

Pak welcomes resolution
ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said Pakistan welcomed the adoption of the resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council titled "Countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence". On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said that the incidents like public desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden could not be tolerated at all.

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PTI sacks Pervez Khattak
NOWSHERA (Agencies): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Wednesday sacked former KP president Pervez Khattak from the party over his failure to respond to a "show cause notice" issued to him. Khattak was informed about the termination of his membership in a letter sent to him by PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan. The letter was also shared on PTI's Twitter account.

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PM vows to utilize all resources for country's uplift

— launches Pakistan Endowment Fund for Education, incorporation of coding, constitution in curriculum

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday pledged to the nation that under the leadership of its Quaid Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, if given the mandate in next general elections, would utilize all available resources to bring the country out of economic crisis and take it to the zenith of development and prosperity. State of the art technology would be introduced for development in various sectors, including agriculture, energy and industries, he said addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of a flyover here at Shaheen Chowk on Ninth Avenue. The prime minister said the coalition government had launched a series of development projects in the Federal Capital to provide relief to its residents.

The Capital's most important project, he said, was the Bahara Kahu flyover that had almost been completed and its inauguration was likely by the end of current month. The project was not only beneficial for the residents of the twin cities but it would also facilitate the people from all over the country in their travel to Kashmir and Northern Areas.

Referring to the stand-by agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he said it was all because of the prayers of the people and now the country would resume its journey of development and prosperity. It was not an easy task as the PML-N and its coalition partners put their politics at stake by taking tough economic decisions to save the country from default, he added.

Pakistan, he said, would now stand on its own feet. "We will promote agriculture, information technology and other sectors. Pakistan will not only shed the debt burden but also emerge as a powerful country very soon." He said the PTI's Imran Niazi was bent upon ruining the economy as evident from his willful deviation from the IMF agreement. He wanted the country to default, but with the blessings of Almighty and efforts of the coalition government, such an

Premier stresses balance in pricing of life-saving drugs & pharma sector growth

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed the formulation of a balanced strategy that could lower the pricing formula of life-saving drugs and also ensure growth of the country's pharmaceutical industry.

Addressing the Pharma Export Summit and Awards (PESA-2023), he said the government was committed to protecting the poor on one hand besides helping the pharmaceutical sector to thrive. The event organized by Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PPMA) gathered corporate heads of national and multinational pharmaceutical companies and pharma experts. The prime minister said the country's pharmaceutical industry was playing an important role in meeting the demands of medicine. He paid tributes to the companies for propelling the export of medicines.

Because of the steep rise in the cost of raw materials, he said, the prices of medicine witnessed an upsurge. He, however, stressed that the situation must not lead to conflict with the production of life-saving drugs. PM Sharif constituted a committee to resolve the issues and demands of the pharma industry within two weeks. He hoped that before the completion of the constitutional term of incumbent government, the matters pertaining to the pharma industry would be resolved amicably. The prime minister expressed confidence that the board meeting of the International Monetary Fund this evening would help open more Letters of Credit (LCs) relating to pharma products. "This is just the beginning of a long journey, for which, the government, businessmen and all institutions need to work together," he said. He said the nation could make remarkable progress if all segments work with unity within their ambits.

eventuality was averted, the prime minister added.

Shehbaz said not a single corruption scandal had been reported during the current government's tenure of over one year, rather billions of rupees were saved by reaching big deals such as import of wheat and the agreement of a nuclear power project with China. The cost of the nuclear power project remained the same as agreed with the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif in 2018, besides a discount of Rs 30 billion, he added.

Speaking about the 9th May incidents, the prime minister said what the PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) had done on that day the enemy even could not do. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also inaugurated the monsoon tree plantation campaign by planting a tree near the project.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said the prime minister always did the politics of serving the people. He efficiently run the government affairs

during his over a year's tenure as he kept balance among all the coalition partners. The 'politics of arrogance' had had been buried forever, he added. Capital Development Authority Chairman Noor ul Ameen Mengal said on the prime minister's direction, the project would be completed in four months and it would cost around Rs 2 billion.

Currently, he said, various projects worth Rs 150 billion were in progress in Islamabad, out of them the projects of Rs 100 billion would be completed in a month time. PML-N leader Hanif Abbasi said the Bahara Kahu flyover would be inaugurated on July 31. Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb was also present on the occasion. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif launched the Pakistan Endowment Fund for Education along with incorporation of computer coding and constitutional studies in the National Curriculum.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif distributing scholarships among high-achieving students on merit basis under the Pakistan Endowment Fund for Education.

Pakistan receives \$1b from UAE, says Dar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has received a deposit of \$1 billion from the United Arab Emirates, which would further strengthen and improve the foreign exchange reserves of the country.

Addressing a press conference he said that SBP as Federal Reserve Bank, has also confirmed and said that an amount of \$1 billion had been received from the brotherly United Arab Emirates as this inflow would further increase foreign exchange reserves, held by the SBP.

He said that prior to this an amount of \$2 billion was also received by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and \$1 billion from United Arab Emirates, the foreign exchange reserves held by the SBP, increased by \$3 billion during the last two days.

The Finance Minister thanked the Government of United Arab Emirates on behalf of country's leadership, and the nation for their great gesture and support during the time when the country was facing tough economic challenges and extended its support. Ishaq Dar reaffirmed the government's commitment to put the country back on the track of fast economic growth and development, besides building foreign exchange reserves to the tune of \$15 billion by the end of current month (July).

He further said that Pakistan had started its journey towards economic growth and development, adding every coming day would be better than the passing day and soon it would regain its unique status in the comity of nations.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif expressed gratitude to President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Mohamed Bin Zayed for the deposit of \$1 billion with the State Bank of Pakistan. In a tweet, the prime minister said that as a time-tested friend and brotherly country, the UAE had always come forward to support Pakistan. "We deeply acknowledge this kind gesture & consider it critical to our efforts to stabilize the economy," he added.

IMF approves \$3b loan for Pakistan

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) executive board approved a \$3 billion bailout programme for Pakistan on Wednesday, the lender said, which will immediately disburse about \$1.2 billion to help the country.

"The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund approved a 9-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) for Pakistan for an amount of SDR2,250 million (about \$3 billion, or 111 per cent of quota) to support the authorities economic stabilisation programme," the global lender said in a statement.

It said the arrangement comes at a challenging economic juncture for Pakistan. "A difficult external environment, devastating floods and policy missteps have led to large fiscal and external deficits, rising inflation and eroded reserve buffers in FY23," the IMF added. The IMF board approval was needed before disbursing the first tranche of money, with the rest to arrive later in instalments.

The \$3bn funding, spread over nine months, is higher than expected for Pakistan. Earlier, the country was awaiting the release of the remaining \$2.5bn from a \$6.5bn bailout package agreed in 2019, which expired in June. Commenting on the development, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the approval of the \$3bn agreement was a "major step forward" in the government's efforts to stabilise the economy and achieve macro-economic stability.

"It bolsters Pakistan's economic position to overcome immediate- to medium-term economic challenges, giving the next

government the fiscal space to chart the way forward," he stated. The premier said the "milestone", which he claimed was achieved "against the heaviest of odds" and against a "seemingly impossible deadline", could not have been possible without "excellent team effort".

"I would commend Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and his team at the Ministry of Finance for their hard work," PM Shehbaz said. He also thanked the IMF managing director and her team for their support and cooperation.

Meanwhile, Dar expressed gratitude and said that "things are now moving in the right direction" for which the government had been striving for the past several months. "There were tough negotiations," he stated in an interview. "Our 2019-2022 programme, which was extended for a year [...] we were expecting \$1.19bn in the 9th review and the rest was supposed to lapse," he said.

Dar recalled that most of the government's energies were spent on reaching the standby arrangement with the lender. "Thankfully, our efforts were successful and for this, we had to impose taxes." "I have tried that by the end of the [government's] tenure — preferably by the end of July — the national reserves are between \$14bn and \$15bn," the finance minister said, asserting that Pakistan was headed in a favourable direction now. "All these reforms that we have brought are in the interest of Pakistan and they should remain intact. It will also be our utmost priority to ensure that this becomes the second programme that is completed by Pakistan," Dar added.

9 soldiers martyred in attack on Zhob garrison

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Nine Pakistan Army soldiers embraced martyrdom while five terrorists were killed after security forces retaliated to a "dastardly attack" on the Zhob garrison in northern Balochistan on Wednesday, the military's media affairs wing said.

In a statement issued in the morning, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the militants launched the attack in the early hours of Wednesday, following which four soldiers were martyred and five others were injured. The terrorists' initial attempt "to sneak into the facility was checked by soldiers on duty", the ISPR said, adding that they were "contained into a small area at the boundary" in the ensuing exchange of fire.

Meanwhile, three "heavily armed terrorists" were killed and a clearance operation was initiated to apprehend the remaining two militants, the ISPR said. Later, in an update shared at night, the ISPR said the clearance operation had been completed and in total, five terrorists have been sent to hell.

However, it added, the five soldiers who got critically injured earlier while "fighting gallantly" had succumbed to their injuries and embraced martyrdom. "Security forces and the nation remain resilient and determined to thwart all such dastardly attempts of the enemy aimed at destroying the peace of Balochistan and Pakistan," the ISPR

statement read.

Zhob District Commissioner (DC) Azeem Kakar had told media that a woman civilian was also killed after being caught in the crossfire while five other civilians were left injured. The official added that the severely injured were being referred to Quetta.

DC Kakar said that a passenger bus coming from Dera Ismail Khan was also caught in the firing. He added that "nothing can be said about the number of attackers", and asserted that all departments were on alert.

Meanwhile, Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudoos Bizenjo condemned the attack on the Zhob garrison and paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for thwarting it by taking swift action. In a statement, he said that the nation was proud of the sacrifices made by the martyrs and also offered his condolences to their families. "Pakistan Army is the guarantor of peace and security in the region," the chief minister said.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, terming the martyred soldiers the "pride of the nation", said their sacrifices of invaluable lives could never be forgotten.

The prime minister expressed these remarks in a statement issued after four soldiers of the Pakistan Army lost their lives in a terrorist attack in the Zhob Garrison of Balochistan. He paid tribute to the martyred

soldiers and said their sacrifice for the homeland would be remembered forever.

Separately, on his Twitter handle, the prime minister said that they were indebted to the supreme sacrifices of the sacred blood of their Shuhada and Ghazi that had ensured the defence and solidarity of Pakistan. He said the ongoing fight against terrorism was a fight for the future of the nation. In the last decade, the valiant forces and the nation together had eradicated the cancer of terrorism and would do the same to root out the specter by offering any sacrifice, he added. The prime minister further said that the security and defence of the country was not only their mission, but also a responsibility which was dearer to them than their lives. "The protection of this country is our mission and our responsibility, which is dearer than our own lives," the premier added and prayed for the souls of the martyred. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah also condemned the attack in a statement issued later in the day.

According to the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), he said the courageous personnel of the security forces sacrificed their lives to prevent "a major catastrophe" and successfully sent "three terrorists to their ultimate fate". "I pray for the elevation of the security personnel who embraced martyrdom," Sanaullah stated, adding that the government would not rest until terrorism was completely eradicated.

PTV, Radio Pakistan attacked by proponents of institutions' auctioning

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday said national assets like Pakistan Television (PTV) and Radio Pakistan were attacked by those who were proponents of privatizing the national institutions and selling their buildings during their 4-year tenure which ensued nothing but conspiracies, lies and propaganda.

"On coming into power, we have not chanted slogans to auction buildings of Radio Pakistan which is a national heritage and asset of the country," she said while recalling policies of the previous regime which was bent upon privatizing the national institutions, especially in the information sector. "Those who vowed to auction national institutions were the same individuals who had not only attacked the Pakistan Television (PTV) in 2014, but also the building of Radio Pakistan in Peshawar on May 9 this year," the minister regretted while addressing the media here at Radio Pakistan after inaugurating 12 new studios which were set up on modern lines as a result of the reforms started 14 months ago.

She was accompanied by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Sohail Khan and DG Radio Tahir Hassan. The minister said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) plan to auction the Radio Pakistan was also akin to an attack on the national asset, but it was the then opposition led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who foiled their nefarious design. Recalling the May 9 incidents which included vandalizing of Radio Pakistan and sensitive installations, and burning of memorials of martyrs, she said it was the same mindset that wanted to privatize the national assets on coming into power. The minister told the reporters that the present government rolled out a reform programme to upgrade and digitize the Radio Pakistan on war footing soon after assuming the power.

It was under implementation for last 14 months, she added. Marriyum said a comprehensive business plan had been worked out to transform the Radio Pakistan into a financially



viable organization. "New studios have been established at the Radio Pakistan which I visited today for reviewing its efficiency," she added. Round the clock sports transmission of Radio Pakistan FM had been initiated at 94 frequency, she said, adding programmes in 11 regional languages were also launched.

As regards the environment, she said a dedicated transmission had been initiated to discuss its challenges and highlight the country's biodiversity, wildlife, water management, forest conservation and management. Marriyum said a studio had been launched to instill research-based information regarding tech in the masses. Likewise, a studio was established to broadcast moral drama reel live, while podcast studios had also been launched.

"We have started a dedicated live 24-hour music transmission," she said, adding a world service was also launched to disseminate all sort of news, culture and heritage related content among the overseas Pakistanis. Another studio to broadcast news bulletin had also been launched, while Saut-ul-Quran segment of Radio Pakistan was completely digitalized, Marriyum noted.


She said Saut-ul-Quran was the vision of Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, which had been implemented by the Radio Pakistan. The minister said a total of 12 studios were established on modern lines and at par with the international standards. She said all those initiatives were taken by the incumbent government in last 14 months, as the

Information Ministry was unfortunately spearheaded by a minister who completely focused on gagging the media by assaulting journalists.

Other than those initiatives, cinema research cells were also established in Radio Pakistan, she said, adding all the studios would welcome the talented students who would eventually get an opportunity to hone their skills. She said a summer programme was being launched for universities' students by integrating academies of PTV, Radio Pakistan Academy, and Information Services.

Marriyum lashed out at the PTI chief for consistently churning out lies, spreading propaganda, hatching conspiracies, and above all using national institutions for political purpose during his government tenure. She said the PTI chairman today stated that the country would have been defaulted if the PTI opposed to the IMF bailout programme. "This is a mental state and that is why I say he is not normal," she added. Marriyum said the person had been declared a "predator" for free press by international organizations and it was he who was responsible for bringing the country to the brink of default.

On the other hand, she said, today Pakistan's ranking had been improved for its national economy as well as human rights. "Our mission and vision is reflected in continuous progress of the economy," she added. The minister said the present government took tough decisions and even sacrificed its politics over the national interest.


GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY
 (Regional Head Office Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

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 (Re-Tender Notice No. 202 3/Estate/ 2 x DAUs)

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WILL HAVE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

x Office Accommodation will be in the vicinity of below mentioned locations:

S No.	NADRA Registration Center	Required Covered Area
1.	Swabi (Preferably Near Swabi City - District Swabi)	15000 -18000 sq ft
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x Space measuring of total covered area as mentioned above against each NADRA Registration Center along with public and staff washroom s.

x Prominent, having independent entrance and proposed building should not be in residential area.

x Security wise viable location and easily accessible by public transport.

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x Preference will be given to the building in which dedicated transformer is installed.

x Tap Water facility along with overhead tank.

x Ramp for wheel chair for disable citizens.

x Space, NOC for installation of direction board, sign board and heavy generator.

x Roof top for satellite dish antenna installation.

x Sufficient space for maintaining the public queue & parking area a.

x Tenancy for a longer period (Preferably 10 years).

Note: - Interested parties / owners can purchase the bidding documents on submission of a written application at a cost of **Rs. 100/-** from below mentioned address or from concerned offices between **09:00 am – 03:00 pm** hours (except gazette holidays). The bids / proposal should be submitted duly completed in all respects by **01st Aug. 2023, at 11:00 am** hours (under **Single Stage –Two Envelope** bidding procedure). The envelopes shall be clearly marked as **Technical and Financial** proposals. Technical bids / proposals will be Opened on **01st Aug. 2023, at 11:30 am** hours at NADRA Regional Head Office, EOBI Building, Plot No. 31 Sector B -1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar in presence of bidders/their nominated representatives. Bid / proposals must include the following documents in addition to any other information that the bidder may find necessary: -

Technical Bid (Separate Envelope):

- x Photocopy of property ownership documents (Fard-e-Jaidad/Allotment letter/Possession Certificate by concerned authority (where settled revenue record is not available))
- x Photocopy of valid CNIC
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- x Undertaking on Non -judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- certifying that owner / building is not temporary / permanently debared from any Government agency / authority / department (without bearing any responsibility)
- x Pictures of the building offered for lease.
- x Valid Site Plan / Map of the building duly approved from concerned authority.
- x In case of absence of owner, authority letter for representative duly signed by property owner, permitting him to attend tender process.

Financial Bid (Separate Envelope):

- % Owner's consent showing monthly rent & offered area of the building.
- % Quoted price shall be inclusive of all taxes.
- % No brokerage / service charges will be paid in case of real estate agent.
- % Opening date / time of **Financial Proposal** will be informed to all successful bidder s of General Proposal Evaluation.

% Bidding documents received after submission of due date / time mentioned above, will not be entertained.

% NADRA reserve the right to reject all bids / proposals under PPRA Rule 33 and can cancel the bidding process before acceptance of bid or proposal.

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PID(I) 235/23



Establishment of illegal car parking, encroachment: PHC orders to submit within seven days

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice SM Attique and Syed Arshad Ali ordered to submit reply regarding encroachment on Sadr, Fakhr Alam and Kala Bari along with other roads within seven days, on Wednesday.

The writ petition filed by Shaukat Ullah Shah while his counsel Bashir Wazir Advocate and Additional Advocate General Barrister Yasin Raza appeared before court while Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Cantonment Executive Officer, Secretary Defense, Station Commander, Agriculture's department and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are made

respondents in the petition. The petition stated that encroachment on Sadr, Fakhar Alam, Kala Bari and other roads as well as illegal car parking had established in the premises of Peshawar's cantonment which has created inconvenience for the public. The counsel argued that the petitioner had talk to local shopkeepers and traders for removal of encroachment but the business community threatened him despite cooperation in this regard. He added that the petitioner is law abiding citizen while he faces hurdles dissemination of services due to encroachment on footpaths and establishment of illegal car parking as his office situated in Sadr, Peshawar.

As well as the premises

is posh area and Very Important Personality (VIP) movement also took place while competent authorities had neglected the issue which is creating human crisis, the counsel stated. The writ stated Traffic police as well as Chief Executive Officer Cantonment Board also turned blind eyes towards issue because if lifter can seize vehicles from illegal car parking and demolish the encroachment then the issue couldn't be raised. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes had already narrowed the roads while establishment illegal car parking in Sadr bazaar has created anxiety among the local populace and traders while government has ignored the crisis, the counsel adds. The competent authorities are

requested for several times in this regard but to no veil, the writ stated. The counsel argued to abolish encroachment from Sadr, Kala Bari and Fakhar Alam road as well as demolishing of illegal car parking and rent a car services to ensure smooth flow of traffic in the premises, however, PHC was informed that respondents didn't submitted reply in this regard. PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Arshad Ali ordered DC Peshawar. Chief Executive Officer Cantonment, Secretary Defense, Station Commander, agriculture department and EPA to submit reply within seven days while adjourned further hearing.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali presiding over a meeting with officials of Health Department and Rotary International at Governor's House.

Caretaker govt strengthening social sector: CM's aide

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to the caretaker Chief minister on Tourism, Culture and Archeology Zafar Mehmood has said that the Caretaker Government is taking vigorous steps to solve public problems while strengthening health, education and social institutions.

Addressing a ceremony in Mansehra district on Wednesday, he said that the government is solving problems of the people on priority basis and the provision of basic facilities in all the remote and difficult areas is the first priority.

He said that along with the construction and repair of roads and providing health, education, gas and electricity facilities to the public, vigorous measures are being taken for the development of tourist places and the completion of public welfare projects will be ensured as soon as possible and the available resources will be utilized in their best manner.

He said that the cooperation of the people is also indispensable in this regard and they should play their full role in the construction and development of the province so that the country can move towards development in the true sense.

AC discards foreign cigarettes in Hayatabad

PESHAWAR (APP): Following instructions of Deputy Commissioner, Shah Fahad, Assistant Commissioner Headquarters, Zainab Naqvi on Wednesday took action against sale of tobacco products in close vicinity of educational institutions in Hayatabad.

According to district administration, Project Coordinator Tobacco, Ajmal Shah and officials from the Civil Defense also accompanied the Assistant Commissioner.

During the action hundreds of packets of unregistered and foreign cigarettes were confiscated and later discarded through fire.

The Assistant Commissioner Sayyeda Zainab Naqvi warned the shopkeepers not to sell cigarettes to people below the age of 18 and specially avoid selling tobacco projects within the 50-meter radius of educational institutions.

She also warned of stern legal action in case of violation of the orders.

135 bags of China salt recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): Food Safety Authority Mardan recovered 135 bags of China salt during a raid conducted in Toru Chowk Mardan.

According to food safety authority, the raid was led by Assistant Director, Alif Khan and Food Safety Officer, Musab Javaid. As many as 135 bags of China salt weighing 3400 kilogram were recovered during the raid.

Bags of China salt were to be supplied to various shops and hotels of Mardan. It is worth mentioning that sale of China salt was banned owing to its hazardous effects on human body including high blood pressure, retarded growth of human organs and dangerous effects on nervous system.

Food authority has also warned strict against those involve in selling and supplying of China salt and said that efforts would be continued to ensure availability of quality food items to people.

Australian HC calls on KP minister — discusses economic ties, investment

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins, on Wednesday, called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries Commerce and Technical Education Adnan Jalil, here in Civil Secretariat at Peshawar, and discussed with him matters of mutual interest with special emphasis on economic relations and foreign investment opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He added that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is going to make a hub of investment opportunities and has the potential in various sectors like tourism, hydro power, food, agriculture, mines, technical edu-

cation and so many other areas while we will welcome the Australian investors to come forward for investing here.

On this occasion the High Commissioner said that Australia has cordial relationship with Pakistan and we believe to strengthen these ties more. He said that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is a lot of potential for foreign investment and he will try to attract the Australian companies here.

During the meeting a brief presentation was also presented to the ambassador regarding foreign investment potential and opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1400 Afghan children enrolled in NFE schools

PESHAWAR (APP): Around 1400 non-school-going Afghan children involved in child labour are enrolled in Non-Formal Education (NFE) schools in refugee schools for equipping them with the treasure of education.

The initiative was taken by Helvetas Pakistan, a Swiss-based development organization, through its humanitarian response to address the immediate life needs of vulnerable Afghan communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Initially, we have confined our focus to three districts of KP including Peshawar, Charsadda and Mardan, informed Irshad Ahmad, an official of Helvetas Pakistan. Talking to APP, Irshad said among these 1400 Afghan children around 25 were disabled including 13 girls and 12 boys.

While giving a break up of the total figure, he said 728 are girls and 672 are boys who were not going to schools but are now getting an education. The Afghan children are

obtaining non-formal education at 22 centres, 12 for girls and 10 for boys in refugee camps including Khazana, Kababayan, Nauguman, Mera Kachori, Hajizai, Umanzai, Munda and Jalala.

In order to convince parents for allowing their children to get an education, Helvetas teams with the assistance of the Afghan Commissionerate held counselling sessions with 1833 families to motivate them, Irshad added.

Apart from enrolment of out-of-school children, Helvetas Pakistan also provided 3500 students already enrolled in formal schools with learning aids, uniforms and other need-based material. The students in formal schools were also supported in the continuation of formal education through preparation for the entry test and facilitation of admission.

"All these 1400 Afghan children will be admitted in formal schools after completion of their courses," says Fazal Ullah, Coordinator of Helvetas

Khazana Refugee Camp. Fazal Ullah told APP that the admission fees, books, school bags and uniforms for all these admitted children will be provided by Helvetas.

According to a report prepared by Afghan Commissionerate, there are around 56 per cent of girls and 44 per cent of boys in Afghan camps who are not getting education or any skill training.

Furthermore, the majority of students in Afghan camps cannot obtain higher education after completing primary at camps.

Haji Gul, an elder at Khazana Refugee Camp highly appreciated the measure taken by Helvetas Pakistan of equipping Afghan children with education, enabling them to stand on their feet and contribute to the development of both the host country and motherland.

A large number of children in refugee camps are deprived of education and such initiatives will help them in getting basic education, adds Haji Gul.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Information Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel in a group with officers of Information Department.

Power suspension on various Peshawar feeders notified

PESHAWAR (APP): PESCO on Wednesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Rahman Baba Grid Station on 13th and 17th July from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

It said subsequently the consumers of 11 KV Kachori, Shalozan, Sharif Abad, Khan Mast, Hazar Khwani, Surizai, Pandu Baba, Umar, Yakatoot, Chamkani, Phando, Ring Road, Chairman Daftar, Beri Bagh, Rashid Garhi, Surizi Bala, Akhoon Abad and Ring Road-2 feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said that power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Industrial Kohat Road Grid Station on 13th and 17th July from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Sunehri Masjid, Banamari, Audit Colony, Civil Quarter, Nauthia, Murshid Abad, Abasin, Deh

Bahadar, Kohat Road, Amin Colony, Bara, Nodch Payan, Dora Road, Landi Arbab, Sheikh Muhammadi, Pishthakara, Swati Gate, Gul Berg and Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV City Grid Station on 13th and 17th July from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly

the consumers of 11KV Sikanandar Pura, Lala, Hashtrinaghari, Chugulpura, Chamkani, Jhagra, Radio Pakistan, Sethi Town, Gulbahar, Zaryab, Pandho Road, City Home, Baghbanan, Umar, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Shiekh Abad, Molve Je, Nishitar Abad and NHA feeders will face inconvenience.

Paramedics stage protest outside Health Directorate

PESHAWAR (APP): The paramedics from all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday stage a protest demonstration outside the office of Director General Health here.

The protestors blocked Wazirabad road for all kinds of traffic and chanted raised slogans against DG Health. The protesters deplored illegal appointment of paramedics, slowly working on the promotion of paramedics and sacking of over 1000 IPI technicians.

They also protested against the non-payment of fuel charges to IPI technicians for the last two years and warned to continue protesting until their demands were accepted.

Unleashing power of gender equality: Uplifting voices of women, girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The state authorities must intervene through syllabus and youth to combat the rising challenge of booming population in the country to offset the negative implications of over-population, on Wednesday.

This was the resolution shared by the speakers during a one-day seminar at the department of Journalism, University of Peshawar marking world population day organized under the auspices of Marie Stope Society. The theme for World Population Day 2023 is "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities".

The noted scholars, health practitioners and government functionaries participated in the program. Speaking on the occasion, noted national expert on population Mumtaz Askar called upon participants to learn and follow regional countries like Iran and Bangladesh, where practices in curbing the over-population are working



through the pre-marital counseling and empowering women through national level programs.

She extolled the suo motto taken by the supreme court of Pakistan to lend the support in equating justifiable resources along with the rising population.

The chairman of the department of Journalism Prof. Dr. Faiz Ullah Jan while speaking gave suggestion to state authorities to introduce syllabus intervention at universities to educate youth about the reproductive health and knowledge. "We need to shun words like birth spacing and need not to press hard ourselves for expressing these reproductive issues in the garb of

taboos"; he exclaimed. He further stressed that youth must discuss such issues to make it a discourse and everyday talk for their wellbeing.

He stressed that state must realize that tackling poverty, terrorism and unemployment could only work if we are able to control the unbridling over-population.

Director Community Service's program and ex-chairman Social Work Dr. Shakil Ahmad said that the country is gradually progressing in controlling the population but due to rising poverty and economic hardships, rural population is bound on the course of earning hands and social protection. He called upon

the authorities to work for developing human resources and youth empowerment to achieve the bulging population.

Speaking as a participant, Director Technical population welfare Dr. Ambreen Akhter said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa population figure stands at 35 million is enough for us to rethink our population strategy.

Additional director Health, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Saeed Gul mentioning the figure of 92 per cent of awareness level at the national level about family planning is promising but on the ground, we could see no role that is alarming.

Assistant Professor, Journalism department Ali Imran said that we need to give hope to 65 million youth in the country for better future but with solid leadership vision and promising national level programs. During the seminar, chairman Islamic Ideological Council Prof. Dr. Qibla Ayaz and veteran journalist Mujeeb-ur-Rehman video messages were showcased for participants education.

KP Advisor Finance stressed on increase of tax base

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Finance and Energy and Power Himayatullah Khan on Wednesday visited Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) office and said that the government will take up the pending amount issue with the Federal Government.

He was accompanied by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Finance Muhammad Ayaz. Director General KPRA Shah Mahmood Khan gave them a detailed presentation on the structure, working, and revenue achievements of KPRA with proposed way forward.

The DG KPRA informed that KPRA has contributed 71 percent of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa's own source tax-revenue in the financial year 2022-23.

Since 2017 KPRA's revenue collection has increased by 180 percent which speaks for the performance and dedication of the KPRA team.

The Director General KPRA informed the Advisor on Finance and Energy and Power about the pending amounts of KPRA with FBR, NTDC and PESCO which need efforts of the KP government for release of the outstanding amount.

The DG KPRA said that the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has so far paid Rs8 billion to KPRA under an MoU signed between KPRA and FBR for the cross-input adjustment and a total Rs10 bil-

lion is pending with FBR.

The DG KPRA in his presentation intimated that KPRA has stretched its tax base and new sectors pertaining to services business have been bought under the tax net. When KPRA was established 93 percent of the tax was collected from telecom sector and now it has been reduced to 35 percent with corresponding increase in other sectors as the KPRA team has worked on the exploration of other sectors, the Director General of KPRA said.

Speaking at the occasion, the Advisor on Finance and Energy and Power Himayatullah Khan lauded the efforts of KPRA team and stressed on broadening of the tax base by exploring new sectors for tax collection.

"We need to work on adding more and more sectors to our tax net because then we would be able to further reduce our tax rates without affecting our revenue collection."

He added that KPRA is no doubt playing a vital role in generating revenue for the province which is utilized in public uplift programs for the betterment and prosperity of the people. The advisor told the KPRA team to work on finding growth potential in those sectors which do not affect the poor population of the province.

He cited the examples of oil and gas exploration sector, infrastructure development cess and security services where there might be potential for an increase in the revenue collection.

World Population Day organized

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A seminar on the occasion of World Population Day was held by Population Welfare Department, KP with the support of UNFPA at a local hotel in Peshawar.

Officers from Government Departments, Academia, NGOs, students, civil society etc. participated in the seminar.

Secretary Population Welfare KP, Asghar Ali welcomed the participants and spoke at length about the importance of World Population Day and Family Planning as a best tool for healthy mother and child. He elaborated the theme of World Population Day with the audience along with facts and figures of the province and spoke about importance of gender equality and female education for development of the province. He enlightened



the audience about the services available at facilities of Population Welfare Department.

Jarar Hussain Bukhari, Advisor to CM on Population Welfare KP graced the occasion as Chief Guest. He stressed upon ensuring provision of Family Planning and Reproductive Health services to the last mile. He appreciated the role of government departments, NGOs and donor organiza-

tions in their efforts to increase accessibility to Family Planning services.

Dr. Anoosh Khan of Gender Studies department briefly defined sustainable development and role of women in achieving national and international targets. She said that an educated and healthy mother plays a vital role in upbringing of children as well as plays an important role in sustainable development of the country. Dr. Shahid Technical

Advisor UNFPA KP explained the role of UNFPA, its support to PWD and Health Department. He briefly narrated the historical importance of WPD, when the World body decided to mark 11 July as a WPD after the World population touched the 5 billion mark on 11 July 1987. He read the message of Executive Director UNFPA on the occasion of WPD 2023.

Dr. Abdul Rahman of Islamic Center University of Peshawar explained FP in Islamic perspective. He said that Islam is a complete code of life and it has solution to all issues. Islam stresses on planning including planning for family.

In the end Mrs. Ayesha Ihsan Director General population welfare thanked all participants for taking out time and participating in the seminar on World population day.



In brief

Power to remain suspended F.P. Report

BARA: Due to necessary work at 132KV GSS Bara, power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 14, 21 and 28 July, 2023 for improvement of system. According to a press release of TESCO issued here today, Areas connected with 11 kV Old Karigar, 11 kV Silk Factory, 11kV Ghee Mill, 11kv Bara Bazar, 11kv New Karigar, 11kV Old Nala, 11kV New Nala, 11kV New Bara, 11kV Malik Din Khel, 11kV Spin Qabar - I and 11kV Spin Qabar - II will be affected due to this work. The company has regretted the inconvenience to be faced by consumers due to unavoidable maintenance work. The company has asked the consumers to utilize electricity only for lighting purpose in order to avoid load management and low voltage problems.

Naqvi visits flood hit villages

JHANG (INP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday visited villages inundated in flood water along Chenab river in district Jhang. It should be mentioned here that at least forty villages of Jhang were inundate after rise in water level in Chenab river. The population from affected villages has been shifted to the safer places. Mohsin Naqvi expressed satisfaction over the arrangements and directed to provide all out assistance to the flood-affected people. Meanwhile, the caretaker chief minister ordered the immediate evacuation of the population river bed areas of Sutlej. He directed this during a visit of flood relief camp near Talwar post at Ganda Singh border. Mohsin Naqvi said that all the relevant institutions should be vigilant about down and up stream discharge in the river Sutlej.

Girl dies, youth injured

FAISALABAD (INP): A young girl died while a youth was injured in collision between rickshaw and a bicycle at Satiana road here on Wednesday, rescue sources said. According to details, a reckless driven rickshaw knocked down a bicycle near Punjab Housing Society. Eight-year old girl Mashal died on the spot in the accident while 22-year old Umar Daraz hailing from 116-RB sustained injuries. The body and injured were shifted to hospital and police after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

Son turns out to be father's killer

GUJRAT (PPI): The son turned out to be the killer of his father in Ranbarrian Wala at the outskirts of Gujrat, according to a report on Wednesday. An influential businessman and owner of a poultry farm, Naem Akhtar was shot dead by the firing of unknown assailants some six days ago. The murder case was launched against unknown people on the application of the deceased's brother. Police arrested Akhtar's son due to his suspicious activities and he eventually confessed to murder his father during the investigation. The accused confessed that that his father's conduct was very harsh with him as compared to other siblings and therefore he killed his brother. The police said that suspect Sohaib Naem was planning the murder of his father for the last three months or so. The weapon has also been recovered, while further investigation is underway, the police added.

PML-N workers decry Centre for ignoring Malakand

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz senior worker and former district secretary information Bahramand Syed has said the incumbent federal government led by his party had totally ignored the districts of Malakand division during its current tenure that would affect the results of the upcoming general elections.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara here on Wednesday the PML-N activist complained that no mega development project was announced for the entire Malakand division. He said the party workers in all districts of Malakand felt a sense of deprivation as the provincial president Ameer Muqam too belonged to this area but he also did nothing for the welfare of people. The PML-N activist said the advisor to the prime minister Ameer Muqam had inaugurated a TBS center at Timergara some five months ago but the gas pipes were still lying on the roadside and no one dared to ask the authorities concerned.

He said the party supremo and former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif

had announced the reconstruction and extension of the Chakdara Timergara main road during his last term when he visited Dir but it was yet to be materialized. He said the people of Malakand and especially Dir had attached great expectations from the present government led by Mian Shahbaz Sharif but to no avail.

He demanded of the Prime Minister to approve a modern hospital equipped with the latest technology for the people of Malakand at Chakdara so that burden on hospitals at Peshawar and Rawalpindi could be decreased. He said the PM should declare the militancy and disasters-hit Malakand division as a tax-free zone for the next ten years.

Pesco action: The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) Timergara sub-division on Wednesday cracked down against power consumers using electricity illegally and cut the connections of several consumers. The Pesco sub divisional officer Karimullah along with line superintendent Kamran Khan and lineman Ameer Zaman raided different localities and disconnected the connections

of 15 consumers for not regularly paying their bills.

The raiding team also took action against the power thieves using 'hooks' and consuming illegal electricity. A total of 30 de facto power meters were also replaced. Talking to local journalists the SDO said that power theft was a national crime and the company would never let anyone use electricity illegally.

Police action sought: One Haji Ayub Khan, a well-known businessman hailing from Ouch area in Adenzai has complained that unknown thieves have taken away some items from a running vehicle on the Chakdara bypass road. Speaking at a news conference at the Chakdara press club here the other day the businessman said that he was carrying goods from Batkhela to his store in Ouch when unknown culprits took away some items from the vehicle on the Chakdara bypass road. He said that it was not the first time but several traders had been deprived of their valuables recently in this way. He demanded of the district administration to increase the police patrolling teams on the Chakdara bypass road and investigate the matter.



QUETTA: President of Balochistan Agriculture Officers, Dr. Qasim Kakar addressing a press conference.

Five killed in Buner mishap F.P. Report

BUNER: Head on collision between Mandanr tehsel bound flying coach with a car coming from Mandanr tehsel at Splam Tangay on Wednesday killed 5 including a woman and injured 10 others.

Those killed identified Mohamad Gul Alam Khan Imran and Mst (H) while the injured included Ajwa Ibrahim Usman Said Ghani Nor Islam Usman Khan Rashed Nor Paras and three women. The woman was expired on spot while three others succumbed to injuries on way to DHQ hospital Daggar and fifth injured breathed lost in the hospital. Another serious injured passenger was shifted to Peshawar due to critical condition, the rescue team in charge confirmed. The source confided the accident as per the injured passengers was occurred when both the vehicles were speeding and faced head on collision in a turn at the hilly series.

The rescue team claimed the dead bodies and the injured were transported to DHQ hospital Daggar where the already alert emergency health staff administered treatment to injured and carried out autopsy of the dead bodies. The dead bodies transported to native village in Sora tehsel Mandanr while the injured shifted to wards for further treatment, rescue source added.

The hospital staff confirmed that dead bodies were handed over to legal heirs for burial and finally laid to rest at ancestral graveyard after performing Janaza. It's pertinent to mention here that all of the dead and injured passengers were hailing from the same tehsel Mandanr. The losses of precious human lives and injuries to others was sent a wave of sadness in the area and almost every Bunerity witnessed mourning over sad demise and injuries of locals.

Father along with son killed F.P. Report

SHAH DAD KOT: Unknown armed men shot killed father along with his teenager son in the premises of Jhal Magshi police station.

According to details, the deceased identified as Rahab Magshi and his teenager's son named Fayyaz Ahmed Magshi were dead on the spot in the limits of Jhal Magshi police station of Balochistan near Qamber Shah Dad Kot district.

It is said that the slain youth Fayyaz Magshi had come to Jhal Magshi city to buy items for marriage with his slain father, then the opponents killed him due to old enmity, while the bodies of both the deceased reached their homes after necessary procedures, a situation of mourning arose.

JUI held protest: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam held a protest rally against the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, which turned into a protest demonstration in front of the Press Club from Madrasah Darul-Quran Bhatti Muhalla.

Civil society blames MS for corruption

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Councilors, political and Civil Society Members accused Medical Superintendent (MS) District Headquarter Hospital, Landi Kotal for involvement in corruption and demanded of the health department to transfer him before they initiated indefinite agitation against him.

In a crowded press conference held here in local press club on Tuesday evening Deputy Tehsil Chairman Wali Muhammad, political and social workers including Samiullah, Kaleemullah Shinwari, Shaor Afridi, Muhammad Sadeeq Banori, Chairman VC 17 Haji Sher Afridi and others

condemned the MS Dr Jamshed Sherwani for his corruption and inefficiency and said instead of improving the health center, he added to his personal account.

Sophisticated health machinery was deliberately kept non-function to deprive the locals of better treatment, they added and said casualty of the hospital lacked necessary medicines and the patients had to buy it from private stores. They maintained that MS Dr Jamshed Sherani deceived the locals by false promises and broke previous records of corruption in Sehat Card and no medicine was supplied in the local purchase system.

Category A status had

been granted to the health center beside doctors and other health staff were available but the health services were worse than category D type hospitals that put a question mark on the efficiency of the MS, they opined. They further added that due to rude behavior of the MS many qualified and special doctors had made transfers of the hospital but ironically Secretary Health and Director Health had turned deaf ears towards it.

The speakers threatened that if the MS Dr Jamshed Sherani was not transferred till coming Monday then they would set up a protest camp inside the premises of the hospital.

Food Safety Authority seizes 135 bags China salt

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (FS & HFA) while acting on a tip-off seized 135 bags of banned China salt from a store at Toro Chowk in Mardan district.

The operation was conducted under the supervision of Assistant Director Alif Khan and Food Safety Officer Massab Javed. According to details, the China salt was being supplied to different restaurants and grocery shops of Mardan and totaled to about 3,400 kg.

Due to adverse effects on human body like stunted body growth, causing high blood pressure and breaking down of nervous system, the Supreme Court of Pakistan imposed banned

on trade of China Salt in March 2018.

While talking to media persons, Deputy Director FS & HFA Mardan Division, Kamran Khan said that earlier notorious for food adulterations like adulterated Gurr (Jaggery) prepared from sugar and chemicals, counterfeited cold drinks of multinational brands, low quality juices, ice-creams and pops.

However, he added, with the continuous and rigorous efforts of the field team, things have now improved considerably. He said the FS & HFA aims to provide clean and hygienic food to the general public and no one would be allowed to play with the health of the people.

Drug peddler held with 31kg narcotics: The excise department foiled a drug

smuggle bid, arrested a drug pusher and recovered huge quantity of narcotics here on Wednesday. The excise team under supervision of excise and taxation officer narcotics control and circle officer Mardan, SHO Excise police station Mardan on a tip-off near started snap checking of vehicles.

During search of a suspected vehicle bearing registration number XBA-457, over 31 kilogram hashish was recovered from secret cavities and a drug pusher Kaleem s/o Muhammad Saleem hailing from Abbottabad was arrested. The recovered hashish was confiscated and the detainee was being investigated after registering a case against him at Excise police station Mardan region.

Larkana Municipal Corporation approves Rs2b

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The first budget meeting of Larkana Municipal Corporation (LMC) was chaired by Mayor Anwar Luhar. At the beginning of the meeting, a resolution was presented against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden.

On this occasion, the mayor presented a budget of 2 billion 57 crore 7 lakh and 87 thousand 83 thousand, in which 58 crore 24 lakh 80 thousand in the form of OZ, 4 crore 3 thousand in the form of tax, 8 crore 32 lakh 7 in the form of fee. Thousand, 4 crores 29 lakhs 16 thousand in rent while income and grant received by Sindh government is 1 billion 75 crores 7 lakhs and 50 thousand, arrears and bank profit 1 crore 26 lakhs and 14 thousand rupees, development expenditure in terms of expenses.

Maulana Ilyas argues to praise Allah: The founder and leader of the Dawat e-Islam/ Ahl-e-Sunnah, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Attari Qadri, has said that it is important for every Muslim to put his trust in Allah, and crying in front of Him is the reason for getting rid of problems, just like a person who prays.

Rs13.65 million for the development expenses of R&D and 4.4 million for the payment of current development works. Likewise, a budget with a savings of 1.5 million 21 thousand was presented. But the budget was unanimously approved by all the

members by raising their hands resolution was presented against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden.

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It happens that such and such a person is angry, so to please your real owner,

start crying as much as you want. He is also able and generous. To please Allah, the Exalted, always keep the words of Istighfar in your tongue. We want Jannat al-Firdous. If we keep this desire in our hearts, then we should thank the Lord.

Child dies as house catches fire F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A seven-year-old child died when a house in Gaddusar Pitao area of Shangla district caught fire during wheat thresher process, police informed on Wednesday.

Police said the unfortunate incident occurred in the house of one, Aurangzeb when all his children were present in the house.

The police, Rescue 1122 and locals succeeded in dousing the fire after hectic efforts however Aurangzeb's seven-year-old son, Muhammad Shan was burnt to death. The nine-room house of Aurangzeb was also completely destroyed in fire.

Christian community donates blood

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A delegation of Sundas Foundation Hafizabad led by Former District Nazim Hafizabad and Patron-in-Chief Col. (R) Ali Ahmad Awan visited Christian Community during their Church Congregation for collecting blood donation for Thalassemia children.

Pastor Zeeshan and Dr. Rafiqat received warmly Col. Ali Ahmad Awan and other team members on reaching the Church. Pastor Zeeshan and other members of Christian Community showed their commitment and solidarity with Sundas Foundation and assured that Christian Community would donate maximum blood for children suffering from Thalassemic disease Col. (R) Ali Ahmad Awan said that Christian Community has left unforgettable memories in our hearts to assure serving the ailing humanity to donate blood

for Thalassemic children.

DC monitors flow of water at Qadirabad Barrage: Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warriach visited and reviewed flow of water, machinery and protective band, arrival and discharge of water in the Barrage. On this occasion, DC said that water in the river was flowing as usual and there was no danger of flood, however, all flood relief camps and boating points would remain functional.

International population day observed: International Population Day was observed in district Hafizabad. In this connection, a seminar and awareness walk held at District Complex. ADCR Imtiaz Ali Baig, Assistant Commissioner HR and Coordination Ishfaq Rasul, DO Population Welfare Hafizabad Madam Sajjida Mushtaq, officials of different departments

and women attended the Seminar and Walk.

Addressing the seminar, speakers said that unlimited increase of population is major cause of national problems and increasing population is eating available resources. They said that internal in birth of children was inevitable for better health of mother and child as well as bright future of our new generation.

DEO visits flood relief camp: District Emergency Officer Rescue-1122, Hafizabad, Engineer Adnan Nawaz visited flood relief and boating camps established to combat likely flood in the river Chenab. He inspected machinery, equipment and other necessary items existing at the camps and express his satisfaction over all arrangements made to tackle flood situation. He directed the officials to remain alert for shifting people to safer places in case of flood.

National symposium arranged at UOB

F.P. Report

BUNER: University of Buner (UOB) in collaboration the Pakistan Academy of Science was convened one day Symposium with the titled Science Today & Tomorrow, on Wednesday.

The world reputed renown scholars, faculty members, female and male students the affiliated colleges lecturers and media persons attended. The UOB vice chancellor professor dr. Amin Badsha the registrar professor dr. Anwar Saeed the engineer Sardar Ali the Arshad Khattak the media protocol officer Shahid Rehman represented the UoB.

Vice chancellor professor Dr. Amin Badshah welcomed the scholars the guests the faculty media students and shared about purpose of coffee convening the symposium to

inform and educate them while the registrar professor dr. Anwar Saeed thanked and assured such like positive activities would be arranged in the best interest of the faculty and students as well. The scholars professor dr. Amin Jan the professor dr. Mohamad Aslam Beg the professor dr. Mumtaz Shah the professor dr.

Tasawar Hayat the professor Dr. Zabita Khan Shinwari delivered valued speech related to Qaraqaram High Way important role in CPEC with challenges of glassier melting and earth quacks and proposed actions for protections as well. The scholars also valued information related to scientific researches in the light of past to best protect future.

The speakers also shared valued information about

Buner Marble Mining its importance problems and future challenges and its viable solution. The scholars shared about art of communicating to best use modern medium of social media for creation positive awareness among communities so as to best protect future instead of designating negative propaganda which badly affect the human being.

The scholars also shared services rendered by the Pakistan Academy of Science which created thousand scholars who represent Pakistan at world science forums and serve the nation and wished the new generation as students must keenly study modern sciences and technologies to play their pivotal role as future statesmen. At the end the guest awarded shield in recognition their valued contribution.

Three kidnappers held

F.P. Report

TANK: Tank police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested three kidnappers and recovered the abducted man from their custody in the limits of the City police station.

According to a police spokesman, the city police team led by SHO Aftab Alam Baloch received information through wireless control on the patrol that some armed persons abducted Ibrahim Kamal son of

Yaghistan Betani resident of Mohallah Maidan from Ibrahim Medical Store situated in Marwat Market.

The police officials took immediate action and started chasing the kidnappers. The police, adopting the best strategy, arrested three kidnappers from near the NADRA office on Station Road and rescued the abducted man.

The kidnappers were identified as Ghani ur Rehman, Syed ur Rehman, and Abdul

Rehman sons of Misal Khan residents of Kirri Ahmed Shah. The police also recovered 02 pistols and 57 cartridges from them. The traffic wardens also played a leading role to arrest the kidnappers. Further investigation revealed that one of the kidnappers was an absconder and wanted to Malazai Police Station. On the other hand, police arrested another accused and recovered valuable stolen household items from his custody.



How African migrants survived racial attacks in Tunisia

TUNIS (BBC): Standing destitute in the street with her one-year old baby strapped to her back, Louise Fallone describes the moment when masked attackers broke into her home in the Tunisian coastal city of Sfax and chased her out. "At 2am, Tunisian teenagers attacked... They threw stones at us and held a knife to my throat.

"I took my baby and fled without clothes. My Tunisian neighbour threw a blanket over me as I ran. "They took my money and broke everything we had." Ms Fallone arrived from Ivory Coast about a year ago in search of better economic opportunities, and works in a coffee shop. She was attacked in a wave of xenophobic violence, which happened about a week ago after the fatal stabbing of a 41-year-old local man during an altercation with several migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. As the BBC team drove into the city, with the temperature gauge in the car reading 40C (104F), the first thing we saw were dozens of migrants standing alongside the dusty road holding signs saying "peace". Horns sounded in support as locals drove past the encampment. And we saw locals giving out bread and water.

But there was no doubt that hostility to these migrants remained. Videos of the attack have been widely shared. One shows a masked perpetrator screaming that "black Africans are a threat to us and our women" and then inciting people to assault the migrants. In another, a man shouts: "We must kick all these migrants out. We don't want them living here."

In order to understand why this city had erupted into such violence, we spent the night with the hundreds of migrants, sleeping on the concrete. Dozens were carrying visible injuries which they told us were from the attacks of 4 July. One woman, suffering heat stroke, lay nearly unconscious. A total of 25 people, including children, needed treatment in hospital on the night of the attack. One migrant says his seven-year-old brother, who had both his legs broken, was among them. Footage from that night shows a presence of police,

but a seeming lack of intervention by them.

Despite numerous requests for comment, the police would not speak to us. However, the very next morning, the authorities did respond, by forcibly removing more than 100 migrants from the city and driving them to the Tunisian-Libyan border. A further 1,000 have since been removed from the city and taken to both the Libyan and Algerian borders, local Tunisian officials have been quoted as saying. Videos filmed by the migrants at the Tunisian-Libyan border and sent to campaign group Human Rights Watch (HRW) show several people with open wounds and deep lacerations. They claim to have been beaten by the authorities. HRW said that migrants, asylum seekers and students were expelled in what amounted to "collective punishment". Some of them were living legally in Tunisia, while others were not, it added. The border authorities declined to comment regarding the allegations.

However, Tunisia's President Kais Saied rejected all claims of mistreatment against migrants and said they were receiving aid within what he called "our values". Relative peace has now returned to the streets of Sfax. But in the city's numerous coffee shops, the attacks are still all anyone can talk about. Local shopkeeper and activist Miriam Bribrì says she is outraged but not surprised by the violence which took place last week. "There was a wave of racist videos on social media. I was seeing such disgusting posts. So I was already worried such an upsurge of anger could only result in violence." She blames President Saïd too. Earlier this year he made highly inflammatory comments, alleging that "hordes of sub-Saharan African migrants" were bringing "violence and crime" into the country. "What was shocking was finding myself in the minority, defending basic principles against violence and racism," says Ms Bribrì. One specific Facebook account, criticised for promoting the violence in Sfax last week, was Sayeb-Etrottoir, meaning "Clear the Sidewalks". Just days before the attacks, the page

posted materials advocating that Sfax must be "saved" from the migrants. The group's administrator and prominent influencer, Zied Mallouli, vehemently rejects claims that the posts fuelled violence.

In an interview with the BBC, he said he could only speculate as to why people took to the streets that night. "For them it was a matter of liberation. They think migrants have taken their homes and will settle here." However, he was clear on what he thinks should happen next. "The immediate solution is for the authorities to gather all the people in downtown Sfax and deport them and put them in a camp," Mr Mallouli said. In the centre of Sfax, close to a small rubbish dump, about 300 migrants have set up camp since being driven from their homes. With only cardboard to lay on, and a few trees under which to seek shade from the scorching sun, the stench of rotting food from the dump surrounds them. "I've spent four days here with my family because we don't have any other place to stay. I'm just so tired. I feel like giving up," says Miriam, a mother of two from Sierra Leone. She adds that she is almost at the point of seeking a loan to return, although this is nearly impossible.

Enduring sweltering temperatures, and with very little shade on the streets, they are entirely dependent on hand outs from local residents. "I saw that these people were hungry and sleeping in the open," says one local resident. "So with my friends, we decided to make sandwiches. Yesterday we also brought water and yogurt. All for free, in God's grace." Another, a taxi driver, says he and his wife have begun to host one mother and daughter after last week's attacks. "I feel sorry for the migrants and my city. So I decided to host a family. I provide them with shelter and the food my wife cooks. The Tunisian authorities should offer them all legal status," the taxi driver added. In the current climate, the chances of that happening seem close to impossible. Stuck in limbo, neither the authorities, nor the migrants seem to be any closer to a solution - or a final destination.

SK, NATO to boost partnership on security, cyber threats

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korea and NATO will expand cooperation on global security issues including Ukraine and North Korea their leaders said on the sidelines of NATO's annual meeting in Lithuania, the South Korean presidential office said. President Yoon Suk Yeol arrived in Vilnius for the summit of NATO leaders, aiming to step up security ties in the face of evolving nuclear threats from North Korea and tension over China.

Yoon said security in the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions were inseparable. "I came to institutionalise the cooperation framework by creating individually tailored partnership programmes, and to discuss cooperation on military intelligence and cyber areas," Yoon told NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. Stoltenberg thanked Yoon for joining condemnation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and said North Korea's nuclear and missile threats were an important issue that has an impact on NATO and beyond. South Korea and NATO are expected to agree to expand cooperation in 11 areas, including non-proliferation and cybersecurity, which Stoltenberg said highlighted the significance of their ties. Yoon, at the NATO gathering with the leaders of Japan, Australia and New Zealand, could face renewed pressure to supply arms to Ukraine, which his administration has resisted doing, wary of Russian influence over North Korea.

Media has reported that South Korea had agreed to send artillery rounds to the US to be delivered to Ukraine but South Korea's defence ministry said while it was discussing ammunition exports to the US, the reports were inaccurate. Stoltenberg and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy have urged South Korea to boost military support.

Sudan rejects East African peace bid

CAIRO (Reuters): Sudan's army-aligned foreign ministry rejected a regional summit's proposal to consider deploying peacekeeping forces to protect civilians, dashing tentative hopes the gathering might help efforts to end a near three-month-old war. The violent power struggle between the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces since April 15 has killed more than 1,000 civilians and displaced 2.9 million, according to the United Nations.

Neither side has gained a clear advantage, and much of the capital has been abandoned or destroyed while mediation efforts thus far have failed. The summit, held by East African regional body IGAD and attended by heads of states as well as representatives of several other countries and bodies, had suggested considering the deployment of regional peacekeeping forces and the further involvement of civilians in talks. It represented the first such meeting in weeks, after a separate set of talks in Jeddah had been suspended by the United States and Saudi Arabia after numerous ceasefire violations. The army had boycotted the IGAD mediation effort, accusing Kenya, which headed the effort, of providing a haven to the Rapid Support Forces.

"The disrespect of IGAD towards the opinions of its member states will cause the Sudanese government to re-think the utility of its membership in the organisation," the foreign ministry said. "The Sudanese government rejects the deployment of foreign forces in Sudan and will consider them enemy forces," it added. The statement did welcome an upcoming summit held by Egypt, widely seen as closer to the army than to the RSF, to be held later this week. The IGAD summit, held in Addis Ababa, had featured American representatives, who in statements appeared to reject the prospect of future military rule in Sudan.

North Korea fires long-range ballistic missile



SEOUL (AFP): North Korea has fired a long-range ballistic missile, the South Korean military said Wednesday, days after Pyongyang threatened to down US spy planes that violated its airspace. Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points ever, with diplomacy stalled and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un calling for increased weapons development, including tactical nukes.

In response, Seoul and Washington have ramped up security cooperation, vowing that Pyongyang would face a nuclear response and the "end" of its current government were it to ever use its nuclear weapons against the allies. South Korea's military said it had detected the launch of a long-range ballistic missile fired from the Pyongyang area around 10 am (0100 GMT). "The ballistic missile was fired on a lofted trajectory and flew 1,000 km (620 miles) before splashing down in the East Sea," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

A lofted trajectory involves firing a missile up and not out, a method Pyongyang has previously said it employs in some weapons tests to avoid flying over neighbouring countries. The launch "is a grave provocation that damages the peace and security of the Korean peninsula" and violates UN sanctions on Pyongyang, the JCS said, calling on North Korea to stop such actions. Pyongyang last fired one of its most powerful intercontinental ballistic missiles in April -- the purportedly solid-fuelled Hwasong-18 -- and in February launched a Hwasong-15, which flew a similar 989 km. The flight time of around 70 minutes is also similar to some of North Korea's previous ICBM launches, experts said.

"Given what we have at this point, it's about 90 percent certain that it was an ICBM launch," Choi Gi-il, a professor of military studies at Sangji University, told AFP. He added that it could also have been North Korea attempting to re-test its satellite launch technology to prepare for another attempt to put a spy satellite into

orbit, after a May launch failed. Wednesday's launch came after North Korea accused a US spy plane of violating its airspace and condemned Washington's plans to deploy a nuclear missile submarine near the Korean peninsula. A spokesperson for the North Korean Ministry of National Defence said the United States had "intensified espionage activities beyond the wartime level", citing "provocative" spy plane flights over eight straight days this month. "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 added.

Kim's powerful sister Kim Yo Jong said that a US spy aircraft had violated the country's eastern airspace twice, according to a separate statement. Kim Yo Jong said North Korea would not respond directly to US reconnaissance activities outside of the country's exclusive economic zone, but warned it would take "decisive action" if its maritime military demarcation line was crossed. The United States said in April that one of its nuclear-armed ballistic submarines would visit a South Korean port for the first time in decades, without specifying an exact date. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has ramped up defence cooperation with Washington in response, staging joint military exercises with advanced stealth jets and long-range heavy bombers. Yoon is set to attend a NATO summit in Lithuania this week, seeking stronger cooperation with the alliance's members over North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats. "Kim Yo Jong's bellicose statement against US surveillance aircraft is part of a North Korean pattern of inflating external threats to rally domestic support and justify weapons tests," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "Pyongyang also times its shows of force to disrupt what it perceives as diplomatic coordination against it, in this case, South Korea and Japan's leaders meeting during the NATO summit."

‘Inquiry found subsea explosive traces on yacht’

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): Germany found traces of subsea explosives in samples taken from a yacht that it suspects "may have been used to transport the explosives"

to blow up the Nord Stream gas pipelines, it told the UN Security Council in a letter with Sweden and Denmark. A series of unexplained explosions hit the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines connecting Russia and Germany under the Baltic Sea last September in the exclusive economic zones of Germany, Sweden and Denmark.

The trio are each conducting separate investigations and sent an update - seen by Reuters - ahead of a meeting of the 15-member Security Council called by Russia, which has complained that it has not been kept informed about the probes. "None of the investigations has been concluded and at this

point, it is still not possible to say when they will be concluded.

The nature of the acts of sabotage is unprecedented and the investigations are complex," the three wrote in a joint letter, dated, which included an update on each inquiry. The joint letter said Germany has been investigating "the suspicious charter of a sailing yacht" that had been rented in a way to "hide the identity of the real charterer." Germany was still investigating the precise course of the boat.

"It is suspected that the boat in question may have been used to transport the explosives that exploded at the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines," the letter said of Germany's inquiry. "Traces of subsea explosives were found in the samples taken from the boat during the investigation." "According to

expert assessments, it is possible that trained divers could have attached explosives at the points where damage occurred to the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 gas pipelines, which are laid on the seabed at a depth of approx. 70 to 80 metres," it said of Germany's inquiry. Moscow has said the West was behind the blasts. Western governments have denied involvement as has Ukraine, which is fighting Russian forces that invaded in February 2022. Russia failed in March to get the UN Security Council to ask for an independent inquiry into the Nord Stream blasts. "At this point it is not possible to reliably establish the identity of the perpetrators and their motives, particularly regarding the question of whether the incident was steered by a state or state actor," the letter said of Germany's inquiry.

South Korea, Japan leaders to meet

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol is set to meet Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on Wednesday on the sidelines of a NATO summit, with the release of radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear plant and North Korea expected on the agenda. Japan plans to soon start releasing more than a million tons of treated radioactive water from its tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant, a move which has stirred anger and concern among South Koreans.

After a two-year review, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said last week Japan's plans were consistent with global safety

standards and that they would have a "negligible radiological impact to people and the environment". A South Korean presidential official has said the Fukushima water discharge plan could be discussed at the meeting. South Korea's government said it respected the IAEA's report and that its own analysis had found the release will not have "any meaningful impact" on its waters. But Seoul has said it will decide whether it will agree or not to Japan's release when Tokyo comes up with the final plan. North Korea is also likely to be a focus during the meeting, which will take place in Lithuania, after Pyongyang launched a

long-range ballistic missile off its east coast just hours before the planned talks.

Seoul and Tokyo have in recent years been taking steps to improve ties between the old northeast Asian rivals, especially due to the threat from North Korea. Pyongyang has been making heated complaints in recent days over US military activities in the region, accusing an American spy plane of entering its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and warning of a "very critical flight" if they continued what it called "illegal intrusion." Separately, Yoon also plans hold a meeting with leaders of Japan, Australia and New Zealand while in Lithuania.

Russian veto signals end UN aid work in Syria

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): Russia signaled the demise of a long-running United Nations humanitarian operation in Turkey delivering aid to 4 million people in rebel-held northwest Syria after it vetoed a nine-month authorization renewal at the UN Security Council. Russia then failed in its own bid for a six-month extension of the operation, which has been delivering aid including food, medicine and shelter since 2014. The Security Council approval for the aid deliveries expired.

Russia UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia suggested that the council mandate for the aid operation could not be salvaged. After casting the veto and before the council vote on Russia's six-month proposal, Nebenzia said: "If our draft is not supported, then we can just go ahead and close down the cross-border mechanism. "The technical rollover, for any period of time, we're not going to accept," he added. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the United States would continue to work with all council members to renew the aid operation and urged Russia to reconsider its position. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had pushed for a 12-month renewal. Guterres was disappointed that the council had not reached an agreement and urged members "to redouble their efforts to support the continued delivery of cross-border assistance to millions of people in dire need in northwest Syria for the longest possible period," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Authorization is needed because the Syrian government in Damascus, which has close ties with Moscow, did not agree to the UN operation on sovereignty grounds. Security Council votes on the issue have long been contentious - in both 2022 and 2020 the mandate expired, only to be renewed a day later. The Security Council initially authorized aid deliveries in 2014 into opposition-held areas of Syria from Iraq, Jordan and two points in Turkey. But Russia and China have whittled that down to just one Turkish border point. Aid groups decried the Security Council stalemate.

Civilians train in survival skills to cope with dangers

KYIV (AP): In a cramped municipal building in a residential area of the Ukrainian capital, a group of people take turns training to shoot using a replica of a machine gun with the help of a weapons training simulator relying on virtual reality. The nearly 20 participants - all of them civilians and most of them women - have never held a weapon before.

With Russia's war on Ukraine now in its 17th month, the Kyiv City Administration has opened up training for civilians who want to learn survival skills, including how to shoot, provide first aid and recognize land mines. These and other skills could be used in a hostile environment provoked by missile strikes and other man-made disasters. In a dark room with tightly closed blinds, the unreal pool-pof sounds of the replica weapons are heard. People enthusiastically ask the instructors how to hold their weapons properly and ask to try one more time. "I am more than 45 years old. As soon as the opportunity arose, I decided that I needed to refresh some skills and learn something new," said Kyiv resident Lada Bondarenko. She was especially impressed by the instructor's lecture on

possible land mine threats.

It was a reminder that the Kyiv region, although not currently on the front lines of the war, is still at major risk because of mines left behind by the Russians who briefly occupied areas on the outskirts of the capital in the early days of the war. While the fighting on the front lines is now largely in stalemate, indiscriminate Russian missile attacks continue to hit residential areas, wreaking havoc and causing almost daily casualties across the country. Several days after the registration on the city's website was opened, more than 2,000 people had signed up for the training, around 70% of them women, said the deputy director for Kyiv's municipal security, Mykhailo Shcherbyna.

"The main goal is for people to learn how to survive and how to respond to these military threats that exist," he explained. According to Shcherbyna, by educating people, local authorities try to prevent more casualties in the future. "The war continues, and we don't know what the next threats will be." In his opinion, one of the reasons why most of those who signed up for the training are women is because a large number of men are

already at the front. Also, many women come so that these skills will help them protect not only themselves but their children. But men, too, attend with the protection of their children in mind. "I came to be able to explain to my children that there are mines that can tear off arms, legs and take life," said Vitalii Sumin, aged 38. His house is located in nearby Irpin, an area in the northwestern outskirts of the capital where fierce battles took place last spring. When the Russians retreated last March, many land mines were left in the area, which now could be deadly dangerous, hidden in the grass.

Vitalii's wife couldn't attend the training in person, so he transmitted it online while she stayed at home with their 2-year-old child. Next time, he plans to bring the whole family to the training, especially his 13-year-old, he said. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, around 174,000 square miles (451,000 square kilometers) in Ukraine are potentially contaminated with mines, about the size of the US state of Florida. Local authorities held the first such training for civilians. Previously, they mostly trained people who worked in municipal services.

Republican lawmaker blasts State Dept response

WASHINGTON (Reuters): A senior US Republican lawmaker criticized as "absolutely unacceptable" a State Department response to his inquiry about why the US special envoy for Iran's security clearance was under review. Michael McCaul, chairman of the House of Representatives committee on foreign affairs, wrote to Secretary of State Antony Blinken on June 30 seeking "a full and transparent accounting" about an investigation into the envoy, Rob Malley.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a US official said Malley was put on unpaid leave on June 29 after news broke that his security clearance was under review. In a response made public by McCaul's office, Naz Durakoglu the assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs, said the agency had a "thorough and comprehensive process" to assess an individual's eligibility to access classified information.

"Consistent with longstanding Executive Branch and Department of State policies and practices, the Department is not in a position to provide further documents or information related to this personnel-security clearance matter," she said. McCaul, in a brief statement, said: "This is an absolutely unacceptable response."

"Congress deserves to know exactly why the US Special Envoy (for) Iran had his security clearance suspended, was then suspended from his position, and now, according to news reports, is being investigated by the FBI," McCaul added, saying he would ask the agency for a classified briefing next week. When news that his security clearance was under review broke on June 29, Malley said: "I have been informed that my security clearance is under review. I have not been provided any further information, but I expect the investigation to be

resolved favorably and soon. In the meantime, I am on leave." In a regular briefing, State Department spokesman Matt Miller said Malley "stopped performing the duties" of special envoy for Iran on June 29 and "went on leave" several weeks before that, but he declined to provide further details.

Appointed soon after Democratic President Joe Biden took office in 2021, Malley had the task of trying to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. Then-President Donald Trump, a Republican, had abandoned the pact in 2018 and reimposed US sanctions on Iran. Having failed to revive the deal, the United States has held talks with Iran to try to ease tensions by sketching out steps that could limit the Iranian nuclear program, release some detained US citizens and unfreeze some Iranian assets abroad, Iranian and Western officials said in June.

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The strategic dimensions of Kurram’s land dispute

THE bloody tribal dispute in the newly merged district of Kurram has witnessed a fierce fight between contesting tribes and the death toll reached 11 with two more deaths on Tuesday. According to the reports, clashes continued in Pewar, Gido, Bali-shkkel, Khar Killay, Sadda, Para Chamkani, Muqbal, and Kunj Alizai areas of Kurram districts while the public was facing serious issues due to movement restrictions and non-availability-of-essential-commodities-because-of-continuous exchange of fire between the parties and road blockades. Meanwhile, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government requested the federal authorities to deploy additional military and paramilitary troops under Article 245 to put an end to the conflict. The law and order situation is seriously marred and no permanent ceasefire deal has been facilitated by the local authorities and tribal jirga so far.

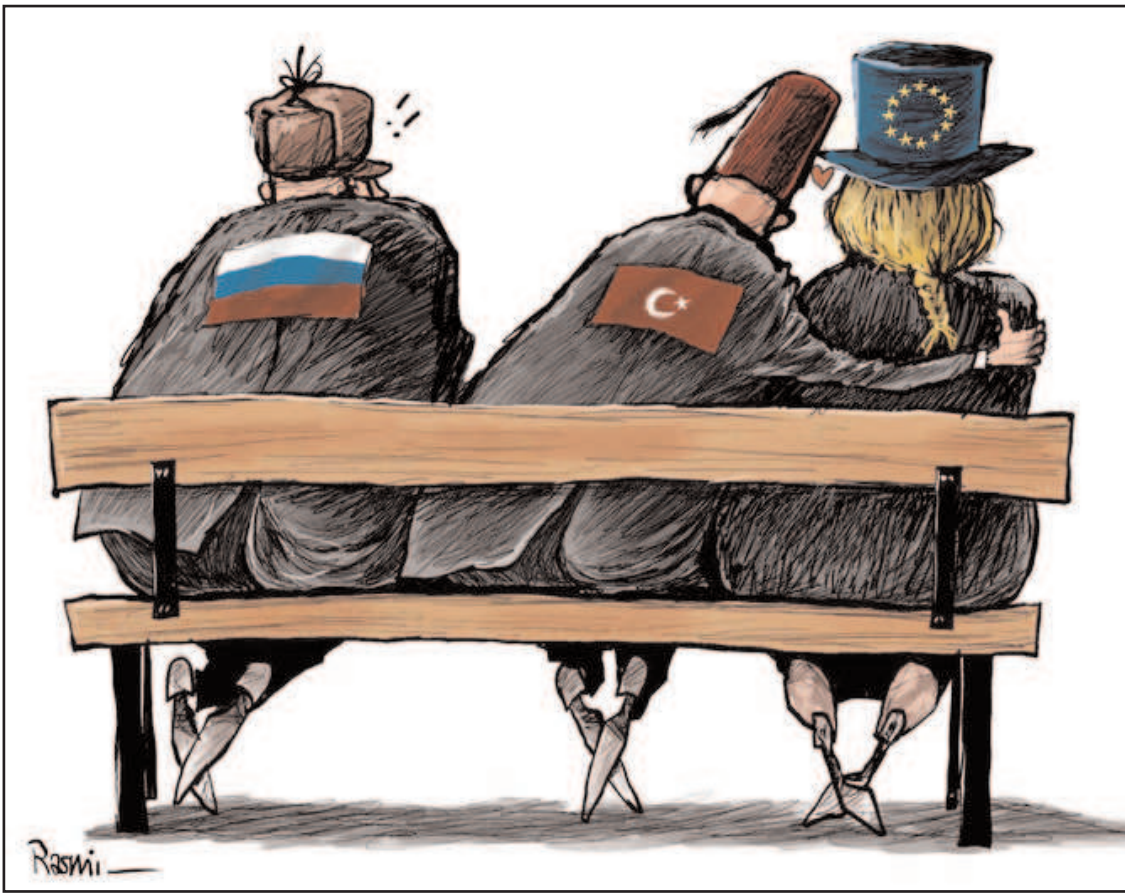
Historically, tribal clashes and land disputes are common in Erstwhile FATA because of revenue department flaws and corruption and no accurate marking on the ground, while mountainous and difficult terrains further made this job more complicated/disputed. Therefore, decadeslong controversies often lead to armed tussles between different communities residing in most parts of the newly merged Districts. According to the local Revenue department, currently, there are eight different land disputes going on in the central, lower, and upper areas of Kurram district, most of which existed long before the creation of Pakistan. Recently, the residents of the Dandar Sehra and Boshehra areas took up weapons over a fresh construction on a disputed piece of land on July 7, which shaped into a wide conflict and resulted in multiple deaths and dozens of injuries from both sides. The reports suggest that the KP Home and Tribal Affairs Department with the help of a 30-member elders jirga has been engaged in settling down the disputes and ensuring peace in the area but failed so far.

The newly merged Kurram district formerly known as Kurram Agency is a very sensitive and strategically important district of the former (Federally Administrated Tribal Area) FATA region. Kurram District lies in Central FATA on the border with Afghanistan and has adjoining boundaries with North Waziristan and Khyber Districts, which also share a border with Afghanistan and have served as terrorist sanctuaries during the pre-Zarb-e-Azb era. The Kurram District has a long history of sectarian violence and Shia-Sunni rivalries over the past several decades, while those sectarian groups have close links with national and transnational terrorist outfits and often create serious legal and security issues for the government and Law Enforcement Agencies in the country. Currently, miscreants from banned outfits and foreign Intelligence Agencies are propagating false news on social media and trying hard to label the current land dispute as a sectarian clash to ignite wider sectarian violence in the Kurram district and adjoining regions.

The newly merged Tribal Districts have attracted tremendous importance in the current geostrategic environment amid heightened global rivalry between the major powers. A previously ungoverned region with a long terrorism history, the global powers see FATA as the next arena to engage Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China simultaneously against each other through their proxies including the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), the TTP, and certain factions in Pakistan's Erstwhile FATA having deep nexus with the former high-ups of Afghanistan National Directorate of Security (NDS). For this purpose, the giant of terrorism had been reinvented in newly merged districts, and sectarian violence is being ignited in Kurram, Khyber, and Orkzai Districts to create a high-level anarchy in the entire border region. Although, the provincial government has deployed paramilitary troops and is strictly monitoring the current situation to defuse the conflict, however, those efforts are not sufficient to deal with the enormous challenge. Meanwhile, the local political leadership and notables had requested the Prime Minister and central government to intervene and get control over the situation before it gets too late and the current hostility changed into a wider ethnic and sectarian violence. There are also calls for the deployment of the regular Army to maintain the law and order situation in the violence-ridden area. Moreover, the Prime Minister should convene a high-power committee comprising political leaders, Ulema, and local elders to defuse tension and resolve the land disputes on a merit and permanent basis so this decades-long tussle comes to an end and no foreign conspiracy ever succeeds in the area.

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Settler violence should be on conscience of all Israelis

Yossi Makelberg

FOR most Israelis, what happens in the Occupied Territories stays in the Occupied Territories. Israelis are a modern version of the three wise monkeys, who "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil," ignoring what is being done on their behalf by a military in which many of them have served, by a government they voted for and by means of taxes they duly pay.

Nothing better illustrates this than the violence that Israeli settlers are accustomed to meting out to ordinary Palestinians - a violence that is constantly spiraling out of control in terms of its frequency and viciousness. The number of settlers involved in the habitual harassment and other forms of violence against Palestinians might be small, but by turning a blind eye to it, as most Israelis do, they have become complicit in these crimes.

Settler violence is not a new phenomenon and it has not gone unreported in the past, but the very nature of the current ultranationalist-religious government has legitimized this ugly phenomenon. Further red lines have now been crossed, in some cases with the explicit support of government ministers. This year, two extremely violent cases have caught the eye in the most troubling way, as entire Palestinian communities have been terrorized. Both took place in the occupied West Bank, one in February in Huwara and one last month in Turmus Ayya. In Huwara, a mob of Israeli settlers entered the town and began burning houses, vandalizing shops and torching cars and orchards. During the attack, a 37-year-old Palestinian man, Sameh Al-Aqtash, from the nearby village of Zatarah, died after being shot in the stomach, while more than 350 Palestinians were injured. The fate of Turmus Ayya was no better when masked settlers armed with assault rifles tore through the town and opened fire. As was the case in Huwara, they torched homes, cars and fields in an ugly rampage that ended with one Palestinian dead and many more wounded.

To justify their contemptible behavior, mem-

bers of this violent segment of the settler population claim their actions are in revenge for the murder of Israelis by Palestinian terrorists and are acts of deterrence. What they are really instigating is mob rule and a complete breakdown in law and order, as they take the law into their own hands and behave like a militia in order to prove that they are the masters of

while these atrocities are committed or, on other occasions, see their role as protecting the perpetrators of these crimes because they are Israeli citizens, not one of protecting the victims.

Under no circumstances should settlers be allowed to take the law into their own hands and, if there were any modicum of decency or integrity left in the government, it would have forced an immediate halt to all forms of settler violence against Palestinians.

this land. Terrorizing entire communities in revenge for the acts of individuals is primitive behavior that has no place in a civilized society. Palestinians who murder Israelis are, in most cases, killed on the scene or shortly afterward and the tiny minority who are captured are put on trial and spend decades in jail. On some occasions, the occupying force punishes their families by sealing up or even demolishing their houses, which by itself is an abhorrent practice of guilt by association followed by collective punishment. Settlers are Israeli citizens and, even if we ignore just for a brief moment the fact that their entire presence in an occupied land is illegal, their ongoing violence against Palestinians adds insult to injury. This situation is made worse by Israel's security forces, which either remain as bystanders

the government, it would have forced an immediate halt to all forms of settler violence against Palestinians. But then it might be rather naive to expect a government that itself behaves illegally and robs Palestinians of their land, and in many cases their lives, to protect the very same rogue settlers to do the right thing. Huwara and Turmus Ayya might look like extreme incidents - cases of settlers having a rush of blood to the head - but this is far from the truth. These atrocities are merely the tip of the iceberg. They are not just spontaneous, impulsive and angry reactions that themselves are no less criminal and reprehensible, but are part of a well-organized campaign of harassment against Palestinians aimed at making their lives more and more miserable until they either give up on their national aspirations and

submit to all the whims of the settlers or just pack up and leave. Not that either of these scenarios is likely to happen, but that does not stop the settlers constantly resorting to these tactics.

According to a disturbing report from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in the first six months of this year, Israeli settlers were involved in 570 attacks of various kinds, including about 160 that caused physical injuries. Various human rights organizations have made it clear that these violent acts date from the very first days of the settlements project and include "beating, throwing stones, issuing threats, torching fields, destroying trees and crops, stealing cars, damaging homes and cars, blocking roads, using live fire, and, in rare cases, killing." These settlers are no longer on the margins of Israeli politics, but at the heart of its government. Following the events in Huwara, a senior minister and a settler himself, Bezalel Smotrich, opined: "The village of Huwara needs to be wiped out. I think that the state of Israel needs to do that - not ... private individuals." Settler violence has become another branch of the occupation's oppressive machinery; one that does not adhere to any law or authority beyond that of their religious and political leaders, among whom are those who themselves have perpetrated acts of violence against Palestinians and are encouraging others to copy this contemptible behavior.

As an occupying force, Israel has the responsibility to protect the occupied civilian population. By not doing so, it becomes complicit and culpable for these actions. It is time for those who are protesting against the antidemocratic drive of the current government to add to their list of demands the call to stop settler violence. Equally, the international community, which facilitates the occupation in so many different ways, must make its voice heard in Israel's corridors of power and make it clear to the country's leaders that it will not stand idly by in the face of the suffering of innocent and vulnerable people at the hands of settlers or any other Israeli.

Arab News

Will Russia target Ukraine nuclear plants?

Jade McGlynn

EVER since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, western commentators, policy advisers, and political leaders have raised the spectre of nuclear war to argue against supplying Ukrainians with weapons of self-defence for fear of provoking Russia. But this cautious approach could backfire, leading us closer to nuclear catastrophe.

For Ukrainians, the question of whether Russia will sabotage the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP), Europe's largest, located in southern Ukraine, has long been a "when", not an "if". Last week, Ukrainian civilians and officials shared panicked messages on social media as fears of a potential attack crystallised. Russian embassies and Vladimir Putin's spokesperson appeared to be preparing disinformation lines, suggesting that Ukraine, which suffered so terribly from the Chernobyl nuclear accident, could deliberately unleash radioactive terror on its own people. While unconvincing, the rhetoric was an eerie and foreboding reminder of past Kremlin disinformation campaigns following Russian atrocities: the Skripal poisonings, the Bucha massacre, the downing of passenger jet MH17, and the destruction of the Kakhovka dam.

The instinct by some of Ukraine's allies to reduce the risk of Russia turning to its nuclear arsenal is entirely correct, but the tactics are misguided. The west's mixed signals over its willingness to defend Ukraine are widely considered to have contributed to Putin's decision to launch his genocidal war. Since the invasion 17 months ago, Putin appears to have remained convinced that he has the "strategic patience" to outlast the west and assure his victory. In his defence, he can cite some compelling evidence to support his belief. After Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, the US and EU response was underwhelming - limited to symbolic but often ineffective personal sanctions. More recently, the international community's muted reaction to the Kakhovka dam catastrophe will have hardly caused him to reconsider his strategy.

But in the absence of a clear, coordinated plan to deal with Russia's escalating nuclear threats, western leaders have edged us closer to the nuclear disaster they are seeking to avoid. Russia possesses the world's largest nuclear arsenal, a dubious achievement it is not shy of broadcasting. A nuclear war would herald the end of global civilisation. Even use of a tactical nuclear weapon, resulting in a smaller explosion, would be a catastrophe for Ukraine. Any serious assessment of nuclear risk means not underestimating this. But it is also crucial that western leaders consider the consequences of being cowed by Putin's threats, which are designed to force the world to indulge his rapacious appetite to destroy

Ukraine. By providing Ukraine with war-winning military support, the west can send a message to the Kremlin - and any other irredentist powers - that using nuclear threats will not work. Focusing on Russia's nuclear arsenal alone distracts from more immediate threats, namely the alleged positioning of explosives around ZNPP, which has been under occupation by Russian armed forces since March 2022. Russia has amassed military personnel and equipment inside the facility, and there are reports that the children and families of Ukrainian operators forced to work at ZNPP are being held hostage in Russia, having been removed from the vicinity of the plant under the guise of "evacuation". Against the backdrop of ongoing Russian war crimes in Ukraine, the fear that the Kremlin is preparing an act of nuclear terrorism is far from unreasonable.

When this could occur or what this act might look like remains unclear. Some experts suggest that it is likely Russia will blow up a small part of the plant, such as a cooled reactor, to display what it is capable of, or to slow down the Ukrainian counteroffensive. This would be unlikely to lead to radiation leakage - but there are also much riskier scenarios. A stronger explosion could cause damage to the protective shell of a reactor, spreading radiation approximately 350 miles from the site of the blast and creating a disaster of catastrophic scale. Perhaps the threats can be dismissed as part of Russia's information warfare - another way to terrorise the Ukrainian civilian population. Last week, 10 Ukrainian civilians were killed by Russian missiles in Lviv, Ukraine's most western and peaceful city. But nuclear catastrophe is not something to leave to chance or half measures. The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has worked under trying conditions to ensure the safety of the plant, but it has lost the confidence of many in Ukraine. In its latest inspection, the IAEA insisted the plant was secure but also requested further access, as it was prevented from viewing parts of the site where Ukrainian officials claim mines have been planted.

This situation is untenable. Much more robust action is needed to restore nuclear safety, and confidence. The best possible chance of demilitarising (and de-occupying) ZNPP would involve a multilateral taskforce formed of parties trusted by all sides, including the US, China, India, the UK and the EU, which could supervise the area around the station with IAEA support and expertise. In the absence of such efforts, much of Europe remains hostage to fortune. World leaders must now face up to some tough decisions, rather than giving in once more to Russian blackmail or ignoring the problem until it starts to radiate into Ukraine's atmosphere - and beyond.

The Guardian

NATO expansion alters security dynamics, woefully

Ma Xiaolin

NATO allies are gearing up for their annual summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11-12 amid growing tensions with Russia. The summit began on Tuesday with fresh momentum after Türkiye withdrew its objections to Sweden joining the alliance. On the other hand, Ukraine has been imploring the military alliance to expedite its membership process. As a legacy of the Cold War, NATO has frequently triggered regional tensions and conflicts worldwide, and despite violating its promise to Russia to not extend "even one inch" eastward, NATO is still holding talks to admit new members.

In April Finland became the 31st member of NATO, and NATO has expanded in Northern Europe. Finland's accession to NATO has profoundly changed the European political and geopolitical landscape and

will have a spillover effect on the global security situation. Finland abandoned its policy of military neutrality, which it had adhered to since the end of World War II, to become a full NATO member in perhaps the shortest span of time - Finland joined NATO before Sweden, even though they had applied to join the alliance at the same time.

This is a direct consequence of the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and a significant achievement by NATO. Since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in February 2022, there have been significant changes in the security situation in Europe, which have exceeded the nature and extent of NATO's bombing and dismemberment of Yugoslavia in 1999.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict, on the other hand, is the consequence of NATO's continuous efforts to shrink

Russia's strategic space, with the fuse being the refusal of the US and the European Union to accept Moscow's demand to stop expanding NATO eastward and posing a bigger security threat to Russia. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has led to strategic changes in the geopolitical security assessments of Switzerland, Finland and Sweden, which till recently had been pursuing a neutral foreign policy. Switzerland broke a principle it had followed for more than 200 years by freezing Russian assets, following the financial and trade sanctions by the US and the EU against Russia. And Finland and Sweden chose to join NATO ostensibly to seek "protection" from Russia.

The decision of Finland and Sweden to join NATO reflects the historical trauma of "fear and aversion to Russia", due to their long history of war with Imperial

Russia and the Soviet Union, which has shaped the territorial and border dynamics of Russia and the Baltic and some Nordic states. Despite political differences within NATO, Sweden is set to join the military alliance and help NATO expand northward and push its frontiers to the Arctic coastline.

Finland's accession to NATO and Sweden's impending membership signal the end of military neutrality for some countries, the complete reconstruction of the Nordic security framework established under the Yalta system, based on the Yalta Conference between Washington, Moscow and London, and the end of "cold peace" in the Baltic region. It also means the EU-Russia confrontation will intensify, leading to further fragmentation and division of the continent.

The two countries' accession also marks the end of the strategic differences among Western politicians over Russia, indicating the waning influence of traditional theorists and strategists on Western politicians and decision-makers. Some diplomats such as Zbigniew Brzezinski have publicly opposed NATO's unlimited expansion and "anti-Russian" stance, but their opposition has been in vain. Former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, who too was of the same view, has now changed his stance and supports Ukraine's accession to NATO.

The two countries' decision has forced Russia into a more serious security dilemma. NATO has extended and consolidated the northeast flank, bringing under its so-called defense umbrella not only the entire Gulf of Finland, the Baltic Sea and coastal countries, but also doubling the length of its border with Russia,

completing a C-shaped encirclement of Russia. As a result, the military pressure on the western front of Russia and even the Arctic region has suddenly doubled.

Finland's entry and Sweden's imminent entry into NATO will also encourage the military alliance to expand further eastward, even tempting some Asia-Pacific countries to join the alliance, and then dovetail its global security strategy with that of the US. In fact, NATO has already persuaded Japan to open a liaison office in Tokyo next year, which will allow the US-led military alliance to become a global military police and geopolitical juggernaut, sparking more geopolitical tensions and security frictions. This does not bode well for either Europe, Eurasia or the Asia-Pacific, and could increase confrontations and conflicts in the region.

The China Daily

Asia pretty much prefers the world as it is

Brad Glosserman

ANXIETY surrounding the rise of China, the rise of the rest, or the "revisionism" of certain countries reflects more than fears that those governments will use their new strength to settle scores. More worrying is the prospect of a restructuring of international relations and creation of a new "global order" with new rules and guiding principles.

Asia's rise over the last three decades, its centrality to the global economy and the wealth that it has accumulated as a result have focused attention on regional thinking about preferred conceptions of order. The long-held belief that Asian societies have different preferences from those of the West, especially regarding the relationship between the individual and the state - most particularly when it comes to democracy and human rights - has spurred considerable hand-wringing about the impact of a greater Asian role in global rule-making. A new assessment argues that concern is overstated. Asian societies have different views of how the world should work, but in many important ways, those differences are not so striking. They seek changes, but not wholesale reconstruction of the global order. In perhaps the most important ways, they prefer a restoration of principles first articulated by the West and a consistency in their application that truly aligns rhetoric with reality. The conventional wisdom is that we live in a liberal international order, or LIO, constructed by the victors of World War II. The main features of the LIO are that states are the key actors and possessors of the primary rights and responsibilities; those states are independent, equal and their interactions are based on the rule of law; and it promotes "liberal" values, such as open markets and free trade in economic relations and democracy and human rights in politics.

Like most simplifications, that's overly simple. Amitav Acharya, noted scholar of Southeast Asian affairs at American University, says that calling it "global" is hubris: "the Soviet bloc, China, India, Indonesia and a good part of the 'Third World' were outside of it ... that order was little more than the US-U.K.-West Europe-Australasian configuration." Harvard's Alastair Iain Johnston identified at least eight issue-specific orders (e.g., military, trade, information and political development). And we can take as given the exceptions, exemptions and hypocrisies that leading powers have taken since the LIO's inception that undermine any claim to equality or universality. Those exceptions fuel fears that a redistribution of wealth would force a rethinking of order.

The question then is whether we should expect a power transformation - new countries slipping into old roles ("meet the new boss, same as the old boss") - or order transformation in which new rules, principles and procedures are articulated. A decade or so ago, it was argued that China's rise - a power shift - would yield a new order as Beijing imposed and the region accepted tianxia (a Chinese concept for global governance), in which it is the "Middle Kingdom" and other countries its tributaries. That isn't going to happen, claim

Kanti Bajpai of Singapore National University and Evan Laksmana of the International Institute of Strategic Studies. Asian countries respect power but they won't kowtow.

Instead, they argue in an important new collection of country studies that examine "Asian Conceptions of International Order" (available in a special edition of the journal International Affairs), "major Asian powers are largely supportive of the reigning

al," report Bajpai and Laksmana, reflects "fear they will be held to standards that they reject as being unfair or incompatible with their traditional or contemporary values." These findings shouldn't be a surprise. Countries like Japan and South Korea may complain about status, but they are thriving democracies and market economies. The LIO reflects in large measure their values and interests. While uncomfortable with its value-oriented components, Southeast Asian

They are uncomfortable with the idea of "a progressive march toward liberal democracy," but that doesn't equate to outright opposition to the idea. Non-Western countries have made considerable contributions to international human rights law and institutions, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations making particular efforts to embed them in its bodies. So, rather than liberal international order, Asians prefer "rules-based international order," or RIO. Discomfort with the word "liberal," report Bajpai and Laksmana, reflects "fear they will be held to standards that they reject as being unfair or incompatible with their traditional or contemporary values." These findings shouldn't be a surprise. Countries like Japan and South Korea may complain about status, but they are thriving democracies and market economies. The LIO reflects in large measure their values and interests. While uncomfortable with its value-oriented components, Southeast Asian nations rely on foundational principles of the LIO - sovereignty, sovereign equality and multilateralism. Typical is the thinking of Malaysia, which according to Cheng Chwee Kiuk of the National University of Malaysia in the IA volume, views the LIO arrangements as "necessary, but flawed and problematic." Dylan Loh, of Nanyang Technological University, explained that Singapore acknowledges the "crucial role" that the LIO has played in its development since independence, even though it seeks system reform to better reflect its interests and those of other small and developing states.

constitutive as well as regulatory norms and institutions." Southeast Asia may be suspicious of US hegemony or a "free and open Indo-Pacific," but the region isn't implacably opposed to the LIO. Governments throughout East Asia support independence, equality and the rule of law, concepts that facilitate their contribution to and shaping of international relations, despite power asymmetries. Those concepts gird their resistance to domination by outside powers - or any major power - and there is no indication that those governments would accept another hegemon in Washington's place. They are uncomfortable with the idea of "a progressive march toward liberal democracy," but that doesn't equate to outright opposition to the idea. Non-Western countries have made considerable contributions to international human rights law and institutions, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations making particular efforts to embed them in its bodies.

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nations rely on foundational principles of the LIO - sovereignty, sovereign equality and multilateralism. Typical is the thinking of Malaysia, which according to Cheng Chwee Kiuk of the National University of Malaysia in the IA volume, views the LIO arrangements as "necessary, but flawed and problematic." Dylan Loh, of Nanyang Technological University, explained that Singapore acknowledges the "crucial role" that the LIO has played in its development since independence, even though it seeks system reform to better reflect its interests and those of other small and developing states. A priority is the disassociation of "liberal" from international order to prevent the use of human rights as a cudgel in geopolitical fights. Even Vietnam "increasingly identifies itself as a beneficiary, if not a stakeholder, of the LIO" - credit the economic rules and norms that have increasingly integrated the country into global supply chains - despite doubts about the "liberal" dimension as well.

As Bajpai and Laksmana point out, the LIO has provided those

countries and others with real benefits - most especially the economic engagement that has spurred national development and conferred legitimacy (meaning popular support) for governments that improve the lives of their citizens. Critical, however, are the LIO's foundational principles - sovereignty, equality and rule of law - that protect regional countries from predation by big powers in the neighborhood. Whatever the cultural affinities, there is no appetite for subordination or hierarchy as an operating principle of regional order. There may not have to be. While Indonesia and India, two of Asia's largest powers, are unhappy with their status in the world, they still seek reform within the system, rather than its overturning. As Bajpai and Laksmana report, those governments want "recognition that they should be at the high table in global institutions and that they should increasingly transition from 'norm takers' to 'norm shapers.'"

Neither of those governments poses the same challenge to the LIO as does China; but in this telling, even Beijing isn't the revisionist power that it is sometimes assumed to be. In analysis that tracks that of other China scholars - Johnston among them - Ruonan Liu, of Beijing's University of International Business and Economics, and Songpo Yang, with Tsinghua University, argue that China "continues to exhibit a significant degree of support" for the existing world order and shows no intent to replace it. It backs the core institutions of the LIO - the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank - and few governments are more fervent in their backing of the principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality. More concisely, Johnston claims that "the narrative of a US-dominated liberal international order being challenged by a revisionist China makes little conceptual or empirical sense." Although Beijing can be considered a status quo power in some respects, Liu and Yang note that "it does wish to see an international order that recognizes its great power status, provides a more equitable distribution of benefits and allows resistance to some liberal norms that may jeopardize its core interest and harm its regime security."

In an important book published a few years ago, Saadia Pekkanen of the University of Washington collected a gaggle of analyses that concluded that Asian governance would not depart significantly from prevailing models. The biggest change would be greater respect for sovereignty as states interacted. Fortification of that principle of international order has been deemed "the Eastphalian model," a twist on the legal order created by treaties signed in 1648 that ended the Thirty Years War. In other words,

Asia's revisionist impulses are really a return to first principles; they are, concluded one international legal specialist, "the perfection of Westphalia." In other words, Asia's rise looks like less of a threat to the world order than many feared. Regional governments recognize the realities of power but see current arrangements - including the US alliance system - as protective of their sovereignty and national interests.

The Japan Times

Historic breakthrough as Erdogan approves Sweden's NATO bid

Sadiq Shaban

In a promising start to the Nato Vilnius Summit, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has pledged to advance Sweden's bid to join the Nato military alliance, bringing an end to a prolonged uncertainty that strained the bloc. Last year, both Sweden and Finland abandoned their long-standing policies of military non-alignment and applied for Nato membership following the Russia-Ukraine war.

While Finland's membership was approved in April, Turkey had reservations about Sweden's bid, citing concerns over counterterrorism efforts against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), considered a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the EU, and the US. The recent announcement has been warmly received by US President Joe Biden, who is having one-on-one discussions with Erdogan during the summit. Once the Turkish parliament ratifies the accession protocol, Sweden will become the 32nd member of Nato. The military alliance feels that Sweden's participation will bolster the defence of Nato's eastern flank countries and enhance security in North Central Europe, particularly in the Baltic Sea region. The Vilnius Summit therefore sets a tone for deepening partnerships in an ever-evolving geopolitical landscape.

Turkey has finally given its long-awaited approval for Sweden to join Nato, setting off a wave of celebration at the Vilnius Summit. Nato Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, declared it a historic day as the agreement was signed between Sweden, Turkey, and Nato. The agreement eliminates the risk of Sweden being left on the outskirts of Nato, ensuring full-fledged membership. Stockholm can now accelerate its military and political adjustments, benefiting not only its own defence but also playing a pivotal role in safeguarding Northern Europe. But the excitement doesn't end there. Finland, closely tied

to Sweden in terms of security and defence, eagerly anticipates its own full integration as a Nato member. Finnish President, Sauli Niinistö, emphasised that Finland's Nato membership cannot be complete without Sweden by its side. For Nato, this deal kick-starts the Vilnius Summit on a high note, preventing any

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson emphasised the importance of countries contributing to enhanced security when joining the alliance. As celebrations erupted following talks in Vilnius, Kristersson admitted to enjoying a celebratory drink with colleagues. However, questions linger regarding the potential behind-the-scenes back-and-forth during closed-

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signs of fragmentation among the alliance's members. Stalling Sweden's progress would have jeopardised Nato's credibility and its cherished "open door" policy.

Amid this high political drama, it appears that President Erdogan has effectively leveraged his influence to push Sweden and Nato towards stricter counterterrorism measures. The icing on the cake? Sweden's unexpected support for Turkey's aspirations to revive the European Commission's accession process. It seems like a win-win situation, but will Turkey's dreams of acquiring the sought-after F-16 fighter jets from the United States materialise? All eyes are on US President Joe Biden. Sweden's stringent anti-terrorism laws, enacted in June, have been put into action for the first time, resulting in the imprisonment of a Kurdish man on charges related to terrorism financing. The court ruling included a subsequent deportation order. In a surprising twist, Sweden has also resumed its arms exports to Turkey.

door discussions. Turkey appears to have emerged as a significant beneficiary in this development. In light of Erdogan's withdrawal of opposition to Sweden's Nato membership, the US has agreed to fresh talks concerning Turkey's acquisition of F-16 fighter jets.

Some analysts argue that Sweden may have become a bargaining chip in Erdogan's larger geopolitical strategy. Supporters of Sweden's Nato membership emphasise the crucial security guarantees it offers during this volatile period in European politics. Additionally, Sweden's inclusion will provide Nato with additional resources, despite its relatively small military. Sweden has reintroduced conscription and increased defence spending, with plans to reach a military budget equivalent to 2% of the country's GDP by 2026.

With the approval of Sweden's Nato membership, the Vilnius Summit sets in motion with an affirmation of collective security and a positive outlook for the alliance's future endeavours.

Gulf News

Swimming in Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water is absurd

Li Song

THE IAEA released its report on the safety review of the nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which attracted wide international attention. The foreword to the report states clearly that it is neither a recommendation nor an endorsement of the Japan's ocean discharge policy. Furthermore, the report does not fully reflect the views of all experts participating in the review, and relevant safety conclusion is narrow with limitations. Therefore, such a report should not be regarded as a "shield" or "greenlight" for Japan's discharge plan.

Japan's discharge plan is unprecedented. On the disposal of the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water, there are options including long-term storage, hydrogen release, geosphere injection, underground burial, and vapor release. Japan has chosen the discharge plan with minimum cost among all options. Ocean discharging is not the safest or most optimal one, nor has it been widely accepted by Japan's neighbors or Pacific Islands countries. Japan requested the IAEA to undertake a safety review only after it made the decision on discharging the water into the ocean, and continually seeking the endorsement by the IAEA in every possible way. Japan's requirement on the IAEA safety review on the ocean discharge plan is extremely selective, which excluded any other options. No matter who conducts such a review, there is no way to assess and justify the legitimacy of Japan's ocean discharge plan. Drawing a simple analogy between the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear accident and effluent from nuclear power plants in normal operation in other countries is against the

common scientific knowledge. Someone even claimed that the discharged nuclear-contaminated water can be used for drinking or swimming. This is absurd. The nuclear-contaminated water comes from the cooling water injected into the damaged reactor core after the nuclear accident, as well as infiltrated underground water and rainwater. Compared with the effluent from normally operational nuclear power plants, the nuclear-contaminated water comes from different sources, contains different types of radioactive nuclides and varies in treatment difficulty level. They are fundamentally different matters.

The conclusion of the IAEA report on the safety of Japan's ocean discharge plan is quite narrow. The IAEA interlaboratory comparisons were only limited to a small number of samples collected by Japan, and the assessment made was solely based on information provided by Japan. Therefore, the conclusion in the report is not convincing enough and lacks credibility. In addition, the IAEA, restricted by its mandate, has not assessed the long-term effectiveness of Japan's purification facilities, has not verified the accuracy of relevant data, and cannot ensure the international community to be informed timely when the radioactive concentration in discharged water exceeds the discharge limits. It is even more difficult to predict the impact of long-term accumulation and concentration of radionuclides bring to the marine ecosystems, food safety, and public health. Since data accuracy, equipment reliability and effective safety regulation cannot be ensured, it is impossible to draw the conclusion that it is safe to discharge more than 1.3 million tons of nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean more

than three decades. China is seriously concerned and strongly opposes to Japan's decision. We urge that Japan's disposal of the nuclear-contaminated water should be in a science-based, safe and transparent manner, and Japan should not forcibly push through its ocean discharge plan. Moreover, China insists that the IAEA should take the lead in establishing an independent and effective international monitoring mechanism, with full participation of third-party laboratories, especially those from neighboring countries of Japan, to conduct long-term and effective international monitoring on the ocean discharge plan that has been consistently pushed forward by Japan. The mechanism should include monitoring on the source term of the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water and the environment, and radiation environmental impact assessment, release in a timely and transparent manner credible data and information to stakeholders and international community, and subject itself to oversight and questioning.

Over the past week, the people of Japan's neighbors and Pacific island countries have increasingly expressed doubts and opposition to Japan's ocean discharge plan as well as to the IAEA report. The public opinion shall not be ignored. The narrow conclusion from the IAEA report and the absurd idea of swimming in the contaminated water cannot conceal the long-term and uncertain risks to the people and the environment caused by the discharge of Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean. Once again, China urges Japan to stop the ocean discharge plan, otherwise it should bear all consequences arising from it and historical responsibilities. The IAEA should take on a responsible and professional role.

The Telegraph

Keir Starmer isn't the new Blair: He's Labour's answer to David Cameron

Sherelle Jacobs

HISTORY doesn't repeat itself but it rhymes, so they say. Yet sometimes this is just a trick of the ear - the faded echo of a moment lost in time. Still, the centre-curious are straining to hear the same mood music as that which preceded Tony Blair's historic victory in 1997. True, there is the same low roar of an approaching tsunami in the Tory camp that can no longer be dismissed as a passing train. Meanwhile, a cling-film wrapped Opposition is once more shuffling and squeaking toward final victory. There is more than a touch of déjà vu in the Labour camp's militant ban on "complacency"; so too its freshly laminated negative spending pledges, intended to reassure the middle classes.

Even so, it is premature to consider this a repeat event. For one, Keir Starmer's distinct lack of New Labourish reforming grit is on the brink of being rumbled. While he may have quietly crushed the Corbynites, he is flailing in the face of a new green anti-growth coalition that is determined to slow choke urban capitalism by erecting low-traffic neighbourhoods and terminate North Sea oil exploration. Naturally, weak conviction works both ways; the prospective PM has also watered down his £28-billion flagship green policy amid scrutiny over costs. The biggest difference between Starmer and Blair is the unprecedented - and frankly dangerous - circumstance of Labour's imminent rise to power. Behind the scenes, Blair was oppressed by the epicness of his ascendancy, muttering "it isn't real" on the jet ride from his Sedgfield constituency to London. Starmer, by contrast, must feel increasingly appalled by the

unheroic narrowness of his options. Inflation, stagnation and the City of London's coagulation into a superblob has liquidated any prospect of reviving New Labour's welfare capitalist model. Put simply, Britain is both broken and broke. A return to Blairism is simply impossible.

In reality then, Starmer's situation is more similar to that of David Cameron. The Labour camp is electrified with the same terrorised cunning as that of the Camerons in 2010. In particular, shadow ministers are casting about for a "sticky", simple narrative that they can use to endlessly blame the Tories. While, in the Coalition's case, the contention was that New Labour spent too much money, Team Starmer are irresistibly drifting towards the idea that the Tories didn't spend enough. A gripping Hollywood storyline of Tory dogma and depravity is being road-tested on the Labour speech circuit. A favourite line of Rachel Reeves is that the Liz Truss experiment was "the last gasp of a failed economic philosophy" - one that would boil down to 13 years of misplaced faith in deregulation and the free market.

Like many promising political narratives, it is mainly bunkum. The Tories have in fact moved to the Left in government. And besides, the crisis that has engulfed them is not so much the unravelling of Thatcherism as the continued implosion of the Blairite Third Way. Subsidising a cheap-wage economy through in-work benefits has failed to prevent many from calculating that they are better off on full-time welfare. Creeping regulation and quantitative easing binges have fostered a

world that bolsters billionaires and those on benefits, but punishes everyone in between. Starmer will be compelled to gloss over all this, as he offers a Left-wing panacea. Crucially, it will not be socialist ideology that galvanises him, but the gravitational pull of political logic. As the Cameron era teaches, once a government decides on a blame narrative to keep voters onside, it must be reinforced with actions that signal a drastic departure from the soiled predecessors. With Cameron, it meant excessive austerity. With Starmer, it may well lead us down the rabbit hole of bold state interventionism and soaking the rich. Such a path will be all the more tempting as the Labour leader looks for ways to finance his flagship childcare and green prosperity plans.

Our economic policy would enter unprecedented territory. In 1974, the Treasury supposedly crushed Harold Wilson's bid for a wealth tax. Today though, Starmer may well be surprised to find the establishment on his side. A powerful global consensus - from the IMF to Harvard - has formed around the notion that inequality is harming growth. Some of the more ebullient activist-academics have started to argue that well-crafted wealth taxes can even kickstart an economy, by forcing billionaires to invest their money in entrepreneurship rather than accumulating assets. It's easy, then, to foresee a grim scenario where a Labour government becomes more reckless with time.

Just as the Coalition was dumbfounded when so many working-class voters applauded them for slashing benefits, shadow ministers



Implementation of consistent policies imperative for economic growth, prosperity

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi stressed the need for implementation of consistent policies to bring economic stability in the country.

The SCCI's acting chief emphasized that the chambers and business community should be consulted before the formation of policies, which would have long-lasting and durable impacts on the national economy and the country will lead toward sustainable development.

Ijaz Khan Afridi was speaking during the study visit of participants of the 37th Mid-Career Management Course of the National Institute of Management Islamabad held at the chamber's house on Wednesday.

The senior officers' delegation was led by NIM

Islamabad Directing Staff Ms Sema A Khan.

During visit of the senior officers, the SCCI's former presidents Faud Ishaq, Zahidullah Shinwari, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sherbaz Bilour, former senior vice presidents Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Imran Khan Mohmand, members of the chamber's executive committee Haji Ghulam Hussain, Hafaf Ali Khan, Laal Badshah, Monawar Khurshid, Qurat Ul Ain, and Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ihsanullah, Ishtiaq Muhammad, Qaiser Shahzad, NIM senior officers, trader, industrialist and members of business community were present in a large number.

On the occasion, a briefing through a multimedia presentation to NIM senior officers was given regarding the chamber history, important goals, future planning, projects and other important initiatives for welfare of the

business community.

During the meeting, the participants asked various queries regarding industrialization in newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, grievances of business community on non-opening of Letter of Credits (LCs), establishment of Special Economic Zones in KP, industrialization, Ease of Doing Business, along with bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The SCCI's acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi, former presidents Faud Ishaq, Zahidullah Shinwari, Zulfiqar Ali Khan Sherbaz Bilour and others responded to all questions of the participants comprehensively.

Faud Ishaq and Zahidullah Shinwari and others asserted the implementation of consistent and durable policies are essential for industrialization, economic growth and development.

The chamber's senior members called for taking pragmatic steps for resolving issues pertaining to imports and exports and provision of facilities to existing industries to stabilize the national economy.

The speakers said the economic policies should be framed by making proper consultation with chambers, traders and relevant stakeholders.

They also stressed the need for building of concrete coordination and liaison between government institutions, chambers and the trading community.

Earlier, the SCCI acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi highlighted initiatives that had been made by SCCI for welfare and resolution of traders' community issues.

He expressed the hope that senior officers and bureaucracy will cooperate with the business community for economic stability and progress in the country.



PESHAWAR: Acting President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ijaz Khan Afridi presiding over a shield to NIM Islamabad Directing Staff Ms. Sema A Khan.

Dar seeks roadmap for outsourcing of first airport

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday sought a roadmap with timelines to move forward for the outsourcing of the first airport to improve service delivery and match the best international aviation practices in Pakistan.

The minister was chairing a meeting of the steering committee to oversee the outsourcing of airports' operations, according to a Finance Ministry press release.

Officials of the International Finance Corporation, the transaction advisor, briefed the meeting about the latest status and progress on the matter.

Besides the IFC team, the meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique; Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa; SAPM on Government Effectiveness Dr Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan; and senior officers from Aviation and Finance divisions.

The minister said we could not only share our concerns through such events but also how could we provide cost effective medicines to Pakistan and abroad.

Meanwhile, CEO Martin Dow Javed Ghulam Muhammad said the purpose of the summit was to discuss challenges and export potential of pharmaceutical industry, adding that currently the global pharmaceutical market export stood at \$ 1.8 trillion with five per cent annual growth.

The minister said North America was a major player in pharma export with 43 per cent while rest of the world had 25 per cent.

Tourism can generate foreign exchange

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Punjab have agreed to put joint efforts to promote religious tourism to earn foreign exchange.

These views were expressed by Acting President RCCI Faisal Shahzad in a meeting with Secretary Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Punjab Rana Muhammad Arif at the chamber house.

Faisal said that Pakistan has a largely unexplored avenue of tourism in the religious sector primarily Sikh and Buddhist tourism which can potentially generate millions of dollars for Pakistan, and create over 100,000 jobs.

Pakistan contains numerous sacred sites of different religions like Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism that can easily be transformed into tourist destinations, he added.

Secretary ETPB Punjab Rana Muhammad Arif informed that the ETPB was working to develop international competitive religious tourism sector to fully realize its diverse potential and making religious tourism a leading economic sector for the country through public-private partnership.

He said that ETPB had around 70,000 sites and properties including religious shrines and "We are trying to explore our tourist sites and to develop infrastructure and accessibility of those sites to promote the soft image of Pakistan."

Gold rates down by Rs.500 to 204,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs500 and was sold at Rs.204,000 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs. 204,500 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.429 to Rs.174,897 from Rs.175,326 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs.160,322 from Rs.160,715, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.70 to Rs2,550 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.60 to Rs.2,186.21

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$14 to \$1946 from \$1932, the association reported.

HC Rwanda for enhancing trade relations with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan James Kimonyo here on Wednesday invited the business community to invest in different sectors of its economy and assured the full support and facilitation by the embassy for promoting bilateral trade and investment relations between both countries.

Talking to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari during his visit to the chamber the envoy asked the local business community to take advantage of the business-friendly environment of Rwanda and look into the opportunities of trade and investment existing in its different sec-

tor of economy.

There are many possibilities to take the trade relations between Pakistan and Rwanda to new heights, he said adding that Rwanda is the best investment destination for the business community with its business-friendly environment, peace, and transparency, said a press release.

Rwanda can be a launching pad for Pakistan in the Central Africa region as this region is a vast market with 300 million population and eight countries, he said adding that it has overcome the difficulties faced in the past and become a strong and fast developing country.

Speaking on this occasion, President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that

the present trade volume between Pakistan and Rwanda is 34 million dollars, in which Pakistan's share is only 4 million dollars.

This trade volume is far below then the existing potential of both countries and needed to double in the next few years, he said adding that the pharmaceuticals is a sector in which Pakistan has the most investment opportunities.

Apart from this, sectors like sports goods, leather, textile, and construction can also play an important role in improving the trade relations between Pakistan and Rwanda, he said adding that Pakistan's defense export sector has a unique position in the world.

Management Course delegation visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): A delegation of inland study tour of the 37th Mid-Career Management Course from Pakistan Institute of Management Islamabad visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Wednesday.

SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh and others welcomed the guests.

While briefing the delegation, Abdul Ghafoor Malik said the business survived and flourished under an enabling environment for which the role of government and bureaucracy

was important.

"We believe that the government should take all necessary measures for improving the ease of doing business environment in the country to ensure steady growth in the private sector and to attract higher levels of foreign direct investment", he added.

He said the Sialkot Chamber attached extreme importance to maintaining linkages with the government quarters in its advocacy and lobbying efforts and seeks your cooperation in the greater interest of trade and industry.

The president SCCI

said:" Our footballs, field hockey sticks, cricketing gear, and boxing gloves are used in international games, including the Olympics and the World Cups".

Malik said: " The inheritance of skilled craftsmanship in manufacturing surgical instruments from a history spanning over a century had enabled us to manufacture premium quality surgical instruments which are exported to over 140 countries around the world and are used by Medics, Surgeons, Beauticians, and Dentists with complete trust".

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, MSC Alma-VII, GC-Argon, Santa Ace and Milaha Qatar, carrying Container, Palm oil, Coal and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Electric Power Terminal and Gas Port Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, four more ships, MSC Shanella-V, Aurelia, Leon and Al-Areesh with Container, Palm oil, Coal and LNG also arrived at the outer

anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

PQA berths were engaged by 07 ships during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Lisa, MSC Alma-VII and Atrotos Hercules are expected to sail on Wednesday.

A cargo volume of 193,843 tonnes, comprising 166,643 tonnes imports Cargo and 27,200 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,200 Containers (2,600 TEUs Imports and 1,600 TEUs

export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are seven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Leon, Al-Areesh and MSC Shanella-V & MSC Cape Town-III carrying Coal, LNG and Container are expected to take berths at, Bulk Terminal, Engro Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on 12 July, while another container ship, Vancouver is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

Oil up as markets continue pricing in market tightness

ANKARA (APP): Oil prices increased on Wednesday as OPEC+ cuts continued to fuel upward price movements in a tight market; however, price rises were tempered by weak demand projections based on US crude stockpile data and dismal global economic performance.

International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$79.48 per barrel at 10.32 a.m. local time, a 0.07% gain from the closing price of \$79.42 a barrel in the previous trading session on Friday.

The American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at the same time at \$74.86 per barrel, up 0.04% from the previous session's close of \$74.83 per barrel.

The price of Brent crude

breached the threshold of \$80 per barrel during the previous trading session for the first time in months on fears that the OPEC+ cuts announced last week will further tighten supply.

Last week, Russia and Saudi Arabia said they would cut supply in August by 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) and 1 million bpd, respectively, to ensure market stability. Algeria later said it would also reduce output by an extra 200,000 bpd for August.

Price increases came despite the American Petroleum Institute's announcement late Tuesday of an estimated increase of 3 million barrels in US crude oil inventories, more than the market expectation of a 200,000-barrel rise.

If crude stocks rise faster

than predicted, it indicates less demand and a bearish outlook for crude prices.

The US Energy Information Administration's data on oil stocks will be announced later on Wednesday, and if the increase in stock levels is confirmed, prices are expected to decline.

The monetary tightening steps of major central banks in response to inflationary surges, persistent geopolitical risks, and growing recessionary concerns continue to exert downward pressure on prices.

The US Federal Reserve (Fed) will publish later on Wednesday its Beige Book, which gauges economic conditions and offers investor direction on the Fed's next interest rate move.

Pakistan eyes to enhance pharma exports to \$5 bln by 2030: Qamar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar Wednesday stressed the need for collective efforts to boost pharmaceutical exports upto \$1 billion by 2025 and by \$5 billion by 2030 to improve exchange reserves of the country.

Realizing the export potential of the pharmaceutical sector, he said the government, pharma industry players and regulatory bodies should join together to tap the true potential of this particular sector and help economic development of the country.

Speaking at the 6th Pakistan Pharma Summit and Pharma Export Summit and Awards (PESA) 2023, the minister outlined the government's plans to significantly increase Pakistan's pharmaceutical exports.

The event was organized by the Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PPMA), brought together industry leaders, experts, and stakeholders to discuss strategies for growth and innovation in the pharmaceutical sector.

While highlighting the immense opportunities for growth in the global phar-

maceutical market, valued at \$1.4 trillion, the minister emphasized the need for Pakistan to benefit from it.

Expressing gratitude to Chairman of PPMA Syed Farooq Bukhari, and Chairman of the organizing committee Dr. Kaiser Waheed, for their exceptional leadership in arranging the prestigious summit, the minister said pharmaceutical market of Pakistan was growing very fast and together, we could make Pakistan a leading player in the global pharmaceutical market.

He said in order to enhance pharmaceutical exports, we must prioritize local manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) to reduce our dependence on imports besides aligning with international standards.

This would not only make us self-reliant but also create opportunities for export-oriented growth, he remarked.

He said by complying with global regulations and certifications, we could access more lucrative export markets, ensuring the quality and competitiveness of our pharmaceu-

tical products.

"The government was committed to providing support and incentives to facilitate the growth of pharmaceutical industry. Duties on APIs have already been abolished besides allowing toll manufacturing, and setting the pharma industry tariff under the commerce ministry" he added.

The minister said the government was also working on rationalizing tariffs and creating a conducive regulatory environment that fosters innovation and growth.

Naveed Qamar also urged all stakeholders to explore opportunities for growth, invest in research and development, and strive for excellence in quality and standards.

Earlier, Chairman Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacture Association (PPMA) Syed Farooq Bukhari said the summit aimed at showcasing for export purpose and recognizing those companies which performed well in the pharmaceutical sector.

It would also allow policy makers and other stakeholders to sit together for formu-

lating cohesive policy for the pharma sector, he added.

Chairman organizing committee and MD Medisure Laboratories Dr Kaiser Waheed while welcoming the distinguish guests including from abroad, said that this was 6th event in last 10 years which was organized to recognize the efforts of pharmaceutical industry.

The government's vision was to boost exports, he added.

The minister said we could not only share our concerns through such events but also how could we provide cost effective medicines to Pakistan and abroad.

Meanwhile, CEO Martin Dow Javed Ghulam Muhammad said the purpose of the summit was to discuss challenges and export potential of pharmaceutical industry, adding that currently the global pharmaceutical market export stood at \$ 1.8 trillion with five per cent annual growth.

The minister said North America was a major player in pharma export with 43 per cent while rest of the world had 25 per cent.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 359 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 359.15 points, a positive change of 0.08 percent, closing at 45,514.95 points against 45,155.80 points the previous trading day.

A total of 450,259,607 shares were traded during the day as compared to 555,100,181 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 13.139 billion against Rs

15.487 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 359 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 173 of them recorded gains and 163 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 49,959,283 shares at Rs 1.29 per share; Unity Foods Ltd with 20,347,892 shares at Rs.22.50 per share and Pak Int. Bulk Ltd with 18,202,500 shares at Rs.4.61 per share.

Rathan Maize witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 315.05 per share price, closing at Rs 8,913.00,

whereas the runner-up was Colgate Palm with an Rs 73.78 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,275.83.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 548.90 per share closing at Rs 22,901.00; followed by Reliance Cotton with Rs 37.00 decline to close at Rs 458.00.

Rupee gains Rs 1.09 against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday gained Rs 1.09 against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 277.47 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.56.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars

in the open market stood at Rs 278 and Rs 281 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 85 paisa to close at Rs 305.90 against the last day's closing of Rs 306.75, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.98, whereas an increase of 13 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 359.14 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 359.01.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 30 paisa and 29 paisa to close at Rs 75.54 and Rs 73.97, respectively.

PPMA delegation calls on Chairman FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association (PPMA) Wednesday called on the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue Asim Ahmad and discussed issues related to sale tax regime governing the pharma sector.

The delegation was led by Chairman PPMA Syed Farooq Bukhari including

members as well as ex Chairman of the Association, said a press release.

The meeting was also attended by Member IR-Policy FBR Afaq Ahmad Qureshi.

The delegation invited Chairman FBR to attend the Pharma Export Seminar on July 12 and several other operational issues were also discussed

during the meeting.

The chairman assured the delegation of all possible support for resolution of issues being faced by the Pharma industry.

Chinese shares closed lower

BEIJING (APP): Chinese stocks closed lower on Wednesday, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index down 0.78 percent to 3,196.13 points. The Shenzhen Component Index closed 0.99 percent lower at 10,919.26 points. The combined turnover of stocks covered by the two indices stood at 911.9 billion yuan (about 127.07 billion US dollars), up from 773.7 billion yuan on the previous trading day.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 230/1. Institution. 5/4/2022. Date of hearing. 17/7/2023. Mst. Husan Khaist etc VS Imran Khan etc. Notice to No.18/1. Sher Rehman. 18/2. Bakhti Talib Khan Khan. 18/6. Hamid Khan sons of Shazaren Khan. 28/2. Rehmani Gul. 28/4. Mohamad Akbar. 28/6. Mohamad Husain sons of Khaista Gul. 30/1. Mst Bakhti Nisa widow Abdul Ghafar. 33/2. Mumtaz s/o Sultanzeb. 35/2. Abdali Khan. 35/3. Abdul Hamed Khan sons of Gulzar residents of Malakpur tehsel Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 17/7/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Delegations calls on RMO Afzal Khan

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Table Tennis delegation called on RMO Afzal Khan here at his office and discussed in detail ways and means regarding the promotion of table tennis in District Abbottabad. The delegation of District Table Tennis Association, Zahid Khan, Sajid Rafiq, Shaukat Hussain and women players Komal congratulated Afzal Khan for becoming RMO. The delegation appraised Afzal Khan regarding the performance of the players in various national junior and national seniors' Championship. The delegation also assured him that the players would continue their hard work for the good name of the District. Afzal Khan assured the delegation more cooperation and support for the promotion of table tennis in the District. He also approved the Naran-Kaghan Tour on the request of the players, on which the players expressed their happiness. Afzal Khan said that he did all possible support for the promotion of table tennis in future as well.

US surfer Jones dead at 44

NEW YORK (AFP): American professional surfer Mikala Jones, known for shooting striking photographs inside barreling waves, has died after a surfing accident in Indonesia. He was 44. The death of the Hawaii-born surfer, who lived in Indonesia, was announced by his daughter Isabella in a Sunday social media post "I'm in so much disbelief right now, this doesn't feel real," Isabella wrote in an Instagram post. "I wish this never happened and we could just wake up and go surf together tomorrow morning." In explaining her father's death, she said: "I'm not sure how to put this in words, but my dad got into a bad surfing accident and didn't make it. I'm happy he was doing what he loved the most. Life will never be the same without you. "Thank you for teaching me so many life lessons, and always being there for me. I wish you were still here with us right now. I will always be thinking about you dad." Reef apparel paid tribute to Jones on its website, calling him, "a father, an explorer of uncharted surf, and arguably one of the most barreled surfers on the planet."

Junior Squash training camp

ABBOTTABAD (APP): In an effort to nurture young talent and promote squash at the grassroots level Wednesday the Jan Sher Khan Squash Complex commenced Junior Squash Training Camp. The camp witnessed an impressive turnout on its inaugural day, with over 50 enthusiastic children participating. The camp was formally inaugurated by the former DG sports and President of the Regional Squash Association Hazara, Tariq Mahmood, accompanied by Abrar Shah, Secretary of Squash Association Hazara, Dr. Shakir Hafeez, Director of Squash Courts, and Shaukat Hussain. Tariq Mahmood, in his speech, underscored the vital role of grassroots development in catapulting the sport to new heights. He envisioned the young participants of this camp as future ambassadors of the country, equipped with a diverse range of techniques. He firmly believed that their accomplishments would not only bring glory to themselves but also elevate the nation's name on the international squash stage.



LONDON: Ons Jabeur of Tunisia plays a forehand in the Women's Singles quarter finals match against Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan during day ten of The Championships Wimbledon.

Babar, Saud hit early form in drawn warm-up game in SL

HAMBANTOTA (Monitoring Desk): Babar Azam and Saud Shakeel stroked half-centuries as Pakistan's two-day warm-up match against the SLC Board XI ended in a draw in Hambantota Wednesday. Babar, who started the day at 14, retired after scoring 79, while Saud, who was yet to get off the mark, retired after scoring 61 as Pakistan were bowled out for 342 in reply to the home side's 196.

When the match ended, the home side were 88 for four with Salman Ali Agha picking up two wickets and Naseem Shah and Shaheen Shah Afridi bagging a wicket each.

Babar faced 113 balls and hit seven fours and a six, while Saud's 86-ball innings included six fours. Sarfaraz Ahmed remained not out on a 26-ball 17. The form shown by Babar, Saud and Shan Masood, along with openers Imam-ul-Haq and Abdullah Shafique, will give a lot of confidence to the Pakistan batting for the first Test, which commences in Galle on Sunday, 16 July.

Apart from the batters, Shaheen was also impressive in his return to red-ball cricket, scooping four wickets, with Hasan Ali claiming three, and Abrar Ahmed and Aamir Jamal equally sharing four wickets apiece.

While Sarfaraz scored unbeaten 17 with the bat, he held four catches. Scores in brief (day 2 of 2): 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) and 88-4, 30 overs (Nuwanidu Fernando 31 not out, Nipun Dhananjaya 26 not out; Salman Ali Agha 2-18) Pakistan 342 all-out, 78.3 overs (Shan Masood 83, Babar Azam 79 retired, Saud Shakeel 61 retired, Imam-ul-Haq 36, Abdullah Shafique 25; Lakshitha Manasinghe 4-82, Praveen Jayawickrama 2-89).

Guyana Amazon Warriors pick Saim Ayub, Mohammad Haris for CPL

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): West Indies's marquee T20 event Caribbean Premier League (CPL) franchise Guyana Amazon Warriors picked Mohammad Haris and Saim Ayub for the upcoming edition of the tournament.

The 11th edition of the CPL will run from August 17 to September 25 with six teams fighting to get their hands on the coveted title.

Meanwhile, the CPL on Wednesday, revealed three teams have confirmed their fifth overseas player ahead of this year's extravaganza. Consequently, the five-time runners-up Guyana Amazon Warriors have bolstered their squad with the addition of Pakistan batting prodigy Saim Ayub and Mohammad Haris.

Saim rose to fame during

this year's Pakistan Super League (PSL). He scored 341 runs in 12 matches, at a strike rate of 165.53 with the help of five half-centuries.

The left-handed batter, at the back of a scintillating domestic record, got his maiden call-up for the away T20I series against Afghanistan in March.

He opened the innings for Pakistan in the three-match series against Afghanistan and scored 66 runs in as many matches, including a sensible 49-run knock in the final fixture.

Additionally, the Warriors have also announced that Rahmanullah Gurbaz will not be available for some of this year's CPL due to international commitments. Gurbaz will be replaced by Pakistan inter-

national Mohammad Haris for that period.

Notably, Wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Haris will captain Pakistan Shaheens in the eight-team 15-match ACC Men's Emerging Asia Cup 2023, which is scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka from 14 to 23 July.

Haris-led Pakistan Shaheens squad was scheduled to depart in the wee hours of Tuesday from Lahore for Sri Lanka via Dubai to feature in the eight-team tournament.

Shaheens are slotted in Group B with India A, Nepal and UAE A. Shaheens will open their campaign on 14 July with a match against Nepal, after which they play UAE A and India A on 17 and 19 July, respectively.

Sanjay Dutt eager to meet Javed Miandad in LPL

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Prominent Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt has expressed his desire to meet Pakistan's cricket legend Javed Miandad.

In a video message for the former skipper of the national cricket team, Javed Miandad, Bollywood celebrity Sanjay Dutt extended his greetings and expressed his desire to meet him soon in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

In the clip, Sanjay Dutt, who has recently joined the Lankan Premier League as the co-owner of the T20 franchise team, B Love Kandy, shared his fondness for Javed Miandad and the mentor of the team. "It feels so good to see you after this long. See you soon in Kandy," Dutt addressed Miandad in the video.

Sharing the clip on his Twitter handle, the cricket icon wrote, "Thank you Dear @duttсанжай and @OmarKhanOK2 for all the love, anxiously waiting to join @BLoveKandy in August 2023 in #LPL2023."

It is pertinent to mention that the fourth edition of LPL, the T20 franchise cricket tournament in Sri Lanka, is scheduled to be played between five teams, from July 31 to August 22.

A total of 13 Pakistan cricketers were roped in for the upcoming fourth edition of the Lanka Premier League (LPL) in the player auction which took place last month.

Notably, before the auction took place, some of Pakistan's notable cricketers had already found new homes in the LPL. Leading the charge is the formidable Pakistan captain, Babar Azam, who will be representing the Colombo Strikers.

Joining Babar in the LPL was the young and fiery fast bowler, Naseem Shah, who had also been acquired by the Colombo franchise.

Another key addition to the LPL is the explosive batsman, Fakhar Zaman, who will be donning the colours of the B-Love Kandy team.

Wimbledon 2023 Elena Rybakina beaten by Ons Jabeur in quarter-finals

LONDON (Agencies): Defending champion Elena Rybakina lost in the Wimbledon quarter-finals as Ons Jabeur avenged her defeat in last year's final.

In a reverse of the match 12 months ago, sixth seed Jabeur came from a set down to win 6-7 (5-7) 6-4 6-1. The Tunisian sixth seed clinched the second set with a timely break of serve at 5-4 and then dominated the decider.

Jabeur will play Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals on Thursday after she powered past Madison Keys. Belarusian second seed Sabalenka beat the American 6-2 6-4 - keeping alive her quest to win a first Wimbledon title and replace Iga Swiatek as world number one.

Rybakina's exit means there is guaranteed to be a first-time women's singles champion this year. Jabeur was far more aggressive than she was last year against a player known for her powerful shot-making, with the Tunisian hitting 35 winners to Rybakina's 21.

"I said I am going for my shots because if you try to go easy with her it is not going to work," Jabeur said. "It is not easy playing her but I wish we could exchange this match for the finals last year." Rybakina had only lost her serve once in the entire tournament before the quarter-final but the Kazakh was put under constant pressure by Jabeur.

Jabeur broke twice in the first set before losing it on a tie-break, twice more in the decider and, crucially, once in the second. With the second set in the balance, Jabeur hit a fine backhand return winner to start the game and

then forced Rybakina to twice push backhands into the tramlines.

That game levelled the match and was the second in a run of five games in a row for the Tunisian - games which ultimately decided the contest. Rybakina threatened to overturn Jabeur's 3-1 lead in the third but, helped by two tight challenges, Jabeur fought off danger before closing out the win to set up the meeting with Sabalenka.

"I saw she won very quick which I wasn't happy with," Jabeur said of Sabalenka. "She is an amazing player. She hits very fast like Elena so it will be very challenging. "It will be a difficult match but I will keep this spirit on the court and hopefully the crowd will be with me."

"Different player" Sabalenka into second Wimbledon semi

Second seed Sabalenka will be making her fourth successive Grand Slam semi-final when she faces Jabeur on Thursday. The Belarusian won the Australian Open in January and will go to the top of the world rankings if she reaches Saturday's final.

She was only briefly threatened by Keys when, after storming through the first set, she trailed 4-2 in the second, but the challenge seemingly made her find yet another gear in her already high level.

She broke back twice and served out victory, sealing it on her second match point with an emphatic serve that 25th seed Keys could only send long. Sabalenka will be playing in her second Wimbledon semi-final after a three-set loss to Czech Karolina Pliskova two years

ago and she says her game has developed since then.

"I can't wait to play my second semi-final and hopefully I can do better," she said in her on-court interview. "Since that semi-final I changed a lot. I did a lot of work and think I am a different player now."

Sabalenka was unable to play at last year's grass-court Grand Slam at the All England Club because of the ban on Russians and Belarusians following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But she has returned with a hunger to lift a trophy she has dreamed of winning since she was a child and wasted no time in taking charge against 28-year-old Keys, who won the Eastbourne title last month.

She broke in the opening game and faced only one break point in the first set, which came when she was serving for the set and which she fended off, before sealing the opener with an unreturnable, booming serve.

The sheer effort she puts in to get the power on her groundstrokes is audible every time she hits the ball and those decibels rose even more with the roar that she unleashed after turning around the second set by winning 12 points in a row from being 4-2 down with Keys serving at 40-0.

She failed to convert her first match point when a net cord bounced the wrong way for her but made no mistake on the second as she moved a step closer to a second major singles title. "Since I was little I was dreaming about the Wimbledon title, it is something special," she said. "Wimbledon is different, it's more special."



MOULINS: Jasper Philipsen of Belgium and Team Alpecin-Deceuninck - Green Points Jersey celebrates at finish line as stage winner during the stage eleven of the 110th Tour de France 2023.

Major League Cricket aims for US breakthrough

MIAMI (AFP): The most ambitious attempt yet to establish professional cricket in the United States gets under way on Wednesday when wickets will be pitched for the start of the inaugural season of Major League Cricket.

With backing from four franchises in the Indian Premier League, including the league's most successful teams the Mumbai Indians and the Chennai Super Kings, MLC has plenty of money and expertise behind it, unlike prior attempts to crack the American market.

As well as financial muscle and television deals, MLC has also been sanctioned by USA Cricket and the International Cricket Council — rubber stamps that have been absent from short-lived private ventures in the past.

Like the IPL, the league will play the shortest and most explosive version of cricket, Twenty20, and has recruited some experienced international players.

England opening batsman Jason Roy, Australian batsman Aaron Finch, South African pace bowler Kagiso Rabada and West Indies spinner Sunil Narine are among the foreign players drafted by the six teams.

While cricket has long been played at a recreational level in the USA — the first-ever international game being between the USA and Canada at New York in 1844 — there remains a shortage of facilities for the sport in a country where baseball is beloved.

A former baseball park in North Texas, Grand Prairie Stadium, has been transformed into a cricket-specific venue and will be the site of the opener when the Texas Super Kings face the Los Angeles Knight Riders.

Other games will be played in Morrisville, North Carolina, before the playoffs and final return to Texas.

While organizers expect good levels of support from fans with family backgrounds in cricket-loving countries, they aim to gradually win over the broader American public.

"The goal is to grow the game of cricket and expose the sport in the USA," tournament director Justin Geale, told AFP. "We've got some of the best players in the world that can actually represent the product, do it justice. So it's going to be a good quality game of cricket that gives us the best chance to show existing fans and new fans the game. "We've got as far as anyone ever has. So after all the false starts, I think it's finally here."

"An exciting project"

Part of the groundwork that MLC did was been the creation of Minor League Cricket, a 26-team competition which began in 2021 to spark domestic player development.

6-member Pak team to feature in World Scrabble C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tariq Pervaz will lead Pakistan team in the World Scrabble Championship (WESPAC) 2023 scheduled to be held at Las Vegas, USA from July 22 to 25.

The championship will likely feature about 300 of the world's finest players. Tariq Pervaz would lead Pakistan team comprising Pakistan's No. 1 Waseem Khatri, Muhammad Inayatullah, Hassan Hadi Khan, Hammad Hadi Khan and Hasham Hadi Khan.

Four of Pakistan's top players were unable to participate as their visa could not be issued on time. The championship played every two years has reserved seats for the world youth champions of the last two years.

It may be mentioned that the winners of the 2021 and 2022 World Youth Championship were both from Pakistan (S. Imaad Ali and Ali Salman) but the youngsters were unable to participate due to their tough study schedule.

Team leader Tariq Pervaz expressed disappointment at the loss of key players ahead of the World Championship but hoped that the remaining players would do well as four of the five players have won international tournaments in the past. This would be the first in-person world championship being held after the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The 2021 virtual championship was hosted by Pakistan.

Hamza returns as draws confirmed for WSF World Jr Squash C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Hamza Khan returns as the draws and seedings for the individual events at the 2023 WSF World Junior Squash Championships have been confirmed.

The 2023 WSF World Junior Squash Championships would be played in Melbourne sports Centres (MSAC) from July 18 to 29.

The event features 245 entries across the men's individual championship, the women's individual championship and the women's team championship. In the men's draw, England's Jonah Bryant and the Netherlands' Rowan Damming are seeded to renew their rivalry in the final, with the English 17-year-old and the Dutch 18-year-old going in as number one and two seed, respectively.

Also tipped to go deep in the competition are Egyptian 15-year-old Mohamed Zakaria and Pakistan's Hamza Khan, who returns after reaching the semifinals as the top seed last time out. For the home fans, six men enter in the first round, with Kenneth Lamb, Dylan Classen, Harvey Allan, Connor Hayes, Oscar Curtis and Thomas Scott in day one action.

In the women's draw, Egypt's

defending champion Amina Orfi returns to defend her crown. The No.1 seed, who won the title last year after a number of stunning comebacks, made headlines this season on the PSA World Tour, reaching the final of the Squash On Fire Open in Washington DC and the last 16 at the senior World Championships.

Seeded to face the 16-year-old in the final is compatriot Fayrouz Aboelkheir, who will be aiming to avenge her semi final defeat to Orfi last year in Nancy. Malak Khafagy is the third Egyptian in the top four seeds, with the Alexandrian joined at 3/4 seed by Asian Junior Champion Aira Azman, who is looking to be Malaysia's first female winner since Nicol David beat Omneya Abdel Kawy in 2001.

As in the men's draw, six women are representing Australia in the individual event. In round one, Shona Coxsedge faces Chinese Taipei's Yen-Chi Chen, Courtney Scholtz takes on Ireland's Sarah Sabry and Hannah Slyth plays Scotland's Louisa Kaven. Meanwhile, Erin Classen, Madison Lyon and Amelie Guziak receive byes through to round two.

Seeded entries, 2023 WSF World Junior Squash Championship, Men's

Individuals Draw: (1) Jonah Bryant (ENG), (2) Rowan Damming (NED), (3/4) Hamza Khan (PAK), (3/4) Mohamed Zakaria (EGY), (5/8) David Bernet (SUI), (5/8) Joachim Chuah (MAS), (5/8) Salman Khalil (EGY), (5/8) Juan Jose Torres Lara (COL), (9/16) Kareem El Torkey (EGY), (9/16) Krishna Mishra (IND), (9/16) Dylan Moran (IRL), (9/16) Hollis Robertson (USA), (9/16) Melvil Scianimanico (FRA), (9/16) Yassin Shohdy (EGY), (9/16) Omar Said Sobhy (EGY), (9/16) Rishi Srivastava (USA).

Seeded entries, 2023 WSF World Junior Squash Championship, Women's Individuals Draw: (1) Amina Orfi (EGY), (2) Fayrouz Aboelkheir (EGY), (3/4) Aira Azman (MAS), (3/4) Malak Khafagy (EGY), (5/8) Caroline Fouts (USA), (5/8) Asia Harris (ENG), (5/8) Zeina Zein (EGY), (5/8) Anahat Singh (IND), (9/16) Lauren Baltayan (FRA), (9/16) Nadien Elhamamy (EGY), (9/16) Amelie Haworth (ENG), (9/16) Madison Ho (USA), (9/16) Savannah Margot Ingledew (RSA), (9/16) Sehveettraa Kumar (MAS), (9/16) Nour Megahed (EGY), (9/16) Riya Navani (USA).



In brief

IRSA releases 283,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 283,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 325,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1,517.31 feet, which was 119.31 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 143,200 cusecs and 140,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1,198.60 feet, which was 148.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water in the dam were recorded 49,300 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur barrages was recorded as 173,800, 196,200, 148,000 and 85,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, 44,900 cusecs water was released from the Kabul River at Nowshera and 70,200 cusecs from the Chenab River at Marala.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday 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 09:00 AM to 2:00 PM Islamabad Circle, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Islamabad Feed Mill, Jhatta Hatial, Bisali, Pind Jatla, Lab.I & II, Reliance Weaving Mill, Bhal, Jarrar Camp Feeders, From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon Islamabad Circle, I-11/I, I-11/3, Metro Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Kahota City II, Hanif Shaheed, Mohra Nagyal, Zaraj, Dhok Awan, IST, Qureshiabad, Garja.I, Hayat, Murt, Ranyal, Gulshan Fatima, Kohala Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, F-17 /I, F-17/II, Nogzi, Pindhon, I-14/3, Noon, I-16, HPT (Radio Pak), Lakho Road, Ameer Hamza, Officer Colony Feeders, Attock Circle, Kamra Rural, Mansar, Gondal, Haji Shah Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Khanpur Feeder, Jhelum Circle, Cantt, CMH Jhelum, Domeli, Bhagwal, Shah Safir Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 18:00 PM, GSO Circle, Birut Gala, Darbar Mai Toti, Khoi Ratta City, Churohi Express, Dana Bhal, Cheruhi Dungi, Siri, City, Kariala, Jandrot Dabisi, Ditot, Majajan City II, Cheruhi feeders and surrounding areas.

CTP imposes fine of Rs 6,488,350

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi had issued 19,159 challan tickets and imposed a fine of Rs 6,488,350 over violations of traffic rules during the last ten days. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan while talking to APP informed that 10,946 challan tickets were issued to motorcyclists without helmets while FIRs were registered against ten drivers for violating traffic rules. He added that permits for nine vehicles were cancelled while 479 challan tickets were issued for one-way violations. Similarly, the CTO informed that 551 challan tickets were issued to vehicles bearing tinted glasses while 359 challan tickets were issued for wrong parking.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister, Mian Javed Latif, addressing a press conference.

Israel has no right to meddle in Pakistan's internal affairs: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Wednesday firmly asserted that Israel had no right to meddle in Pakistan's internal affairs.

Addressing a press conference Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council, criticized the Israeli government for showing sympathy towards individuals allegedly responsible for the attacks on government and military installations on May 9.

He warned Israel to refrain from interfering, emphasizing that the matter at hand solely concerned Pakistan. Ashrafi labeled Israel as a notorious perpetrator responsible for the deaths of numerous innocent Palestinians, expressing his dismay that the concerned party did not give a

stronger response to Israel's actions on the international stage. However, he assured the public that all minority communities in Pakistan were safe, enjoying a peaceful life with their full rights protected. In a united stance against Israeli interference, Ashrafi announced that the Ulama and Mashaykh (religious scholars) would unequivocally condemn Israel on the upcoming Friday, making their voices heard across the nation.

This collective denouncement aimed to shed light on the specific segment of Pakistani society for which Israel had advocated on the global platform. Ashrafi also expressed gratitude towards the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its generous economic and financial aid to Pakistan. He emphasized the pivotal role played by Saudi Arabia in fostering economic cooperation between the two

countries.

According to Ashrafi, the Saudi government had transferred \$2 billion to Pakistan's State Bank, a significant financial injection that was expected to have a transformative impact on the country's economic landscape. This infusion of funds would create new opportunities for growth and development in Pakistan.

The Prime Minister's Special Representative further commended Islamic countries for their endorsement of Pakistan's proposed agreement against the desecration of the Holy Quran at the United Nations. Ashrafi specifically praised Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for their efforts in securing approval for the agreement and promoting the cause of protecting the sanctity of the Holy Quran on a global scale.

Local communities role vital in preservation, promotion of Gandhara heritage: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers on Wednesday stressed the vital role of the local communities in the preservation, protection, and promotion of the Gandhara heritage.

The Day II of Gandhara Symposium 2023 titled "Cultural Diplomacy: Reviving Gandhara Civilization and Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan" commenced with the Fourth Session on "Exploring the Spirit of Gandhara: Preserving the Past & Illuminating the Future."

The session was moderated by the Director of the State Bank Museum and Head of ICOM Pakistan, Dr. Asma Ibrahim.

Speakers of the session were Prof of Archaeology, University of Leicester, UK, Prof. Ruth Young; Senior Researcher, Cultural Heritage Foundation, South Korea, Yi Yun Jung; Director Minister of

Buddhasana Religious And Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, Nishantha Pushpakumara; Prof. Dr. Hridya Ratna Bajracharya; Former VC Lumbini University, Nepal; and Prof. Xiang Debao, Prof. School of International Journalism & Communication, Beijing University. The panelists discussed that the heritage sites were very important for religious practices but also for building religious and national identity.

They highlighted that the true spirits of Gandhara were reflected in the stone sculpture of fasting Siddharta, the academic excellence of Taxila, and the mindful, pragmatic, imaginative, creative, and bold nature of Gandhara.

It was proposed to support the bringing of new digital technology and chemicals for preservation purposes. It was also underlined that Gandhara was not only

a communication but an all-out campaign for modernization for not only an international audience but also for the Pakistanis themselves. In the Concluding Session, a summary of the Symposium was presented by Dr. Abdul Samad that highlighted key takeaways from the 2-day Panel Discussions, Round Table, and In-house deliberations. This was followed by concluding remarks from Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, who stressed inter-faith harmony and shared his views and suggestions on promoting Gandhara tourism.

An address by the Chief Guest Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith, Senator Talha Mahmood, was delivered. Senator Talha Mahmood indicated that developing sustainable tourism initiatives, particularly related to Gandhara, should be one of our key goals.

CDA mulling over dualisation of Pir Sohawa Road, alternate route

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is mulling over dualisation of Pir Sohawa Road linking the scenic Margalla Hills National Park and the federal capital with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province along with an alternate route to the Bari Imam area to cope with growing vehicular traffic.

Chairman, CDA Captain (R) Noorul Amin Mengal on Wednesday informed the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination meeting chaired by MNA Nuzhat Pathan that the rising traffic and congestion on Pir Sohawa Road on various occasions has become a nuisance for the Capital Territory Administration.

He said the Pir Sohawa Road was a mess and traffic congestion was posing a serious risk to nature and wildlife as heavy fumes of vehicular emissions were casting detrimental impacts on nature.

He noted that the civic agency was also working on PC -1 of establishing a reception and information center in the national park along Pir Sohawa Road.

"We are proposing another route from Monal to Bari Imam to reduce traffic and thin vehicular emissions. Surveys are underway for the dualisation of the route and finding the alternate route," he added.

The CDA chair informed that the civic agency for the first time in the past 70 years had initiated fencing of the national park and all its resources were available for the IWMB.

He informed that the benches, gazebos, and dustbins being installed across the federal capital were all made of reusable plastics that were helping in addressing plastic pollution.

The F-9 that is one of the largest public parks was sprawling over 750 acres of land and was bigger than the famous Hyde Park of the UK. There were efforts underway to introduce rainwater harvesting recharge wells in that park to manage water for plantation, he said.

"We have Rs 20 billion tenders issued for rural areas road construction and have also hired a consultant to resolve local nullahs pollution," he added.

CTP conducted general hold up

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi organised a general hold-up across the district regarding the violation of the helmet rule on the orders of IG Punjab. CTP has established 45 pickets to check illegal activity.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan also conducted various surprise visits to ensure action against bikers without helmets. Action is being taken for not wearing a helmet.

More than 2500 challan tickets have been issued to motorcyclists for not wearing helmets.

After bringing the helmet and submitting the challan ticket, the bike is being handed over to the owner, Khan said.

600 illegal housing societies operating in twin cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Around 600 illegal housing societies have been operating in twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad without any formal approval, Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Captain (R) Noorul Amin Mengal told the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination.

The 35th meeting of the committee was held here at the CDA Secretariat to receive briefing on comprehensive report on implementation status of the previous recommendations of the Committee, complete details of Housing Societies in Islamabad (legal and illegal) causing severe damage to the environment and sewerage system in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), briefing on all restaurants located on Margalla Hills causing severe damage to the environment with poor sewerage system, and especially the complete case study of Monal Restaurant with previous follow up.

Chairperson MNA, Nuzhat Pathan presided the committee and expressed her resentment over late arrival of the Chairman CDA in the Committee meeting whereas the Authority officials had informed the chair that the latter was in the Court for personal hearing.

The Chairman CDA informed that there were some 318 illegal housing societies in Rawalpindi and 150 housing societies in Islamabad whereas most of these societies were in Fatehjang, Rawalpindi Tehsil.

The cumulative figure of these illegal or unauthorized societies was falling between 568-600 societies alongwith some 100 illegal societies being established in the adjoining Attock district.

The Chairperson took the floor to seek information from the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination on Soybean Seeds import summary pending in the Ministry causing increase in the prices of poultry products.

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change, Musaddik Ahmed Khan briefed the forum in detail on the context of the issue and informed that there were alternates to the poultry feed already available in the market and there was no such

shortage but rather it was exploitative tactic by the Poultry industry.

MNA, Romina Khrushid Alam on her agenda item expressed her resentment on the response submitted by IWMB and CDA pertaining to installation of street-lights in the National Park.

"There are serious concerns of CDA on installing street lights in Margalla Hills National Park is strange. There are solutions to it as sensor-based lights could be used to illuminate the hiking tracks. The language needs to be changed," she said.

There are 102 gutter lids stolen in the federal capital and a day earlier two individuals including a father and son died after the boy fell into the gutter and got suffocated due to gas.

She proposed that the Committee should strongly recommend the federal cabinet for appointing a highly qualified member in CDA to take environmental matters on priority basis and also from EPA. Member, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), Waqar Zekria informed the forum that most of the species in Margalla Hills National Park were nocturnal and were impacted by lights at night.

The guidelines for visitors of trails were very clear that they should after sunrise and leave the national park before sunset, he added. He mentioned that the more the traffic the more would be the damage to nature in the national park whereas on average there were over 5,000 visitors visiting trails at the weekends.

"We will propose a timing of 9-10 pm to provide full lights in the national park and then halt entry into the national park to sustain wildlife," he added. Chairman CDA Noor ul Amin Mengal said there were few view points and paths that needed street lights and it should be installed there but the rest was a protected and jungle area with a controlled entry. "The CDA Environment Wing has planted 700,000 trees across the federal capital out of which one third are fruit trees that are primarily to enhance green cover. Moreover, section 144 has been imposed in the Margalla Hills National Park on no smoking and cooking food as it all has been banned," he said.

192 Pakistani students get scholarships in European universities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The highest number of 192 Pakistani students have received scholarships to study in European universities under the EU's flagship Erasmus Mundus Joint Master scholarships programme including 103 men and 89 women during the current year.

The European Union Delegation to Pakistan hosted a pre-departure event to celebrate the achievement of the recipients of the scholarship, said a news release.

This is the second year in a row that Pakistan ranked top in the world for the number of scholarships awarded and remained in the lead in terms of scholarship applications.

In his welcome remarks, EU Chargé d'Affaires a.i, Thomas Seiler said, "Today we congratulate the young men and women who will embark on an educational and cultural journey through the Erasmus+ programme over the coming months. I

am sure that they will return with strong knowledge and rich experiences, and their exposure to European universities will also contribute to the development of Pakistan."

The EU Chargé d'Affaires a.i. further added, "The results of the scholarship's selection demonstrate that Pakistani students are well prepared and that the Pakistani universities provide them with the necessary skills to compete at the global level."

He added that he is particularly pleased to see more students from Pakistan have accessed the Erasmus+ programme. This year 2,835 students from 128 countries were selected for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master scholarships.

The pre-departure event was organized in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC). It provided an opportunity to the scholarship holders to prepare for their education in Europe and to net-

work amongst their peers and Erasmus+ Alumni. The Erasmus+ Alumni shared their experiences, followed by a question and answer session. Higher Education Commission Executive Director Dr Shaista Sohail, representatives from EU Member States and members of the Erasmus+ Alumni Association also attended the event. Erasmus+ is the EU's premier programme to support education, training, youth and sport across the world. The first Erasmus+ Programme was launched in 1987, initially for exchanges within Europe only. It was extended beyond Europe's borders in 2004. It funds programmes, projects, scholarships, and fosters cooperation both within the European Union and globally. The current Erasmus+ programme was launched in March 2021 and brings over 23.2 billion Euro worldwide to support mobility and cooperation in the higher educational sector.

'No laxity in security duties would be tolerated during Muharram ul Haram'

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A high level meeting was held to review the security arrangements made by Islamabad capital police to shield Muharram ul Haram processions in the capital, a Police Public Relation officer said. The meeting was chaired by SSP (Operations) Malik Jameel Zafar.

According to the details, a security meeting was held to review security arrangements for "Muharram ul Haram" and establish an atmosphere of communal

harmony during Muharram and to make the fool-proof security of the Majalis and processions. On this occasion, SSP (Operations) issued instructions to further improve the security arrangements and said that no lapse in security matters will be tolerated.

He said that cooperation of organizers should be ensured with police and law enforcing officials. He directed to maintain high vigilance of processions through safe city cameras,

smart cars, surveillance cameras and drone cameras. He said that it should be ensured that processions would pass through the fixed routes and timings of processions to be observed strictly. He also directed for effective patrolling and use of commando vehicles for the purpose.

He further directed that smooth flow of traffic should be ensured on alternate routes during the processions. It should be ensured that parking lots

are far away from Imam Bargahs. Strict vigilance should be maintained to ensure security measures, he added.

He further said that, bomb disposal squad would conduct checking of routes through robots and modern technology while entry of participants in the procession would be ensured after complete checking. No laxity in security duties would be tolerated, the SSP maintained.



RAWALPINDI: Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs/Minister Incharge Prime Minister's Public Affairs & Grievances Wing addressing during "Open Kachari" at Commissioner Office.

Enmity of 2 families resolved

KABUL (Agencies): Officials of the Baghlan Police headquarter said that the 30 years of enmity between two families resolved with the mediation of the religious scholars and local elders of the province. The police chief of the said province, Mullah Jan Mohammad Hamza, told Bakhtar News Agency that this mediation was done according to the Islamic Sharia and Afghan traditions, adding that they are planning to settle the disputes of the people in other districts as well in the future.

AWCC opens new center

PAKTIKA (Agencies): AWCC officially opened another customer services center in Sharana city, the capital of Paktika province. At the opening ceremony, the head of the central zone of AWCC said that through this new center, problems experienced by the company's customers in Paktika will be addressed. Officials welcomed the opening of this new Afghan Wireless services center and asked AWCC officials to expand the services in the province.

Permits required for financial transaction services

KABUL (TOLONews): The Central Bank of Afghanistan said that money exchangers and companies that engage in currency exchange are no longer permitted to hold or lend their clients' money without a permit. "Monetary services firms and money changers cannot register client information at unauthorized registration offices. Also, monetary and currency service firms are not permitted to conduct money exchange operations in the nation through individuals without permission," said Hasibullah Noori, a spokesman of the Central Bank. According to the Central Bank of Afghanistan, permits are required for operations involving money exchange organizations and monetary services providing money transfers, cur-

rency exchange, and cheque conversion to cash.

In the meantime, the Sarai Shahzada money exchangers union in Kabul, said that the Central Bank must grant permission for unlicensed companies to stop providing illegal financial services in Afghanistan. "The Central Bank should work with us and grant licenses to applicants in order to stop illegal activities," said Abdul Rahman Zirak, a spokesman of the union.

Some economists said that since Afghan banks are subject to sanctions, the only way to provide monetary services outside is through money exchangers and financial service companies.

"It is the only means of trade for national and financial interactions as Afghan banks cannot provide com-

plete banking services, not even provide people's deposits, and are constrained in money transfers," said Azerakhsh Hafizi, an economist.

"The money changers can transfer money, engage in foreign currency transactions, and pay checks, but they cannot keep people's deposits or lend them money," said Sieyar Qurishi, another economist.

According to data from the Sarai Shahzada money changers union in Kabul, the Central Bank of Afghanistan has granted permits to almost 800 companies that provide currency and monetary services in Afghanistan.

However, a significant number of applicants have not yet received a license from the bank despite having paid the bank the guaranteed money.

'After decades of war, we can now breathe in peace'

KABUL (Agencies): The citizens of Badghis described their living environment as safe and peaceful after several decades of war and said that they are now breathing in peace.

The citizens of Badghis, who are optimistic about the future, said that now, at any time, wherever they want, they travel and work and have fun without fear or hesitation.

A resident of the city of Qala Numaraz Badghis, Mohammad Arbab said, "After the rule of the Islamic Emirate, fortunately, peace has prevailed in Afghanistan, and this has been one of the long-standing aspirations of the people of Afghanistan throughout history. After four decades of war in Afghanistan, today we live in peace and security."

Another resident of Badghis Mawlavi Ghulam Mohammad Mohadi said that now they are living in complete security and they want the authorities to continue this process and not leave people to be security concern.

The spokesperson of Badghis Police, Sediqullah Seddiqi assured about the complete security in this province and said that they are working day and night to leave no room for concern for the residents of this province and people who travel here from other provinces for tourism.

Nomads seek education ground for their children

BAGHLAN (Agencies): A nomad Council in Baghlan requests the establishment and construction of a school for the better future of their children in this province.

The chairman of the Jogi council of Baghlan, Dr. Azizullah Jogi, and some members of the council, in a meeting with the director of education of Baghlan province of Afghanistan, requested the Department of Education establish and build a school for this tribe as soon as possible so that their children do not be deprived of the education.

The provincial head of education in Baghlan, Mawlavi Mohammad Noor Azizi says that they provide education services to the people in this province regardless of ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences and expand educational services to all areas of Baghlan as needed. "We will strive to coordinate with high-ranking officials to build a primary school for Jogis in Baghlan," Azizi said. Meanwhile, the residents of Baghlan call the government's responsibility to provide a good educational environment to all the tribes, nomads, and people of the country in addition to the Jogis, and insist that the government should provide services to all people in all areas according to balanced development.

Turkish investors to invest in Afghan mining sector



KABUL (Khaama Press): Turkish Investors asked for funding for mines and processing facilities in Afghanistan at a meeting with Shahbuddin Delawar, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said in a statement.

According to the ministry, Turkish investors reportedly expressed interest in investing in Afghanistan's mineral resources and indicated they wanted to invest in Afghan mines and mineral processing facilities.

At the same time, Delawar welcomed Turkish investors' interest and promised to work with them in compliance with the country's mining laws and regulations.

Minerals like lithium, rare earth, gold, copper, iron, and gemstones are abundant in Afghanistan. According to some estimations, the country contains mineral deposits worth up to \$3 trillion.

However, decades of war and conflict in the country and a lack of infra-

structure have made it difficult to invest and adequately extract these mineral resources. As a result, the local warlord and illegal armed organizations take advantage of the situation and smuggle several mines and deposits into the country.

Since the Taliban took control of the country and the lack of a legitimate or recognized government, it made it difficult for foreign investors to invest in the mineral sectors of the country.

Meanwhile, foreign investors hesitate to invest in the country due to legal issues, security threats, and political meddling. As a result, most foreign companies have been put on hold or cancelled their contracts since August 2021.

Recently, several countries, including China, Turkish and several others shown interest in investing in the mining sector or processing to expand their influence through investing or humanitarian aid in the country.

Afghan officials flog four people in Kabul for alleged crimes

KUNAR (Khaama Press): Taliban's Supreme Court has announced that four people including a woman were publicly flogged for allegedly accused of committing "immorality" in the Paghman district of Kabul city.

According to a news release, these people were arrested from the Kargha area of Kabul, adding the Taliban officials sentenced the convicts to three months imprisonment.

Taliban's Supreme Court

on Wednesday, July 12, in a press release stated that after the verdict was issued, Taliban officials publicly lashed criminals in the Paghman district court in the presence of government officials and some common people.

Each convict was sentenced to twenty lashes and one-month imprisonment, the news release stated.

After seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban regime resumed practicing physical punishment among the ordinary people,

which was abandoned over the past twenty years in Afghanistan.

Human Rights advocacy groups have repeatedly stated in their reports that convicts do not have access to a legal and standardized judicial system in Afghanistan under the Taliban-run administration. Therefore, the process of fair judgment is faced with immense challenges in the country.

Many human rights organizations have condemned the physical pun-

ishment of convicts by Taliban officials.

Meanwhile, the ruling regime is accused of committing human rights violations in many cases, particularly banning Afghan women and girls from attending education, work or public engagements.

However, the Taliban-run administration has its own policies and priorities regarding the internal matters of Afghanistan, and barely prioritizes other stakeholders' interests.

Afghanistan, Iran sign MoU on developing railway sector

KABUL (Khaama Press): The head of the Afghanistan Railway Authority, Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharafi, and a delegation from Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday to expand their collaboration in the railway sector.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked in the western province of Herat, Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan Railway Authority stated that the two parties discussed enhancing their bilateral collaboration during the MoU signing ceremony.

Following the agreement, Iran has declared its preparedness to build the Khaf-Herat railway line. Iranian government representatives have emphasized their interest in resurrecting the Silk Road using trains.

Afghanistan and Iran opened their first rail link across their borders in



December 2020. In 2007, construction was done on the 225-kilometre railway line that connects Herat, in western Afghanistan, with Khaf, in eastern Iran.

One of the four parts of this line, an 85-km stretch between Ghurian and Herat, which is located in Afghanistan and has two

sections in Iran, has to be finished.

The first trip between Khaf and Ghurian, which will see freight and passenger trains, was performed by a train carrying 500 tons of cement. Iran provided funding for the US\$75 million railway line connecting Iran and Afghanistan as

part of its development support to that country.

According to Iranian officials, the former Afghan administration, which received support from the US, sought to link the Khaf-Herat railway to the Hairatan border and the country rail system of Uzbekistan to China.

Melon festival begins in Sheberghan



SHEBERGHAN (TOLONews): The first melon festival program was launched in Sheberghan, the capital of Jawzjan province.

In this festival, 46 different kinds of melons were introduced, with the Arkani, Asqlan, Danyari, Chatri, Yazli, Ala Pochaq, Gurgak, Zamburcha, and Jarupi melons being the most well-known.

Poets and authors at this cultural event urged the authorities to develop such initiatives to promote the province's agricultural products.

"For the presence of poets and writers in Jawzjan, the Association of Poets and Writers is active, and there is support from various addresses in this field," said Ali

Shir Intezar, a writer.

"The poetry ceremony of the melon festival of Jawzjan can bring together a large number of cultural figures, such as poets, writers, youth, professors, and students, for the exchange of ideas," said Bahram Yaqoobi, a university lecturer.

The launch of the melon festival, according to Jawzjan's Department of Information and Culture, is intended to inspire young people to pursue writing careers and introduce them to regional products.

"We come here with confidence and at ease. We sit here, listen, recite our poems, and discuss our opinions with one other," said Saif Rahman Motasem, head of the

department of information and culture of Jawzjan province.

"The program's goal is to bring together poets, writers, cultural figures, and culture enthusiasts, to hear their problems, and share them with the center," said Ahmad Shah Rokh Joyenda, Culture and Tourism head of Jawzjan's Information and Culture department.

According to officials in the Department of Agriculture and Irrigation of Jawzjan, melons are among the most significant agricultural products in this province.

2,857 hectares of land have been used to cultivate melons in the current solar year, and farmers in Jawzjan harvest more than 1,620 tons of melons.

Critical shortfall of funds threatens humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): The World Food Program (WFP) has cut assistance to eight million food-insecure Afghans due to critical funding shortfalls.

The UN said in a statement this week that in addition to the eight million people, 1.4 million new and expecting mothers, toddlers and preschoolers are also no longer receiving foods designed to prevent malnutrition. From July onwards, only five million people will receive emergency food assistance when 15 million people in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3 and 4 do not know where their

next meal will come from, the statement read.

In addition, ration sizes have been reduced and those families in IPC 4 areas now receive one-third less assistance than before. If no new funding is received, emergency food assistance by WFP will shrink to nothing by the end of October, the agency warned.

WFP nutrition partners also reported that due to funding shortfalls, 25 mobile health and nutrition teams in four provinces have been shut down. The affected provinces include Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar. The closure of these teams means that

more than 100,000 people will not have access to basic health and nutrition care services across the Eastern region. By June this year, only nine percent of the \$4.6 billion required for Afghanistan's initial Humanitarian Response Plan had been received. In addition, 90 percent of the expenditure in the first five months of the year, that is approximately \$850 million, relied on carryover funds from 2022. Despite a revision of the initial humanitarian appeal for 2023, the response plan remains currently only 14 percent funded.

The UN said funding levels will also affect the

health sector, and an estimated 7.6 million people will lack access to essential life-saving health assistance if funding levels remain the same.

"More than 31,500 households with severely malnourished children have already missed out on critical integrated cash packages for nutrition due to underfunding," the UN said. The education sector also faces potential discontinuation of approximately 2,800 community-based classes, impacting 83,000 children, 59 percent of whom are girls, who have only gained access to education in the past year after

the Taliban took over.

The UN pointed out that the end of the year will bring further challenges with its harsh winter, which many cannot survive without assistance including warm clothing and blankets, essential medical treatment and food aid. "Timely funding is crucial to enable aid agencies to procure and deliver core supplies, address border delays and market disruptions, and preposition relief items in highly affected areas. The Inter-Cluster Coordination Team is embarking on a critical funding gaps analysis which will be ready by the end of July," the UN stated.

Bilawal has capacity of foreign minister: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, in his capacity as a foreign minister of Pakistan, has brought the issue of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden to the attention of the international community and raised voice against it, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari emphasized the importance of respecting all religions and urged for the sanctity of Islam to be upheld in the same manner.

Speaking at the media corner before the meeting of the Sindh Assembly today, Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has effectively conveyed our commitment to advocating for religious respect worldwide, we anticipate the international community to devise a comprehensive action plan on promoting religious tolerance, ensuring that the sentiments of followers of all religions are safeguarded from any form of harm in the future.

Sharjeel Inam Memon mentioned that the alleged support received by PTI from Israel and India was confirmed by yesterday's Israeli statement. He highlighted a previous incident where Chairman PTI supported his Jewish brother-in-law over a candidate of Pakistani origin Sadiq Khan in the election for Mayor of London.

The Sindh Information Minister expressed concern over the recent revelation of connections between certain politicians and Israel, which is a significant matter of concern for the entire Pakistani population. Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that this development, in light of the Israeli statement, raises alarming implications. He stated that such affiliations of the PTI are potentially perilous and need to be carefully addressed.

He questioned the relevance of Israel's support for Imran Khan. When asked about Imran Khan, Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the truth about Imran Khan was revealed late. He further added that had the facts been known earlier, it is unlikely that any honest Pakistani would have voted for



or supported him.

In response to a question, the Sindh Information Minister said that Pakistan has consistently safeguarded its minority communities and their places of worship, and this duty will be upheld continuously. In response to another question, Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that if an individual is found to be acting as a foreign agent, appropriate actions should be taken against them. Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted that it is unprecedented in history for Israel to publicly issue a statement in support of Imran Khan.

In response to a question, the Sindh Information Minister said that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) brought together the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and Jamaat-e-Islami, the PPP has a history of fostering unity among people. In response to a question, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that it is a bitter truth that the leader of a political party was allegedly pursuing the agenda of another country. He expressed that this revelation has left everyone surprised and astonished, prompting a need for reconsideration of their opinions regarding PTI. In response to a question, Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that Sindh will always maintain its status as a province.

As death toll rises to 13, officials look to jirga elders

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: As clashes between tribes over a piece of land in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram tribal district continued for the sixth consecutive day on Wednesday — killing two more people and injuring five — tribal elders in some areas agreed on a ceasefire.

According to local officials, the death toll — as of Wednesday — had risen to 13, while the number of injured people rose to 74. The numbers were provided to media by Dr Qaiser Abbas Bangash of the Parachinar District Headquarters Hospital. The bloodshed led the caretaker government to call for military intervention to end the violence.

Kurram Deputy Commissioner Saiful Islam Shah told media that negotiations were successful and he was hopeful that a "complete ceasefire" would be achieved by evening. "We are hoping that a complete ceasefire will be reached by this evening," he added. Internet services have also been suspended as the tribal elders try to restore peace, DC Shah stated.

After conducting successful negotiations with the Sunni elders in Sadda yesterday, Azmatullah and the peace jirga today held successful talks with the Shia elders in Parachinar, calling for a ceasefire, jirga representative Seth Gohar Bangash said while speaking to media. "I have come with a message of peace and, God willing, we will establish peace," he said.

He condemned the loss of precious lives in the battle, stating that the loss of life is regrettable and that the people of the region are living under severe hardships. "We are all Pashtun, and we expect our Pashtun brothers to hold up Pashtun traditions," he added. After the ceasefire conversation was successful, tribal leader Haji Jameel Hussain told media that two out of the five warzones were successful in establishing a ceasefire and military forces were being deployed simultaneously. "The remaining three warzones were being visited by the elders and ceasefire will be established there soon," he added.

Meanwhile, additional troops of Pak Army and FC had been deployed on the request of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, in district Kurram to control the situation over land disputes among locals.

An official communiqué of the KP Home department issued here said the Army and FC would remain in the area till the situation gets normal, adding that the decision has been taken to normalize the situation and avoid further losses and casualties. The government was trying to get the longstanding issue resolved amicably through Jirga and the support of the revenue department, it informed. It warned of strict action against such individuals and requested the people to cooperate with the district government and law enforcement agencies to foil the nefarious designs of anti-state elements.

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10 of a family burnt alive

LAHORE (PPI): At least 10 members of a family were killed when their house inside Bhati Gate caught fire in the wee hours of Wednesday.

According to initial reports, a fire broke out in the house in Mohallah Samian in Bhati Gate area due to a short-circuit. Ten members of the ill-fated family including women and children were burnt alive. Rescue officials confirmed that the fire broke out due to an explosion in fridge's compressor. They said the house had no ventilation to let the smoke out.

Teams of fire-fighters and Rescue 1122 reached the spot and brought the fire under control after some time. The rescue teams shifted the dead bodies to a hospital. Some of the deceased were identified as Adil Hussain, Saira Bano, Farzana, Amber, Ghazal, Fatima, while the identification of the remaining was underway. Police said that the bodies of the deceased will be handed over to the heirs after completion of identification and medico-legal formalities. Meanwhile, the rescue team said that the cooling process of the burnt building was underway.



KARACHI: Police personnel arresting protesting teachers, while they trying to enter red zone.

Imran says his arrest is inevitable — expects it as early as Monday

LAHORE (Agencies): PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Wednesday again claimed that his arrest was inevitable and could happen as early as next Monday or the upcoming week, saying that he did not see himself being "out of jail for long".

"I was expecting to be jailed this week but my lawyers really put up a great fight ... but I have no doubt that it is just a question of time ... whether it is on Monday or some other day next week ... they are going to put me in jail," the former prime minister said in an interview with Fox News. After violent protests broke out across the country following Imran's arrest on May 9, the government arrested several PTI leaders and booked the party chairman in numerous cases.

The PTI chief had earlier also expressed fears that he might get arrested. During the interview on Wednesday, Imran claimed

he was being booked in a new case every day and the tally of first information reports lodged against him had increased to 180. "Unfortunately, right now we are facing the law of the jungle and this is the worst kind of persecution," he lamented, adding that PTI workers across the country had been "picked up" and were being forced to quit the party.

"This sort of thing has never been done in Pakistan to political workers," Talking about his ouster through a no-confidence motion last year, Imran said it was "engineered" by former army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa "for an extension". The PTI chief alleged Gen Bajwa had "joined hands" with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and they "fed the US this bit that I was anti-American".

"He actually had a lobbyist who was paid by my government without my knowledge ... who was

lobbying in the US regarding how anti-American Imran Khan was and how pro-American the army chief was," Imran claimed. He added that the PTI had now realised that their ouster was "engineered" by the army chief and not Washington. During the 10-minute long interview with Fox News, the ex-premier also defended his foreign policy, which Imran called "non-aligned".

"My idea was not to be anti any government, my idea was to get people out of poverty," he stated, referring to Pakistan's position in the Afghanistan war which "took a heavy toll on us". Imran also talked about the US exit from Afghanistan, lamenting the way the withdrawal took place. He added that he didn't blame US President Joe Biden for not anticipating that former Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani "would take off in the middle of the night."

Islamabad court fumes at Imran's frequent absences

ISLAMABAD (INP): An Islamabad court judge on Wednesday expressed displeasure at PTI Chairman Imran Khan's frequent absences in the Toshakhana case hearings, noting that the accused had only appeared before the court once during the seven-month-long trial.

Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Humayun Dilawar made this observation as the hearing of the reference commenced today a week after the court ruled that the case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the PTI chairman was maintainable. Imran had challenged the session court's decision in the Islamabad High Court Tuesday, arguing that the ECP did not follow the prescribed procedure in filing the complaint and requested the IHC to set aside the session court's decision.

As the hearing commenced, Imran's counsel Niazullah Niazi informed the court that his client had already challenged the session court's July 8 verdict in the Islamabad High Court, and the hearing for

the plea was scheduled for today. "Where is the accused," the judge asked. In response, the counsel stated that he intended to file a plea for his client's exemption from appearing in court and requested a two-day adjournment of the hearing.

The judge then said: "As a criminal case lawyer, have you ever seen a situation where a case has been ongoing for over seven months and the accused has only appeared in court once?" ADSJ Dilawar instructed Imran's legal team to provide a copy of the IHC verdict, and adjourned the hearing till 12:30pm.

The case, filed by ruling party lawmakers, is based on a criminal complaint filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The case alleges that Imran had "deliberately concealed" details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana — a repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept — during his time as the prime minister and proceeds from their reported sales.

Imran has faced a number of legal issues over his retention of gifts. The issue also led to his disqualification by the ECP. On Oct 21, 2022, the ECP concluded that the former premier had indeed made "false statements and incorrect declarations" regarding the gifts.

The Toshakhana is a department under the Cabinet Division that stores gifts given to rulers and government officials by heads of other governments and foreign dignitaries. According to Toshakhana rules, gifts/presents and other such materials received by persons to whom these rules apply shall be reported to the Cabinet Division. The watchdog's order had said Imran stood disqualified under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution. Subsequently, the ECP approached the Islamabad sessions court with a copy of the complaint, seeking proceedings against Imran under criminal law for allegedly misleading officials about the gifts he received from foreign dignitaries during his tenure as the prime minister.

Bank must refund lost amount, apologize to fraud victim: Alvi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has rejected a representation filed by Bank Alfalah Ltd (BAFL) against the decision of Banking Mohtasib directing it to send an apology to a customer for enabling online transaction/payment system on his credit card without his consent and neglecting his timely complaint about a disputed transaction.

President Alvi said on Wednesday that when Internet Banking Facility was provided by a bank to its customers, it was incumbent upon the bank to educate its customers about its pros and cons. He also directed BAFL to refund the lost amount of Rs 66,850 along with the profit to the customer.

He gave these remarks while deciding upon a case wherein Muhammad Yar (the complainant) had filed a complaint before the Banking Mohtasib stating that he had a Bank Alfalah Credit Card and a scam of Rs.66,850/- occurred on his Credit Card when his card was used at Noon-e-Commerce solution.

President Alvi informed the bank that he had not done this transaction and requested to stop this online transaction/payment. The bank had initially reversed this transaction amount but surprisingly after six months, the bank had deducted this amount from his Credit Card.

Feeling aggrieved, he escalated his complaint before the Banking Mohtasib which directed BAFL to refund the lost

amount.

The Bank, then, filed a representation with the President against the decision of the Mohtasib. The President held a personal hearing of the case and rejected the representation of the bank. In his decision, he noted that the complainant was not conversant with Internet/Digital Banking and became aware of the transaction on receipt of a call from the bank's real-time Monitoring Unit wherein he told the Bank's representative that he did not perform the disputed transaction.

He added that the bank was duty-bound to take care of its customer's interest by instantly reporting the unauthorized/fake transaction, instead, it waited for the lodgement of a formal complaint.

Death toll rises to 66 in India's monsoon mayhem

NEW DELHI (Agencies):

Days of relentless monsoon rains have killed at least 66 people in India, government officials said on Wednesday, with dozens of foreign tourists stranded in the Himalayas after floods severed road connections. Flooding and landslides are common and cause widespread devastation during India's treacherous monsoon season, but experts say climate change is increasing its frequency and severity.

Torrential downpours have washed away vehicles, demolished buildings and torn down bridges in Himachal Pradesh, the worst-affected state. At least 33 people have lost their lives in the state — popular for its picturesque Himalayan hill stations — since Saturday, said Onkar Sharma, head of the state disaster agency. Rescue teams were mobilised to assist 40 foreign travellers — including 14 Russians and 12 Malaysians — stranded at tourist destinations alongside several hundred Indian nationals, state police chief Satwant Atwal told AFP.

"Due to heavy snowfall and bad weather it has become very difficult to evacuate them," Chief Minister Sukhinder Singh Sukhu said on Twitter. "We are exploring all possible options." At least 12 people were killed in neighbouring Uttarakhand state, including nine on Tuesday when debris fell on their vehicles on a national highway, officials said. A popular pilgrimage to the state's Kedarnath temple, home to a revered shrine of the Hindu deity Shiva, was suspended due to heavy rains.

"In view of continuous rains in all the areas of the state, I request the people and pilgrims to avoid making unnecessary journeys," Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami wrote on Twitter. Incessant rain had caused significant damage across Punjab state, with at least 10 killed in flash floods. "There is a huge loss of life and property, the loss is being assessed," state revenue minister Brahm Shankar Jimpa told reporters a day earlier.

At least 11 people were killed in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, according to state officials. The capital New Delhi has also been put on high alert for flooding after the Yamuna river, which snakes past the megacity, recorded its highest levels since 1978. The waterway has already inundated homes along its banks and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said it was expected to rise further later on Wednesday evening.

The monsoon brings South Asia around 80 per cent of its annual rainfall and is vital both for agriculture and the livelihoods of millions of farmers. But it brings destruction every year in the form of landslides and floods. Melting glaciers add to the volume of water while unregulated construction in flood-prone areas exacerbates the damage. The rainfall is hard to forecast and varies considerably, but scientists say climate change is making the monsoon stronger and more erratic.

Transparent elections vital for country: Javed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif on Wednesday said the threats and conspiracies against the country could only be thwarted through transparent and timely elections.

Addressing a press conference here, he said the vision of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) regarding the upcoming general elections was very clear as people and institutions of the country agreed that only Nawaz Sharif could steer out the country from the prevailing crises. The minister said that decision regarding the upcoming government would be taken by people of the country.

He said that if efforts had been made to stop threats, blackmailing and attacks in 2014, the incident of 9th May would not have happened. "Facilitators are equally complicit with the main culprit. Today, Israel is talking about going to the United Nations. When such a game (played in Pakistan)

takes place in these countries, do other states try to protect these criminals," he questioned.

Javed Latif observed that foreign funding was given to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) chief from India and Israel with the aim to destabilize Pakistan. He was of the view the objectives which our enemy could not achieve by army, it achieved on 9th May by investing in the PTI chairman.

The minister said that today some institutions were deliberately expressing pressure on them but in actuality, there was no pressure on them, adding that Parvez Elahi also got relief. The injustice with Nawaz Sharif should be redressed and action should be taken against the elements involved in the conspiracy, he demanded.

Javed Latif said that senior lawyers and politicians had admitted that injustice had been done to Nawaz Sharif adding that the state was not weak and conspiracies against the country would be foiled in future.

He said "It is in the interest of the country to hold fair and transparent elections on time. The people of Pakistan will decide who will be the next government. If fair and free elections are held, Nawaz Sharif will be elected as Prime Minister for the fourth time".

"Today, institutions also agree with the public opinion regarding Nawaz Sharif that if he comes, the era of prosperity will begin in the country in two years. The CPEC project will be completed and its fruits will start coming" he added.

In response to a question, Javed Latif said that the way threats were being made and conspiracies hatched, the only solution was timely and fair elections and the thinking of Muslim League-N was clear in that regard. In response to another question, the minister said that arresting or releasing a criminals was not the responsibility of governments, but the work of state institutions.

PAC seeks NAB, FIA, AGP reports on \$3b loans

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday directed the NAB, FIA and Auditor General Pakistan to submit report over three billion dollars loans given to 620 borrowers in PTI government. "It was informed at the in-camera session that the loans were given to businessmen on three to five percent interest rate," PAC chairman Noor Alam Khan told the session.

PML-N member of the PAC, Birjis Tahir said that eight banks have played pivotal role in devaluation of Pakistani currency. "The names of 620 individuals should be unveiled," he urged. The PAC members recommended inquiry of the matter on merit.

"Three billion dollars

are as much as 900 billion rupees," Birjis Tahir said. "One must know, the people intending to destroy the national economy," he remarked. "No person, even a minister, has been above the law. I am asking chairman NAB to check my assets," Noor Alam said. Wajeeha Qamar demanded forensic audit of the matter. "This is a poor country three billion dollars are massive amount," PAC chairman remarked.

In a previous PAC session, the State Bank refused to share the list of 620 borrowers given three billion dollars loans on zero-interest. "The central bank issued US\$ 3 billion's loans on April 19, 2021, to 620 borrowers". "The loan was given on zero-interest rate

for 10 years", PAC chairman said. "It was the State Bank's re-finance scheme," Secretary Finance replied. "The central bank has been entitled to launch such scheme under 1956 Act," he added.

Governor SBP refused to share the list of 620 borrowers on the PAC demand. "The exchange of all information between the bank and customers being kept secret and could not be shared with anyone," the secretary finance ministry also endorsed the governor's stance. "It is the state money, it must be unveiled, how much money was borrowed and by whom," PAC chairman Noor Alam insisted. The central bank had agreed to provide the list of the borrowers in an in-camera session.

Medium to high flood expected in Sutlej

LAHORE (PPI): As the Met Office predicted more monsoon rains from Thursday [July 13] in various parts of the country, the residents living along Sutlej were on the edge after a warning that the river might be in medium to high flood at Ganda Singh Wala, a border village in Kasur, during the next 24 to

28 hours.

It means India is going to release more water into the river because of persistent rains in the catchment areas. It was in 1988 that Pakistan had witnessed worst flooding in the two eastern rivers — Ravi and Sutlej — which devastated crops and livelihoods over hundreds of thousands of acres.

In this connection, the NDMA has directed the authorities concerned to continuously monitor the situation at Jassar — a border town of Narowal district where the first control structure on River Ravi in Pakistan is located — and Trimmu Barrage in Jhang district, which regulates the flow of River Chenab.