being scrutinized and would be dealt with accordingly.

To another question, Murad Ali Shah said that he has not received official figures of the digital census. "When I'll receive them officially, I will be able to comment," he said. Giving an oblique reference to MQM, the Sindh CM added that through a press conference on January 27, 2023, they (MQM) had expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the digital census. "They told the media that they have formed committees to facilitate the people to get them registered but it was me who had questioned the methodology of the census," he said.

## Governor assents to five bills

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori has given his assent to five bills, which were passed by the Provincial Assembly of Sindh, earlier, here on Tuesday.

The bills, which were officially approved, included Sindh Workers

Welfare Fund Amendment Bill 2023, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology Bill 2023, Prohibition of Interest on Private Loans 2023, and two others.

These bills after the approval of the Sindh Governor will become law.

## More rains from today

LAHORE (APP): The Met office has predicted another monsoon spell in most parts of the country, including the provincial capital, from Wednesday to Monday.

According to a spokesman for the Pakistan Meteorological department, monsoon currents from Arabian sea are likely to penetrate in upper and central parts of the country from 12th of July (evening) which are likely to intensify on July 14. A westerly wave is also expected to enter upper parts on 14th (evening/night) and under the influence of these weather systems, rain/wind-thundershower (with few heavy falls) is expected in most parts of the country, including Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Kasur, Okara, Attock, Chakwal and Jhelum from the 12th (evening/night) to 17th July with occasional gales.

Rain/wind-thundershower (with few heavy falls) is expected in Mianwali, Khusab, Sargodha, Hafizabad,

Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh from 13th (evening/night) to 17th July with occasional gales.

Rain/wind-thundershower is also expected in DG Khan, Rajanpur, Multan, Bhakkar, Layyah and Kot Addu from July 14 (evening/night) to July 16.

The Met office also informed that heavy rain may cause urban flooding in low lying areas of Gujranwala and Lahore from July 14 to 17 and may trigger landslides in the vulnerable and hilly areas of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Farmers are advised to manage their activities keeping in view the forecast while tourists and travelers are advised to remain extra cautious to avoid any untoward situation during the wet spell.

Dust storm/wind-thunderstorm may damage loose structures like electric poles, solar panels and general public is advised to stay at safe places during wind-storm/heavy rains.

## Security arrangements reviewed

LAHORE (APP): The District Intelligence Committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of DPO Pakpattan Tariq Wilayat to review security arrangements and law & order on Muharramul Haram and Urs of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Masud Ganj Shakar.

RPO Sahiwal Mehboob Rasheed, heads of intelligence agencies and others reviewed arrangements to ensure peaceful atmosphere during Muharram and Urs, said a handout issued here on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the DPO Pakpattan briefed about arrangements and also directed to use all resources to ensure fool-proof security arrangements.

He said that the security plan for Muharram had been completed by the police as more than 3,000 personnel would perform duties.

The DPO said more than 1400 officers

and officials, including one DPO, one SP, four DSPs, 13 inspectors, 37 sub-inspectors, 100 ASIs, 113 head constables, 1115 constables, and 50 lady constables would perform duties on Muharram processions and gatherings across the district.

However, more than 1600 police officers and officials a SP, six DSPs, 19 inspectors, 67 sub-inspectors, 80 ASIs, 132 head constables, 780 constables, 60 lady constables, 300 patrolling officials besides traffic police officers would perform duty on Urs of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin, whereas more than 179 civil defense personnel would also be included, he maintained. Later, DPO Pakpattan Tariq Wilayat along with RPO Sahiwal Mehboob Rasheed visited the route Lorry Ada Pakpattan to Darbar Baba Fariduddin and checked the control room at Darbar Baba Farid.

## Director LDA's One Window Cell transferred, Rafia Nazir appointed

LAHORE (APP): After the visit of Chief Minister Punjab to LDA One Window Cell, Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa called an important meeting on issues related to One Window Cell.

The Commissioner and DG LDA immediately removed the Director One Window Cell and issued instructions to change the management team of One Window Cell.

Randhawa has directed to appoint Rafia Nazir as Director One Window Cell. He directed her to take up charge immediately and start working. He said that new officers are being appointed at the one window cell on the basis of previous performance. The time of LDA one window cell has been extended till 5:00 pm instead of 2 pm and Citizens' applications can now be received up to 5:00 pm instead of 2 pm. He

directed that director one window cell and office staff will remain in the office until late for timely completion of the work on daily basis and citizens convenience.



**DIRECTOR GENERAL (EXTENSION)**  
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### TENDER NOTICE

Livestock & Dairy Development Department (Extension), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, intends to award the contract for supply of Broiler Poultry Feed under its ADPI/AP Scheme titled as: "Introduction of Semi-Environmentally Controlled Poultry Housing System & Revival/revitalization of Existing Poultry Farms in Merged Areas" AND "Introduction of Semi-Environmentally Controlled Poultry Housing System & Revival/Revitalization of Existing Poultry Farms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" for financial year 2023-24. **Feed Manufacturing firms**, duly registered with sales tax, income tax and having experience in the sales/marketing of poultry feed are invited to submit their **Sealed Offers/Bids** on Single Stage two envelopes procedure.

A Pre-bid meeting will be held on **25/07/2023 at 11:00 am** in the office of Director, Livestock Merged Areas, Civil Secretariat, Warsak Road Complex, Peshawar. Closing date and time for submission of sealed tender's documents is **08/08/2023, at 12:00 PM** and will be opened on the same date at 02:00 PM in the office of the Director Livestock Merged Areas, Civil Secretariat, Warsak Road Complex, Peshawar. In case of any situation beyond control, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

Estimated cost of the tender is **Rs.260.00 million** and Call deposit of **Rs.5.200 million/-** (duly issued from the bidders account in the form of CDR) on the name of "Deputy Director (HQ), Livestock & Dairy Development Department, Merged Area, Peshawar" duly issued from the bidder account.

Standard Bid Documents (SBDs), Terms & Conditions & technical evaluation criteria, Specification can be obtained during office hours from office of the Director Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Merged Areas, Civil Secretariat, Warsak Road Complex, Peshawar on payment of Pkrs 1000/- Non-Refundable till last date of the bid. The same is also available on KPPRA website.

**PROJECT DIRECTOR**



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for local bodies Sindh Syed Nasir Hussain Shah along with Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon sharing Sindhi Ajrak during visiting at KPC.

## ‘Work on to provide plots to 700 new KPC members’

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Minister of Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that Malir Development Authority and Lyari Development Authority are forming a coordination committee to solve all the problems of Karachi Press Club's LDA and MDA's housing scheme. The journalist colonies will solve the problems, the committee will include Secretary Information, DGMDA and LDA and President and Secretary of Karachi Press Club. The resettlement should start as soon as possible, the summary for the plots of 700 new members of Karachi Press Club is available in the relevant departments and they are working together with Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah.

He said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Asif Ali Zardari have always spoken for the rights of journalists, we have made laws for the protection of journalists which no other government has made till date.

He said that I am giving the news that this time PPP is going to form the government in the federation. It is proof that we are not fighting any political party, we are fighting poverty. He expressed these views while meeting with the governing body and senior journalists of the Karachi Press Club and talking to the media on the occasion of his visit to the Karachi Press Club along with Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah.

Earlier, a meeting of provincial ministers and club officials was held regarding housing schemes of Karachi Press Club and plots for new members. President Karachi Karachi Press Club Saeed Sarbazi said that

there was a one-window meeting today. The payment of the plots of MDA scheme Tesar Town will be made according to the previous formula, orders to a DA and DC Kemari for the demarcation of block 68 have been issued and there are also schemes for development works in MDA and LDA. Secretary Karachi Press Club Shoaib Ahmed said that we are grateful to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari that he is taking great steps to solve the problems of journalists, we hope to increase the grants of Karachi Press Club and solve the problems of the members on a priority basis.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said in a conversation with journalists that we have always helped media houses and journalists, we are aware of the economic challenges, yet we are talking to the Chief Minister of Sindh to increase the grant of journalists, the first law has been made by the Sindh government for journalists.

He said that many campaigns were conducted against us, propaganda was done under a well-thought-out conspiracy, but we do not believe in this kind of politics, we are democratic minded people, the previous government used to invite journalists of their choice and give interviews so that they could ask questions of their choice. He said that I am giving news that we are coming to the government this time, what the mandate stealing party has done to this country and nation is in front of you, actions were taken accordingly, political rivals were imprisoned in false cases during his tenure, media was banned, the only contender for freedom of expression is the PPP which believes in service and lenience.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the state of MQM and Jamaat-e-Islami is in front of you. Be it transport or

health, we are number one. MQM and Jamaat-e-Islami should leave bitterness and if there is any problem, talk to us, we want to send a message of love. He said that our main competition will be on the polling day. Our message is love, we want a bouquet in the country, we do not fight in politics, we do politics.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that he has seen the situation of PTI in local elections, they are not in a happy situation, they are cowards. Instead of facing trial, they have gone into hiding. He said that PTI has harmed the country, we have never come to the government through the door of the thief, the history is a witness.

Sindh Information Minister said that the attitude against us has been very strict, in our profile you will find martyrdoms and in the profile of others there are only backdoor contacts.

He said that we do not have any problem or danger from MQM London, we are outraged that the words of their leader were against our country, the trends that are going against our institutions include enemy countries. PTI's fight is with this country and not with the institutions. They want to see the country default, PTI wants to harm the institutions, we stand with the state institutions judiciary. Sindh Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that Jamaat-e-Islami has benefited from MQM's boycott in local elections.

He said that the mandate of Karachi is with us, we have not committed any mandate theft, everyone knows the benefit of MQM's boycott. He said that what happened to us in 1979 is a part of history. Now you will get to see a new Karachi. Projects worth 200 billion have been earmarked for Karachi.

## NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelope Procedure)

Executive Engineer Haripur Irrigation Division Haripur, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites Electronic Bids from eligible firms / bidders in accordance with KPPRA Procurement Rules 2014 on Single Stage Single Envelope procedure for the following Works:

S.#	Work Name	E/ cost	Bid Security	Time Limit
1.	AM&R To All Irrigation Works in Khanpur Section of Irrigation Sub Division Khanpur During 2023-24.	1.10	22000	Up to 30/6/2024.
2.	AM&R To All Irrigation Works in Small Dam Section of S&I Sub Division Haripur During 2023-24.	0.900	18000	.do.
3.	AM&R To All Irrigation Works in Sarai Saleh Section of S&I Sub Division Haripur During 2023-24.	1.200	24000	.do.
4.	AM&R To Irrigation T/wells in S&I Sub Division Haripur During 2023-24	2.00	40000	.do.
5.	AM&R To Irrigation T/wells in Sarai Saleh Section of Sub Division Haripur During 2023-24	2.00	40000	.do.
6.	AM&R To All Irrigation Tube Wells in Irrigation Sub Division Haripur. Repair To Voltage Regulators & Supply/ Fixing of Service Wire.	2.00	40000	.do.
7.	AM&R To All Irrigation Works in Abbottabad Section Including Building Work in irr: Sub Division Abbottabad During 2023-24	1.200	24000	.do.

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Bid Solicitation documents including Instructions to Bidders can be downloaded from Irrigation website <http://www.irrigation.gkp.pk/> as well as KPPRA website, otherwise bids submitted without these documents (duly filled) will be considered non-responsive.
- Bid Solicitation documents issued to the bidders, contains requirements for eligible bidder and other important terms and conditions.
- Electronic Bidding shall be done on "Above / Below System" on BOQ / Engineer's Estimate, based on the MRS/NSI where applicable. Only two digits after the decimal point shall be considered for evaluation purpose.
- The Bidder should submit through courier **02% Bid Security** sealed in envelope of the estimated cost in the shape of **Call Deposit (Original)** as per kppra instructions, rules and other government notifications issued from time to time.
- The employer has the authority to reject any bid or all the bids assigning cogent reasons.
- Bid security of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest Electronic Bidder for the specific work will be retained by the department for one week after issuance of letter of acceptance to the successful bidder.
- All the bidders / Firms must be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority.
- The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineers Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional security of Engineers estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security then it will be considered as non responsive, and 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government.
- If a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineers estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid on Engineers estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis or required amount of additional security, then the bid shall be considered non responsive, all the securities submitted along with such non responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- The contractors must prepare their bids c/ds i.e 2% & Additional security (if any) in the name of Executive Engineer Haripur Irrigation Division Haripur.
- The last date for bid submission is **8/8/2023 @ 12.00 Noon** which will be opened on the same day at **12:30 PM** in the office of the **Superintending Engineer Hazara Irrigation Circle Abbottabad** office in front of contractors and their representatives who wishes to attend.

INF(P)1590/23

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

HARIPUR IRRIGATION DIVISION HARIPUR.





# Amir Muqam believes in freedom of media

— strongly criticized Imran’s agenda of suppressing media

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam has said that on behalf of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and especially the journalist community, I thank Maryam Aurangzeb for taking interest in the issues of the journalist community of the province. He said that owing to the security concerns faced by the province in the past, the journalist community had to face many difficulties. The adviser further said that all the political parties that are part of PDM participated in the coalition government for the sake of national



interest so that the problems faced by the public could be solved. The adviser said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif proved to be an excellent statesman for being able to bring all political parties together.

Muslim League-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam expressed these views on the occasion of the visit to Peshawar Press Club. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Maryam Aurangzeb, Secretary Information and Broadcasting Sohail Ali Khan, Principal Information Officer PID Mubashir Hassan and President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik were also present on the occasion. In the press conference held on the occasion of the visit, the aforementioned had a detailed discussion with the media representatives from around the province.



PESHAWAR: A delegation led by Ameer JI's Peshawar Baharullah Khan Advocate meeting with Provincial Election Commissioner, KP, Shamshad Khan.

## Community projects prioritized to address public problems: Afridi

PESHAWAR (APP): THE Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Relief, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Taj Muhammad Afridi and Caretaker Minister for Irrigation Haji Fazal Elahi on Tuesday chaired a meeting regarding the construction and completion of Bara and Jabba Dams in Khyber district including Warsak Canal System, held at Civil Secretariat here.

The caretaker provincial ministers were told in the briefing that around one million people will get clean drinking water upon completion of the Jabba Dam, while 300 cusecs of drinking water and 400 cusecs of water for irriga-

tion will be possible with the completion of the Warsak Canal system.

At the briefing, it was further informed that the completion of Bara Dam will not only irrigate 48 thousand acres of land, but it will also provide 16 cusecs of clean drinking water along with generating 6 megawatts of electricity.

On this occasion, caretaker provincial minister Alhaj Taj Muhammad Afridi said that he will give priority to projects of public interest and collective nature so that faster development in the area can be made possible. He also insisted on removing all reservations concerned with the said projects.

Caretaker Provincial Minister Taj Mohammad Afridi also issued instructions to include Malaguri and Bakarabad areas in the Warsak Canal System project so that the people there are provided with clean water, and do not face any problems in this regard.

He emphasized on surveying other adjacent areas so that wherever water access is possible, they can also be included in the project.

The Secretary of the Irrigation Department, DG Small Dam, representative delegations of the areas adjacent to the discussed projects and other relevant officers also participated in the meeting.

## ‘PPP strongly oppose to delay in elections’

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial president PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Minister of State for Water Resources, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha has said that they will strongly oppose the delay of elections.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that PPP strongly believes in democracy and is ready for the general elections and directed the party workers to start the campaign for the general elections.

Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha directed the party organizations to prepare for the elections and said that the paper work of the candidates of the National and Provincial Assembly should be completed as soon as possible.

He said that the PPP knows how to fight elections and also how to win it. He said that they will defeat their political opponents with the power of votes.

The PPP provincial chief further said that the popularity and public support for the party is increasing throughout the country, saying the joining of the influential political personalities is proving that the party in the next general elections will come into power in the centre and provinces and Bilawal Bhutto will be the Prime Minister.

## Show-cause notices issued to officers

PESHAWAR (INP): The health department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday issued show-cause notices to the health officers of 25 districts in which they were asked to submit report on the medical equipment which had not been used at government hospitals so far.

Sources said that the DHOs had been asked to explain within 24 hours as to why packed medical equipment that had been provided to them was not used.

Sources further said that it had been conveyed to these officers that in case they did not respond to these notices, action would be taken against them.

## Dry weather likely in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center on Tuesday predicted mainly dry and humid weather in the province during next 24 hours.

However, it said that isolated thunderstorm-rains associated with gusty winds are likely to occur in Abbottabad, Mansehra, Batagram, Torghar, Kohistan, Shangla, Upper Dir, Swat, Buner and Kurram districts. Dust storm/wind storm is also expected in Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat and D.I.Khan districts.

During the last 24 hours humid & partly cloudy weather occurred over most districts of the province. However, rain/wind-thunderstorms occurred in Swat districts. Rain recorded (in mm): Kalam 04.

Maximum and minimum temperatures recorded were Peshawar City 37/24, Chitral 33/17, Timergara 36/23, Dir 33/15, Mirkhani 37/20, Kalam 25/07, Drosh 35/21, Saidu Sharif 34/17 and Pattan 38/24.



PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif performing inaugural ceremony of main campus of a University in Darra Adam Khel at Governor's House.

# Provincial govt expanding population welfare service delivery network: CM aide

PESHAWAR (APP): Adv-

isor to Caretaker Chief Minister KP on Population Welfare Syed Jarrar Husain Bukhari on Tuesday said that the Population Welfare Department was making efforts to expand its service delivery network and in this connection, 260 family welfare centres in the settled and 120 others in the newly merged districts of the erstwhile FATA had been established.

Addressing a seminar organized in connection with World Population Day here, he said that for the facilitation of the people of the southern districts of the province, the caretaker set-up has agreed to the establishment of a new Regional Training Institute at Bannu. The project will fully benefit the people of the region.

Besides, the Secretary Population Welfare, Asghar Ali, Director General (DG) Population Welfare, Ayesha Ihsan, a representative of the UN Family Planning Agency, Dr Shahid and oth-

ers attended the seminar.

The advisor said that for the provision of a better legal framework for family planning and reproductive health, the provincial government has enforced KP Reproductive Healthcare Rights Act 2020 with the purpose of the look after reproductive health, protecting reproductive health rights, decrease in mortality rate of mother & child and empowerment of women to take the decision on their own sweet-well. The participants of the meeting discussed in detail the role of women in development and the teaching of Islam regarding family planning.

Briefing the participants, the Secretary Population Welfare, Asghar Ali said that World Population Day is being observed with the cooperation of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on July 11 each year with the purpose to create awareness about the impacts of the growing population on the society.

The theme of observing World Population Day this year is 'Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities'.

He further said that a total of 802 welfare and 35 reproductive centres have been established under the auspices of the Population Welfare Department in the province, besides organizing awareness sessions from time to time. He expressed gratitude to UNFPA for its cooperation in organizing the seminar.

Highlighting the ongoing programmes and achievements of the department, he said that the provincial government has adopted a balanced narrative, which stressed on maintaining a balance between the volume of family and resources. The parents have the right to make decisions regarding the fulfilment of the basic rights of their children and

families independently and similarly, it is also the responsibility of both the government and society to provide comprehensive access to information and services of the family planning.

Furthermore, he said that 14 youth-friendly health centres have also been set up to provide a platform for youth to participate in healthy activities. He said that a programme for the provision of prior marriage consultation, reproductive health, and resolutions of the psychological problems of youth has also been initiated in these health centres. The programme also includes giving counselling regarding health, pleasant and stable marriages.

The advisor urged for reaffirmation of the resolve for further strengthening of the programmes of family planning, and removal of hurdles in access to services for the provision of a safe and cooperative environment for family planning.

## Girls meet AC

PESHAWAR (APP): The girls from Ranra Child Welfare Foundation on Tuesday met with Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Sayyeda Zainab Naqvi here at the Deputy Commissioner office.

On their arrival, Assistant Commissioner Sayyeda Zainab Naqvi welcomed the children at the DC office and informed them regarding facilities being provided by the district administration to its people.

On the occasion she emphasized upon the children to take extra interest in their education as they could also become an officer after acquiring higher education.

She told the children that hard work was a must to achieve success in life.

The Chairman Ranra Child Welfare Foundation, Mehwish Ali thanked the Assistant Commissioner and said these children would be taken on visits to the offices of various female officers for motivation. She said the children would be told that our women folk were second to none in different fields of life.

## Rain predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Regional Meteorological Department Tuesday predicted rains starting July 13 to 17 in most parts of KP.

According to a notification issued by Provincial Disaster Management Authority said that Regional Met Office Peshawar informed that a new spell of rains was starting for which people were urged to take all precautionary measures to avoid any loss of life, damages to infrastructure, crops and animals.

Furthermore, all concerned authorities asked to take the safety measures.

The tourists to be informed about weather forecast, ensure availability of all emergency services staff and machineries and other resources, and all concerned line departments would remain vigilant in restoring road links.

## DEC supervises arrangements for by-polls



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The District Election Commissioner (DEC), Swabi, Fahad Ali Shah supervising as well as ensuring earlier arrangement for holding free and fair by-elections on seats of Village and Neighborhood Councils scheduled on 27th August like respect of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Tuesday.

In this regard, the Election Commission of Pakistan has announced the election schedule. According to the schedule, the ROs will issue a public notice on 14 July 2023. Candidates can submit their nomination papers from 17 July to 19 July 2023.

The list of nominated candidates will be published on 20 July 2023. Appeals against acceptance

and rejection of papers can be filed from 25th July to 26th July 2023 whereas the decisions on these appeals will be taken by 1st August 2023.

The revised list of candidates will be published on 2nd August 2023. Last date for withdrawal of candidature is 3 August 2023. Final List of contesting candidates will be published after allotment of symbols on 04 August 2023.

According to the code of conduct issued by the ECP, the appointment and posting/transfer of government employees has been banned in the districts where elections are being held. Prime Minister, Chief Minister, Governor, Speaker/Deputy Speaker of any assembly, representative of any other public office holders are prohibited to visit and announce any development projects in respective councils till the culmination of the said elections.



PESHAWAR: Imran Khan and Muneer Bangash addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to PM Malik Ahmad Khan meeting with Caretaker Minister for Information Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel.

## Anti-polio drives Commissioner directs monitoring by ACs

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting held under the headship of Commissioner Peshawar Division here on Tuesday decided to further bring down the number of anti-polio drop refusing cases, providing foolproof security and surveillance of polio teams by the assistant commissioners.

The meeting of Divisional Task Force with regard to anti-polio initiatives, headed by Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair, was also attended by the deputy

commissioners of all five districts of Peshawar including Nowshera, Charsadda, Mohmand, Khyber and district health officers, focal persons of the task force Dr Zubair and official concerned.

At the meeting, the deputy commissioners of five districts gave a detailed briefing on the last anti-polio campaign.

The Commissioner Peshawar Division while showing satisfaction over decrease in number of refusing parents said the

remaining parents must also be persuaded for vaccination of the children. He said far reaching steps were needed in this direction.

He said foolproof security should be provided to the polio teams during the next anti-polio campaign, starting from 1st August.

He said the assistant commissioners concerned should monitor the next anti-polio drive in their respective areas. He also warned of stern legal action against those failing to comply with the orders.



PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan cutting a ribbon to inaugurate a workshop at Traffic Line Bacha Khan Chowk.





## In brief

### PTI leader, four others booked

MATIARI (PPI): Police in Matiari city of Sindh on Tuesday arrested three persons after registering a case of dacoity of millions of rupees against five people, including PTI leader Makhdoom Fazal Hussain, his son Makhdoom Mohsin and Imran Taj Memon. According to a copy of the FIR, the case, registered under sections 397-504-507 (2) of the PPC on the complaint of three persons, including Mumtaz Hanguru, read that the complainants were travelling from Saeedabad to Hala when they were intercepted by five men, including the PTI leader, who robbed them of Rs500,000 cash, a gold ring, and other valuables. Police later stormed residence of the PTI leader at Hala and took into custody three persons. However, the Force refused to give any further details. On the other hand, Makhdoom Fazal Hussain, the PTI leader, giving his version, said that the police had registered a false case against him and his associates. "We are not at Hala these days. But the police are bent upon harassing us," he has said, adding, "An effort is being made to malign us. But we are confident that soon we will be able to break these shackles and the truth will triumph."

### DPO hold Jirga with traders

#### F.P. Report

WANA: District Police Officer (DPO) Lower Waziristan Farman Ullah and trade union held a jirga in Wana bazaar to dispel misunderstandings created a day back following a crackdown of the police against foreign made items imported through Angoor Adda gate in form of relief facility extended to war torn people of lower Waziristan. DPO assured the participants in jirga that police would show no laxity in performing its duties. He said that I am carefully reviewing the situation and the vehicles seized by the police will be released soon keeping in mind the principles of previous relief in Lower Waziristan. He assured that the police would continue its efforts to eradicate drugs and other social evils in Lower Waziristan and traffic police will be deployed in Wana Bazar soon so that the traffic problems in Wana Bazar could be solved on a solid ground. He also expressed his determination that Wana bazar is a major commercial center and full cooperation of the business community will be required to further improve the commercial activities here and we expect the people of Lower Waziristan to cooperate fully with the police in establishing peace and eradicating the scourge of drugs. After that, the newly appointed DPO Farmanullah visited Wana bazar along with business people and the public appreciated the visit of DPO.

### Meeting reviews security

#### F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: District Police Officer (DPO) Mansehra, Zahoar Babar Afridi chaired a high level meeting held here on Tuesday to review the Muharram security arrangements. During the meeting also attended by SP Headquarters, Circle SDPOs of the districts and SHOs, security arrangements for all majalis and processions in connection with Ashura Muharram were reviewed. DPO Zahoar Afridi directed all police officials to make all out efforts to ensure security during Muharram.



ABBOTTABAD: DIG Hazara Tahir Ayub Khan presenting shield to Coordinator of 37th NIM Midcareer Management Course Seemi A Khan at a ceremony.

# World Population Day observed in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The district population welfare department organized a seminar and an awareness walk at Timergara here on Tuesday to mark World Population Day. The additional deputy commissioner Abdul Wali Khan was chief guest while deputy district health officer was the co-chief guest on the occasion. Kinan Pasha, the tehsil population welfare officer briefed the seminar participants regarding the importance of the World Population Day.

He said the day was marked every year on July 11 with different themes to sensitize the public regarding the population growth and its effects on society. "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities" was the theme for this year, he said, adding the theme showcased the vitality of the day. He said the alarming 2.71 growth rate in Lower Dir district would be harnessed to ensure prosperity for the upcoming generation.

The ADC Abdul Wali Khan said that the countrymen should realize the gravity of the booming population growth in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan ranked fifth most populated country in the world. The ADC said that it was the time to think collectively and shoulder the responsibility of the burgeoning population growth. "The large size of population creates a cumbersome challenge that exposes us to various threats that disrupts human life", he said, adding that a stable population growth and investing in human capital and particularly in youth brackets could change the destiny of the nation.

Speaking on the occasion the district population welfare officer Shahid

Khan said the parents should change their attitude towards family planning that guaranteed the mother and child health. He said that uneducated and ill-nurtured children adversely affected the process of development and prosperity. Later the participants led by the ADC Abdul Wali Khan while carrying banners and placards marched on the road for public awareness.

**Contractors demand justified distribution of funds among districts:** The government contractors on Tuesday demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and its finance department to ensure a justified distribution of available funds allocated for the ongoing development projects.

Talking to local journalists the government contractors' association divisional president Ikramullah Khan and general secretary Imranullah Takur said the provincial government had to pay billions of rupees to the contractors for their work done on development projects in the province.

They said that after several protests the provincial government had started distribution of funds but there were some reports that the funds were being distributed on the basis of like and dislike among the districts. The contractors' leaders said the government and its finance department should ensure a justified distribution of funds so that the affected contractors could take a sigh of relief.

They said the contractors had badly suffered because of funds' unavailability for the last two years. The contractors said that most of their colleagues had stopped work on their projects as they had been unable to afford the recurring expenses. They threatened to come onto the roads if funds were not equally

distributed among the districts.

**Jewellers' protest:** The Timergara jewelers on Tuesday postponed their protest for a week and demanded of the police department to expedite the investigation regarding a broad-day burglary a week ago wherein a jeweler Hanifullah was robbed and the robber took away 2 kilogram of gold and Rs 500,000 at one of the Timergara jewelry market. An unknown accused wearing a white cap and a face mask had picked up a bag containing the gold and cash and had escaped from the scene on July 5.

The decision was taken during a meeting of president of Anjuman Tajirran Timergara Haji Anwarud Din and president of Timergara Sarafa Association Ziaullah with the local station house officer Muhammad Imran. The SHO informed the traders' leaders about the progress in the case on which they expressed satisfaction. The official said that police had obtained the CCTV footage and would soon reach the culprit. The traders' body called off their proposed strike. However; they said the traders would again agitate against police if the accused was not arrested soon.

**Teachers' promotion:** The Lower Dir chapter of the elementary and secondary education department issued the promotion orders of 71 different cadres' teachers working in BPS 15 to BPS 16 here the other day. The district education officer Muhammad Ameen after the recommendation of a departmental promotion committee, promoted the teachers to the next grade. Different teachers' organizations congratulated the promoted teachers and hoped they would now devotedly perform their duties.

### Traders observe 4th foundation day

#### F.P. Report

MARDAN: Like other parts of the country, the fourth foundation day of Markaz-e-Tanzeem Tajirran District Mardan (Zahir Shah Group) was also celebrated with great enthusiasm.

According to details, General Secretary of the Central Organization of Traders Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Haji Zahir Shah, General Secretary Waqar Ali Bacha, New Adda President Sahibzada, Bakht Munir, Hafiz Muhammad Naem, Saeed Khan, Faqir Saraf, Abdul Jabbar, Muhammad Iqbal, Aftab, Gul Syed and many others participated.

MCCI President Haji Zahir Shah, on the occasion of the fourth foundation day paid tribute and congratulated the businessmen of the country who always played their positive and pioneering role during natural calamities and national crises.

Markaz-e-Tanzeem Tajirran is the biggest non-political platform. The government should solve the problems faced by traders on a priority basis because traders are the backbone of the country's economy. The services of the businessmen should be valued because if the businessmen are happy then the economy of the country will develop. On the occasion of the fourth foundation day, cake was cut and special prayers were offered for the security and development of Pakistan.

### Protection from brothers demanded

#### F.P. Report

LARKANA: A resident of Aqil Band named Sajjad Ali Jatoti, suburb of Larkana, along with his family, held a protest in front of the press club against the alleged abuses of influential brothers.

I take care of my children by doing labor. They accused me that for a long time, my influential brothers Shafi Muhammad Altaf Hussain and Bhatia Gada Hussain have been insisting on vacating my private house, while all of them are criminals.

There are also contacts and it is completely undesirable for them to enter the houses while I have also lodged a report at the police station of Hudud. Police of Bandh should be prosecuted for not doing justice to me.

**Residents demanded establishment of Taluka:** A protest demonstration was held in Badh, the second largest city of Larkana district, by "Badh Taluka Movement" to give Badh the status of tehsil, which was addressed by Zeb Ali Sario, Dudu Desi, convener of Badh Taluka Movement, Anwar Askari and others said that the population of Badh is more than 150,000 and this city is the second largest city in Larkana district, but the elected members of the People's Party are not interested in giving Badh the status of tehsil for the last fifteen years. While giving a warning to the members of the assembly, he said that the general election is just around the corner, but we also have to think before voting.

# Ali Masjid picnic spot needs attention of authorities

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: The visitors demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and other concerned authorities adopt all necessary initiatives to develop Ghaar water streams, Ali Masjid tourists' site, the lonely picnic point in Jamrud, Khyber.

Ali Masjid picnic site is located at main Pak-Afghan highway in Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its around 16 kilometer east of the city of the Landi Kotal and has 3174 feet above the sea level.

According to the locals, being historical status (Khyber Pass) fresh water flowing out from the century-old stream has added beauty to the area and in summer a busiest tourist site attracts hundreds of thousands' visitors from Khyber and adjacent districts from the month of May and till September.

Amjad Khan, a tourist from Peshawar said that the cold water of the stream in Ghaar, Ali Masjid gave a moment of relief to those who escaped from the scorching heat of downtown. He appreciated the natural beauty of the picnic point however he added that due to lack of facilities,



the visitors faced problems. The site was short of potable water besides no proper sitting shelters were available for families, he added and said the visitors had no other option but to sit under an open sky. Another local visitor, Muhammad Haris of Shiekhmal Khel Landi Kotal who enjoyed the site with his friends said that the picnic point was near to Landi Kotal and even to down towns and could be cheaply approached.

He maintained that like other mountainous areas, nature had poured blessings in the area yet the government had turned blinds eyes towards it. If the concerned department exhibits interest, it can be developed to the most reproductive tourist site of Khyber, he remarked.

Owner of the only hotel hills at the site, Amir Khan

said that they developed an idea to make a picnic point at Ghaar stream, Ali Masjid to attract visitors to the Khyber. Last year the administration announced development schemes for the site but practically nothing had been done so far, he opined.

He asked the government to build huts and shades, washrooms and supply drinking water as the stream water was contaminated because visitors bathed in it, the picnic point would not only provide a place of enjoyment to the citizens but would also be a source of income for the locals. It is to be stated here that the previous government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced development projects for Ali Masjid picnic point but so far no construction works have been initiated on it.

# THQ hospital Mir Ali facing lack of funds

F.P. Report

MIR ALI: During one year of outsourcing Tehsil headquarters hospital Mir Ali has fulfilled vacant positions in all departments which has increased Outdoor Patient (OPD) strength from 10 patients to 300 but its conditions became deteriorated due to negligence of provincial government and health's department by violating the agreement concluded at the process of outsourcing, on Tuesday.

According to sources, Sarhad has obtained THQ Mir Ali hospital in May 2022 while established laboratory with modern equipment and operationalized children, gynae and medical wards which has

attracted patients from far long areas of the tribal region.

The sources added that claimed that the organization has utilized all available resources for operationalizing THQ hospital situated in the war trodden area of North Waziristan which has also tribal patients in the premises with quality health facilities. It is revealed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation and Health's department has violated agreement sections which has ultimately resulted in the delivery of services at the facility.

Lack of funds had also impacted the capacity of also resources to serve the tribesmen while Sarhad

organization has claimed that due to limited resources several initiatives have been taken for welfare of patients while responding to issue.

However, the organization requested provincial government as well as district administration to stop cutting from employees' salaries, while it is also revealed provincial government has released only 15% of the allocated funds to the THQ Mir Ali. It is worthy to mention that an organization named Sarhad has obtained possession of THQ Mir Ali in June 2021 following an agreement with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health foundation and health's department in this regard.

# 1750 farmers get seeds for hike in cultivation

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Frontier Corps North and the USAID joined hands in a significant initiative to support local farmers in Mohmand District. An inauguration ceremony was held at Guluno Valley to mark the distribution of seeds to 1750 farmers, aiming to enhance agricultural productivity and uplift the livelihoods of the farming community.

The distribution ceremony witnessed the presence of esteemed civil and mili-

tary representatives, USAID staff members, and local notables, all gathered to commemorate this collaborative effort. Four distribution points were established in Guluno, Suran, Safi and Ambar.

These distribution points will cater to the needs of local farmers by providing them with the necessary seeds to cultivate their lands effectively. As part of the distribution process, USAID teams will conduct a comprehensive survey of selected projects from 12th to 15th July 2023. In Had

Ambar, Safi, Suran & Guluno areas, 2000 packages of corns, 1025 packages of Bitter Gourd and 550 packages of tomatoes were distributed.

The local farming community expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the joint efforts of the Security Forces and USAID. This initiative has provided them with a valuable opportunity to engage in farming activities, which will undoubtedly have a positive impact on their lives and the overall development of the area.

# ATC cancels bail of 102 PTI leaders, activists

MALAKAND (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) Malakand on Monday cancelled interim bail of 102 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and workers in a case related to May 9 riots.

The PTI leaders and workers were arrested from the premises of the ATC after the cancellation of bail. The suspected PTI leaders and activists were facing charges of torching Swat Motorway Toll Plaza on May 9. The accused persons included former MNA Mehboob Shah and ex-MPA Humayun Khan. The former MNA Junaid Akbar had been declared a proclaimed offender in the case.

The ATC judge Riaz Ahmed had granted interim bail to the accused till July 10. A few days ago, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore had issued non-bailable arrest warrants for 22 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) central leaders in the May 9 riots case. Police

pleaded with the ATC to issue non-bailable arrest warrants for the 22 PTI leaders in the May 9 riots case. The plea was accepted and arrest warrants were issued by the anti-terrorism court during the hearing.

**D&SJ administer oath from DBA new cabinet:** District and Session Judge (D&SJ) Malakand Iqbal Khan administered oath from Dargai Bar Association (DBA) newly elected cabinet, on Tuesday.

During the oath taking ceremony, Additional Session Judge Tila Muhammad, Senior Civil Judge Atta Ullah Khan, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shahab Muhammad Khan, Assistant Commissioner Dargai Shabbaz Khan, Additional Assistant Commissioner Zaid Khan Safi along with lawyers of Malakand and Swabi bar associations were present.

DBA president Fazal Ahmad, general secretary

Naseem Ullah and Aziz-ur-Rehman addressed the participants during oath taking ceremony while committed for establishment regarding Rule of Law in Pakistan. The newly elected cabinet committed for dissemination justice to public as their top priority.

### Magnet bomb found

#### F.P. Report

MINGORA: A magnet bomb was reportedly fixed to the main gate of the residence of a former PTI MPA in Swat. However, the bomb was later defused.

Police claimed that a magnet bomb was found fixed to the main gate of the residence of former PTI MPA, Afzal Hakeem, in his hometown of Mingora, Swat. They said the bomb was planted to the gate with a magnet. It was later defused by the bomb disposal squad.





‘Europe or death’ - teenage migrants risking it all to cross the Med

LONDON (BBC): As the giant red and white rescue ship sails across an expanse of Mediterranean Sea, the horizon is interrupted by the sight of a dark blue inflatable boat, crammed with bobbing heads. Rescue workers from the charity SOS Méditerranée don helmets and life jackets as they race to the scene in speedboats. They quickly pull the migrants on board the vessels one by one, counting as they go.

The boys and young men, most from The Gambia, have been at sea for 15 hours and have made it 54 nautical miles from the Libyan town of Castelverde, near Tripoli. They are in a state of distress. Some later tell me that shortly before rescuers arrived, a fight had almost broken out on board the over-packed boat. Some were determined to keep going, while others were begging to give up and try again later. One dropped his phone in the sea in the melee.

One wears the familiar pale blue of a Manchester City football shirt, others are holding iPhones. Few have brought any water or food. Many cannot swim, armed only with the inner tubes of tyres to use as flotation devices should they end up in the sea. There is panic during the rescue as a Libyan coastguard vessel appears on the horizon. Many of the boys have previously been pulled back to Libya by its coastguard, which the EU has provided with ships, training and funding. Some of the migrants grin as they sit down in the rescue speedboat - one takes a selfie on his phone. One later tells me that when he grabbed the hand of one of the rescuers, he thought: "Now I have entered Europe."

The group are rushed back to SOS Méditerranée's ship, the Ocean Viking, where they undergo medical checks and receive new clothes and drawingstags containing supplies like toothbrushes. The charity alerts Italian authorities, who quickly assign the southern city of Bari as the port at which to disembark, telling them to head there "without delay". This follows a new law which requires such vessels to immediately head to a port rather than continue to patrol for more migrant boats. Bari



will take almost three days to reach. So, as we set sail, we speak to some of the migrants in rooms set up as medical facilities and accommodation areas on the deck of the ship. Most speak English - all of their names have been changed.

The migrants tell us they were not ignorant to the risks they were facing. Many say it was not their first attempt at reaching Europe - some had narrowly avoided death, having been picked up from boats in distress and returned to Libya. "Seven times I have been trying," one 17-year-old says. Every migrant I speak to has friends who have died attempting the same journey. Some have also been following news on social media of the Greek disaster - one of the deadliest migrant sinkings in years, in which up to 750 people are believed to have died - which happened less than two weeks earlier. Those migrants had also set sail from Libya. One says it didn't put him off because he believes those migrants would have had the same mindset as him.

"It's either you reach Europe or you die at sea," the teenager tells me. "There's only two options." SOS Méditerranée had received an alert about the rubber boat from Alarm Phone, an emergency helpline for migrants in trouble at sea, and European border agency Frontex.

More than 80% of the group are unaccompanied minors, aged under

18. Many of the boys had started their journeys years earlier, when they left home hoping to make money to send back to their families. Many say they have lost one or both parents and, as the eldest sons in their families, they feel responsible for supporting loved ones. They are mostly from The Gambia - more than 2,000 miles south and west of Libya. The Gambia is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) says Gambians have emigrated at a higher rate per capita than any other nation in Africa in recent years. It says from 2015 to 2020, more than 32,000 Gambians arrived in Europe through what is known as "irregular" migration. It says a similar number arrived between 2020 and 2022. The Central Mediterranean is the main migratory route into the European Union. Frontex says that in the first five months of this year, the number of detected crossings more than doubled compared to the same period in 2022 - to 50,318. It is the highest number recorded since 2017.

Relieved to be on the boat and heading to Europe, the boys relax enough to start telling me how they got there. They took different routes to get to Libya, using networks of smugglers, to cross multiple countries from Africa's west to north coast. Eighteen-year-old Suma says his journey began when he was put

in contact with an "agent" in nearby Mali, with whom he planned the start of his journey to Europe, travelling through Algeria to Libya. Along the way, he says he was tied up, beaten and denied food by smugglers. No-one he travelled with to Libya was on the boat with him, and the BBC was unable to independently verify his claims - but others have similar stories. In the time it takes us to reach land, the migrants settle into life on the ship, playing games of football, cards and the game Connect Four - and dancing to music played on a loudspeaker. There is a moment of excitement when they have the clothes they travelled in returned to them. They sift through a large pile to find their own items and take them over to buckets of soapy water to wash them, before hanging them on ropes to dry.

For many, these clothes are their only personal items - everything else had to be left either back at home or in Libya. Life on the ship marks a stark change from the way they tell us they had been living before they set sail. In Libya, they say they lived in compounds run by smugglers as they tried to get the money together for the Mediterranean crossing. Many say this leg of the journey cost them 3,500 Libyan dinars (£570). Suma's step-dad sent him some of the cash, and another boy says his family had taken out a loan against their business to help fund the journey. Others make vague references to working for the smugglers.

"This journey, I didn't pay... so I'm very lucky," one said. "I was working with the man, I was helping him arrange things." Many of the teenagers say they also spent months in Libyan detention centres after being picked up by the Libyan coastguard during attempted crossings - where they say they were tortured and given little food. Many of them have scabies. Once they had enough money to cross the Mediterranean, the migrants approached agents to make the arrangements. Suma says he has learned not to trust them, explaining: "What they will tell you and [what] they will do is a different thing most of the time." He says he had been previously told he would be

transported on a boat with around 55 to 60 people on board, only to find a small rubber raft with 80 to 90 passengers.

"We [just have to] believe, you know, we leave everything in the hands of God. And everyone has to be on that rubber boat," he says. Adama says he was on a boat holding about 125 occupants that sank - he was one of 94 who survived. "I just see my friend dying. I help a lot but I cannot help all of them... I see them, they're going." There is hope among the migrants on board the Ocean Viking as we near the Italian coast, but also some traces of regret. Suma says he misses home, but that it would bring "shame" on him to return after borrowing money from loved ones for the voyage. "It's a disgrace, you know." Some knew little about the plan for their dangerous voyage or where it was headed - beyond the promise of Europe - while others had their minds set on landing on the Italian island of Lampedusa, a common arrival point for migrants. Several also tell us that they had hoped all along to be picked up at sea by SOS Méditerranée's Ocean Viking rescue vessel, never thinking they would make it alone all the way to Italy. One teenager tells us he was tracking the ship on his phone before setting off.

"I like social media, even the vessel finders, I have all of them on my phone. I will look at the weather, I will look at the rescue ships," he says. Critics of groups like SOS Méditerranée argue that they act as a pull-factor that encourages migrants to make the dangerous journeys. However, SOS Méditerranée says numbers of migrant crossings are not affected by whether or not they are on patrol. "People leave no matter what - ships or no ships," says Claire Juchat, operations communications officer. She adds that in a 72-hour period following the rescue of the teenagers, when no NGO vessels were on patrol, 5,000 migrants arrived on the island of Lampedusa. She also notes most rescues are conducted by authorities. According to figures from the United Nations refugee agency, more than 64,000 people have arrived in Italy after crossing the Central

Mediterranean so far this year. More than 1,000 of those have been from The Gambia.

The teenagers tell us they view Europe as a place of safety and stability, where they can return to school and get a good job. On the ship, the crew give the group a lesson in basic Italian, as they sit on the deck carefully making notes and repeating phrases. While some have friends who have successfully made the crossing before them and have shared details of their new lives, Europe is mostly an abstract idea for the migrants. Much of their knowledge is based on their favourite football teams and players. "I want to be a footballer. Like Ronaldo," one says. "Marcus Rashford!" another exclaims. Lots are excited to be disembarking in Italy - the country of the Serie A league, and its new champions Napoli. But their future remains uncertain. When the ship docks at the port of Bari, the teenagers, who had earlier been singing and dancing on the deck, go quiet, clutching grey blankets, and documents to present to authorities. Some shake as they wait to be called. They are greeted at the port by health and border officials, as well as Red Cross and United Nations workers. Some are taken away in paediatric ambulances for health treatment. Others are put in coaches and transported to reception facilities, where they will undergo further assessments. Sara Mancinelli, operations manager with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, on board the vessel, told me that their right to stay in Europe will be determined by their individual circumstances. "Even if in their country there is no war or persecution, they may have some... reasons why they are recognised for some kind of protection," she says. Chiara Cardoletti, the UN refugee agency's representative for Italy, says that partly due to a "dramatic upsurge in arrivals" the reception capacity in the country is "currently insufficient to respond to the needs of unaccompanied migrants and others". As he prepares to take his first step on European soil, Suma turns around and waves goodbye to us.

UN warns its development goals for 2030 are in trouble

UNITED NATIONS (AP): In a grim report, the UN warned that at the current rate of global progress 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty and 84 million children won't be going to school in 2030 - and it will take 286 years to reach equality between men and women.

The report on progress in achieving 17 wide-ranging UN goals adopted by world leaders in 2015 to improve life for the world's more than 7 billion people said that only 15% of some 140 specific targets that experts evaluated are on track to be reached by the end of the decade. Close to half the targets are moderately or severely off track, it said, and of those 30% have either seen no movement at all or regressed including key targets on poverty, hunger and climate.

The ambitious goals for 2030 include ensuring that hunger is eradicated and nobody lives on less than \$2.15 a day which is the extreme poverty line, providing every child with a quality primary and secondary school education, achieving gender equality, ensuring all people have clean water, sanitation and access to affordable energy, reducing inequalities, and taking urgent action to

combat climate change. "Unless we act now, the 2030 agenda could become an epitaph for a world that might have been," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a foreword to the report. "Failure to make progress means inequalities will continue to deepen, increasing the risk of a fragmented, two-speed world." The report was released ahead of a summit that during the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September, which he said will be "a moment of truth and reckoning."

Undersecretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Li Junhua said conflicts including the war in Ukraine, climate change, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic especially its devastating financial impact on developing countries, and geopolitical tensions are all "threatening to derail hard-earned progress" toward achieving the goals. He said in a foreword that the pandemic saw the largest decline in childhood vaccinations in three decades, an increase in tuberculosis and malaria deaths, and learning losses in 80% of the 104 countries studied. It also interrupted three decades of progress in

reducing poverty, and produced the largest rise in inequality between countries in three decades, he said. "By May 2023, the devastating consequences of war, conflict and human rights violations had displaced a staggering 110 million people of which 35 million were refugees - the highest figure ever recorded," the ECOSOC chief said. Li told a news conference launching the report that at the September summit, the UN would like political leaders to come up with "a new roadmap" to accelerate action at the global, regional and national level to achieve the goals by 2030. With seven years left, the report said achieving the goals is "in deep trouble" and "it is time to sound the alarm."

At current rates, it said not only will 575 million people still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 but only about one-third of countries will meet the target to reduce national poverty levels by half. "Shockingly, the world is back at hunger levels not seen since 2005, and food prices remain higher in more countries than in the period 2015-2019," the report said. In 2021, the number of people suffering from hunger was close to

800 million, far above pre-pandemic levels, and in 2022 an estimated 45 million children under the age of 5 suffered from wasting and 148 million had stunted growth while 37 million were overweight, it said. As for education, the report said years of underinvestment and learning losses mean that without a major effort not only will an estimated 84 million children be out of school in 2030 but approximately 300 million students will lack basic literacy and math skills for success in life - and only one in six countries will achieve the target of universal secondary school completion.

On tackling global warming, the report said, "If ever there was an illumination of the short-sightedness of our prevailing economic and political systems, it is the ratcheting up of the war on nature." The small window of opportunity to keep temperatures from rising beyond the internationally agreed threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) to prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis is fast closing, the report said, and the critical 1.5 degree tipping point is likely to be reached or surpassed by 2035.

UN sounds alarm on heat threat to S Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP): Southern Iraq's fabled marshland is suffering its worst heatwave in the past 40 years, the United Nations warned, reporting a drastic drop in water levels. Largely arid Iraq is ranked by the UN as one of the world's five countries most impacted by some effects of climate change, and authorities there say the country is going through its fourth straight year of drought.

Iraq endures blistering summer heat and frequent dust storms, and declining rainfall as well as upstream dams have reduced the flow of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said in a statement it was "deeply concerned about the grave consequences of climate change and water scarcity on the marshes and buffalo producers in southern Iraq". The UN agency cited "alarming field reports" from its staff operating alongside Iraqi agriculture ministry staff.

The FAO statement said reports "indicate that the marshes are experiencing the most severe heat wave in the last 40 years, accompanied with a sudden water shortage in the Euphrates river". "The dire situation is having a devastating impact on the marshes system, buffalo producers, farmers and fisheries, forcing many of them" to leave the area, it added. The FAO said that in Chibayish, located in Dhi Qar province, "the water level of the Euphrates is only 56 centimetres (22 inches), and in the marshes from zero to 30 centimetres". It noted high salinity levels exceeding 6,000 parts per million which have raised concern among farmers, especially buffalo herders and fishermen.

The statement cites official figures showing that "almost 70 percent of the marshes are devoid of water". In a vivid illustration of the problem, an AFP journalist early this month saw thousands of fish washed up on the banks of the Amshan river in Majar al-Kabir, in Maysan province bordering Iran. This region is famous for its marshland fed by the Tigris river. Environmental campaigner Ahmed Saleh Neema said "a rise in temperatures" leading to increased evaporation, coupled with reduced water flow contributed to "a lack of oxygen and high salinity" in the river.

North Korea threatens to down US spy planes

SEOUL (AFP): North Korea threatened to shoot down any US spy planes violating its airspace and condemned Washington's plans to deploy a nuclear missile submarine near the Korean peninsula. A spokesperson for the North's Ministry of National Defence said the United States has "intensified espionage activities beyond the wartime level", with "provocative" flights made by US spy aircraft over eight straight days this month, and one reconnaissance plane intruding into its airspace over the East Sea "several times".

"There is no guarantee that such shocking accident as downing of the US Air Force strategic reconnaissance plane will not happen in the East Sea of Korea," the spokesperson said in a statement, carried by the official Korean Central News Agency. The spokesperson cited past incidents when Pyongyang shot down US aircraft, and warned the United States would pay for its "frantic-

ly staged" air espionage. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister Kim Yo Jong said that a US spy aircraft had violated the country's eastern airspace twice morning, according to a statement. Kim Yo Jong said that the North would not respond directly to US reconnaissance activities outside of the country's exclusive economic zone, but warned that it would take "decisive action" if the US military crosses its maritime military demarcation line. In a separate statement carried by KCNA Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong warned that the US military would face "a very critical flight" in case of a new intrusion by a US aircraft. The earlier KCNA statement also slammed the planned deployment of US strategic nuclear assets to the Korean peninsula as "the most undisguised nuclear blackmail" against North Korea, saying it posed a grave threat to regional and global security.

"The present situation clearly proves that the situ-

ation of the Korean peninsula is coming closer to the threshold of nuclear conflict due to the US provocative military action," it read. Washington said in April that it would send a nuclear-armed ballistic submarine to make the first visit to a South Korean port in decades, without specifying the exact timing. North Korea has conducted multiple sanctions-defying launches this year, including test-firing its most powerful intercontinental ballistic missiles, and in May attempting to put a military spy satellite into orbit.

South Korea's President Yoon Suk Yeol has ramped up defence cooperation with Washington in response, staging joint military exercises with advanced stealth jets and powerful US strategic assets. Yoon is set to attend a NATO summit in Lithuania this week, seeking stronger cooperation with NATO members over North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats, his office said.

Rescuers brace for more rain

ANDOVER, Vt. (AP): Swift water rescue teams and local officials across Vermont braced for more precipitation and flooding Tuesday after persistent heavy rains drenched the state and other parts of the Northeast, unleashing fast-moving waters that washed out roads, trapped residents in their homes and disrupted travel.

One person was killed in New York as she tried to leave her inundated house. There have been no reports of injuries or deaths related to the flooding in Vermont, according to emergency officials. But dozens of roads were closed, including many along the spine of the Green Mountains. And the National Weather Service issued flash flood warnings and advisories for much of the state from the Massachusetts line north to the Canadian border. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said they expected two dams to release water overnight, causing "severe flooding" downstream likely to affect multiple towns. Rescue crews from North Carolina, Michigan and Connecticut were among those helping to get to Vermont towns that had been unreachable since torrents of rain began belting the state, according to Mike Cannon of Vermont

Urban Search and Rescue. Swift water rescue teams in Vermont have done more than 50 rescues, mainly in the southern and central areas of the state, Vermont Emergency Management said. "We have not seen rainfall like this since Irene," Vermont Gov. Phil said, referring to Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011. That storm killed six in the state, washed homes off their foundations and damaged or destroyed more than 200 bridges and 500 miles (805 kilometers) of highway. What's different is that Irene lasted just about 24 hours, Scott said. "This is going on. We're getting just as much rain, if not more. It's going on for days. That's my concern. It's not just the initial damage. It's the wave, the second wave, and the third wave," he said. Flooding hit Vermont's state capital, with Montpelier Town Manager Bill Fraser estimating that knee-high waters had reached much of downtown and were expected to rise a couple more feet during the night. Some people canoed to the Cavendish Baptist Church in Vermont, which had turned into a shelter while volunteers made cookies for firefighters working on rescues. "People are doing OK. It's

just stressful," shelter volunteer Amanda Gross said. Vermont Rep. Kelly Pajala said she and about a half dozen others evacuated from a four-unit apartment building on the West River in Londonderry. "The river was at our doorstep," said Pajala. "We threw some dry clothes and our cats into the car and drove to higher ground." The slow-moving storm reached New England after hitting parts of New York and Connecticut. Rainfall in certain parts of Vermont exceeded 8 inches (20 centimeters), and the National Weather Service in Burlington said more rain was forecast for Tuesday. One of the worst-hit places was New York's Hudson Valley, where a woman identified by police as Pamela Nugent, 43, died as she tried to escape her flooded home in the hamlet of Fort Montgomery.

The flash flooding dislodged boulders that rammed into the woman's house and damaged part of its wall, Orange County Executive Steven Neuhaus told The Associated Press. Two other people escaped. "She was trying to get through (the flooding) with her dog," Neuhaus said, "and she was overwhelmed by tidal wave-type waves."

Ukraine says he fears Russia has ‘no red lines’ to prevent attacks on nuclear plant

KYIV (AP): The catastrophic collapse of a dam in southern Ukraine has made Kyiv worried that Russia might stage an attack on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant to foment panic and quell Ukrainian advances on the frontline, Ukraine's energy minister said. Herman Halushchenko said the destruction of the dam while under Russian control in the Kherson region proved "there are no red lines" for Moscow. He said it warrants the level of alarm Ukraine's leadership has been raising in recent weeks of an alleged Russian ploy to attack the nuclear plant in a possible false flag operation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy alleged last week, citing intelligence reports, that Russian troops placed "objects resembling explosives" atop several power units to "simulate" an attack. Drone and satellite images obtained by the Associated Press showed unidentified white objects on the roof of the plant's fourth power unit, but

Ukrainian leaders have so far been unable to provide further evidence. While Russia accuses Ukraine of bombarding the Kakhovka dam, Kyiv blames Moscow for the attack on the dam in late May, which triggered a humanitarian crisis and caused widespread ecological devastation. An AP investigation found that Moscow had the means and motive to carry out the attack. Halushchenko said he and Zelenskyy had raised alarms as early as October 2022 that the Russians could plant mines to blow up the Kakhovka dam.

"For many many people it sounded ridiculous ... and when it happened everybody understood that there are no red lines for them," he said in a sit-down interview with The Associated Press. "And of course it's all connected to the counter-offensive operation, and after Kakhovka, the one tool which they still have is Zaporizhzhia." The nuclear plant was seized by Russia in March 2022, in the first weeks of the war in Ukraine, raising

fears of a nuclear accident. Over the past year, Russia and Ukraine repeatedly accused each other of shelling the plant. Ukraine's military intelligence has claimed for weeks, without providing evidence, that Russia is planning a "large-scale provocation" at the nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, in the southeast of the country.

Around the same time, Ukraine launched the early phase of its much anticipated counter-offensive last month and has reported steady advances along multiple directions of the 1,500 kilometer (930-mile) frontline. An incident at the plant could halt Ukraine's advance, Zelenskyy has said. Ukrainian military intelligence reports have said that Russia placed mines on the roof of the nuclear plant, and put remote-controlled and regular anti-personnel mines in technical and machine rooms. Image experts the AP spoke to could not identify the objects that have been seen on the roof. Jeffrey

Lewis, a professor at the Middlebury Institute and satellite image expert, said the objects appeared to be placed on the roof of the unit's turbine hall, and, if it turns out to be a bomb, is unlikely to cause serious damage to the reactor.

The Russians have cited security concerns in granting only limited access to officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency's Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said recently that the IAEA had recently gained access to more of the site, including the cooling pond and fuel storage areas. The Ukrainians had said those areas were mined by the Russians, but the IAEA found they were not, Grossi said. The agency has not yet been given access to inspect the roof of the plant. Halushchenko noted that the IAEA representatives were not able to access the entire site. "So the Russians allowed them to see only what they decided they could see, and that is the problem," he said.



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# Green Pakistan initiative, when will these dreams come true?

PRIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the Green Pakistan Initiative would eventually bring about the second agriculture revolution, in addition to the creation of four million jobs in the country. While addressing a seminar on agriculture and food security, he said agriculture was the backbone of the country and the farmers work hard to provide food to millions of people but they are facing a lack of resources. According to him, farmers had the right to avail incentives for the agriculture sector and it was the responsibility of the government to provide them all possible assistance for overall development and progress. Shehbaz vowed that the agricultural sector growth would bring Pakistan to par with developed nations. Meanwhile, the Premier praised the Army Chief's vision for the development of the agriculture sector that would be implemented through collaboration among federal and provincial governments, agriculture departments, and research institutions in the country.

Over the past decades, Pakistan's agriculture sector experienced a sharp decline because of no use of the latest technologies, nonavailability or poor quality of fertilizers, deterioration of soil fertility, a lack of modern machinery, equipment, and warehouses, above all high production cost and insufficient reward for farmers hard work are the important factors which gradually discouraged growers and led to a collapse in the agriculture sector. Meanwhile, the gap between Argi-production and demand for staples had increased many folds due to conventional methods of farming and a sharp increase in population in the country. According to an estimate, Pakistan needs to increase its food production at least by 40% by 2025 in order to meet its long-term food demands of the 33% predicted increase in population. Currently, Pakistan's agriculture sector has serious challenges in meeting domestic food requirements due to rapid population growth, low crop production, disastrous climate change effects, and high production cost, which turned a food-sufficient nation into a major grain importer. As of today, a significant boost in agricultural output is essential to secure the agricultural industry in Pakistan. The agricultural sector should utilize the most advanced technologies for soil testing, seed treatment, irrigation and cultivation, crops transportation, and storage, along with the use of modern agricultural practices including crops financing through banks and incentivization/support by the government to help facilitate the growers to put their full efforts to produce high yield crops from their land.

The incumbent government has chalked out a Green Pakistan Initiative aimed at combating climate change effects, desertification, and reverse deforestation to protect the environment, wildlife, and bio-divinity, overcome water scarcity, prevent soil erosion, and promote agriculture and forestry in climate-hit Pakistan. The coalition government has allocated huge funds for this initiative under the budget 2023-2024. The government of Pakistan has also invited Gulf nations to invest in Pakistan Argi-sector which has huge untapped potential and offers lucrative investment opportunities to foreign investors. Currently, Pakistan Army in collaboration with the Punjab government is working on several projects to bring millions of acres of barren and uncultivable land under crops and livestock production, while the Pakistan military owes a pivotal role in the realization of the Green Pakistan Initiative in the days to come.

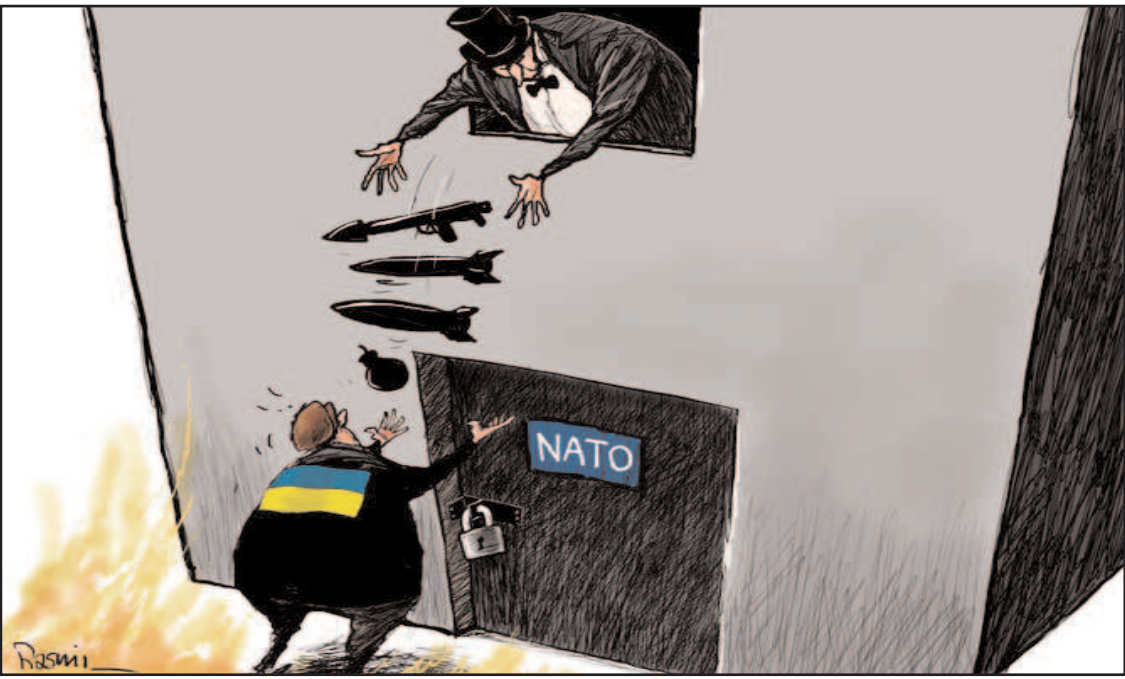
Historically, Pakistan's Argi-sector collapsed due to discriminate policies and negligence of the past governments, who fail to prioritize farming vis-a-vis other sectors including industry, real estate, housing, science, and technology thus fast growing housing societies and industrial complexes engulfed thousands of acres of cultivated Greenland, while salinity and soil erosion damaged a vast part of farming-land in Sindh and Punjab. The successive government offered incentives to a few particular crops including sugar, cotton, wheat, and yarn while staples growers often failed to receive their production cost which shattered their belief in their profession, increased dependence on imported foodstuffs, and caused inflation in the country.

Realistically, several past leaders and successive governments had taken multiple initiatives to bring revolutions in diverse fields to overcome energy shortages, curb pollution, industrial revival, agricultural revolution, anti-corruption, and accountability campaigns, counter-terrorism operations, as well as overhauling and reforming of PIA, Steel Mills, National Shipping Corporation, etc. over the past seven and a half decades of our national life. But, all those issues still persist rather those problems became more gruesome and challenging over the past years. The leaders announce plans, and allocate resources and funds but even then no such endeavors had ever produced the desired results and those projects were later shut down without achieving the desired objectives or identifying reasons for failure or otherwise. The world nations had gained excellence in their respective domains, whereas we have lost our superiority and currently trying to re-address our chronic issues in the current age.

In fact, Pakistan's democracy is not so mature while Pakistani leaders are not so loyal like other nations in the world that they undertake smooth transition of power from one political set up to the succeeding government, brief their successors about important projects, national issues and other governmental affairs, so those important national endeavors continue without any impediments. At the same time, our leaders have no such passion that they continue a pro-nation project launched by their political rivals in the best interest of the country. Therefore, every other magnificent project of national importance shut down or struck delay after change of the government or political leadership in the country. Until and unless Pakistani leaders bring a pavitol change in their policies and Palestani nation prepares to grasp current day innovations/ technologies, no sustainable revolution could not be realize in any field.

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# Sudan's scary future must be faced with patient realism

Mukesh Kapila

SUDAN'S civil war shows no signs of abating. It appears that the well-armed struggle between the Sudanese Armed Forces under Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces under Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo is an existential one.

While forecasting is hazardous in an uncertain world, Sudan's trajectory provides depressing predictability against the backdrop of its tragic history. We should get ready for worse to come. The nature of the differences between the warring Sudanese commanders implies that, for them to consider peace, one side must win militarily. Or at least attain sufficient territorial advantage to ensure their future survival.

This likely endgame derives from the experience of other wars. For example, the evolving situations in Syria, Yemen and Iraq. Ethiopia's civil war in Tigray or South Sudan's achievement of independence. With no side yet in the ascendance, there is plenty of fight left in Sudan. Therefore, it is not surprising that third-party peacemaking has made little progress, even with the limited objective of humanitarian ceasefires. Existential battles imply no self-restraint or adherence to the rules of war, despite exhortations from outside. Besides, Sudan's brutal past, including the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of the Darfur genocide, show that neither the army nor the Rapid Support Forces are dedicated to the principles of humanity. They are unlikely to change now, even with threats of prosecution in international courts and sanctions from superpowers.

Viciously fought wars develop their own autonomous dynamic, like a proliferating cancer cell or overheating nuclear core. Moderating voices from Sudan's regional and global friends - even on different sides - fall on deaf ears. Spurned diplomatic capital will be much more costly to redeploy when the time comes to invest again. While a consoling thought from history is that all wars eventually end, when will that be in Sudan?

War-torn for most of its 67-year existence as an independent state, another five or more years of acute strife is likely, with a further period of half-war, half-peace extending for a generation. No change is likely until the Sudanese fighting class wears itself down and space emerges for a compelling vision that

can rise above a divisive debate on democracy. There is no indication so far of anyone emerging to take on this leadership mantle. Civil society activism may sometimes overthrow disliked regimes, but it cannot usually run governments. Could external intervention reset Sudan's trajectory? The foolhardiness of that in Africa's second-largest nation is obvious, noting the continent's dismal record with peacekeeping under the UN, African Union or former colonial powers. The current geopolitical situation suggests that the prospects of such an intervention in Sudan's contested state are thankfully close to zero. In the coming months, the geography of the conflict will continue to shift as the opposing sides consolidate their areas of control and fight to extend them. The country could fracture into different militarized zones. Other groups may appear, either allied to one of the protagonists or by carving out their own pieces of real estate.

Such divisions will generate more instability, which will offer fertile ground for predators. These include existing criminal networks, especially human traffickers preying on the misery of desperation. Europe should be ready for what it fears most: More migrants across the Mediterranean and more news headlines as significant numbers perish in its depths. Waging wars needs resources and others, such as the Wagner Group or copycats, will capitalize on the economic opportunities offered by chaos. For example, to smuggle Sudan's gold and minerals in exchange for weapons. Violent extremist groups in the Sahel are already poised to exploit Sudan's vulnerability.

They include the allies of the Rapid Support Force's precursor, the Janjaweed, who are riding in from Libya and Chad, as well as Daesh cells that are bidding their time. Sudan inhabits a very disturbing neighborhood, sharing boundaries with deeply distressed nations such as South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, the Central African Republic and Libya. Other unhappy countries, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, are just a hop away. And so, rather like a highly infectious virus causing a pandemic, prevalent instabilities could coalesce from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.

At a time when the West

is worried about conflict with Russia spreading in Europe, or a new one starting in the Fast East with China, should we be concerned about what may emerge as a great African war, with Sudan at its center? This scenario is less fanciful when the continent-wide destabilizing impacts of accelerating climate change, environmental decline and deepening hunger and poverty are factored in. Sudan's civil war is unlikely to stay confined to its territory. That much is already evident with the 600,000 Sudanese who have fled the country. Many more will figure out how to leave safely. Planners should start preparing for 1 million to 2 million refugees over the coming year. Their impoverished neighbors must expect additional economic and social problems. As in the past, resistance groups will also emerge among the refugees, bringing political and security challenges.

In many ways, the refugees are relatively lucky. The internally displaced - currently underestimated at 3 million - could double or treble in number as the fighting continues. A significant proportion will be used by armed groups as bait to attract resources from humanitarian agencies. Aid will get looted and "taxed" along the way - perhaps 30 percent of life-saving food and other assistance will be diverted. Aid workers will get killed and double standards mean that, while local staff deaths will be regretted, the deaths of foreigners will spark outrage. International donors will be mindful of impacts among taxpayers back home at the time of a widespread cost-of-living crisis. They will react with stoppages that penalize innocent victims.

This copybook of the political economy of humanitarian aid is familiar from many complex emergency contexts, most recently in neighboring Ethiopia. As frustration rises because humanitarians cannot solve problems not of their making, we will have more angst-filled conferences on the future of global humanitarianism. None of this will relieve the worsening plight of the Sudanese. At the current war's start in April, 16 million people - or about a third of the country's population - were already dependent on humanitarian assistance for life-sustaining essentials such as food, healthcare and water. A month later, that number had risen to 25 million. On

current trends, this will increase to 36 million, or eight out of every ten Sudanese.

The UN's humanitarian appeal sought \$1.7 billion at the beginning of the year and subsequently increased its demand to \$2.6 billion. But with less than 20 percent funded so far, and the appeal size likely to reach \$3 billion to \$4 billion by year-end, such numbers are moot. Rising competition from other crises means that Sudan's humanitarian share will be ever more limited, especially as donors tend to be less generous in cases where solutions are not forthcoming and authorities remain uncooperative or obstructive. Meanwhile, the Sudanese cannot live on a diet of unfulfilled aid pledges when humanitarian access is so limited and delivery infrastructure such as hospitals are out of commission. A significant rise in mortality and morbidity from all types of acute and chronic conditions, as well as a stratospheric increase in malnutrition, are to be expected. As always, women and children will bear the brunt.

This stark scenario is presented not to demotivate those who care for Sudan, but to counsel that they help best by understanding what they cannot do. Sudan will have to find its own solutions, but that does not mean abandoning the Sudanese people. It requires solidarity by recognizing what foreigners must not do to worsen the crisis. To start with, do not enforce shabby peace deals that reward, legitimize and empower warmakers. Do not shortcut accountability and justice for past and ongoing crimes against humanity.

This does not mean neutrality either, but if Sudan's external stakeholders take sides, let them advise their proteges wisely, not with self-serving political and economic interests in mind. Do not set inflexible forms of democracy copied from the West. Let the Sudanese find their own practical governance model. And most importantly, remember that there is no Sudan without its people. So open borders to let them find safety and nurture them with open and generous hearts until they return to rebuild their shattered nation.

The Sudanese are a resourceful people and, when this nightmarish time passes - as it will - their undoubted contribution to our common world will amply repay the strategic patience we must practice in the interim.

# Why Chris Christie has a plausible path to 2024 victory

David Mark

AS Chris Christie files his presidential paperwork, joining the 2024 Republican primary field, he does so as a candidate with nothing to lose. And for former President Donald Trump, the GOP front-runner, that's the most dangerous kind of rival. The pugilistic Christie is casting himself as the one moderate GOP primary candidate willing to confront Trump head-on. Along with a relatively bipartisan record as New Jersey's governor from 2010 to 2018, this approach makes Christie the most distinctive non-Trump GOP candidate - one with a narrow but plausible path to victory.

Trump's closest GOP rival, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, has taken some verbal shots at the Republican front-runner. But DeSantis' comments are nothing like the sustained rhetorical campaign that Christie promises, which would inform voters of Trump's mounting legal troubles, his 2020 loss to President Joe Biden and his broad unfitness for high (or any) office. Trump's GOP rivals have largely taken pains to avoid criticizing the former president, who aims to become the first return White House resident since Grover Cleveland in 1893. Such reticence on their parts likely will bolster Trump, since why would GOP voters choose a pale imitation when they can have the real thing?

To be sure, Christie faces long odds. Trump dominates primary news coverage despite a modest campaign schedule. Moreover, Trump's populist-nationalist approach clearly has a hold over the Republican primary electorate. Trump has consolidated the support of a little more than half of his party, a recent CNN poll conducted by SSRS found. Christie, too, seems, particularly out of step with the current GOP primary electorate, representing its pre-2015 incarnation. The CNN poll found that 60% of Republicans would not support Christie under any circumstances. Nor does Christie exactly have a stellar track record as a presidential candidate. His 2016 presidential campaign is best remembered for Christie's debate takedown of Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, when he called out the then-freshman senator's repetition of memorized talking points. It helped seal Rubio's doom in the still-crowded GOP field but didn't help Christie much. He finished a dismal sixth in the New Hampshire primary, dropped out shortly afterward and then endorsed Trump.

That Trump link may have hurt Christie during his final nearly two years as governor. Christie scored the lowest approval rating of any New Jersey governor in recorded history in June 2017 (15% approval among the state's voters), a Quinnipiac University poll found. Christie at that point couldn't catch a break. Days after leaving office, he even was denied entry to a special entrance at Newark Liberty International Airport that he once enjoyed as governor.

Now Christie is betting his blustery personality that twice won over voters in blue New Jersey will appeal to GOP primary voters. And, taking Christie at his word, he'll deliver a direct

confrontation with Trump in a way that never happened during the 17-candidate primary mashup in 2016. Back then, Trump rivals such as Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rubio effectively pulled their punches against Trump early on, before turning on each other and providing a clear path for the billionaire businessman and celebrity television show host to claim the GOP nomination.

Christie's position as the leading 2024 anti-Trump Republican is a remarkable turn of events, given that his endorsement of Trump in 2016 gave the rookie candidate an imprimatur of GOP establishment legitimacy. Trump didn't do much to return the favor, dropping Christie as director of his presidential transition team after the defeat of Hillary Clinton in the general election. Still, Christie continued to defend Trump in public. But he renounced his support for Trump after supporters of the defeated president stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Now, he promises he'll go after Trump directly. "You'd better have somebody on that stage who can do to (Trump) what I did to Marco (Rubio) because that's the only thing that's going to defeat Donald Trump," Christie said at a New Hampshire town hall event in March.

After Trump's May 10 CNN town hall, Christie called the former president a "coward" and a "puppet of (Vladimir) Putin" for refusing to take a clear side in Russia's war of aggression against neighboring Ukraine. Christie's chances of wresting the GOP nomination from Trump also rest on hopes that there's an appetite among primary voters for some measure of bipartisanship. That has long been part of the former governor's public persona, balanced with the confrontational sound bites that made him famous. In October 2012, Christie alienated many Republicans by warmly welcoming then-President Barack Obama to New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy.

Christie can also point to bipartisan accomplishments as New Jersey governor despite facing Democratic majorities in both legislative chambers. These included a reorganization of New Jersey's higher education system, an expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act and pension overhaul. Christie flamed out in New Hampshire the last time, but there's reason to think a more bipartisan image could resonate in 2024 in the Granite State, which is politically split. The state has a Republican governor, a nearly evenly divided legislature and a Democratic congressional delegation. And it doesn't hurt that New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu told CNN on Monday that he won't seek the 2024 GOP presidential nomination, so Christie won't have to compete against a popular home-state contender who's also a frequent Trump critic.

Despite the odds, Christie has one thing going for him - he's the most distinctive non-Trump candidate in the field. And he is unafraid of going after Trump directly, which is necessary to have any hope of blocking the former president's comeback bid.

# Right-wing victory in Spain could bolster Catalan independence drive

Graham Keeley

ANALYSTS say a right-wing victory may bolster the Catalan independence movement in the north-eastern corner of the country when voters go to the polls in Spain this month. Several recent polls suggest the opposition conservative People's Party (PP) will get more votes than the ruling Socialists in the election on July 23 but will fall short of a majority so it may have to rely on the support of the hard-right Vox party to form a government.

In 2017, a former PP government ordered hundreds of police to stop a Catalan independence referendum which resulted in clashes between riot officers and voters. Vox, meanwhile, proposes eradicating regional governments like the one in Catalonia, in a direct challenge to the fiercely proud region. Meanwhile, the European Union's General Court last week stripped Carles Puigdemont of legal immunity from prosecution as a member of the

European Parliament (MEP) for his role as the separatist leader of Catalonia's failed bid for independence nearly six years ago. The decision could pave the way for Puigdemont, who lives in self-imposed exile in Belgium, to be extradited to Spain to stand trial for disobedience and embezzlement, which carry jail terms of up to eight years.

Analysts believe that the prospect of a separatist leader appearing in a Madrid court may boost the Catalan independence movement, which has lost support in recent years. Puigdemont has vowed to appeal the decision at the European Court of Justice, which could delay any moves by Spain to extradite him. In 2017, Puigdemont fled Spain to avoid prosecution following a short-lived declaration of independence that prompted Madrid to take direct control of the wealthy region. In its ruling last week, the Luxembourg-based EU court rejected the appeal filed by

Puigdemont and backed the European Parliament's decision to waive his immunity and that of two other self-exiled Catalan separatist MEPs, Toni Comin and Clara Ponsati. "The Parliament cannot adopt decisions to defend immunity which produce binding legal effects with regard to the Spanish judicial authorities," the court said in a ruling reported by Reuters.

Puigdemont said the three MEPs would appeal to the European Court of Justice. "We will defend our fundamental rights until the end," he tweeted. Vox was in the political wilderness until four years ago, but after the Catalonia crisis it experienced a surge in support and is now the third largest party in the Spanish parliament with 52 lawmakers. In its election manifesto published Friday, Vox called for regional governments to be abolished and Spanish to be promoted over other co-official

languages like Catalan, Galician and Basque. Santiago Abascal, Vox leader, told hundreds of supporters at a rally last week attended by VOA in Barcelona that he would "not cede an inch in defending the right of Spaniards to speak their own language and against linguistic imposition."

The Catalan language is seen by separatists as a symbol of its nationhood. It is the predominant language in which most school subjects are taught in the region. Only 25% of classes in Catalonia are taught in Spanish. Pere Aragonès, the separatist Catalan regional leader, last month called for a "democratic front" against a possible right-wing government. Catalan independence parties, which have been divided in recent years over the right path to independence, came together to support Puigdemont. Aragonès, a senior figure in the left-wing

Catalan Republican Left party, said he hoped European justice would prevail and restore Puigdemont's immunity. Dolors Feliu, president of the Catalan National Assembly, a pro-independence civic group, told VOA in a statement: "The arrest of President Puigdemont would be a blatant violation of his rights and an attack against Catalonia's pacifist pro-independence ideology."

Pablo Simon, a political analyst at the Carlos III University in Madrid, said Puigdemont's decision to appeal means the prospect of the Catalan leader standing trial is not an immediate one. "It will have [a] far more immediate effect on the independence movement if the PP and Vox govern together [after the election]. That could provide a boost to the independence movement," Simon told VOA. On the same day as Puigdemont lost his appeal in Luxembourg last week, a poll found 52% of Catalans opposed inde-

pendence, according to the Catalan government's Center for Opinion Studies (CEO), while 42% support splitting from Spain. Since May, when the last survey was published, opposition to independence has risen two percentage points, while support has fallen one point, the survey found.

Since July 2022, support for staying part of Spain has risen by four percentage points, while support for independence has fallen by two points. In January, Spain's Supreme Court dropped sedition charges against Puigdemont after a reform of the country's penal code abolished the crime. Supreme Court judge Pablo Llarena said he would submit a new extradition request to Belgian authorities for Puigdemont to face trial on the lesser charges, depending on the EU courts' rulings. Spain's earlier attempts to extradite Puigdemont from Germany, Belgium and Italy failed.

VOA



# World will be forced to grapple with coming Palestinian storm

Baria Alamuddin

**As always, the punitive methods Israel's armed forces deployed against Palestinian civilians serve only to create the conditions they pretend to address. This is how you create new generations of angry young men with nothing to lose, drive armed groups into the arms of Iran, and cultivate children whose overriding desire is to avenge mothers, uncles or sisters.**

Sadeel Naghniyeh, 15, was shot dead by an Israeli sniper in Jenin last month. Her father said: "My son is 9 years old and he sees his sister killed. He sees death and destruction around him. What will that teach him? To resist."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his generals know this. But how else do you appease your extreme-right base, or take the wind out of the sails of Israel's massive anti-Netanyahu protest movement? Netanyahu is Israel's arsonist-in-chief - deliberately igniting inferno after inferno in the exalted cause of his personal political survival.

Western politicians also know this, but lamely issue anger-inducing statements about supporting "Israel's security and right to defend its people," aware that Israel is shooting itself in the foot by fueling out-of-control vicious circles of reciprocal provocation. Britain's Foreign Office feebly muttered that Israel's invasion of Jenin "must respect the principle of proportionality." Would such a ludicrously out-of-touch statement have seemed appropriate as Putin obliterated Bakhmut? And what is Britain planning to do after Israel so spectacularly failed to observe any such "proportionality"?

Palestinians are scarcely accorded the right to exist, let alone defend themselves. Life was already nearly impossible in Palestinian cities where expand-

ing populations live on top of each other, as Israel inexorably gobbles up new swaths of land. In Jenin's densely populated refugee camp, 15,000 people are crammed into a square half-kilometer. Outsiders fail to recognize how apocalyptically destructive Israel's incursions are. The Jenin attack was the largest Israeli military operation in the occupied West Bank since September 2000, during the Second Intifada. They deployed a heavily armed brigade-sized force of up to 2,000 troops, with armed drones, tanks and armored bulldozers. Tarmac roads were ripped to shreds by those bulldozers in the search for roadside bombs, streets were strewn with burnt-out family cars, multistory buildings were smoking wrecks, thousands of people were displaced, hundreds injured, and 12 dead. Nablus suffered a comparable fate. This is collective punishment in its purest form.

In a vicious practice which has become horrifically normalized, hundreds of armed vigilante settlers - the radicalized, illegal occupiers of Arab land - went on the rampage through Palestinian towns, terrorizing families and attacking citizens. Burnt and destroyed buildings included a school and mosque, and 310 settler attacks on Palestinians were monitored in just 24 hours. At least 155 Palestinians have been killed so far in 2023. There has also been a spike in Israeli deaths - giving the lie to Netanyahu's assertions that Israelis can enjoy a calm and secure environment when all efforts toward peace have been thwarted. Is it any surprise that many Israeli dual nationals are already departing?

Even Netanyahu acknowledged that this was just "the beginning of regular incursions."

The epidemic of violence is again spreading to Gaza, where there was a tit-for-tat exchange of fire, including Israel hitting a weapons manufacturing facility. Hostilities across the Israel-Lebanon border in recent days are a further wake-up call that the region is unraveling into anarchy. These territories that Netanyahu attacks with impunity are not his to pacify. Palestinians have repeatedly demonstrated willingness to share their historic homeland, but Netanyahu's farthest-of-far-right fascist allies are hellbent on stealing it all: expediting construction of thousands of additional illegal West Bank homes, annexing huge chunks of territory, and seeking to entrench fully fledged apartheid as an irreversible reality.

After a recent fact-finding mission, representatives of the Elders, an international NGO of senior statesmen and peace advocates formed by Nelson Mandela in 2007, bluntly stated that Netanyahu's government had demonstrated "an intent to pursue permanent annexation rather than temporary occupation, based on Jewish supremacy," damningly adding that they had heard "no detailed rebuttal of the evidence of apartheid." On how many occasions during 1990s and 2000s peace processes have Western leaders complacently lectured audiences that regional peace was impossible until the Palestinian issue was resolved? But under Donald Trump and now Biden, the attitude prevailed that Israel could be allowed to throttle Palestinians out of existence - as long as they did it quietly.

The war crimes of Jenin demonstrate how wrong-headed this was, even though we are only witnessing the tip of the iceberg of the forthcoming cycle of violence, which will suck in all those

nations which that are affected by Middle East security whether they like it or not. We can celebrate the vigorous manner in which the Western world has mobilized support for Ukraine, while also asking: why only Ukraine? Are Ukrainians the only nation who deserve support in resisting brutal occupation, relentless bombing of their cities, and imperialist oppression? Why are Ukrainian soldiers daily championed in the Western media as heroic freedom fighters, while any Palestinian youth who picks up a rock is a "terrorist" who deserves to die?

Are human rights, self-determination, and democratic freedoms not supposedly universal values? Palestine is not an "Arab" or "Muslim" issue, but a global cause that strikes at the core of our humanity. If we desire a world in which wars of aggression against the people of Ukraine and Taiwan are unthinkable, we must start by unambiguously regarding the occupation of any nation's land as illegal, carrying an obligation of action to redress these historic crimes. But all those global governments who genuinely don't give two hoots for justice are once again going to be compelled to grasp the Palestinian conundrum with both hands, if they have any desire at all to stem the oncoming tsunami of violence.

Hopes and expectations for our futures - to be doctors, lawyers, artists or musicians - are what provide our lives with purpose and structure. After being brutalized from birth, enduring a thousand humiliations, indignations and tragedies, is it any shock that Palestine's younger generation, having had all other possibilities closed to them, seek out the single avenue that Netanyahu has left open - as freedom fighters and liberators of their lands?

Arab News

# Welcome to the ‘looking-glass’ world of Putin’s Russia

Daniel Treisman

well. Putin's sloganeers might add a few more paradoxes to the list. Lies are truth. Illusion is reality. In Russia today, spreading "false" information about the war - that is, reporting on it accurately - is punishable by up to 15 years in a penal colony. If, like the courageous pro-democracy campaigner Vladimir Kara-Murza, you also accuse Russian troops of war crimes, you risk getting an additional 10 - as the judge decided in Kara-Murza's case.

Putin's speeches create a mirror image of reality. As citizens in Rostov cheered the mutineers and booed the police, the president insisted that everyone was united behind him and the constitutional order. Later, he thanked the troops and security services for acting "in a firm and coordinated manner." In fact, they hardly acted at all. Russia's president is also adept at subterfuge. To conceal his whereabouts, he is said to have built exact replicas of his Kremlin office in multiple locations. When TV shows Putin in Moscow, he may just as well be in Sochi or Valдай. To avoid being tracked by flight radar, he has taken to travelling in a secret train carriage, according to a defector from his guard service. Amid all the lies, Prigozhin's most subversive act may have been not his march on Moscow but his moment of truth in a video released just before it. In an impassioned rant, he accused the Russian authorities of cooking up a pretext for the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. "On February 24th, nothing extraordinary happened," he said.

He was careful not to call Putin a liar. But - hardly better - he made him out to be a dupe, deceived by medal-hungry generals and rapacious oligarchs into starting an unnecessary war that has cost many tens of thousands of Russian lives. Worse yet for the Kremlin, Prigozhin's claim - coming from a dihard nationalist - will seem quite believable to many Russians.

That may be one reason Putin did not, at first, use force against him. Rather than risk creating a martyr for hardliners, he seems to have decided to start by destroying the warlord's credibility. Investigations and leaks have already begun, with pictures of Prigozhin's lavish mansion appearing on state television. Equipped with gold bars, multiple passports, caches of weapons, a closet full of wigs and other disguises, the place is a model of gangster chic.

In this looking-glass world, the president has no

time for politics. He rarely appears in public. Visitors must often quarantine for days before he will sit with them - and then, usually only at the end of one of his famous elongated tables. Isolated in his self-built echo chamber, he relies on reports from his security services - the same ones that predicted quick victory in Ukraine and failed to anticipate and prevent Prigozhin's rebellion. It's a sign of how badly Prigozhin rattled him that Putin briefly broke out of his comfort zone after the mutiny to telegraph that he was still in control. On a visit to Dagestan, he mingled in-person and posed for selfies with a crowd of presumably carefully vetted admirers, awkwardly kissing one teenage girl on the forehead. This was followed by a clearly scripted visit to the Kremlin by an eight-year-old girl, who joined the grandfatherly president in a bizarre phone call to the Russian finance minister. No one expects the new friendly Putin to last long. The real politician in Russia today, despite all obstacles, is Alexey Navalny. Even from jail, he has continued campaigning and commenting on events, doing interviews, and posting on social media via his lawyers.

With a mix of millennial humor and folksy irony, he reaches out to ordinary Russians with scenes from prison life. Watching prices soar last year in the prison store, he sympathized with pensioners on the outside struggling with inflation. Every holiday, he sends greetings to supporters, and he even appealed to French voters last year to reelect President Emmanuel Macron over the Putin-friendly Marine Le Pen. After the war started, Navalny offered a 15-point program for ending it and rebuilding a democratic Russia. And now, in between battling the prosecutors' new charges, he has called for IT specialists, sociologists, donors and volunteers to sign up for a "long, stubborn, exhausting but fundamentally important campaign" to sway public opinion against the war. It remains to be seen whether this will prove more effective than Navalny's previous campaigns while at liberty. But as reality begins to break through the Kremlin's filter, the timing may finally be right.

Putin seems less and less able to grasp the challenges before him. After the 2014 invasion of Crimea, then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel described Putin as living in "another world." An open question now is whether he can find the way back.

CNN

## Ghana’s \$3b IMF deal: Did the fund kill my uncle?

Jean Adomfeh

**IN a pivotal moment for Ghana's economic future, news the country was approved for a \$3bn loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in late May caused excitement and anticipation across the nation. However, I found myself pensive, wrestling with a haunting question: Did the strict policies imposed by the IMF on loan-recipient nations in any way contribute to the untimely death of my uncle?**

"I'm a doctor, and I couldn't even help my only brother," were the words my father choked out between sobs when news of the death of his younger brother who had lived in Ghana reached us in our upstate New York home. My uncle died at the age of 53 on October 25, 2021. I took in my father's cries helplessly as we shared in mutual heartache. As an MBA graduate and medical student at the time, I pondered how all the years of education between the two of us could not put a blood pressure cuff on a man across the Atlantic. As a big-picture thinker, I was left wondering: What systemic factors played a role in his death? Research has shown IMF involvement reduces government health spending due to the strict loan conditions that lead to cost-cutting. This has ripple effects on modern low- and middle-income nations, including fewer governmental workers, such as healthcare workers; less money for public infrastructure, including building hospital capacity and providing clean

water and proper sanitation; and little funds for public goods, including medicines and diagnostic technologies. With all this in mind, it is not surprising IMF involvement leads to increased mortality rates. My uncle had risen from his bed that morning, eaten breakfast and sat down to watch his favourite news program as he waited for his daughters to get ready so he could drop them off at school before he headed to work in Kumasi, Ghana. Once the girls were ready, my aunt attempted to shake him awake as he had "fallen asleep" and was snoring very loudly. He was unresponsive.

The family carried him into a taxi as ambulances are not accessible in Ghana. He was dead by the time he reached the hospital. The cause of death was unclear but, given my aunt's description of the events and family history, we suspected a stroke due to undiagnosed high blood pressure. The family pushed for an autopsy but it was never done. My father, the son of subsistence farmers from Edubiase, a small village in the Ashanti region of Ghana, had received international merit scholarships and ultimately become a primary care physician. After years of peacefully protesting the authoritarian rule of then leader Jerry Rawlings, the threat of retaliation in Ghana drove my father to the United States in 1992. Despite the distance, he and our family in the US maintained close contact with

family back home. We visited my uncle, aunt and cousins in Kumasi as often as we could and kept in touch via phone calls and social media.

We also donated our time and resources to local hospitals whenever possible, hoping to do our part in supporting the health and well-being of people in Ghana, in addition to our clinical contributions in the US. And yet, my father blamed himself for not being able to save his brother and for already living to an age my uncle would never get to enjoy. I felt guilty as well, until I realised just how extremely the odds were stacked against my uncle surviving a chronic illness like high blood pressure in Ghana. Like many former colonial nations, the Ghanaian healthcare system was structured as a skeleton of care to target infectious diseases that were most likely to affect colonial occupants. Unfortunately, despite preventive healthcare being the Ghana Health Service's purported priority, to this day, the general public has little access to the kind of prevention that would address chronic diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes due to a lack of healthcare providers, few and inadequate healthcare facilities and a lack of general health knowledge by the public. It costs money to invest in healthcare systems. Newly-independent nations like Ghana in 1957 needed IMF loans to build basic services and infrastructure after former colonial

powers and allies limited access to funds from alternative sources by branding these new nations as financial risks for seeking independence. But these loans came with stringent conditions, including strict cost-cutting measures.

These strict cost-cutting measures have never applied to Western nations that wield the most influence over IMF policy, and which have used generous spending packages to build up their own healthcare workforce and facilities. As of late, the IMF has purported a shift from imposing strict loan conditions. However, 87 percent of the IMF's COVID-19 loans to "developing" nations still mandate new cost-cutting measures, compounding existing global financial and healthcare inequities. I urge the international public, the Ghanaian ministries of health and finance and global healthcare stakeholders to demand equitable IMF policies.

At the minimum, the IMF must avoid restricting healthcare spending and related costs, including, but not limited to, healthcare personnel training and salaries, facilities construction and maintenance, ambulances and transportation, public health campaigns and domestic drug manufacturing capacity, at the discretion of loan-recipient nations. Unfortunately, my uncle did not live to see the day when accessible preventive healthcare was funded in Ghana but I hope that, through increased awareness, advocacy and systemic global change, his children - my cousins - will.

Aljazeera

## The threat from Russia is not going away

Paul Taylor

**HOWEVER Russia's war in Ukraine ends, Europe is staring uncomfortably down the barrel of a decade of defence. A wounded, vengeful Russia will remain a threat as long as Vladimir Putin, or like-minded successors, are in power. There is no way back to the post-cold war security order, which was cracked by Moscow's assault on Georgia in 2008, ruptured by its annexation of Crimea in 2014, and finally shattered by its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February last year.**

The end of Europe's "holiday" from defence is going to be expensive and impose painful choices between guns and butter, which the left will find particularly uncomfortable. After initial hesitation in Berlin and Paris, European countries have stepped up arms and ammunition deliveries to Ukraine, and many - not least the UK - will need to replenish their own threadbare forces, depleted by three decades of "peace dividend" savings.

Nato, which holds its annual summit in Vilnius this week, has reinforced its eastern flank but is under pressure from Baltic states and Poland - who feel an existential threat from Russia - to go much further and fortify their borders more heavily than makes military sense. Having seen what happened to Ukraine, Baltic leaders understandably don't want to see Bucha-like atrocities on their own territory and are demanding greater front-line protection. However, as the chair of Nato's military committee, Adm Rob Bauer, told me, if you

stationed a brigade permanently on the border of each of the seven nations on the alliance's eastern flank, six would be in the wrong place if a Russian attack came. Rapid reinforcement from central hubs in Poland and western Europe remains the best strategy, provided Europeans make the investments in infrastructure, logistics and air defence to make that work. The accession of Finland, and soon of Sweden, will strengthen Nato in the Baltic and the Arctic, but with ammunition stocks critically low and much equipment not in working order, especially in Germany, it will take a major multi-year investment programme to make European armed forces fit for purpose.

Having watched two 20th-century former Soviet armies waging a mostly 20th-century war of attrition in Ukraine, Nato must be wary of focusing too much of its defence investment on fighting the last war with heavy metal platforms such as tanks, combat aircraft and aircraft carriers. To be credible and deter aggression, the alliance certainly needs more functioning tanks than it has today.

But the war has shown that 21st-century capabilities such as real-time space and drone surveillance, precision-guided munitions, armed drones, crowdsourced intelligence and relatively cheap anti-tank weapons, can trump Russia's lumbering armour and artillery. The sensible way to avoid waste and duplication would be for Europeans to procure more of their

weapons, communication systems, logistics capacities and ammunition in common, as they are starting to do to supply Ukraine with Nato-standard munitions. While the UK was the quickest and most vocal supporter of Ukraine, the European Union has arguably undergone the biggest transformation, from an overwhelmingly civilian, economic regulatory body into a geopolitical player. Who could have imagined the EU spending billions of euros of common funds to supply arms to a neighbour at war?

Yet defence remains the most fiercely guarded national prerogative, and defence ministries are deeply reluctant to pool and share equipment even with Nato allies, while politicians want arms factories on their turf (preferably in their own constituencies) rather than teaming up with European partners for greater efficiency. Battles over national control of defence industries, proprietary technologies and arms exports are complicating both Nato initiatives to rationalise defence investment and the European Commission's efforts to ramp up ammunition production. If the EU's joint procurement scheme for Ukraine succeeds in its goal of supplying 1m rounds of artillery ammunition this year, it should be expanded to meet other common needs. And the EU should consider joint borrowing to finance common defence enablers such as strategic airlift. Raising taxes for defence will be hard given the competing demands of the green

energy transition, post-pandemic public health care and adapting societies to the digital future. Europeans have been extremely lucky to have President Joe Biden's consensual transatlantic leadership. Just imagine the mess if Donald Trump had been in the White House when Putin's tanks barged into Ukraine, or if he were to return after next year's US presidential election.

So European leaders must do more for their own defence, not only because of the Russian menace, but also because they cannot count indefinitely on the US doing most of the heavy lifting to defend Europe. Washington is itching to pivot more of its resources to the strategic competition with China. We will need to fill the gaps if and when US forces are shifted to Asia. The head-in-the-sand attitude to defence has been a bipartisan affair. Conservative leaders such as Angela Merkel were no more eager to invest in military capabilities than socialists were. Some on the left - in Germany for example - nevertheless imagine that strengthening Europe's defences for a more brutal world with a bully in the Kremlin eager to exploit western weaknesses is somehow a rightwing conspiracy by the military-industrial complex to divert urgently needed funding from schools, hospitals and public transport. It isn't. You just need to look at what has happened to the schools, hospitals and railways in Ukraine to know that defence isn't a distraction from strengthening our social fabric, but an essential protection for it.

**THE Iraqi militia Kata'ib Hezbollah has been holding hostage, since March, Israeli-Russian Elizabeth Tsurkov, a graduate student at Princeton University. Tsurkov had entered Iraq, using her Russian passport, four months prior to conduct fieldwork. Her captivity is an embarrassment to the Iraqi state and Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, showing them as weak and unable to assert sovereignty in the face of militias.**

Anti-Western regimes have always used hostage-taking as a tactic to blackmail Western governments. These regimes claim false equivalence between their own assassins and spies, who get busted, tried and jailed in the West, and private Western citizens, such as activists and academics, most of whom are usually opposed to the policies of their own governments. In the mid-1980s, Hezbollah took several Western hostages in Lebanon - including Americans - and traded their release for Western arms shipment to Iran.

After a nuclear deal was signed between the international community and Iran, Tehran freed all Westerners in its custody in early 2016. Since then, Iran has taken 13 new Western hostages, 11 of whom are of Iranian origin. From time to time, Tehran offers to "swap prisoners" with the US, Canada and European countries, or

Hussain Abdul Hussain

asks for some American concessions, mainly sanction relief, in return for releasing one or more hostages. Syria has been playing similar games and is currently trying to extort Washington in return for information about journalist Austin Tice, believed to be in the hands of the Syrian regime since 2012.

But Baghdad enjoys strong ties with Washington and does not need to take hostages to extract concessions. On the contrary, it shows that, in Iraq, the government cannot guarantee the safety of foreign tourists or residents. This is why it is imperative for Baghdad to take custody of Tsurkov. If, by entering Iraq, Tsurkov had violated the Iraqi law that prohibits normalization with Israel, then the Iraqi government should bring her before a court, which can deport her. If the court finds Tsurkov not guilty, she should be allowed to stay safely in Iraq, just like all other foreign residents. If the government of Baghdad cannot guarantee the safety of foreigners, then Iraq has a long way to go before it can convince the world that it is a normal country worth visiting or dealing with.

In theory, Al-Sudani is the chief of all military forces, including the Popular Mobilization Units militias. In its 2024 budget, the Iraqi government allocated \$2.7 billion to the PMU, which includes

Kata'ib Hezbollah. This means that, if he wanted to, Al-Sudani could order Tsurkov freed and deported. On the first day after the news broke, Iranian media focused its coverage on quoting Israeli reports about Tsurkov's kidnapping. The day after, Iranian media changed course and accused Tsurkov of being an Israeli spy who had made Iraqi Kurdistan her base. Iranian media even linked Tsurkov, whom they called "a spy in the clothes of a researcher," to bombings of targets and the assassination of nuclear scientists inside Iran.

If Al-Sudani overrules Tehran and orders Tsurkov out, he will give the Iranians and their Iraqi allies fodder with which they can attack him in the future, as "the prime minister who let go of the Zionist spy." Perhaps this is why Al-Sudani has yet to comment on the situation. Al-Sudani has so far played dead, likely hoping that the crisis would resolve on its own and spare him having to make any hard choices. America has invested a lot in Iraq and has built strong ties with Al-Sudani, his ministers and security agencies. As a close ally, it would be wise for Washington to impress on Baghdad that Tsurkov should be freed, not for the sake of Israel, but for the image of Iraq as a sovereign country where law and order are upheld by courts and law enforcement agencies.





## Envoys call for promoting tourism in South Asia

ISLAMABAD (APP): The envoys of Bangladesh and Nepal in Pakistan on Tuesday stressed the need for collective efforts to promote and develop the tourism sector of the South Asian region including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal for sustainable growth of their respective economies.

They also lauded the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) for organizing the International Tourism Summit 2023, which they said would also help in further promoting tourism in

Northern areas of the country, said a press release.

The High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Pakistan Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique congratulated President ICCI for successfully organizing the "First ICCI Tourism Summit Skardu 2023".

He said that the initiative provided an opportunity to see the natural beauty of the northern regions, and it would have a positive impact on the tourism industry of Pakistan.

There is a huge potential for tourism in the South

Asia region, he said adding that all the neighbouring countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh need joint measures to attract tourists from other regions of the world.

Regarding the summit, Tapas Adhikari, Nepal's ambassador to Pakistan, said that Pakistan has a rich tourism heritage which can create tremendous economic opportunities.

He said the initiatives to expand the beautiful tourist destinations of Pakistan for economic activities and promote tourism are commendable.

President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari thanked ambassadors for participating in the ICCI International Tourism Summit.

He said that the ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Syria, Somalia, Kenya, Nepal, Iran and other countries also attended the summit and reviewed business opportunities.

He said that tourism is not only an industry that promotes economic growth and development but is a bridge to connect different cultures.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a meeting with a delegation of Women Business Network led by Ms. Sam Ali Dada at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

### PSX stays bullish, gains 570 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 570.67 points, a positive change of 1.28 percent, closing at 45,155.80 points against 44,585.13 points the previous trading day.

A total of 555,100,181 shares were traded during the day as compared to 440,221,059 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs15.487 billion against Rs12.086 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 363 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 253 of them recorded gains and 92 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 18 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 35,089,048 shares at Rs1.28 per share; Pak Refinery with 31,421,276 shares at Rs16.95 per share and Fauji Foods Ltd with 23,204,209 shares at Rs6.74 per share.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs242.95 per share price, closing at Rs8,597.95, whereas the runner-up was Khyber Textile with an Rs55.89 rise in its per share price to Rs801.09.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs38.35 per share closing at Rs1,714.65; followed by Siemens Pakistan with Rs16.01 decline to close at Rs699.99.

### Rupee gains Rs1.24 against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained Rs1.24 against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs278.56 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.80.

However, according to the Forex Association, the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs282 and Rs284.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 17 paise to close at Rs306.75 against the last day's closing of Rs306.58, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen gained 2 paise to close at Rs1.98, whereas an increase of 50 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs359.01 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs358.51.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 33 paise and 32 paise to close at Rs75.84 and Rs74.26, respectively.

### Gold rates down by 4,500/tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs4,500 and was sold at Rs204,500 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs209,000 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs3,858 to Rs175,326 from Rs179,184 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs160,715 from Rs164,252. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs2480 and Rs2,126.20 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$7 to \$1932 from \$1925, the association reported.

## SCCI expresses displeasure over non-resolving LCs issue

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) expressed displeasure over non-resolving issue of Letter of Credits (LCs) despite assurance of government and finance minister Ishaq Dar, stressed the need for taking serious measures for resolution of business community/importers issues.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the SCCI acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi said the business community/importers has faced enormous difficulties owing to non-opening of Letter of Credits (LCs).

Despite clear directions of government and State Bank, he said commercial banks were continuously using delaying tactics in opening of LCs, which has caused huge financial loss to exporters, particularly, owing to non-availability of raw materials, industrial progress has adversely affected and number of manufacturing units are near to closure.

Ijaz Afridi recalled that federal minister for finance Ishaq Dar had given assurance that the LCs issue would be resolved after reaching a deal with the IMF, while dollars were also available.

However, he lamented that the government isn't taking serious steps to resolve issues of LCs as per commitment, which has created great unrest and displeasure among the business community, especially importers.

Afridi was of the view that the business community has always played a pivotal role in bringing economic development by paying various kinds of taxes.

But, he said the present and previous governments didn't pay serious attention toward resolving traders' community issues which are the main cause behind the present economic turmoil, besides, adding to issues with the business community, the country's economy is still at cross-road, he added.

The SCCI's acting chief said it was completely

incomprehensible that LCs were not opening despite depreciation of US dollar and strengthening PKR after striking a deal with the IMF, while dollars were also available.

Therefore, he said non-opening of LCs were tantamount to further adding to miseries of business community/importers.

Ijaz Afridi appealed to the federal government, prime minister Shehbaz Sharif, finance minister Ishaq Dar, minister for trade and commerce and other authorities concerned to issue instructions for immediate resolution of LCs issue to remove growing tension among importers.

He was of the view that a prosperous business community was guaranteed for sustainable economic growth, prosperity and development.

He linked economic stability to resolving issues of the business community so that the country will lead toward improvement and progress.

## Member Custom holds meeting with PCMEA

LAHORE (APP): Member Custom Focal Person Collictor Sialkot Nayyar Shafiq along with top officials has held an important meeting with Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) in an effort to address the traders' woes as soon as possible, here on Tuesday.

PCMEA Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf, Senior Central leader Abdul Latif Malik, Saeed Khan, Shahid Hassan Sheikh, Tahir Abbas, Kamran Razi and others were present.

PCMEA Senior Vice Chairman apprised Member Custom Focal Person about problems confronted by exporters of handmade carpets in Pakistan and urged him to help sort out those issues at earliest.

He underlined the need for extensive interactions with exporters by relevant government institutions. He claimed that if problems are sorted out and hurdles are removed, at least three folds exports can be ramped up, and traders and exporters can easily fetch

such level of foreign exchanges in bare minimum time.

Member Custom Collector Nayyar Shafiq acknowledged that exporters have pivotal role in bringing foreign exchange to the country. He assured for putting forward all PCMEA's concerns to relevant institutions and departments of government.

On this occasion, Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf presented souvenir to Focal Person Nayyar Sharif.

## Cars' sale decreases by 58.65% during FY 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of cars witnessed a decrease of 58.65 per cent during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the sale of fiscal year 2021-22, the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA) on Tuesday said.

According to the data, as many as 96,812 cars were sold during July-June 2022-23 as opposed to 234,180 units during July-June 2021-22. The breakup figures showed that 12,823 units of Honda Civic and City were sold during the

corresponding period of the year 2022-23 as compared to the sale of 35,197 units last year, thus showing a dip of 63.56 per cent.

Toyota Corolla and Yaris cars sales also decreased by 66.67 per cent as it went down to 18,838 units from 56,528 units in the same period of the previous year.

However, Suzuki Swift's sales went up by 50.87 per cent as sales increased to 9,339 units from 6,190 units last year.

Sale of Suzuki Cultus decreased to 6,956 units

during the period under review, whereas during the same period last year, the sale was recorded at 23,169 units while the sale of Suzuki Wagon-R also decreased to 5,434 units from 23,131 units.

Suzuki Alto's sales also witnessed a sharp decline of 50.30 per cent from 71,198 units to 35,379 units during the year under review, whereas the sale of Suzuki Bolan decreased to 4,447 units as opposed to the sale of 12,361 units in the same period of last year.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Conti-Courage, Lisa, Karimata and Santa Ace, carrying Container, Mogas and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Terminal, Oil Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Alma-VII, Bahri Tulip and Milaha Qatar with Container, Mogas and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

PQA berths were engaged by 06 ships during the last 24 hours, out of them a containership 'Conti-Courage' sailed out to sea on Tuesday morning and two more ships 'Santa Ace and Southern Anoa' are expected to sail on afternoon.

A cargo volume of 53,034 tonnes, comprising 38,091 tonnes imports Cargo and 14,943 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,583 Containers (704 TEUs Imports and 879 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are six ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, MSC Alma-VII, GC-Argon and Milaha Qatar carrying Container, Palm oil and LNG are expected to take berths at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Gas Terminal respectively on Tuesday, while two more container ships, MSC Shanellie-V and EM-Astoria are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

### China's yuan loans grow

BEIJING (APP): China's yuan-denominated loans rose by 15.73 trillion yuan in the first half of the year, central bank data showed Tuesday.

In June alone, the yuan-denominated loans rose by 3.05 trillion yuan, according to the People's Bank of China. The M2, a broad measure of money supply that covers cash in circulation and all deposits, climbed 11.3 percent year on year to 287.3 trillion yuan at the end of June.

The growth rate was 0.3 percentage points lower than at the end of May, and 0.1 percentage points lower than at the end of June last year.

## Chinese, PCJCCI discuss low-cost energy projects

LAHORE (APP): A Chinese delegation from Huzhou visited Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) to discuss the scope of investment in low-cost energy projects here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Tuesday.

The delegation was headed by Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiandeng, Hi-Tech Electric Co.

On this occasion, PCJCCI President Moazzam Ghurki said, "We are fully confident that the future of China-Pakistan relationship is broad and bright." He said that low-priced energy was produced in China through incineration of waste materials. This model could prove to be a solution to energy crisis and environment pollution in Pakistan.

He also said that many Chinese companies were willing to invest in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) incineration for power generation.

Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiandeng, Hi-Tech Electric Co said that in Pakistan about 3,000 MW electricity

could be generated using agricultural residue and municipal solid waste. He said that Pakistan generated about 15 million tonnes of crops residue annually, which could be used as feedstock to generate 120 MW of electricity.

He added Pakistan had a huge potential for renewable energy resources such as wind, solar and biomass, which would also save foreign reserves to be consumed on the high-cost energy.

The delegation was of the view that construction style in Pakistan was conventional and inefficient. By contrast, Chinese employ highly energy-efficient construction technology and style that could save construction and energy cost in Pakistan by up to 10 times.

He added that among the 530MW cumulative generation capacity in Pakistan, 400 MW (75 percent) was generated from Quid-e-Azam Solar Park, the first-ever power plant capable of generating solar energy in Pakistan, owned by the Punjab government and

built by one of the renowned Chinese company.

Hamza Khalid, Vice President PCJCCI, said in order to nurture the industry and economic uplift; there was a dire need to inculcate modern trends of energy projects and construction among the common masses. With the involvement of general public, he added, the trends and standards of modern construction would start to reflect in other segments of society.

He also said that shortfall of fuel and electricity in Pakistan was an indication for them to decrease dependence on conventional fuel resources and find the new sustainable resources such as renewable energy means.

The joint chamber's Secretary General Salahuddin Hanif said that Pakistan could adopt a safe and balanced approach to exploit its vast coal reserves too for power generation with least damage to the environment to overcome energy shortfall without burdening the economy.

## FPCCI welcomes Pak, Kazakhstan direct air link

LAHORE (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Tuesday welcomed commencing of a direct air link between Pakistan and Kazakhstan as it would help enhance bilateral economic cooperation and prove to be a milestone in forging mutual business and economic integration with Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states.

Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Irfan Iqbal Sheik told the media here that direct flights would increase the possibilities of economic cooperation between the two countries. Two flights in a week from Almaty, the industrial hub of Kazakhstan to Lahore would help enhance economic activities.

Irfan Iqbal said the Kazakhstan Ambassador to Pakistan Yerzan Kistafin deserved appreciation for

playing an important role in the launch of a direct air link between the two brotherly countries.

He said that economic relations between the two countries would improve further with the start of direct flights.

He said the business community of Pakistan considered that the step would positively impact trade relations with Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Sheikh expressed his views by highlighting its positive impact on various aspects of the bilateral relationship between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. He emphasized that introducing a direct air flight between our two nations would bring about a transformative change, fostering increased trade, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding.

He said the direct air route between Kazakhstan and Pakistan was pivotal in

enhancing commercial activities and bolstering bilateral trade. By providing a convenient and efficient means of transportation, this direct flight would undoubtedly encourage entrepreneurs, traders, tourists and investors from both countries to explore new opportunities, expand their operations, and forge stronger economic ties.

In addition to its economic significance, Irfan Iqbal Sheikh underscored the importance of cultural exchange between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. The direct air flight will facilitate more significant interactions between people from both nations, immersing them in each other's vibrant cultural heritage.

This exchange would undoubtedly foster more profound understanding, appreciation, and friendship between the two countries, he added.

## Pakistan Business Forum welcomes Green Pakistan Initiative

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Vice President Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad praised the government's historic initiative and the Pakistan Army's special focus on revolutionizing the agricultural sector through the promotion of cutting-edge technology, collaboration between the public and private sectors, and dividends distributed to local farmers to alleviate poverty.

Talking to the media here Tuesday, he said Green Pakistan Initiative would be the country's second green revolution, paving the way for progress and prosperity. In Pakistan's agricultural sector, billion-dollar investments are anticipated within the next four to five years.

He said the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations import US \$ 40 billion worth of agricultural and food products annually. Under the supervision of the Special

Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), for which the ground has been prepared, the government intends to attract investment in the amount of billions of dollars into Pakistan's agriculture sector from the GCC nations. In addition to the creation of four million new jobs, there would be an investment of approximately US \$ 40 billion over the next four to five years, he added.

"The second Green Insurgency is tied in with making farming the significant driver of our monetary development, prompting food security that builds up our public safety".

He mentioned, "We are importing in \$4.5 billion worth of palm oil. We're an emerging nation we can't spend such a gigantic sum on palm oil. Pakistan used to produce more cotton than our neighbor, but today we are behind in cotton, wheat and other agricultural products."

Ahmad Jawad said that Pakistan produces great Basmati rice but now it has many competitors.

"In a year or two, our agri-based economy will be revived. We will not have to seek further loans but investors will come by themselves," he hoped.

The PBF Vice President said that Land Information Management System - Centre of Excellence (LIMS - COE) will definitely support the new shape of Pakistan agriculture sector and will also focus on transforming how farming is done in Pakistan with a view to optimizing agricultural output for improving domestic food security and creating exportable surplus for the Gulf states and China.

The (Geographic Information System) GIS-based initiative aims to make use of 22 million acres of uncultivated state land and improve modern agro-farming. Under LIMS, the government

anticipates significant investments in agriculture from China and the Gulf.

In a similar vein, it may be the first multifaceted strategy to simultaneously address pressing agricultural issues: developing food uncertainty, a flooding food and rural import bill and reducing send out excess.

It is anticipated that the new plan's success will significantly address these issues.

Jawad said there is no doubt that the government needs to encourage the utilisation of uncultivated state land to boost crops area. Besides investing in swathes of wasteland to make them cultivable, he said and added that it must also put a stop to the encroachment of agricultural lands by sprawling housing schemes.

But a lot is required to be done to ensure food security and create exportable agricultural surplus. The LIMS initiative is only the first step, he added.





In brief

**PCB, BCCI discuss Pakistan's participation**  
K A R A C H I (Monitoring Desk): An important meeting between Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Chairman Zaka Ashraf and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Secretary Jay Shah will take place in Durban. The two officials will meet on the sidelines of the International Cricket Council (ICC) annual meeting. Pakistan's participation in the World Cup in India will be discussed in the meeting, informed sources have said. Apart from the World Cup, bilateral series between the two countries will also be discussed, the sources have added.

**Bilbao ends Spanish wait**

ISSOIRE (AFP): Pello Bilbao won a hilly stage 10 of the Tour de France on Tuesday, becoming the first Spaniard in five years to win a stage on the world's biggest bike race. The main contenders for the overall title crossed the line together nearly three minutes after Bilbao. Omar Fraile was the last Spaniard to win at the Tour back in 2018. Latvia's Kristis Neilands looked set to make it two stages in a row for Israel-Premier Tech but was finally caught by a desperate six-man pursuit. On a baking 167km run from the volcano-themed Vulcania amusement park, the peloton laboured over five hills to the village of Issoire in Auvergne. Billed as one of the Tour's most beautiful stages, the pack splintered due to the intense conditions in exposed terrain on the semi-deserted hillsides along the Puy de Dome tectonic fault line. Defending champion Jonas Vingegaard retained his 17-second lead in the overall standings but second-placed Tadej Pogacar forced the Dane into chasing him early in the stage. Jasper Philipsen retains the green jersey ahead of stage 11, which offers the Belgian Alpein fast man a chance at a fourth stage win. American Neilson Powless also held on to the polka dot jersey and will likely do so again Wednesday.

**FIFA ends Zimbabwe suspension**

ZURICH (Agencies): FIFA has officially lifted its suspension of the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) after an 18-month period, clearing the way for the country's participation in the African qualification competition for the 2026 World Cup. The decision was confirmed by officials on Monday, just days before the draw for the qualifiers. To ensure smooth operations during the transitional phase, an interim normalization committee has been appointed to oversee ZIFA until new management elections are held. Zimbabwe faced suspension from the global governing body in February 2022 due to perceived government interference in the administration of the troubled football association. Following allegations of misappropriation of funds meant for Zimbabwe's participation in the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations finals, the executive committee of ZIFA was dissolved in November 2021 by the country's Sports and Recreation Commission, a government-appointed body. FIFA's Bureau of the Council made the decision to lift the suspension and establish a normalization committee, stating, "The Bureau of the FIFA Council decided to lift the suspension that was imposed on the Zimbabwe Football Association in February 2022 and appoint a normalization committee with immediate effect."



LONDON: Elina Svitolina of Ukraine reacts in the Women's Singles quarter finals match against Iga Swiatek of Poland during day nine of The Championships Wimbledon 2023.

## Afridi makes impressive return to red-ball cricket

H A M B A N T O T A (Monitoring Desk): Shaheen Shah Afridi took three wickets on his return to red-ball cricket as Pakistan dismissed SLC Board XI for 196 in 46.3 overs on the opening day of the only two-day practice match here on Tuesday. Shaheen dismissed Kamindu Mendis (21, caught at the wicket), Ahan Wickramasinghe (two, caught in first slip) and Kavishka Anjula (two, bowled) as he recorded figures of 12-3-37-3. This was Shaheen's first competitive red-ball match in nearly 12 months after he had missed England and New Zealand

Tests due to knee injury. Hasan Ali also had a good outing when he registered figures of 7.3-1-22-3, while all-rounder Aamir Jamal (two for 33) and mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed (two for 52) shared the remaining four wickets. For the home side, 31-year-old Oshada Fernando, who has played 21 Tests, scored 113 runs from 127 balls. His innings included 18 fours. He was the seventh batter out at the score of 168, falling to Aamir.

When the stumps were drawn for the day, Pakistan had reached 160 for three in 37 overs with Babar Azam (14) and Saud Shakeel (0) at the crease.

No.3 batter Shan Masood was the top-scorer with 83 (9x4s, 3x6s, 66b), while openers Imam Ul Haq and Abdullah Shafique scored 36 and 25 runs, respectively.

The first Test begins in Galle from Sunday, 16 July.

Scores in brief: SLC Board XI 196, 46.3 overs (Oshada Fernando 113; Hasan Ali 3-22, Shaheen Shah Afridi 3-37, Aamir Jamal 2-33, Abrar Ahmed 2-52) Pakistan 160-3, 37 overs (Shan Masood 83, Imam Ul Haq 36, Abdullah Shafique 25, Babar Azam 14 n.o., Saud Shakeel 0 n.o.; Lakshitha Manasinghe 2-39).

## England name unchanged squad for fourth Ashes Test

OLD TRAFFORD (Agencies): England have named an unchanged 14-player squad for the fourth Ashes Test at Old Trafford.

It means there is no place for Surrey wicket-keeper Ben Foakes, with Jonny Bairstow set to retain the gloves. Ollie Pope is absent after suffering a shoulder injury during the second Test at Lord's that has ruled him out for the rest of the summer.

England won the third Test by three wickets to leave the series 2-1 to Australia with two Tests to play. The fourth Test starts on Wednesday, 19 July.

Seam bowler James Anderson was rested for the third Test but could be recalled for the match at his home ground. The 40-year-old could come in for Ollie Robinson, who suffered a back spasm during Australia's first innings and did not bowl for the rest of the match.

Josh Tongue is also pushing for a recall after impressing during the second Test at Lord's, though Mark Wood and Chris Woakes both made match-winning contributions at Headingley on their first Test appearances of the summer.

Wood was named player-of-the-match after taking seven wickets and is confident he will be fit for the remainder for the series, while Woakes took six wickets and scored a crucial unbeaten 32 in England's second innings to see them over the line.

England squad:- Ben Stokes (Durham, captain), Moeen Ali (Warwickshire), James Anderson (Lancashire), Jonathan Bairstow (Yorkshire), Stuart Broad (Nottinghamshire), Harry Brook (Yorkshire), Zak Crawley (Kent), Ben Duckett (Nottinghamshire), Dan Lawrence (Essex), Ollie Robinson (Sussex), Joe Root (Yorkshire), Josh Tongue (Worcestershire), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), Mark Wood (Durham).

## Svitolina beats top-ranked Swiatek to reach Wimbledon semifinals

WIMBLEDON (AP): Three months after returning from maternity leave, Elina Svitolina reached the Wimbledon semifinals by beating top-ranked Iga Swiatek 7-5, 6-7 (5), 6-2 Tuesday.

The 28-year-old Ukrainian gave birth to her daughter in October and returned to the WTA tour in April. She received a wild-card entry to the grass-court tournament one month after reaching the quarterfinals at the French Open.

"First of all I'm going to have a beer, probably," Svitolina said on court. "At the beginning of the tournament if someone would tell me that I will be in the semifinal and beating world No. 1, I would just say that they're crazy."

Swiatek, a four-time major champion, won her third French Open title last month but was playing in the Wimbledon quarterfinals for the first time.

At one point, Svitolina won 20 of 22 points against Swiatek on Centre Court, including 16 of the final 18 points in the first set.

Svitolina will next face Marketa Vondrousova for a spot in Saturday's final. It will be the Ukrainian player's second appear-

ance in the Wimbledon semifinals. She lost to eventual champion Simona Halep at that stage in 2019.

"I'm just going to enjoy tonight and then get some treatment, get some massage, much needed and then just regroup and be ready for the next big battle," Svitolina said.

Svitolina has been ranked as high as No. 3 in the world and also reached the U.S. Open semifinals in 2019. She is currently ranked 76th. To reach the semifinals this year, she has beaten four Grand Slam champions — Venus Williams in the first round, Sofia Kenin in the third, Victoria Azarenka in the fourth and Swiatek in the quarterfinals.

Vondrousova won five straight games in the final set to beat fourth-seeded Jessica Pegula 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 on No. 1 Court. The left-handed Czech who reached the French Open final in 2019 trailed 4-1 in the third set but didn't lose another game after that.

"I'm just trying to stay in every game. It can change pretty quickly," Vondrousova said. "She got so much better in the second set. She was pushing me today." Pegula is now 0-6 in Grand Slam quarterfinals. The 29-year-

old American was playing at this stage at Wimbledon for the first time.

Vondrousova had won only four matches on grass heading into the tournament at the All England Club. But she has won five in a row on the surface over the last eight days.

"My best result here was second round. It's amazing. I'm just loving grass now," Vondrousova said.

The victory for Vondrousova is her fourth over a seeded player at this year's Wimbledon tournament. She beat No. 12 Veronika Kudermetova in the second round, No. 20 Donna Vekic in the third round and No. 32 Marie Bouzkova in the fourth round.

Pegula was leading 3-1 in the third set when play was suspended so that the roof over No. 1 Court could be closed with rain approaching. Pegula then held serve in the next game to lead 4-1 before Vondrousova took over.

Later Tuesday in the men's quarterfinals, seven-time Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic will face Andrey Rublev on Centre Court and Jannik Sinner was playing Roman Safiullin on No. 1 Court.

## Liton, Shoriful help Bangladesh avoid Afghanistan whitewash

CHITTAGONG (Agencies): Liton Das top-scored with 53 not out as Bangladesh defeated Afghanistan by seven wickets to avoid a series whitewash in Tuesday's third and final one-day international in Chittagong.

The hosts raced to 129-3 in 23.3 overs after Shoriful Islam's career best 4-21 helped them bowl out Afghanistan for 126 in 45.2 overs.

Tail-ender Azmatullah Omarzai offered some late resistance for Afghanistan to top-score with 56, his maiden ODI fifty.

Left-arm seamer Fazalhaq Farooqi gave Afghanistan a glimmer of hope, bowling out Naim Sheikh for a duck and Najmul Hossain for 11.

Liton and Shakib Al Hasan put on 61 runs for the third wicket to steady the innings and bring Bangladesh back into control.

Shakib fell to Mohammad Nabi after making a run-a-ball 39, but Liton, who struck three fours and two sixes in his 60-ball innings, took Bangladesh home.

Young Towhid Hridoy hit the winning boundary off Zia-ur-Rehman to stay unbeaten on 22.

"There will be wins and

losses... that's what happened to us in the first two games. We tried to prove that we were the better team in the last game," said Bangladesh pacer Shoriful Islam. "It feels good.... I was supported by the whole team so it was a good performance."

'Mentality wasn't right' - The tourists earlier won the toss and elected to bat first, but never managed to get their innings going.

"The guys didn't execute, they didn't adjust to the conditions," said Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott.

Shoriful struck early after taking the field for the first time this series, dismissing Ibrahim Zadran for one and Rahmat Shah for a duck in the third over.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who smashed a career-best 145 in the previous match, saw one catch land in no man's land but soon top-edged Taskin Ahmed to depart for six.

Shoriful compounded Afghanistan's woes by trapping Nabi leg-before to leave the tourists teetering at 15-4 inside nine overs.

"They played bad shots, the mentality wasn't right today -- we kept

losing wickets," Trott added.

"We never had a partnership -- you need that big partnership when rebuilding your innings from 15 or 20 for four."

Hashmatullah Shahidi and Najibullah Zadran stemmed the rot, but Shakib sent back the latter for 10 to stop their partnership from developing.

Shahidi dragged one off Taijul Islam onto his stumps to end his patient knock of 22 from 54 balls.

Omarzai helped Afghanistan past the 100-run mark after the quick departure of debutants Abdul Rahman (four) and Zia (five).

He was the last man dismissed, holing out a catch to Naim Sheikh at long-off off Taskin, who claimed 2-23.

Afghanistan are already only the second team to win an ODI series in Bangladesh in the past seven years, with world champions England being the other.

Victory in the match would have made them the first side to win all three matches of an ODI series in Bangladesh since Sri Lanka in 2014.

Following the ODI series are two T20s in Bangladesh's northeastern city of Sylhet on July 14 and 16.

## Ahsan Ramzan departs for IBSF U17 & U21 World Snooker C'ships

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan snooker prodigy Ahsan Ramzan on Tuesday, left for Saudi Arabia to partake in the IBSF U17 & U21 World Snooker Championship.

In a statement released by the Pakistan Billiards and Snooker Association (PBSA), the Pakistan contingent, comprised of Ahsan Ramzan and Muhammad Hamza Ilyas will represent the nation in the global event.

The IBSF U17 & U21 World Snooker Championship commenced on July 7 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and will conclude on July 16.

To participate in the event, Ahsan Ramzan alongside Muhammad Hamza Ilyas flew off from Jinnah International Airport, Karachi by Saudi Arabian Airlines via flight no. SV 701 which took off at 1005 PST.

It is important to note that Ahsan Ramzan also participated in the U21 Asian Snooker Championship in Iran last month where he put on a dominant run before getting his hands on the prestigious silverware.

He continued his rich vein of form in the continental event and remained unbeaten.

In the final of the event, Ahsan



Ramzan outclassed Iranian opponent Milad Pourali Darehchi with a score of 5-2 (48-46, 70-5(41), 61-6(52), 62-29, 30-71, 55-67, 101-27) to get his hands on the silverware.

Despite making his nation proud, the young cueist received no welcome upon his arrival to the country, alongside fellow cueist Haris Tahir, via Jinnah International Airport here.

"It is not a pity that no one came to welcome me," said Ahsan Ramzan.

"I have a trophy in my hand and a gold medal around my neck and I am delighted with this honour.

"There is no hope from the government. I want to say that may Allah guide the government," he added.

Speaking on his title-winning victory over the Iranian opponent in the final, Ahsan Ramzan asserted that his experience from the World Cup Final helped him to handle the pressure in the tense match.

"There is no doubt that an individual always gets a reward for his hard work. I have also played the final of the World Cup, that's why I was used to playing under pressure," said Ramzan.

It is pertinent to mention that the young snooker sensation Ahsan Ramzan rose to fame after winning the IBSF Snooker World Championship 2022 as he scripted an astounding comeback in the final against Iran's Amir Sarkhosh from 4-2 down to eventually triumphing 6-5 and became the second-youngest cueist to seize the prestigious title.

Furthermore, Ahsan is only the third snooker player from Pakistan to win the international amateur world title after Muhammad Yousaf, who achieved the feat in 1994.

Notably, Ahsan has already won the national U17, U18 and U19 titles, while he ended up as runner-up in the U21 championship.

## 1,500 athletes taking part in SBP summer camps of 14 games

LAHORE (APP): Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail on Tuesday said that Sports Board Punjab's mega Summer Camp programme was underway quite successfully at various sports venues here at Nishtar Park Sports Complex.

Dr Asif Tufail said that 1,500 athletes are taking part in the summer camps of 14 games such as Swimming, Athletics, Archery, Badminton, Cricket, Football, Hockey, Table Tennis, Lawn Tennis, Self-Defence, Taekwondo, Wushu, Karate and Gymnastics. "Around 500 young male and female swimmers are being

imparted training by Sports Board Punjab's expert coaches in swimming summer camp," he added.

Dr Asif Tufail said that swimming is one the most popular sports among the younger generation.

"We are quite upbeat that the swimming summer camp will help a lot in further nurturing the potential of young camp probables".

He further said that young male and female swimmers are keenly taking part in Swimming Summer Camp. "The coaches have been advised to teach young swimmers about the basics of swimming during the camp train-

ing," he informed.

He said that holding of Summer Camp is a valuable step of Sports Board Punjab and young swimmers must avail this golden opportunity and polish their skills under the guidance of qualified coaches.

Director Youth Affairs Syed Umair Hassan visited Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall and witnessed the summer camps of table tennis and badminton. He appreciated the keen involvement of table tennis and badminton players and advised the SBP coaches to impart true professional training to young players.





## In brief

### Two street criminals arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Tuesday arrested two street criminals and recovered Rs 75,000 cash, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Pirwadhai police arrested two members of a street criminal gang including ringleader namely Rehan alias Semi, and Raheem Gul, wanted in various cases. He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Pirwadhai Police Station on the directives of the Superintendent of Police conducted a raid and managed to net the accused. As per the preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he said adding, the accused are being shifted to jail for identification parade.

### 8,000 challan tickets issued

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the orders of IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, City Traffic Police (CTP) are taking strict action against motorcycle riders without helmets. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO), Taimoor Khan inspected various highways of the city to make helmet campaign successful and ensure that no fuel without helmet. Khan said that helmetless motorcyclists would face the music. Moreover, the CTP have established 45 pickets to check the illegal activity. CTP has also issued challan tickets to 8,000 motorcyclists without helmets in 05 days. More than 130 motorcycles were impounded in different police station over violation. The CTO directed to hold the motorcyclists, hanging the helmet in the arm, keeping it on the tank.

### Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for 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 from 08:00 AM to 1:00 PM Islamabad Circle, Comsat, Chhatta Bakhtawar, Park Enclave, Lahtrar, Tramiree, ISI, Rahara, PHA, Kuri Road, CM Pak Zong, Isolation Hospital Feeders, From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Comsat, Chhatta Bakhtawar, Park Enclave, Lahtrar, Tramiree, ISI, AIOU Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Binjnyal, Nogzi, Masryal Road, Madina Colony, Askari XI, Res. Chorus, Iqbal Road, Subhan Shaheed, New Milpur Feeders, Attock Circle, Shikardara, Ghorghashti, Bara Zee, Maskinabad, Shah Dir, Radio Pak.I & II, Lampur, Qaziabad, GBHP Colony Feeders and surrounding areas.

### AIOU to introduce matric-tech program

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is introducing a matric (tech) program to provide technical education and skills to youth in collaboration with JICA. This program will be offered in upcoming admissions of semester autumn 2023 starting from July 15. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that this program was designed to gear up youth with skills for employability. The university has already introduced a middle-tech program which is very effective in selected areas.



ISLAMABAD: MNA Mrs. Zahra Wadood Fatemi calls on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Ombudsman institutions functioning with full govt's support: Ejaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ombudsman institutions are functioning in Pakistan with the full support of its citizenry and the incumbent government.

This was stated by Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman) Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi while addressing an international seminar in Bangkok on the role of the Asian Ombudsman as a mechanism for promoting fair administration, good governance and the rule of law, a news release on Tuesday said.

The seminar was held as part of the Asian Regional Meeting 2023 hosted by the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) which is a global ombudsman body with over 200 members from across the globe.

In his address to the seminar, Qureshi emphasized that the institution of Wafaqi Mohtasib was playing its due role in the dispensation of administrative

justice, thereby complementing the efforts of the supreme judiciary in providing justice to all citizens.

He said that the steps taken by the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution to check against the maladministration and administrative excesses of government agencies, in fact, contribute towards promoting good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Highlighting the growth of the institution as an effective mechanism for speedy and inexpensive justice, Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi stated that it has perfected its complaints-handling mechanism over the last 40 years. The incidence of complaints has touched an all-time high figure of 164,173 during 2022 and the disposal of 157,798 complaints has been unprecedented.

During the first six

months of the current year, it has received 90,660 complaints and disposed of 92,387 complaints including the backlog which is reflective of the public confidence in the institution.

Addressing the international seminar, Qureshi said the ombudsmanship has taken firm roots in Pakistan. The ombudsman institutions are functioning in the country with the full support of its citizenry and the government.

He said the Wafaqi Mohtasib's institution meets all the given standards in terms of the Venice Principles (2019), the Paris Principles (1993) and the UN Resolution 77/224 of December 2022. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi being the current President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA), also chaired an informal meeting of the AOA members on the sidelines of the international seminar.

## PM&DC submits a complete application for WFME Recognition after attaining initial eligibility

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical & Dental Council after completing the mandatory requirements to be eligible for WFME recognition of its Accreditation Programme has applied to World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) to initiate the process.

After the promulgation of the PM&DC Act 2022, the Council took up the matter of the WFME Recognition Process on priority. President PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj constituted a WFME accreditation cell consisting of experts from all over Pakistan and conducted several meetings for extensive deliberation to fulfill all the requirements of the WFME application. PMDC furthermore, carried out various workshops nationwide for the said purpose. Almost 124 colleges

anticipated the workshop.

The panel of experts from all over the country was taken on board for the WFME accreditation process. In the first step, the WFME after assessing the PM&DC's application has approved its eligibility for the WFME recognition of the PM&DC as an accrediting body and its Accreditation program. PM&DC and WFME will now coordinate to schedule the visit of the WFME's international assessors who will undertake a site visit to Pakistan to inspect the PM&DC and its entire regulatory systems.

The team will evaluate the complete accreditation process of a medical college by PM&DC. The entire process including physical site assessment and inspection is expected to be completed within 12 months before 2024. The WFME recognition of the PM&DC

and its Accreditation Programme will enable all graduates of these colleges licensed by the PM&DC would have the ability to train and work in the USA and internationally without any restriction. President PM&DC stated that PM&DC has been striving to complete the mandatory requirements and develop the standards as per not only WFME standards but also international best practices and ensuring that medical education is put on a path of constant improvement and attaining internationally recognized quality as well as ensuring that Pakistan's medical education and doctors are duly recognized internationally. Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj added that this is a major achievement after the tireless effort of PM&DC. The federal Minister of Health appreciated the efforts of the PMDC in actively pursuing the effort in record time.

## Police strengthen security measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to the evolving security needs, the Islamabad Capital Police have intensified its efforts to safeguard the federal capital and mobilize security apparatus.

Under the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr Akbar Nasir, enhanced security measures had been implemented, including the imposition of Section 144, which prohibits demonstrations and gatherings within the city.

These measures aimed to maintain peace and security while prioritizing road safety and traffic regulations, the police said.

The police are determined to uphold road safety standards by taking strict action against vehicles that violate regulations, such as the misuse of red and blue lights, tinted windows, and traffic rules.

Moreover, individuals found responsible for erecting road blockades or occupying pedestrian spaces will be held accountable for their actions.

To promote road safety awareness, motorcyclists are reminded of the mandatory use of helmets.

Stringent measures will be taken against violators, including those who exceed the permissible limit of two riders on motorcycles.

Furthermore, individuals who obstruct roads or occupy pedestrian spaces will face appropriate legal consequences.

In line with ensuring public safety, the Islamabad Capital Police will take legal action against any gathering of four or more individuals.

However, all transportation routes within Islamabad will remain open and accessible to the public.

The Islamabad Capital Police are fully committed to the convenience, protection, and security of its citizens.

Efforts are being made to provide a safe environment that fosters a peaceful and harmonious society. In light of these security measures, citizens are urged to cooperate with the police and promptly report any suspicious activities or objects to the nearest police station or the "Pukar-15" helpline. By working together, the community can contribute to maintaining a secure and thriving capital city.

## 22nd death anniversary of Qateel Shifai observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 22nd death anniversary of renowned Urdu poet Qateel Shifai observed on .

According to a private news channel, Qateel Shifai was born on 24 December 1919 in Haripur.

His real name was Muhammad Aurangzeb but he adopted Qateel Shifai as his pen name.

His work includes 20 collections of verse and over 2500 songs for film.

He was decorated with Pride of Performance Award, Adamjee Award, Naqosh Award and Abasin Arts Council Award for his contribution in literature.

Qateel Shifai died on this day in 2001 in Lahore.

## World Youth Skills Day to be marked on July 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Youth Skills Day will be marked on July 15 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan which aimed to encourage youth to celebrate the value of acquiring skills like building, making, and creating as a way to achieve personal success and fulfillment. By empowering young people, they can better advance the broader mission of the United Nations (UN) for lasting peace, sustainable development, and human rights for all, according to UN Secretary-General António Guterres. A UN resolution to establish a World Youth Skills Day was adopted by the General Assembly on December 18, 2014.

On the UN's website, they state that education and training are the keys to success in the workforce. However, unfortunately, existing systems are failing to address the learning needs of many young people. A large number of youths have low levels of achievement in basic literacy and numeracy, according to surveys. Skills and jobs for youth feature prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both the resolution and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) quote an International Labour Organization (ILO) publication which states that 73.4 million young people were estimated to be unemployed in 2015, which equated to a 13.1% youth unemployment rate.

## Dr Jamal expresses annoyance over SSH's poor management

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare and Population Welfare Dr Jamal Nasir on Tuesday expressed annoyance over the poor management at the Social Security Hospital (SSH) Rawalpindi and apprised the Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi of the situation.

During a visit to SSH, he directed the relevant officials to utilize the available resources judiciously as the patients were suffered and delayed in treatment due to mismanagement.

The minister warned the hospital's administration to improve the management of the hospital within a week or else strict action would be taken against them. Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare and Population Welfare Dr Jamal Nasir took rounds of the emergency, OPD, laboratory, X-rays room and other parts of the hospital. He interacted with the patients and asked about the treatment facilities and the doctor's and hospital staff's attitude.

Dr Jamal Nasir said that Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi had significantly increased funds for social security hospitals across the province and issued instructions for the provision of the best treatment facilities to domestic workers

in social security hospitals.

He said that the social security hospital was less crowded than the general hospitals, but despite this, the patients faced difficulties in getting medicines and treatment facilities there.

Expressing anger over the hospital's management, he said that the patients and their families have to wait for an unjustified long time to get the slip and when the patients got the slip for a check-up, the duty time of the doctors was about to end.

Dr Jamal Nasir also expressed dissatisfaction over the arrangements in the pathology lab and said that despite the presence of pathologists, SOPs were not implemented, adding that in such circumstances, the hospital lab tests were not satisfactory in any case.

The minister said that there was no shortage of doctors and paramedical staff in the hospital, but due to mismanagement and lack of discipline, patients were not getting proper facilities.

He said that mismanagement was not tolerable in any case and strict action would be taken against the officers who caused unnecessary suffering to the patients, adding the services of dispensers were also not used properly despite the number of human resources available for the purpose.

## NHMP making dedicated efforts to control accidents on motorways, highways

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) have been making dedicated efforts to control accidents on motorways and federalized highways by ensuring strict enforcement of traffic laws.

An official of NHMP told APP on Tuesday that strict enforcement of law under National Highways Safety Ordinance 2000 and imposition of fines under section 79 of NHSP, 2000 against violators specially involved in careless driving, over speeding, lane violation etc were among the steps taken to control accidents. He said that FIRs under section 279 and other relevant sections of Pakistan Penal Code were also lodged against the violators found in rash or negligent driving. The official said that extensive use of day and night speed checking cameras was being done to avoid accidents due to over speeding. Moreover, he said that checking of tyres with treads and air pressure gauges were also being done at toll plazas to prevent tyre burst accidents.

He said that anti-doing points were established to avoid accidents due to dozing at the wheel. In addition to that surprise and random checking of vehicles at night time to check the physical status of drivers was being done, he added. He said that road safety seminars and walks at the beat and sector level were arranged on road side hotel/ pumps and truck stations to inform drivers regarding road safety.

The NHMP official said that seminars, walks/counselling and briefing sessions were also conducted for the drivers regarding mechanical fitness of the vehicles.

He said that briefings were given regarding road safety to the road users at

toll plazas as well as through Mobile Education Unit.

Surprise checking and patrolling by the sector commander was being done and strict action taken against lane violators, he added.

Briefings were given and education imparted at different institutes/school/ colleges as the youngsters were the major users of bikes, he said adding special emphasis was given on enforcement against underage riding and overloading on motor bikes.

The official said that strict action was being taken against motorcyclists for not wearing a helmet, dangerous riding, one wheeling, triple riding, without black/ side view mirror, one way violation etc.

He said that a record of vehicles had been compiled under Public Service Vehicle Management (PSVM) and a record of change of tires of vehicles had been compiled. Such record of the vehicles had also helped in preventing accidents and tracing accidents, he added.

The road is also monitored by drone cameras, and hidden cameras had been installed in uniforms to check the performance of motorway police personnel so that those traveling on the motorway did not face any problems, he added. He said entry for PSVs on Motorways without valid Driving License, fitness certificate registration book and en-route permits and in case of overloading of passengers or excessive luggage on roof had been banned. The official said as far as Kalar Kahar portion of Islamabad- Lahore Motorway was concerned, the NHMP had established a 10km sub beat in Salt Range to make sure of zero tolerance for any traffic violation.

## ANF in five operations seizes over 90 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country seized over 90 kg drugs and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that ANF in an operation at Islamabad International Airport recovered eight drug-filled capsules from the possession of two Sharjah-bound passengers, residents of Bannu, going on flight no 181.

In second operation near M-1, Motorway Toll Plaza, Islamabad, 1150 grams charras was recovered from the possession of two accused, residents of Mardan and Muzaffarabad, travelling in a passenger van.

In third operation near Khanewal

Motorway Toll Plaza, 24 kg opium and 48 kg charras concealed in secret cavities of a car were recovered.

Two accused including a woman resident of Charsadda along with five children were rounded up during the operation.

In fourth operation, 16 kg of opium concealed in a house in a deserted area of Chaman was recovered.

In fifth operation, 270 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel being sent to UK through a private courier company at Shahr-e-Faisal Karachi. Heroin was concealed in six cricket balls, the spokesman said.

Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a meeting with Federal Secretary Ministry of Communications Chairman NHA CAPT (R) Muhammad Khurram Agha at Parliament House.



Police arrest 9 drug dealers

HERAT (Agencies): Local officials of Herat say that their officers arrested nine drug dealers in that province. These drug dealers were arrested during the police inspection and operations from parts of Herat city and districts on the last day, a police source informed Bakhtar News Agency. These nine drug dealers were selling drugs when they were arrested, a source from the counter-narcotics department of the Herat Police Department said.

Murderer of two child held

HELMAND (Agencies): The murderer of two child who killed brutally in Helmand arrested by police. The detainees were the kidnappers who abducted these children three days back, to demand money from their families, the abductors after not receiving the money for the families of the children killed them. The police with the cooperation of the villagers, pulled out the lifeless bodies of these ten and twelve-year-old children from a well in Grishk.

## Afghanistan not on agenda as Nato leaders gather in Lithuania

ATLANTA (Pajhwok): A two-day NATO summit is scheduled to begin in Lithuania on Tuesday with overarching aim to convince Russian President Vladimir Putin of the alliance's long-term military commitment to Ukraine.

NATO press office in Belgium told Pajhwok Afghan News that presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers of all 31 allies would participate in the summit.

On the other hand, NATO website published a statement, saying the alliance was facing severe security challenges after the Cold War.

It said the alliance would discuss how to protect its one billion people and its geography.

NATO said the summit will discuss threats to this organization, future plans, strengthening of the organization, defense and how to

bring Ukraine closer to the alliance.

A day before the summit, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and host country Lithuania President Gitanas Nosedas gave information about the meeting in a joint press conference.

NATO Secretary General thanked the government and people of Lithuania for hosting the meeting.

Stoltenberg said in this meeting, along with strengthening the organization's defense, there will be discussions on Ukraine and its approach to NATO.

Presidents of NATO member countries, including US President Joe Biden, have arrived in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania.

Political affairs expert Muhammad Shafiq Hamdard said Afghanistan was not on the agenda of the NATO summit because now NATO had no military

presence in the country and was no longer interested.

He told Pajhwok that currently NATO was focused on Ukraine and some other areas and they were discussing a lot about them.

Hamdard said due to wrong policies of the current rulers of Afghanistan, the world was slowly ignoring Afghanistan and was not discussing the country in international conferences.

At the NATO summit, Washington will focus on the current and long-term security needs of Ukraine, a White House official said Thursday.

John Kirby, National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications, told VOA that at the summit in Lithuania July 11-12, the US wants to focus on the current fight Ukraine is in and support Kyiv's immediate and long-term security needs.

## IEA halts Swedish activities in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said on Tuesday all activities by Sweden in Afghanistan must stop after the burning of the Holy Quran outside a mosque in the Swedish capital last month.

"After the insulting of the Holy Quran and granting of permission for insulting of Muslim beliefs ...The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ordering the stopping of all activities of Sweden in Afghanistan," said Zabiullah Mujahid, the IEA's spokesman in a statement.

The order was likely to affect the Swedish non-governmental organization, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, which has thousands of aid workers at work throughout the country in health, education and rural development.

An Iraqi immigrant in Sweden burned the Quran outside a Stockholm mosque last month, causing outrage in the Muslim world.

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the IEA order and the IEA did not provide details on which organizations would be affected.

## Anas endorses Twitter over threads

KABUL (Agencies): Amid the ongoing debate over 'Twitter vs Threads', Anas Haqqani, a prominent figure of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), has expressed support for Twitter citing its 'freedom of speech' policy and 'public nature' as advantages.

Anas Haqqani said on Twitter that the platform has two advantages over other social media platforms, asserting that other platforms cannot replace it.

"The first privilege is the freedom of speech. The second privilege is the public nature & credibility of Twitter," Haqqani said. "Twitter doesn't have an intolerant policy like Meta. Other platforms cannot replace it."

Mark Zuckerberg's Meta has taken the social media race by storm after the launch of its new microblogging platform Threads, which many see as an answer to Twitter. Threads has rocketed to 100 million users in less than a week, Zuckerberg announced on Monday.

"Threads reached 100 million sign ups over the weekend," Zuckerberg said in a post. "That's mostly organic demand and we haven't even turned on many promotions yet. Can't believe it's only been 5 days!"

## Hanafi meets Mawlawi Fazl

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for administrative affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, met with Mawlawi Fazl Mohammad Haqqani country's chargé d'affaires in Tehran.

Afghanistan chargé d'affaires Mawlawi Fazl Mohammad Haqqani in Iran discussed the situation of Afghan refugees in that country, the political, economic, and cultural relations between the two countries, as well as the return of Afghan refugees, according to a statement released by Arg.

During the meeting, Mr. Haqqani reminded saying that electronic identity cards should be provided for those Afghan refugees who return to the country.

For his part, Mawlawi Hanafi praised Tehran embassy efforts and said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has good ties with its neighbors, the region, and other countries.

Deputy PM Hanafi called the issue of refugees one of the important and international issues and urged the Afghanistan chargé d'affaires to make further efforts to provide facilities to the citizens living in Iran and address their problems.

## EU allocates over \$6m to support livestock program in Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): The European Union (EU) announced Tuesday it has allocated more than 5.7 million (\$6.2 million) to the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan's (DCA) livestock program in support of vulnerable local populations in the country.

The program helps 350,000 vulnerable community households across 16 provinces to improve animal health of their livestock and increase dietary diversity. This will improve food security, strengthen community resilience and support rural communities in transitioning from aid dependency towards self-

sufficiency.

"I am very glad to see how our European funding to rural communities can make a real difference on the ground. Jointly with the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, we ensure that 350,000 households will be more food secure and less dependent on international aid assistance", said the EU Chargée d'Affaires to Afghanistan, Raffaella Iodice.

Abdul Qadir Fakhri, the Program Director of the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan confirmed: "We are committed to improve food and nutritional diversity, extension services, natural resource man-

agement, value chain development, income production, and job creation for 350,000 disadvantaged households through this cooperation with the European Union.

"DCA takes a unique approach to resilience building by utilizing technically competent private sector such as professional paravets (veterinary workers) who provide services for a fee in a more sustainable manner. I am extremely grateful to the European Union for putting their faith in the DCA and supporting this project," he said.

Animal feed shortages and poor animal health, compounded by an eco-

nomics crisis, often leave rural farming communities no other choice than selling their livestock below the market price.

According to a statement issued by the EU, the program supports private sector actors, pastoralist households, rural youth, elderly, disabled, displaced, returnees, and women. Safeguarding livelihoods and diversification of food intake is promoted by creating opportunities for private sector development and enhancing the existing resilience mechanism of rural vulnerable communities through livestock-focused innovations.

## MoEW approves plan to develop energy sector in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) has drawn up a five-year operational plan for the development of the energy sector, which includes the expansion of energy production from domestic sources and the increase of national income, the ministry said in a statement.

In a meeting, chaired by Abdul Latif Mansoor, the acting minister of energy and water, along with other officials and experts in the sector, this plan was approved for the development of the sector, the statement read.

The ministry stated that in order to implement this plan, different programs will be rolled out. Improving the security of energy production resources, increasing the use of these resources, attracting investment in energy production resources in the country,

using domestic resources for energy production, increasing national income, and gaining market share are the main components of this operational plan, said Ghulam Jilani Haqqarast, a senior IEA official.

Meanwhile, officials at the Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) say Afghanistan has the resources to considerably increase energy production if the ministry provides investment opportunities.

Khanjan Alkozi, a member of the ACCI, said that energy and electricity are an important pillar in the industry, production, trade and agriculture sectors.

According to Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, nearly \$300 million is spent annually on imported electricity from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Iran.

In addition, based on statistics, less than 35% of the country's citizens have access to electricity.

## Relief International to boost medical services



PANJSHIR (Agencies): Relief International Organization has committed to solve the problems of the health sector in Panjshir province and strengthen the process of providing health services.

An official of the organization Timba in Panjshir,

said in a meeting with the governor of the province that they will address the health problems in Panjshir as soon as possible.

The Relief International strives provide support to the education sector in addition to strengthening the health sector in this

province, he added.

The providing of health services should be made in separate to political issues and should not be linked to any group or movement at any time, said governor of Panjshir province of Afghanistan, Hafiz Mohammad Agha Hakim.

## DRC pledge providing potable water to Paktika citizens

PAKTIKA (Agencies): A Local official of Paktika, Qari Fateh Mohammad Zakir met with the representatives of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in that province.

In a meeting, the two sides discussed and exchanged views about the implementation of drinkable water projects in Paktika province, a statement said.

During the meeting, the representatives of DRC vowed to conduct potable water projects in Paktika and asked the local officials of the Paktika water sector to cooperate with the organization. Meanwhile, local officials of the province committed to cooperating with DRC in order to implement the water projects of this province.

## Uruzgan citizens ask IEA to repair roads, dams

URUZGAN (Agencies): The citizens of Uruzgan called on the Islamic Emirate to provide education, health, and reconstruction works besides repairing roads and dams in their province.

They asked for the restoration of highways and dams in a coordination meeting with the government, which was attended by dozens of religious scholars, influential figures, provincial governors, and other local officials from the central Tarinkot and districts.

An elder tribe Mawlawi Sharafuddin Sajid spoke on

behalf of others and asked the Islamic Emirate to pay attention to the reconstruction of highways and dams, the initiation of health centers, the repair of bridges, and a number of other development subjects discussed, according to new agency report.

Sajid said that another road to connect the center of Uruzgan to Kandahar should be built so that all the people of the province could travel easily.

The people of Uruzgan are demanding education, health, potable water, and other similar reconstruction works and the Islamic

Emirate should pay attention to these issues, they urged.

Meanwhile, the governor of Uruzgan, Mawlawi Mohammad Ali Jan Ahmed, asked the religious scholars and the people to prevent drug trafficking, return the usurped lands, support the system, respect the leaders, and implement Sharia laws.

"Currently many reconstruction works are underway in Uruzgan, educational centers are open, dam reconstruction projects have been approved and the ground has been laid for development" he added.

## IRC to assist 2,500 needy families signing MoU



KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

"Based on the memorandum of understanding, the International Rescue

Committee will allocate 755,171 US dollars for the establishment of social committees, surveys of needy, cash assistance, and the implementation of public projects," the Ministry said in a statement.

The assistance will cover about 2500 needy families

in the provinces of Herat, Laghman, Khost, and Nangarhar, according to the Ministry.

The memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Ministry's top officials and the International Rescue Committee.





CHINIOT: A view of flood water at Chenab River as released by India.

# Women empowerment: PM for creation of equal opportunities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed upon provision of equal opportunities to the womenfolk as they consisted of half of the country's population and were playing varying roles at different strata of society.

He was addressing the launching ceremony of the 'Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment' which is being initiated at a total cost of Rs 10.4 billion. The prime minister said that the country's womenfolk were an effective and energetic segment, playing effective roles in families and society as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

He observed that in the last 75 years, the required opportunities for the women empowerment were not sufficient and stressed upon making of further efforts for securing women rights, including the inheritance rights and creation of opportunities in a conducive environment, so that they could contribute meaningfully and productively in society. "Look around the Muslims world and the West, the women have played their due role for the progress and prosperity of their respective nations," he added.

Lauding different prominent women personalities of the country, he said that they had served as great ambassadors of Pakistan in different capacities. The prime minister said that there was no dearth of talent in Pakistan as they were blessed with great minds, but there was a need to harness the true potential with creation of opportunities. Commending the rural women, he said that the ratio of the rural area women in the national building capacity was immense as they had been working on fields along side with the men. He further observed that to achieve a place among the the comity of nations, both genders of the coun-

try had to work together, and underlined the need for provision of financial and actual opportunities in different fields.

"The women segment of our society is the driving engine for the country's economy and serve as builders of nation," he added. About the creation of Shuhada Fund initiative, he said it was their duty as the martyrs had sacrificed their lives for the protection of the motherland and saved generations. There could be no other precedent of bravery and valour than their sacrifice, he said, adding their bereaved families deserved honour and support. The ceremony was attended by a large number of women belonging to all walks of life, besides ministers, parliamentarians, representatives of women organizations and relevant authorities.

Referring to the current day challenges, he expressed his gratitude to the brotherly country of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for extending financial support in form of \$2 billion deposit with the State Bank of Pakistan. The prime minister questioned that as a nation for how long they would continue to depend upon foreign loans. "It is the pricking question," he added. He said a neighbouring country of Pakistan in the year 1991 sought the last IMF programme and then did not require any other financial programme. The prime minister underscored the need that they had to streamline their affairs by learning lessons from the past and 'like an active nation have to move ahead'.

For a year, he said, he had never faced such severe financial issues, triggered further by the last year's floods, global inflation and Ukraine war which posed a huge challenge for the country's economy. About the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, he hoped that it would proceed accordingly. Termining the foreign debts fetters, he said the nation had to rid itself of finan-

cial chains. The prime minister further highlighted that they had to focus on the development of agriculture, exports and exploration of precious minerals worth trillions of dollars. He regretted that billions of dollars had been wasted on litigation in the past and the country did not get a single penny profit which made them to suffer collectively. The prime minister without elaboration said that all the political leaders and dictators were equally responsible for those woes.

"If we show determination, the country can emerge within days," he added. The prime minister further highlighted that as chief minister of Punjab, he embarked upon different initiatives for women empowerment. He cited the award of scholarships to the deserving girls in South Punjab whereas under the Punjab Skill Development Programme, thousands of women from the backward areas were equipped with skills development education, adding they did not invest on brick and mortar rather on human resources. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Human Rights Riaz Hussain Pirzada said that the focus on women empowerment was a significant part of the present government's policy. He cited that Article 25 of the Constitution and other related articles guaranteed against all kinds of gender discrimination, adding the international charter also insisted upon ensuring of equal opportunities. Women empowerment, he further said, meant provision of equal opportunities to the women to participate fully in the national, economic and political affairs of the country. He said the PM's initiatives would serve to achieve the objectives under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). PM's Special Assistant on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that the initiative was launched under the PM's vision aimed at women empowerment.

# India-Israel nexus with PTI exposed behind May 9 mayhem: Sherry

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday strongly condemned the statement of Israel regarding Pakistan at the United Nations and alleged that the Israel-India support for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its chief had fully exposed the sinister nexus behind the May 9 mayhem.

Addressing a press conference flanked by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar, Sherry Rehman lambasted the PTI chairman for his reported venomous campaign against the state, who, she claimed, was ever ready to do anything to please Israel. "He (Imran Khan) believes that Israel's violations in Palestine are fine. Today Israel also becomes an ambassador of human rights but in reality she is doing the opposite," the minister added.

She denounced the PTI chairman for criticising and opposing his arrest. "He asks why the government did this to me? He says he was arrested in a disgraceful way, but he should know that no one is above the law," she added. The minister there were some

sinister designs behind the curtain. Today the PTI was the best friend of Israel and Indian Prime Minister Modi, and its leader was being "baptized" in the waters of Israel.

The PTI workers, she alleged, had desecrated and harmed the monuments of martyrs on the behest of their leader, who now wanted to harm Pakistan as a whole. "Israel is supporting Imran Khan today and what does that mean?" she quipped. The United States had always said that it was not meddling in the Pakistani politics but the PTI chief kept on dragging it, she added.

"Israel's blaming of Pakistan in favour of the PTI at the UN meeting is highly condemnable. Imran Niazi is part of the camp that is violating the rights of Palestinians. Israel did not speak even on the arrest and indictment of those involved in the Capitol Hill attack." "What is the motive that Israel is giving recommendations in favour of attacks on Pakistan's sensitive installations?" "Why Israel does not speak about human rights violations by India in the Occupied Kashmir?" she raised questions, adding in fact, it was not about human rights, but about "special sympathy" of Israel with the PTI

and its chairman.

She said Israel itself had been violating the basic rights of Palestinian people every day for the last 60 years. "With what face and status Israel is lecturing the world regarding human rights," Sherry Rehman added. Imran Niazi, she said, wanted to see the country becoming bankrupt. No politician or any former prime minister did not utter such words or perpetrate such hostile campaign against the country, she added.

The minister said all the reports about so-called human rights and treatment of women in detention were deliberately issued to defame the country. She said Imran Niazi desired to impose the law of jungle in the country, but it could not materialize. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowed that he would protect the country and not his politics. My leader Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed had sacrificed her life while striving for hoisting the National Flag in the Swat valley," she said. The minister stated that her party never promoted "political bandits" during its government's tenures, besides avoiding any indignation and humiliation of politicians.

## Imran arrest warrant issued in ECP contempt case

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and Fawad Chaudhry in case related to the contempt of the electoral body.

During the hearing today, the PTI chief, Fawad Chaudhry, and Asad Umar did not appear before the body. Assistant lawyer of Asad Umar said, her client is facing cases and is scheduled to visit a doctor today.

"My client had been appearing before the ECP, please grant him today's exemption from appearance," she added. Later, the ECP asked Asad Umar's lawyer to submit an exemption plea for her client and adjourned and issued non-bailable arrest warrants for the former premier and Fawad Chaudhry over their 'persistent absence' in the contempt case.

The order was passed by a four-member ECP bench headed by member Nisar Durrani. Further hearing into the case has been adjourned until July 25. Earlier in August 2022, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) issued notices to former prime minister and PTI chief and others for allegedly using "intemperate" language against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja and the electoral watchdog, Fawad Chaudhry. Asad Umar and PTI chief repeatedly lambasted the commission and CEC Sikandar Raja and termed electoral body as a "subsidiary of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz".

## India releases water in Chenab River

LAHORE (PPI): India has released around 2,50,000 cusecs of water in Chenab river, said PDMA Punjab on Tuesday. A spokesperson of Punjab Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has said that Chenab has been in medium flood at Maralla headworks.

Many cities in Punjab are expected to receive spells of heavy rain on Tuesday while Chenab and Ravi rivers will be flooded as an incessant downpour in India's northern states has increased the water discharge towards downstream areas. The PDMA has issued an alert that India has also released water in River Sutlej. The authority said India released 70,614 cusecs of water from Harike headworks in the Sutlej River. The water will enter in Pakistani territory from Kasur.

"There is likelihood of low flood at Kasur, Okara, Pakpattan and Vehari", PDMA spokesman Tasawwur Chaudhry said. "Relief camps have been set up for the localities adjacent to riverbanks," PDMA stated. India had earlier discharged water in Ravi River at Jassar and 61,000 cusecs water flow was entered in Pakistan, PDMA said. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in a report has stated that recent monsoon rains have killed 86 people and injured 151 across Pakistan since June 25.

NDMA data shows that so far 86 deaths and 151 injuries to people have been reported, which includes 16 women and 37 children, whereas 97 houses have also been damaged as torrential rain continued to play havoc across the country.

# Civilians trial in military courts PHC orders to produce SC's proceedings record

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice SM Attique and Justice Syed Arshad Ali has ordered submission of Supreme Court of Pakistan's record regarding trial of civilian allegedly involved in 9th&10th May vandalism in Military courts, on Tuesday.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javeed while Shah Faisal Ottomankhel advocate appeared on behalf of petitioners before PHC during hearing. The counsel argued that civilians are trialing at Military courts allegedly involved in 9th May vandalism while seven prisoners had been handed-over to military out of 33 from Mardan district.

The counsel added that as per First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists can't placing liability of trial in the Military's court. However, Advocate General argued that identical cases regarding trial of civilians in Military's court is under proceedings at SCP and requested to adjourned the hearing till Supreme Court's decision in this regard.

In the meantime, the petitioner's counsel argued

that current petition is different from case pending before SCP because it was filed under Public Interest Litigation (PIL) while this writ is filed by prisoners accused in the 9th May vandalism while seven had handed-over to Military. The counsel argued that the petitioners should release on bail in case of wait till SCP's judgement in this regard while face the consequences in the light of decision.

However, PHC has ordered to produce proceedings' record regarding trial of civilian in Military courts and adjourned further hearing. Similar PHC's bench has reissued notices to respondents regarding constitution of Joint Investigation Team (JIT) for free and fair probe into 9th&10th May vandalism in PTI's writ petition for placing liability on the responsible persons.

PTI's counsel argued that the party pleading for constitution of JIT on 9th&10th May vandalism for identification of culprits involved in the hooliganism across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and imposition of charges in this regard. The counsel added that no department has submitted reply in this despite court's orders in this regard and requested for establishment of JIT chaired by

PHC's judges to probe 9th&10th May vandalism.

However, PHC has reissued notices to government along with other respondents to submit reply while adjourned further hearing. Moreover, PHC redirected provincial government to submit record of cases against PTI's leaders including Asad Qaiser, Aqib Ullah, Shehryar Afridi and City's president Irfan Saleem with supplementary petition before court.

Additional Advocate General Jalal-u-Din Akbar Gara and Barrister Yasin on behalf of government while Shah Faisal Ottomankhel along with Arshad advocates appeared on behalf of petitioners before PHC. The counsel requested for provision of record of FIRs and inquiries against petitioners because PTI's leaderships facing imprisonment following release on bail in other cases.

However, in the meantime PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered provincial government to obtain information from Deputy Commissioner Kohat regarding cases against Shehryar Afridi with supplementary petition and submit within three days while adjourned further hearing.

# Maintainability of Toshakhana case Trial court's ruling challenged in IHC

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday filed a petition against a ruling of the trial court which has declared the Toshakhana case against the party chief maintainable.

PTI lawyer Gohar Khan has submitted the plea in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) asking it to nullify the trial court's order. Last week, a district and sessions court upheld its previous decision by declaring the Toshakhana case against the PTI chairman admissible.

Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar announced the verdict reserved earlier in the day after he rejected a plea filed by PTI lawyer Gohar Khan, seeking adjournment of the case till Monday. The case has been adjourned till July 12. During today's hearing, the judge expressed resentment over non-appearance of Khwaja Harris, the main counsel for the former prime minister, saying the court showed exemplary leniency in this case.

He said Mr Harris had been summoned to submit arguments after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) referred the case to the trial court and gave seven days to decide on maintainability of the Toshakhana case. Earlier, Gohar Khan submitted two petitions seeking exemption from appearance for the PTI chief and adjournment of case till July 10. However, the petitions were opposed by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) lawyer Saad Hassan, saying the PTI chief had filed exemption pleas multiple times.

At one point, the judge remarked that Khawaja

Harris did not appear before the court even once in the last three days. He later reserved the decision which is expected to be announced later today. On July 4, the IHC nullified the decision of the trial court that had turned down the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's plea challenging the admissibility of the Toshakhana case.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the verdict reserved on June 23 after hearing arguments on the petition of the former prime minister against the trial court's ruling. The chief justice sent the matter back to the trial court, ordering it to again hear the arguments of the PTI. He gave the trial court seven days to decide the PTI chairman's plea in the Toshakhana case. The petition had been filed after the PTI chief was indicted in the case on May 10 - two days after the high court had stopped criminal proceedings in the Toshakhana case. On May 5, Islamabad's Additional Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar had announced that charges would be framed against the PTI chairman on May 10 in the Toshakhana case.

During the hearing, the former PM's lawyer had argued on two pleas stating that the ECP's petition was "non-maintainable" and that the sessions court did not have the jurisdiction to hear the matter. However, the judge rejected both the requests and summoned the PTI chief in person for the indictment. On May 10, Judge Humayun Dilawar indicted him during court proceedings that were held at the guest house of the Police Lines headquarters

at H-11.

For security reasons, the commissioner's office had given the status of court to the Police Lines. When the court indicted him in the Toshakhana case, he refused to sign the documents while denying the committing of crime. Last year, a reference was filed against him by lawmakers from the ruling coalition accusing him of not sharing the details of gifts he retained from Toshakhana in his assets declarations and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had concluded in October last year that the PTI chief filed false statements regarding the gifts.

The electoral watchdog subsequently disqualified him for being dishonest and corrupt and approached the district and sessions court seeking criminal proceedings against the PTI chief for allegedly misleading officials about the gifts.

**LHC rejects interim bail of PTI chief in seven cases:** The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday rejected the interim bail of the former prime minister and PTI chief in seven cases registered against him under terrorism charges in Punjab.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief is facing seven cases in Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and others under ATA. The Lahore High Court after upholding the registrar's office objections, rejected the former prime minister's interim bail in seven cases. It may be noted that the LHC registrar's office raised the objection that the PTI chief has contacted any of the concerned courts before moving to the high court.

# KP will never vote for *Fitna* and plotter

(Continued from Page 1)

The minister said she had instructed the management of Radio Pakistan to display all the details related to the attack on its building in the internal corridors of the building so that the people could always remember how the national asset fell victim to the dirty politics of a "foreign agent". Upon the prime minister's directives, she said, the task of redecorating and embellishing the building of Radio Pakistan was commenced on war-footing while the broadcast duration of PTV had also been increased in response to the long-standing desire of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Pakistan Television (PTV) would broadcast its programmes in regional languages of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa around the clock, she added. She said the PTV broadcast could be accessed worldwide through satellite, enabling overseas Pakistanis especially those from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to watch PTV programmes on their TV screens. It

would provide an opportunity to artists, producers, and journalists to sensitize the people about their culture and stance on different national and international issues, she added.

The minister congratulated the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the initiative and lauded the efforts of Secretary Information Sohail Ali Khan, PTV management, and the ministry's team in that regard. She said all journalists were allowed to express their stance on PTV screens. As regards the news item published in Friday Times about Azam Chaudhry, she said the story was published without taking the government's point of view, which was unprofessional and fell short of journalistic ethics and standards.

She urged the media to publish both sides' views which was imperative for issuing a complete story on an issue. Otherwise, it was tantamount to fake news, misinformation and disinformation. Marriyum said Azam Chaudhry was neither a Pakistan Television Corporation employee nor had ever been so. He had only been a

member of an issue-based analysts pool for PTV, and he had neither been removed from the pool nor was asked to quit it, she added.

The views and opinions of the said journalist were known to the government at the time he was invited to the press conference, she remarked. "If the government wanted to suppress his voice or questions, he would not have been invited and given an opportunity to ask questions. The prime minister answered his questions in detail," she said. The minister said unlike the previous PTI regime and its "fascist" PM, who was declared a "Press Freedom Predator" by the Reporters Without Borders, PM Shehbaz and the present government firmly believed in the freedom of media.

The PTI government used to only allow selected reporters and journalists to its "fascist" PM's press conferences, she remarked. She said Azam Chaudhry was a respected journalist and everyone had the right to express his or her opinion freely but no law permitted anyone to spread fake

news.

The PTV had never published any fake news, but today every channel was spreading misinformation about the national TV, she said while recalling the government tenure of PTI when the freedom of expression was stifled, and programmes were abruptly discontinued. She said the present government would complete its constitutional term, and elections would be held after it. She questioned that how would the elements involved in the May 9 vandalism and arson in the country and halting of CPEC project would face the people in the general elections.

She said Pakistan was moving forward on road to progress and prosperity during the government of Nawaz Sharif, however the policies of past government negatively impacted the development process. The minister said the party that claimed to abide by the principles of justices violated the laws, set ablaze the official buildings, targeted the military installations and desecrated the martyrs' monuments on May 9. That party was voted to

power for the country's development not to damage the national assets, she added.

Marriyum said the present government was promoting tolerance, harmony and progress in the country and taking pragmatic steps to reduce the dependency of the country on foreign loans. She said tangible measures are being taken to promote IT, agriculture sectors, improve exports and revive the economy. She said the government was fully aware of the inflation and burden on the common man and attributed it to the ill planned policies of the past government.

However, instead of blaming anyone the present government was focusing foreign policy and development of the country, she added. The minister said it was possible for the government to arrest PTI chief for his corruption on the very day he was ousted from the power but Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif prioritized revival of economy and to steer the country out of crises. She praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for

successfully keeping all the 14 political parties united under the platform of PDM and running the affairs of the government in consultation with coalition partners. He was in close contact with Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Asif Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other political leaders.

She said those who blamed and targeted Muhammad Nawaz Sharif were now acknowledging his political acumen and sincerity to the country. To a suggestion, she assured to take up inclusion of journalists in the laptop and BISP schemes with the prime minister, adding the outstanding payments to journalists were now being paid. The minister said the PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif would soon return to country and participate in the general elections. She said all the political parties in Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) would contest the general elections according to their own manifestos and the next prime minister would be elected by the people of the country.