

Sugar price shoots up
LAHORE (PPI): The sugar prices have been increased across the country as the commodity is being sold at Rs150 per kg in the retail markets. After the flour, the sugar is also out of the reach of the consumers. The sugar per kilogram is being sold at Rs135 in the whole sale market while the 50kg sack of the sugar is being sold at Rs6,750 in the whole sale market. On the other hand, the sugar is also not available at the Utility Stores.

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

ATC remands Khadija
LAHORE (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday sent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) women wing leader Khadija Shah on 14-day judicial remand in a case of burning Askari Tower. Admin judge Abhar Gul heard the case and ordered her to appear again on July 31. Earlier, the ATC's special court had discarded pleas of women involved in May 9 attack including Tayyaba Raja and Robina Khan.

Vol. XXXIX No. 179 Regd. No. 241 ZIL HAJJ 29 1444 -- TUESDAY, JULY 18 2023 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Pervaiz Elahi challenges detention orders before LHC

LAHORE (PPI): Former Punjab chief minister and PTI president, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi, on Monday lodged a petition with the Lahore High Court (LHC) challenging his detention orders.

The PTI president named Lahore Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider and other officials as respondents in the case, accusing the government of engaging in political victimization. He stated that he had already been granted bail in all the cases registered against him and emphasized that even an anti-terrorism court had approved his protective bail. This development follows the detention of former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi for a 30-day period under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO). The Lahore Deputy Commissioner issued a notification indicating that Elahi would be held in custody at Camp Jail Lahore to prevent public disorder.

According to the notification, two cases have been registered against Mr. Elahi at Qila Gujjar Singh police station, including charges of attempted murder, while another case has been registered at Ghalib Market police station under terrorism provisions.

The notification stated that Parvez Elahi, a PTI leader, faces three cases that could potentially disrupt law and order, making him a wanted individual. The notification further justified the action taken against Elahi, citing concerns that he may disturb the peace and cause a breach of law and order. The decision to detain him was made based on recommendations from the district government, District Intelligence Committee, and the police. The notification was issued upon the request of the capital city police. Meanwhile, the Punjab government filed a petition in the LHC challenging a single bench's decision that prevented the police from arresting Mr. Elahi. The government, along with anti-corruption departments and others, has been named as respondents in this case.

Corps Commanders' discuss security situation

E.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) presided over the 258th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) held at GHQ on Monday.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices persistently being offered by the valiant soldiers in the defence of their motherland against the threat of terrorism.

The participants were briefed in detail about the prevailing Internal Security environment. The sanctuaries and liberty of action available to the terrorists of proscribed TTP and other groups of that ilk in a neighboring country and availability of latest weapons to the terrorists



were noted as major reasons impacting security of Pakistan.

The forum deliberated in detail upon the operational preparedness and training aspects of the army. COAS said, "Objective training remains the hallmark of our professionalism and we must always remain prepared to guard against any threat to our national security."

The forum was also apprised about the Government's economic

revival plan and role of Army in uplifting agriculture, IT, mining & mineral and defence production sectors under the ambit of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The participants vowed to fully support the strategic initiatives planned by the Government of Pakistan for the revival of the economy by providing all possible technical and management support for the overall good of the people of Pakistan.

Pleas against mily courts: SC requested for full court

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has once again requested the Supreme Court (SC) to form a full court for hearing pleas against trials of civilians in military courts. In its plea on Monday, the federal government stated that Army Act and Official Secret Act were present before the Constitution. "The actions under both the acts are in accordance with the law."

The trial under the Army and Official Secret Acts give the right of fair trial to the accused. A full court should be formed to hear the pleas against the military courts as the matter is highly sensitive and important, the federal government pleaded with the SC.

It may be noted that Supreme Court (SC) will take on the pleas challenging trials of civilians in the military courts on July 18 (Tuesday). A six-member bench headed by CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial will take up the pleas. Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Ayesha Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik will be the other members of the bench.

Notices had been served to the respondents for the hearing. On the last hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial hoped that no civilians would be tried in military courts until the outcome of proceedings against them in the Supreme Court (SC). Earlier, the seven-member bench of the Supreme Court was dissolved after Justice Mansoor Ali Shah refused himself from hearing over the reservations raised by the federal government.

During the month of May this year, the government decided to try the suspects accused of attacking military installations on May 9 under army laws. Violent clashes broke out across Pakistan after the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was arrested from the premises of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on May 9. Army installations, Corps Commander's house in Lahore and General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi came under attack during a protest by PTI workers.

Court orders handover of 14-year-old married girl to her parents: Pronouncing a decision in

the case of abduction and marriage of an underage girl, the Supreme Court (SC) on Monday ordered that a 14-year-old girl and her two kids be handed over to her parents until investigation in the case was complete.

A two-member bench of the SC, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial, ordered Khanawal police to complete investigation in the case in one month and also ordered medical examination of the child in order to ascertain her real age. The apex court also ordered Mehwish's, the girl, husband to stop teasing his wife and cooperate with the police in the investigation. In his petition, girl's father had said that his daughter was 12 years old when the suspect kidnapped her and then married her.

CJP Bandial remarked that the girl's age was by no means ripe for marriage, while Justice Ayesha Malik expressed her indignation over her early marriage. "Her husband could even be sent to jail for marrying an underage girl," she said, and asked the police about the inquiry conducted in the case so far.

Khattak forms 'PTI Parliamentarians' Ishaq Khan

PESHAWAR: Former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister and ex-Imran Khan aide Pervez Khattak officially announced a new political party named Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians (PTI-P) in Peshawar, on Monday.

As many as 57 former provincial and national assembly members of PTI have joined PTI-P to support Pervez Khattak's leadership. Notable members include Ishtiaq Armar, Ziaullah Bangash, Ghazan Jamal, Agha Gandapur, Ahtesham Javed, Akbar, and Ahmed Hussain Shah. Additionally, Falak Naz, Ibrahim Khattak, Asiyah Asad, Malik Javed, and Arbab Waseem, Malik Wajidullah have also joined PTI-P.

Former chief minister Mehmood Khan is among the prominent figures included in the ranks of the newly formed party. Earlier on July 12, the PTI suspended the basic party membership of Pervez Khattak, with immediate effect. The notification read that PTI had issued a show cause notice to Khattak on June 21 on allegations that he incited PTI leaders to leave the party.

Pervez Khattak, a former leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who previously held the position of federal defence minister from 2018 to 2022, was expelled from PTI on allegations of encouraging former lawmakers to leave the party. The former lawmakers parted ways with the PTI due to the violent incidents of May 9. "We strongly condemn the incidents of May 9. We all exist because Pakistan exists," Pervez Khattak said while addressing a press conference. It is to be noted here that the KP was considered to be the stronghold of the PTI as the party formed its government in the province in 2013.

Sadia elected Dy Speaker of GB Assembly

GILGIT (PPI): The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) nominee Sadia Danish was elected unopposed as Gilgit Baltistan Deputy Speaker.

The process of deputy speaker's election in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly was completed on Monday when the PDM candidate Ms Danish was elected unopposed. Later, she took oath to her office which was administered by GB Assembly Speaker Nazeer Advocate. Sadia Danish became the first woman Deputy Speaker of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly.

The PTI Forward Bloc supported PPP member Ms Danish for the election. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf did not submit nomination papers for the slot. The PTI had removed its speaker by bringing a no-confidence motion against him and made its deputy speaker, a speaker of the GB Assembly. Ms Danish enlisted the support of PTI Forward Bloc and coalition members.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka close allies: Shehbaz

PM, Sri Lankan President reaffirm to continue long standing cooperation in diverse fields

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe on Monday agreed to continue the long-standing cooperation in areas of mutual interest and further strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries.

The prime minister held a telephone call with the Sri Lankan president. The prime minister emphasized the need to work together to fight poverty and promote economic growth and development for the benefit of the entire region, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also expressed his desire to promote peace and enhance connectivity through regional cooperation. The two leaders fondly recalled the close and cordial relations, and immense goodwill between the people of the two countries. The Sri Lankan president thanked the prime minister for conveying warm sentiments on behalf

of the people of Pakistan.

Separately on his Twitter handle, the prime minister said the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Sri Lanka were underpinned by reservoirs of goodwill and good neighbourliness between the two countries. "I had the pleasure of speaking to H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, President of Sri Lanka, earlier today to thank him for his support to Pakistan during my meeting with MD IMF," he added.

Over the decades, the prime minister further said that Pakistan and Sri Lanka had been close allies and friends, and stood by each other through thick and thin. "I remember how a team of Sri Lankan doctors stayed in Lahore and helped the Punjab government deal with dengue epidemic which was devouring precious human lives in Lahore," the prime minister said in a tweet. He also expressed his desire to working with the Sri Lankan president to further build on the friendly relations between the two

countries.

PM briefed about hydroelectric projects: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Lt General (R) Sajjad Ghani and received briefing about the ongoing hydroelectric projects and the projects for producing energy at a lower cost.

During the meeting, he also briefed the PM about the pace of progress on all mega dam projects including Dasu, Diamer Bhasha and Mohmand dams. He also apprised him about the effect of recent rains on the water reservoirs in the country.

Shahzain calls on Shehbaz: Minister for Narcotics Control Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

During the meeting, they discussed the current political situation in the country at length, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The matters related to the relevant ministry also came under discussion.

Meeting reviews security plan for Muharram in KP

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting regarding Muharram –ul-Harram was held at Civil Secretariat Peshawar under the chairmanship of caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Monday.

The meeting discussed in detail the proposed security plan and other arrangements to maintain law and order during the month of Muharram. Besides, Caretaker Ministers Masood Shah and Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Commandant Frontier Constabulary Muazzam Jah Ansari, Senior Member Board of Revenue Ikramullah Khan, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, administrative secretaries of concerned departments and other concerned civil and military officials attended the meeting.

Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and Divisional Commissioners and Regional Police Officers also participated in the meeting through video link. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the plan drawn up to maintain law and order during Muharram and was informed that SOPs regarding meetings and processions of the month of

Muharram have been provided to all the stakeholders. Police, FC and personnel of Pakistan Army will be deployed for security.

An effective and integrated strategy has been devised for monitoring processions and gatherings and for this purpose a central control room comprising representations of all concerned institutions and departments is being established in the Home Department, which will remain active round the clock.

Similarly, special arrangements have been made for the security of sensitive districts/places across the province. Meetings and processions will be monitored through CCTV cameras, while display of weapons, pillion riding, advertisement of hateful material through wall chalking, etc. have been banned.

The meeting was informed that special measures have been proposed for monitoring social media in relation to prevention of hateful content and negative propaganda. The schedule for suspension of mobile phone services in sensitive districts has also been sent to the concerned authorities. Similarly, meetings have been held with the leaders of various schools of thought to promote religious harmony and maintain public order

during the month of Muharram. Health response plan and emergency response plan have also been formed.

Furthermore, instructions have also been issued to the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity during the month of Muharram, especially on the routes of processions and congregations. Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan while expressing satisfaction over the proposed security plan and other arrangements regarding the month of Muharram clarified that ensuring peace during Muharram should be the first priority of all and for this purpose all the relevant departments and institutions should take responsibility.

He directed to focus on the security of sensitive cities during the month of Muharram. The Chief Minister further directed that it should be ensured that representatives of all relevant institutions and departments are present in the Central Control Room. Mohammad Azam Khan also directed to strictly adhere to the proposed routes and fixed time for the processions. He appealed to the general public and religious scholars to play their role in promoting inter-religious harmony and maintaining public order.

‘Masses bearing brunt of economic destruction brought by project Imran’

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday said the present government had saved the country from default by addressing the economic challenges deliberately created by the previous regime of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

"Today, the project Imran has become a source of embarrassment for even those who had brought him to power as the masses are bearing the brunt of his 44-month-long economic destruction," the minister said while addressing a news conference. "The PTI chief has crossed all limits in his enmity towards the country," she said while lauding the leadership and the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who had not only saved the country from default, but also charted the country on the path of progress.

At the outset of press conference, she said the incumbent coalition government took many important steps in 14 months to undo the devastation caused by the four-year misrule of the inefficient and incompetent rulers. The PTI chief's 44-month reign was a

period of economic destruction, inflation, theft, loot and plunder, she added. His government signed the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on tough conditions, first violated it and then suspended, pushing the country to the brink of default.

The PTI chairman had, in fact, crossed all limits to harm national interests as he and his cronies wanted the country to default like Sri Lanka, she added. The petrol price was, she said, reduced by the PTI chief in 2022 in violation of the IMF programme and it was done intentionally to get petty political mileage.

The minister recalled that when the present government came to power as a result of the first ever successful no-confidence motion in country's history against the former prime minister, the economy was completely in ruins with jobless youth and unprecedented inflation. There was acute shortage of energy and there was hardly any fund to purchase petroleum products and liquefied natural gas (LNG), she added.

"When we came to power, the country was close to default, on the contrary when they (PTI) were brought in the government in 2018, it

was developing at a growth rate of over 6.2 per cent." The minister said when the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government ended its tenure in 2018 with surplus electricity, but, ironically, the PTI leaders used to mock the party for producing surplus energy.

Marriyum said the PTI rulers destroyed every sector, including the foreign policy during their 44 months tenure and incumbent government faced great difficulties. Comparing first 14 months of the PTI regime with the same period of the present coalition government, she said sugar was not only expensive but also out of stock, and similarly flour and electricity were also not available in the market despite not being expensive.

Elderly women used to stand in long queues to buy a kilo of sugar during the PTI government, she recalled. The minister said during Covid-19, the price of LNG had fallen to as low as \$3, but that historical opportunity to buy cheap LNG was missed. The country was left at the mercy of gas and flour mafia during the PTI regime. She said the current government not only saved the country from default in its 14-month tenure, but also put the derailed econ-

omy back on track.

Marriyum said that for the first time, the IMF programme was successfully completed in 2016 during the tenure of Nawaz Sharif. She said the PTI regime destroyed the foreign policy and angered all the friendly countries, but the present government restored relations with the world in a confident manner.

"During 14 months we added 3,900 megawatt of electricity, but the PTI in its four years rule could not add even a single megawatt," she added. The minister said the person who announced the construction of 350 dams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made the people "dam fool". She said, "Saving the country from default, with economic stability, is the major achievement of the present government."

Marriyum said the projects launched by Nawaz Sharif were delayed during the PTI government, that resulted into increase in their cost. Even maintenance of power production units was not carried out during the last regime, she added. Electricity generation from furnace oil had now become nil while the furnace oil mafia was ruling the roost during the PTI's government, she

said.

The minister said the previous government had put its political opponents in death cells under the false slogan of accountability, but failed to produce even a single evidence of their "crimes" in courts. Today, inexpensive oil was being imported from Russia, an affordable gas agreement had been signed with Azerbaijan but the PTI did politics on that issue as well, she remarked.

She said the PTI chief and its leadership falsely claimed to have discussed oil import with the Russian leadership as no such thing was mentioned in the communicate or the press release issued at the end of his Moscow visit. They made the LNG contracts with foreign governments controversial and sent Miftah Ismail and Khaqan Abbasi to jail on the allegations of corruption just to mislead the people and inflict damage upon the country, she added.

The minister said the government had introduced distinct electricity tariffs for the wealthy and the underprivileged, aiming to shield the masses from inflationary pressures. The present government had not only averted a potential \$10 billion penalty in the Reko Dek case but also suc-

cessfully restored the agreement, the minister noted. She recalled that when the country was struck by devastating floods, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif allocated a substantial amount of Rs 100 billion to the provinces.

At that time, the ruling coalition held power only in the federation and Sindh, while the remaining provinces were governed by the PTI. Marriyum further criticized the PTI chief, pointing out instances where he abandoned meetings on the Coronavirus pandemic due to the presence of the Sindh Chief Minister and the then opposition leader, Shehbaz Sharif.

His decision, she asserted, demonstrated that how he prioritized arrogance and ego over national interests. During the flood calamity, she said one-third of the country was submerged, leading to extensive damage to crops and the loss of 1.1 million livestock. The disaster left approximately 8 million people homeless along with the loss of over 1,600 precious lives, she added. The damage, she said, would have been unimaginable if the calamity was not responded in time by the NDMA and PDMAs.

(Continued on Back Page)



LAHORE: Labourers renovation work at historical Mosque Masjid Wazir Khan at Walled City.

Sindh govt to organise international conference for investors: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit in Sindh, stated that considering the current economic situation, the Pakistan People's Party has initiated the establishment of Dhabiji Economic Zone to attract global investments.

Pakistan requires long-term economic policies, given its status as an agricultural country with abundant natural resources, including valuable minerals. The Sindh government plans to organize an international investment conference to further encourage investments. Substantial progress has been witnessed in the transport, energy, agriculture, irrigation, communication, and other sectors within Sindh. The current government aims to successfully complete its term, and InshaAllah, the Pakistan People's Party will secure victory in the upcoming elections.

During a conversation with journalists at the Sindh Assembly media corner, Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit in Sindh, highlighted that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) serves as a unifying force for all four provinces, emphasizing unity, solidarity, and understanding as core policies of the party. He said that the PPP's approach has garnered favorable reception among people from all provinces,



evident by the party's recent victories in by-elections across all four provinces, as well as in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir.

In his statement at the Sindh Assembly media corner, Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, emphasized the leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in being able to bring all parties to the negotiation table. He expressed the need to create a positive environment in the country, stating that four years ago, seeds of hatred were sown. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that there are visible attempts by Israel to protect the leadership of PTI. He said that they are plotting to have Imran Khan leave the country under the guise of human rights concerns. Sharjeel Inam Memon further stated that there is an ongoing paid campaign against our nation in various countries across the globe.

In response to a question, Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the decision to dissolve the assembly for

elections would be made by the Chief Minister in consultation with the party leadership. Regarding MQM's statements, Sharjeel Inam Memon expressed that they should not be taken seriously as they are likely intended to create an atmosphere before the elections. He mentioned that the leadership of PPP aims for reconciliation and that they are neither afraid nor concerned.

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that it is ultimately up to the people to decide, as those who are rejected by the people will face rejection, while those who are favored by the people will emerge victorious. In response to a question, Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the government is committed to taking action against any criminal activities. However, he said that despite substantial evidence, no action has been taken against the Ladla, who has not faced imprisonment to date.

In response to another question, Sharjeel Inam Memon indicated that there is a high likelihood of new

individuals joining the People's Party in the near future, suggesting that the party is open to welcoming new members. Sharjeel Inam Memon mentioned that the police are engaged in battles against dacoits in Katcha, highlighting that the robbers possess modern weapons. He further stated that approval has been given to equip police with modern weapons to effectively combat the dacoits.

In response to another question, Sharjeel Inam Memon expressed the view that the positive efforts and accomplishments of the governor deserve appreciation, suggesting that recognition should be given to the governor's good works.

In response to another question, Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the upcoming elections will be conducted in accordance with the constitution and the law, indicating a commitment to ensuring a fair and lawful electoral process. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Ladla enjoys special treatment from certain influential individuals, allowing him to secure bail repeatedly. In response to a question, Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted significant improvements in the health sector. He expressed optimism that if the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) comes to power at the federal level, they will work towards expanding the scope of health facilities, such as the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) and Cyber Knife, to all provinces.

Police launches crackdown against rash PSV drivers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Division) has decided to expedite efforts against heavy/PSV (Public Service Vehicle) drivers who have been operating

their vehicles in a hazardous and overloaded manner while repeatedly violating traffic laws.

The police have cancelled route permits for drivers with multiple viola-

tions and are urging citizens to report complaints to Islamabad Capital Police Helpline 15. This special crackdown aims to safeguard lives and property, and Chief Traffic Officer

Islamabad, Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, is leading the effort to ensure public safety.

Citizens have been urged to report their complaints to Islamabad Capital Police Helpline 15.

"We will collectively ensure the protection of people's lives and property. Strict legal action will be taken against drivers who endanger the lives and property of citizens, and they will be arrested and their route permits cancelled after multiple violations besides impounding vehicles at police stations," said Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer.

According to the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, further stringent legal action has been decided against PSV vehicles that violate traffic laws, especially heavy public service vehicles that are operated in an overloaded and dangerous manner. Under this operation, those drivers who repeatedly violate traffic laws will have their route permits cancelled after multiple violations and they will be arrested at police stations. In addition to this, Islamabad Capital Police has formed a special squad to further strengthen the enforcement of this legal action. The squad is tasked with carrying out operations on various roads and intersections of Islamabad and taking legal action against PSV vehicles that are violating traffic laws.

Muharram Reporting Cell established

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Monday established a Central Muharram Reporting Cell at the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi to monitor the law and order situation as well security arrangements during the first 15 days of Muharram-ul-Haram in the overall province. According to a spokesman for Sindh Police, the Central Muharram Reporting Cell can be contacted by phone numbers 02199212064-5, 02199213081, fax number 02199213836, WhatsApp number 0335314556, and at email address igpoperationsroom@gmail.com.

IGP Sindh has deputed three deputy superintendents of police (DSPs) to supervise the cell. The cell would remain operational round-the-clock in three shifts. The deputed officers would collect the information related with the events of Muharram or any eventuality etc. and would share such information with the competent authority well in time.

More monsoon rains forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Monday predicted more monsoon rains for the Sindh province including Karachi from July 19 to July 23.

Thundershower was predicted in Sukkur Larkana and Jacobabad from July 19 to July 21 with occasional gaps. However, a thundershower with isolated heavy rain is forecast for Tharparkar, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Larkana, Jacobabad, and Dadu from July 19 (Evening/Night) to July 23.

Whereas, thunderstorms with isolated heavy falls are predicted for Karachi, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar, Badin, and Thatta districts from July 20 to July 22 with occasional gaps.

Meanwhile, the PMD has forecast hot and humid weather in most parts of the Sindh province during the next 24 hours (July 18).

While drizzle is predicted for Karachi and its surrounding areas during the period. The Minimum and maximum temperatures were recorded in Karachi 32-34 degrees Centigrade, Hyderabad 38-40 degrees Centigrade, Sukkur 40-42 degrees Centigrade, Thatta 35-37 degrees Centigrade, Mohenjodaro 41-43 degrees Centigrade,

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday 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 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Highway, Zia Masjid, Service Road East, Iqbal Town, AIOU, COMST, Chhata Bakhtawar, Park Enclave, Lahtrar, Tramiree, ISI Feeders.

‘Iran’s abundant energy resources can greatly benefit Pakistan’

KARACHI (APP): The Consul General (CG) of Iran to Karachi Hassan Noorian has laid emphasis on the potential for strengthening the relationship between Pakistan and Iran through cooperation in various fields. He expressed these views in a recent meeting with a delegation of the Karachi Press Club (KPC) led by its President Saeed Sarbazi at the Iranian Consulate in Karachi, according to a communiqué here on Monday.

The delegation included KPC Vice-President Mushtaq Sohail, Secretary Shoaib Ahmed, and Joint Secretary Aslam Khan, which had an opportunity to engage in discussion with the Iranian Consul General. The CG Noorian expressed his belief in the deep-rooted and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran. He said that Iran imports basmati rice, meat, and other commodities from various countries.

He said that she (Iran) provided ample trade opportunities for Pakistani businessmen.

Noorian also stressed the potential for promoting cooperation between the two nations in multiple sectors, in particular, Iran's abundant energy resources can greatly benefit Pakistan.

He also exemplified the ongoing Pakistan-Iran Gas Pipeline project.

President of the Karachi Press Club Saeed Sarbazi, on the occasion, suggested organizing visits of journalistic delegations between the two countries, which received positive feedback from the Iranian Consul General.

The Consul General expressed the Consulate's close ties with the Karachi Press Club and accepted an invitation from Secretary Shoaib Ahmed Khan to visit the Press Club. The forthcoming visit of the Iranian Consul General to the Karachi Press Club, along with the newly appointed ambassador to Pakistan, is anticipated to further foster cooperation and understanding between the media communities of both nations.

This exchange of visits aims at bolstering the already robust Pakistan-Iran relations and exploring new avenues of collaboration.

By enhancing cooperation across diverse sectors and facilitating people-to-people interactions, Pakistan and Iran are poised to forge a stronger and more fruitful partnership.

The Iranian Consul General's visit to the Karachi Press Club will serve as an important step toward the aforesaid goal, fostering mutual understanding and deepening the bonds between the two nations.

Naqvi expresses satisfaction over healthcare facilities being provided at RIC

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Monday expressed satisfaction with the medical facilities being provided at Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology (RIC).

During his visit, the CM in detail inspected the hospital's emergency, CT scan, X-ray room, Fluoroscopic, and other departments of the institute.

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi directed the RIC administration to open the VIP ward for the general public and ensure the availability of medicines at the institute.

The CM interacted with the admitted patients and inquired about Angiography and Angioplasty treatment and other facilities being provided to them.

The patients uttered pleasure over the treatment facilities at the RIC.

On a Twitter handle, he said that state-of-the-art heart treatment facilities were provided to the patients at the RIC.

During my recent visit to the Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, I was impressed by how effectively the management and doctors handled the large influx of patients. Despite the heavy workload, there were no complaints from any patients regarding the care they received.

However, it was evident that certain areas required improvement.

Recognizing this, the Secretary of Health had been assigned to address these gaps and enhance the overall quality of services, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi tweeted.

Mayor Karachi chairs first meeting of the city council

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Monday chaired the first meeting of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation- KMC's Council in the City Council Hall at the KMC building here.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad was also present on this occasion. Two condolence and one condemnation resolution were adopted in the meeting. Condolences were offered on the death of Member City Council Farida Majeed and former Federal Minister Sher Muhammad Baloch and prayers for forgiveness were offered for the deceased.

A resolution condemning the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden was passed. Addressing the meeting, the Mayor welcomed all members of the City Council and expressed hope that all members will work for the betterment of the city. He said that we will work in every UC and there will be equal treatment with all members, we will work with everyone including the workers of Jamaat-e-Islami.

He said that we will connect the hearts to make Karachi the cradle of peace as we want to solve the problems of Karachi with understanding.

Pakistan People's Party, Jamaat-e-Islami, Muslim League (N), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and other parties have to serve Karachi together, he said that time will tell who served Karachi and who did politics. Murtaza Wahab asked the mem-

bers present in the House whether they want the development of Karachi. Want to solve water problems and want to get rid of the land mafia.

He said that the media is seeing that we want to hold a meeting so that the problems of Karachi can be solved and the occupation can be ended from the parks of Karachi, the drains of Karachi can be cleaned, roads and streets can be built.

He said that shouting slogans does not solve problems and our political training is visible to Karachi because we want to improve and develop Karachi.

He said that he and the Deputy Mayor are with them and he wants to tell that Karachi is our priority. Water sewage and parks are a priority and we will fix the roads of Karachi and will try to have work in every UC, he added.

At the introductory meeting of the City Council, at the invitation of Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab, PTI Parliamentary Leader Asad Aman, Muslim League (N) Parliamentary Leader Muhammad Feroze, Jamaat-e-Islami Parliamentary Leader Hafiz Naemur Rehman and Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentary Leader Najmi Alam addressed on the occasion.

Asad Aman said that we are standing for the development of Karachi as if Karachi moves, the whole country will move and develop. Muhammad Feroze congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Karachi.

NADRA Regional Head Office Peshawar

TENDER NOTICE

File# PCM-VRA/Services & Misc Items/2023-24/04

Provision of Services & Misc. Items for NADRA PCM, VRA & Field Offices of RHO KP

1. National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) Regional Head Office, Peshawar invites sealed bids from the Suppliers/ Contractors/ Firms registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments and who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue of following items/ works are required :-
 - a. Stationary Items
 - b. Furniture & Fixture
 - c. Toner & Drums
 - d. Generator Rental
 - e. Security Guard Uniforms
2. Items (Goods) would be delivered to Store Plot-1, NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar and works related jobs at DAUs under jurisdiction of RHO NADRA Peshawar
3. Bidding Documents containing detailed terms conditions, method of procurement, procedure for submission of bids, bid security, bid validity, opening of bid, evaluation criteria, clarification/rejection of bids, performance guarantee etc. are available for the interested bidders at Procurement Section, NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar. Bidding documents may be obtained during office hours from the undersigned from 19th Jul, 2023 to 3rd Aug, 2023 on payment of Rs. 2000/- (non-refundable).
4. The Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, must reach Procurement Section, NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar latest by 3rd Aug, 2023 before 1100 hours. Tender will be opened in the office of the undersigned in the presence of bidders/authorized representatives on same day 3rd Aug, 2023 at 1130 hours. The complete list/detail of required items will be provided with the tender documents.

Assistant Director (Procurement)

Regional Head Office, NADRA

Plot # 31-B, EOBI Building Phase V,

Hayatabad, Peshawar. Phone: 091-9217840

PID(I) 367/23



KARACHI: Women and children selecting and purchasing old toys at a roadside stall in Empress Market.



Police stand strong against terrorism

— kill 156 terrorists, POs in last 6 months

PESHAWAR (APP): Stand strong against terrorism, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have killed 156 terrorists and proclaimed offenders (POs) besides arresting 434 terrorists including 26 hardcore terrorists carrying head money during the last six months in the province.

As many as 144 police officers were also martyred and 224 were injured in the line of duty during the said period, says a press release.

Besides arresting 1,474 narcotics sellers and 36,923 and recovering 7414 arms, 179,873 rounds in 8004 search and strike operations under the national action plan, the police also arrested 42,910 suspects during 28,657 snap checking.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Gandapor said that anti-state elements and professional criminals would be dealt with iron hands under the country's laws.

In a statement here, the IGP said that hurdles in the way of established peace would not be tolerated and reiterated that provision of people welfare services and protection of life and prop-

erties would be ensured to people at their doorsteps.

The high-level meeting presided over by IGP here at the central police office reviewed the law and order situation in the province.

During the meeting, a comprehensive report about the occurrence of crimes and measures taken for its prevention and police performance came under discussion.

The IGP was informed that the counter-terrorism department (CTD) in the last six months arrested accused Shaukat Ullah involved in the killing of DSP Lakki Marwat Iqbal Mohmand and his fellows and other terrorism cases. The involvement of the gang was confirmed through recovered arms and cellular data after forensic tests and the accused confessed the crime.

The most wanted inter-provincial terrorist, Iqbal alias Bali wanted to Kahara Punjab and KP police in 35 cases, was killed during an encounter with CTD DI Khan.

The facilitator of the Peshawar Police Lines Mosque explosion, Imtiaz son of Ameerzada was

arrested by CTD Peshawar and the main accused involved in the target killing of three Sikhs and four ulama were also arrested.

As many as 68 kilograms of explosives, 312 hand grenades, 12 suicide jackets, three RPGs, 68 RPG shells, six shotguns, 51 pistols etc were recovered.

As many as 190,950-kilogram narcotics were recovered and 1,453 FIRs were registered under the anti-narcotics act under which 1474 accused were arrested from whom custody 17,273 857 kilogram hashish, 973,871 kg heroine, 758 204 kg opium, 943,296 kg ice and 3168 liquor bottles were recovered.

Besides the seizure of arms and ammunition and Pakistani currency, 10,220 proclaimed offenders were arrested and 50 were killed in police encounters. Similarly, 1230 Afghan refugees were arrested for illegal stay charged under the foreign act and 420 persons for illegal use of loud-speakers.

Rs114,793,000 fine was recovered after 619,575 vehicles were challen-



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting to review arrangements for upcoming Muharram.

Rescue 1122 completes preparations for Muharram

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Director General (DG) Dr Khateer Ahmed on Monday said that Rescue 1122 had completed all the preparations to provide facilities to the mourners during Muharram.

In a statement issued here, he said, "All the district emergency officers have been directed to cancel the leaves of all staff during Muharram to ensure optimum rescuers' availability to cope with any emergency situation." He said that during Muharram, more than three thousand rescue personnel would perform duty across the province while 78 ambulances, 20 fire vehicles over 300 ambulances, and other operational vehicles and personnel would also be deployed for emergency services.

He said that Emergency Medical Response Unit and rescue personnel would remain alert along with the mourning processions and medical camps would be set up at different places for the mourners.

The DG said, "Additional medicines and other necessary supplies have been provided to all District Emergency Offices and DEOs have been instructed to remain present at their duty stations throughout Muharram and refrain from leaving the station without prior permission from the competent authority." He said, "Rescue staff members have been directed to wear proper uniforms and badges and follow the code of conduct and ethics while performing duties."

Met Office predicts hot, humid weather

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Monday predicted hot and humid weather in most parts of the province.

However, scattered rain, wind-thunderstorms are likely to occur in Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Battagram, Torghar, Kohistan, Shangla, Chitral, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat and Kurram districts.

During the last 24 hours, weather remained partly cloudy/humid in most districts of the province. However, rain wind-thunderstorm occurred at isolated places in Swat, Dir, Chitral and Abbottabad districts.

Rain recorded (in mm): Malam Jabba 15, Kakul 14, Dir and Drosh 03 (each), Mirkhani 02.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of KP were Peshawar City 37/28, Chitral 33/21, Timergara 36/24, Dir 32/20, Mirkhani 40/18, Kalam 26/13, Drosh 35/21, Saidu Sharif 33/23, Pattan 38/26, Malam Jabba 21/14, Takht Bhai 36/28, Kakul 29/19, Balakot 34/19, Parachinar 28/12, Bannu 38/27, Cherat 30/19, D.I. Khan 39/28.

Journalism Dept plays key role in KP's uplift: Feroze

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister of Information, Auqaf, Hajj, Religious and Minority Affairs, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel on Monday said that the Department of Journalism, University of Peshawar has played key role in the development of the province.

He expressed these views on the occasion of his visit to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at University of Peshawar here.

Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar, Dr Muhammad Idris, Chairman Journalism Department Dr. Faizullah Jan, Assistant Professor Journalism Bakht Zaman, Assistant Professor Journalism Syed Irfan Ashraf and others were also present on this occasion.

The caretaker minister said that the profession of journalism plays a huge responsibility in the uplifting of society and the country. The caretaker setup is

trying its best to promote peace, prosperity and development in the province without borrowing a single penny. We consider politics as worship, he added.

On the occasion, the caretaker minister was given a detailed briefing on the various sections, affairs and performance of the journalism department. He met the students of the journalism department and also visited the digital studio.

He said that the podcast studio will provide journalists and students of the journalism department with a platform to make journalistic professional videos.

Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar Prof. Dr. Muhammad Idris, Chairman Department Dr. Faizullah Jan was also present during the inauguration.

In his address to the students, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that it is a happy day for him to address the students of the Journalism Department at the University of

Peshawar. He said that in future these students will be in the field to run the affairs of the country.

In his address, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel paid tributes to the entire journalism department for the inauguration of the podcast studio. He also announced plans to immediately renovate and repair the classroom of the journalism department.

The Caretaker Minister Information also held a question-and-answer session with the students, and interacted with the officials of the Journalism Students Forum.

In response to a question from the media, he said that politics is a sacred profession and it should be done for the development of the country and society.

Vice Chancellor, University of Peshawar, Dr. Mohammad Idris also addressed the students and said that journalism and mass communication is a very important field in

Pakistan.

The department has and will receive all kinds of support from the university. He said that when he took charge, there were salary issues in the university. I have passed the surplus budget twice. The vice chancellor said that my effort is to solve the problems of all the departments of the university.

Chairman Journalism Department Dr. Faizullah Jan while addressing the students said that the Department of Journalism was established in the university in 1978, it is the first department of journalism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The department has produced good Pashto-Urdu journalists across the country and abroad. Now the department not only produces journalists, rather a lot of focus is also being paid to strategic communication.

On this occasion, the Vice Chancellor presented a shield to the caretaker Minister of information.

Additional Judges service extension: PHC dispose-off petition

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmad disposed of writ following provision of six months service extension to three Additional Judges of High Court, on Monday.

During hearing Additional Advocate General Sana Ullah and Joint Secretary Law Irfan Anjum while counsel for petitioner Barrister Adnan Khan appeared before PHC.

The petitioner Maqsood Ali has challenged parliamentary committees decision regarding High Court Judges while Barrister

Mudasir Amir has filed petition on behalf of PHC bar Association.

The counsel argued that PHC has accepted writ petition regarding appointment of Additional judges at High Court but notification didn't issued in this regard.

Additional Attorney General informed that a notification has issued for provision of six months extension to services of three Additional judges of High Court while Joint Secretary produced the notification before PHC.

It is worthy to mention that Secretary parliamentary Affairs didn't recommended Justice, Khurshid Iqbal, Justice Shahid Ali and Justice Fazal Subhan despite PHC

orders which challenged in the current for implementation of court order.

PHC declare SMBR decision null&void: Peshawar High Court (PHC) declared incorporation of Union Council Mayar in Ghari Kapoora tehsil null and void while remand back the case to Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR).

Tehsil Mardan City Mayar Himayat Ullah has challenged the SMBR decision while Babar Khan Yousafzai Advocate argued the case on behalf of petitioner.

The petition stated that Mayar is geographically part of Mardan City but in previous government the union Council was incorpo-

rated in the Ghari Kapoora tehsil to favour blue eyed persons. The counsel argued that maps are available on the file which shows distance between Union Council Mayar and Tehsil Ghari Kapoora while added that it has also created problems for the residents.

The counsel requested to declare the notification null and void while to declare Union Council Mayar part of Mardan city which was earlier part the city.

PHC detailed judgment directed SMBR to review the case and declared void incorporation of Mayar in Ghari Kapoora because other areas of the tehsil is also far away from the union Council Mayar.

Govt urged to take steps for promotion of furniture industry

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi urged the government to take pragmatic steps for promotion of furniture industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and issues businesspeople attached with this sector.

Speaking at a ceremony of three-day Pakistan Furniture Expo in Peshawar, Ijaz Afridi said that the furniture industry has played a pivotal role in economic development and enhancement of the country's export, which should be lifted up at an optimal level.

Afridi said huge potential exists to make investment in the furniture sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He asked to create maxi-

mum opportunities for promotion of the furniture industry and investment in the sector.

Various Pakistani and international furniture stalls set up in the expo. Organiser of the Pakistan Furniture Expo Mohsin Faisal was also present in the exhibition.

The SCCI's acting chief said the business community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has faced various difficulties due to current economic turmoil and other issues.

Therefore, he urged the government to take serious

steps for resolution of businessperson issues attached with the furniture industry.

Like other sectors, he said the furniture industry was not only contributing to economic development but had an important role in improving the country's exports.

He emphasized the furniture industry should be incentivized to boost up investment in the sector.

Ijaz Afridi who was accompanied by the chamber's secretary general Sajjad Aziz and others said the business community

has always supported the national economy in difficult circumstances.

So, he stressed that traders' issues should be resolved on priority grounds.

Later, the SCCI's acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi visited various stalls set up in the furniture exhibition and praised the various arts/designs and high quality of furniture.

On the occasion, Ijaz Afridi also distributed certificates among the participants of the furniture exhibition.

Minister directs introduction of online financial system in TEVTA institutes

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Muhammad Adnan Jalil on Monday directed bringing the financial system of all subsidiary institutes of the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) under an online system.

Presiding over a meeting here at TEVTA headquarters, Jalil asked to cut unnecessary expenditures by shifting offices to solar power to save energy. All directors and other concerned officers of the authority attended the meeting.

The caretaker minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the overall performance, financial and administrative affairs, professional activities of the institute and challenges in this regard.

Keeping in view the importance of technical

education, the provincial minister directed the holding of a grand award distribution ceremony for the outstanding students of the technical educational institutes, administrative & teaching staff of TEVTA and Principals of the technical colleges.

During the ceremony, all teachers, principals, administrative staff and intelligent students of the institutes would be awarded.

Speaking on the occasion, the provincial minister said that technical education is considered as crucial sector for the socio-economic uplift of any society, which even could be ignored during the present modern era.

He further said that besides focusing on the performance of the technical and training performance of the TEVTA, the uplifting the teaching and procedure for the promotion of other

staffers should be improved and accelerated and such kind of system should be adopted to pave the way for the promotion of the higher qualified and intelligent staffers of the institute and provide them golden opportunities for their bright future.

The provincial minister said that the promotion of technical education as a vital sector is their top priority, saying he is making efforts to make the institute a visible precedent on the basis of its performance and can generate such kind of skilled human resources and best opportunities of employment both inside the country and abroad.

Earlier, on arrival at TEVTA headquarters, the provincial minister was accorded a warm welcome, wherein he inspected various shops in the new building for TEVTA and also reviewed the professional affairs of the institute.



PESHAWAR: Elders of Dara Adam Khel Shahid Bilal with others addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghual Murtaza

Jaggery slush providing respite from sizzling heat

PESHAWAR (APP): Jaggery slush, a traditional sweet dish made of blended ice dipped in jaggery syrup, is a decades-old favourite delight of Peshawarites especially served during the summer season as a respite from the sizzling heat.

During the hot and humid summer season, countless push carts and vendors become ubiquitous on streets and roads of Peshawar offering mouth-watering ice slush sweetened mostly by pouring jaggery syrup.

People of all ages mostly from minors to youngsters and even of old ages can be seen gathered around the stalls of sweet syrup for quenching their thirst and for getting relief from the harsh humid summer.

"Locally called 'Totia Motia', the dish has special liking from Peshawarites which can be gauged from the fact that for the last 30 years, our family is

engaged in this business even in the winter season," informs Nazir Ahmad a shopkeeper in Gang area of Peshawar in interior city.

Packed to capacity, Nazir shop was swarmed by Totia Motia lovers of all ages who were waiting to get their favourite dish.

"We are selling Totia Motia in both summer and winter seasons due to its demand throughout the year," Nazir told APP.

In winter the demand is less but in summer we did not have time to even scratch our heads due to the rush of customers, he added.

The shop opens early in the morning and keeps on serving sweets to customers till late at night, especially in hot summer which becomes harsher due to humidity and electricity load shedding, he added.

About the recipe, Nazir said, it is very simple just crushed ice dipped in sweet

syrup especially jaggery due to its demand.

We also add some sweet custard and vermicelli of boiled starch which further adds the sweetness and attraction of customers, Nazir went on to say.

"This sweet slush is our favourite dish and we like to eat it on a daily basis," observed Nasir a young city dweller.

People from different localities come to Nazir shop because of its good reputation for adding pure jaggery syrup, Nasir told APP. A number of ice cream brands have arrived and shops are opened in the city but the demand for Totia Motia remained intact due to its affordable price and unique taste, commented Abid Ali, another city dweller.

A cup of Totia Motia is available at a reasonable price of Rs. 50 and we can easily eat more than one, he added.

Bid to smuggle drug to Punjab foiled; hashish recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): In a successful crackdown against drug smuggling, the Mardan Excise Police on Monday foiled a bid to smuggle huge quantity of drug from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab.

According to the spokesman, the Excise police on a tip-off conducted a raid on Charsadda Peshawar GT Road near Khyalid bridge and intercepted a vehicle number BA-3453.

During search of the vehicle, the police recovered 4800 grams of hashish and arrested an accused from the spot and started further investigation after registering a case.

Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Prison Hidayat Ullah Khan Afridi on Monday said that the provincial caretaker government has taken solid steps for the restoration of the closed family quarters in all jails.

In a press statement issued here from his office, he said that the Communication and Works (C&W) department Government of the KP team has visited the sites of non-functional family quarters and made nec-

essary inspections for the renovation and other construction work.

He added that in 2005 the then KP government had taken a step to establish family quarters in prisons and in the first phase in Central Jail Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Mardan and Haripur family quarters were formed while in other jails the establishment of the family quarter were also included in the scheme.

He maintained that due to the law-and-order situation in 2012 in the

province, the family quarters which were established in five jails had to close, saying that family quarters are the conjugal right of prisoners and the incumbent KP caretaker government making efforts for the restoration of closed family quarters.

The establishment of family quarters, Caretaker Special Assistant Hidayat Ullah Khan said, is a good step and the caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is trying to restore all the close family quarters very soon.



In brief

PTI ex-MPA Shah Faisal held

HANGU (INP): Police arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's former MPA Shah Faisal Khan from Hangu on Monday. Police have arrested the former member of provincial assembly from his house. Shah Faisal was absconding for a month. He came to visit his sick mother today and police got him arrested.

Seized explosive disposed off F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Like other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stored explosives in Khyber were disposed of under the district administration here in the mountainous area of Jamrud subdivision last day. The Provincial Ministry of Interior in a notification had asked all the district administrations of the province to get rid of explosives confiscated in various operations aimed to avoid any untoward incident. In the presence of Assistant Commissioner, Jamrud, Dr Amir Zeb, Judicial Magistrate and in-charge of police Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) Khyber, 204 Kilogram explosive, 25 hand-grenades, 12 mortar shells, and 73 bullets of heavy machine gun were disposed off. The explosive articles had been seized and stored in police and administration warehouses for years.

Terror bid foiled in Chaman

CHAMAN (INP): The police foiled a terror bid and recovered 10 kilogram bomb near Chaman railway station on Monday which was defused later. According to details, police found bomb weighing 10 kilogram near Chaman railway station after which the area was sealed. The bomb disposal squad (BDS) was called in which defused the bomb stated to be remote controlled. Timely action of police and BDS save the area and people of massive destruction.

Cop hurt as check post attacked

TANK (INP): A cop was injured when miscreants attacked a police check post here. Assailants fled the scene after retaliatory action. According to details, unidentified armed men attack Nasran police check post in suburbs of Tank district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A policeman was injured in the assault and attackers fled the scene after retaliatory firing. The injured cop was shifted to hospital. The police cordoned off the area after the incident launched search operation but no arrest could be made.

Relief, rescue operations

BAHAWALNAGAR (INP): Relief and rescue operations by Pakistan Army are underway in the flood-affected areas of the country. According to the details, Pakistan Army carried out relief and rescue operations in fourteen flood affected areas of Bahawalnagar, Minchinabad and Chishtian. The victims, including children, women and the elderly people were shifted to safer places. The army troops also distributed ration and water among the flood victims. The residents of the area thanked the Pakistan army for the relief operations.

Three injured

DUKI (PPI): Three persons, including two women, sustained injuries after unidentified armed men opened fire on a vehicle they were travelling near Kach Sadozai area of Luni in district Duki of Balochistan province on Monday.



HYDERABAD: Children are bathing into Pinyari Canal to beat the heat of scorching sun during a hot day.

AKF orphan home in Dir needs funds

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The biannual meeting of the board of governance of Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad was held with the board' chairman, Shahabuddin at Gulabad.

The Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF) Pakistan Vice President Air Marshal Retd Farooq Habib, Director Aghosh Al-Khidmat Pakistan Air Martial retired Arshad Malik, program manager Aghosh Homes Sheikh Ahsan Fareed, AKF Provincial Vice President Fazal Mehmood, Provincial President Khalid Waqas, District President Hafeezullah Khaksar, Paraplegic Center Hayatabad Peshawar Chief Executive Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, Jamaat-e-Islami district chief Izaz Mulk Afkari, journalist Haleem Asad, renowned businessman Haji Amir Naushad, Dir Chamber of Commerce President Mian Noor Alam Bacha, former Tehsil Nazim Syed Sultanat Yar Bukhari, manager orphan care KPK Muhammad Nawaz and others participated.

The center in-charge Saeedullah presented the last biannual progress report, annual budget and informed the participants about the income and expenditure with the next year plans. The participants appreciated the management of Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad and the local donors for their contribution.

The BOG gave approval for purchasing of a mini bus for orphan students with a cost of Rs 6 million and establishment of a computer Lab with a total cost of Rs 2 million at the Gulabad centre. The meeting also agreed to submit a proposal for purchasing a land for playground adjacent to the centre that would cost Rs 24 million. The meeting was informed that local resources would be utilized while the AKF regional and central offices would be contacted for arranging the amounts.

The Aghosh Al-Khidmat Gulabad centre is currently hosting a total of 84 orphan children from Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Chirral, Malakand and Swat districts. The centre also provides free education, healthcare and residential facilities to these deserving children. Speaking on the occasion retired Air Martial Farooq Habib said that people were trusting the AKF for its devotion, transparency and volunteerism. He said the society should realise its responsibilities towards orphan, widows and helpless childrens.

PPP former minister remembered on his first death anniversary: Speakers of a function on the first death anniversary

paid rich tributes to late Bakht Baidar Khan, a former provincial minister and leader of the Pakistan People Party, for his public services and contribution to local development. The PPP Adenzai chapter arranged the event at Tarnao in Adenzai area which was attended by hundreds of the party workers and area elders including leaders of other political parties.

The function was addressed by the PPP provincial president and minister of state for water resources Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, former provincial president and finance minister Humayun Khan, Awami national Party vice president Hussain Shah Yousafzai, PPP divisional president and former state minister Malik Azmat Khan, former provincial minister Mahmood Zeb Khan, Naemullah (son of Late Bakht Baidar Khan) and others. The speakers said that Bakht Baidar Khan was a real public representative and he had always worked for the poor class. They said the deceased had also lost one of his brothers when militants had attacked his Hujra on Eid day. The speakers said the PPP would abolish all taxes in Malakand division if it came into power.

Speaking on the occasion the minister of state Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha said that Late Bakht Baidar Khan would always be remembered for his services to the party and local people. The PPP provincial president said that Naemullah, the son of Bakht Baidar Khan would follow the footsteps of his father.

He asked the participants to start their electioneering campaign as general elections would be held this year. He said the PPP would form the next government in the center and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as people had attached great expectations with the party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Condemning the May 9 and 10 riots, the PPP leader said that people involved in targeting military installations and state properties would face the law.

Meanwhile a PPP activist Muhammad Hanif Khan told local journalists at Timergara that heavy fees were being collected from tourists while entering the Malam Jabba, a scenic spot in Swat. He demanded of the Swat administration to take notice of the matter and provide relief to the visiting tourists. The PPP activist complained that Rs 1100 was being collected per vehicle while entering the Malam Jabba Swat area and Rs 1400 as fee for using the chair lift. He said that it was not fair and the administration should fix an adequate fee for the chair lifts and abolish the vehicle entry fee.

Two die, four injured in motorcycle collision

CHINIOT (INP): Two including a child died and four others were injured in separate incidents of collision of motorcycles in different areas of Chiniot on Monday.

Rescue sources said that the first accident took place at Chiniot-Jhumra road near Islamia Ground where while overtaking a tractor trolley, three motorcycles collided with each other. A three-year old child Ahsan died on the spot in the accident while his father among four identified as Ashraf, Bilal, Muhammad Rizwan and Saba were injured.

Another unidentified person died between two motorcycles on Chenab Nagar road. The bodies and injured of both incidents were shifted to different hospitals and police after registering separate cases at respective police stations started investigations.

Newborn dies, mother's condition deteriorates due to negligence: A newborn girl died while condition of mother deteriorated due to negligence of staff of Basis Health Unit (BHU) here on Monday.

According to details, wife of Muhammad Iqbal hailing from Kandiwal Lalian district Chiniot was shifted to BHU for delivery case. The inexperienced medics and nurses of BHU performed minor operation of the woman resulting in death of newborn girl and deteriorating the condition of mother.

The woman was rushed to Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital where her stitching was held. The father of deceased girl and affected woman has appealed the caretaker chief minister, secretary health and Deputy Commissioner of Chiniot for action against the staff of BHU.

Sutlej River floods vast area, damaging crops

ARIFWALA (PPI): The standing crops were destroyed and many settlements along the river belt were flooded in Arifwala and Chishtian after the water level rose further in the Sutlej River, according to a report on Monday.

The water level in the Sutlej River near Arifwala rose further with the inflow of an over 83,000 cusecs water current. Many settlements on the river belt were submerged, and several others were washed away. The river water also entered several villages including Balara Arjunka, Hassu Hasanka, Balara Lakhuka and Arazhi Dilawar. Rescue 1122 started shifting the residents and animals of the flood-hit communities to safe places.

The water flow was making its advance with the land erosion. The standing crops on thousands of acres of land were destroyed, and

the farmers were worried about the loss. Also, the river water entered the riverine areas of Chishtian after the release of water into the Sutlej River by India. The standing crops were destroyed with the inflow of a 71,000 cusecs water current in the Sutlej River. The river water also entered the houses and settlements in the riverine areas. People were moving to safe places, leaving their goods, cattle and houses behind.

The flood affected the riverine areas including Mehta Jhedu, Sahoka Camera, Jodhika Dala, Akuka Lodhira, Kaliye Shah and Basti Ashiq Muhammad. The Chishtian district administration did not ensure adequate measures for the provision of essential facilities to the flood-hit people. Only eight camps were established across Chishtian district to

deal with the flood situation, and only two camps were established by the district administration in the riverine areas of Chishtian. People were forced to move to safe places on a self-help basis. Losses were also reported in Kasur, Okara and Pakpattan were the release of water into the Sutlej River by India.

Meanwhile, rescue and relief operations of the Pakistan Army were ongoing in the flood-hit areas of the country. The units of the Pakistan Army conducted rescue and relief operations in about 14 flood-hit areas of Bahawalnagar, Minchinabad and Chishtian districts. The flood-hit people, including children, women and the elderly, were shifted to safe places. The Pakistan Army troops also distributed dry ration, water and other edibles to the flood-hit people.

35 bags of banned China salt seized in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (FS & HFA) while acting on a tip-off seized 35 bags of banned China salt from a store at Khwaja Gunj Bazaar Chowk in Mardan district.

The operation was conducted here on Monday under the supervision of Assistant Director Mohammad Ibrahim and Assistant Director Aliif Khan. As per details provided by the relevant officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (FS & HFA) disclosed that China salt was being supplied to different restaurants and grocery shops of Mardan. As many as 35 bags of China salt weighing 870 kilogram were recovered.

It is worth mentioning here that the sale of China salt was banned by Supreme Court of Pakistan and later to FS & HFA owing to its hazardous effects on human body including high blood pressure, retarded growth of

human body especially bones and dangerous effects on nervous system.

While talking to media persons, Deputy Director FS & HFA Mardan Division, Kamran Khan said the FS & HFA field team has accelerated its activities against food adulteration. He said earlier last week 135 bags of China salt weighing about 3400 kg were seized in an operation at Toru Chowk.

The officials said during the last three months, about six units producing counterfeited cold drinks of multinational brands and of adulterated Gurr (Jaggery) prepared from sugar and chemicals were permanently sealed. 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.

Ifitikhar Mashwani not a part of PTI parliamentarians: Ex-MPA KP Ifitikhar Mashwani has denied to be a member of new political party PTI Parliamentarians. He said that Parviz Khattak falsely included my name in the

list. "Even my picture has been copied from KP assembly website and has included in the list" said Mashwani.

In a video statement released from an unknown location, former MPA Ifitikhar Mashwani has clearly explained that he did not participate in the new party ceremony of Pervaz Khattak in Peshawar today, nor did he support him even he has no intention to be a part of his party. Ifitikhar Mashwani said that my picture and name have been put in the issued list which is totally false and i declare complete detachment. Mashwani has said that i am still have strong attachment with PTI and Imran Khan. He further said that I request all Tehreek-e-Insaf workers not to get involved in anyone's propaganda and not to believe in false and fabricated news. Ifitikhar Mashwani said that today Imran Khan and Tehreek-e-Insaf are going through a difficult period, so all the workers are requested to avoid fake news and avoid sharing such fake news.

Tense prevails in Zhob

ZHOB (PPI): Tense situation prevailed in Zhob after enraged tribesmen of Mandokhail tribe on Monday blocked Quetta-Dera Ismail Khan Road near Mundezaai area of Zhob for all kinds of traffic in protest over encroaching of land of Mandokhail tribe in Sambaza area of district Zhob in Balochistan province. Long queues of

vehicles could be seen on both sides of the national highway, causing severe hardships for passengers.

According to reports, Zhob-Dera Ismail Khan national highway N-50 was blocked by enraged tribesmen of Mandokhail tribe for vehicular traffic against the grabbing of Mandokhail tribe's land in Sambaza area

of Zhob, causing severe hardships for the passengers.

Talking to media, including PPI, Sardar Ayub Mandokhail said that it was being conspired to encroach upon the land of Mandokhail tribe in Sambaza area of Zhob by the tribesmen of Sulemankhail tribe which was not acceptable to Mandokhail tribe.

Protest held against increasing incidents of theft, robberies

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: The Commission Agents of grain market Hafizabad protested against the increasing incidents of theft and robberies. The suspects of the robbery that happened in the past few days along with the local commission agent have not been caught yet. The police have become completely ineffective in protecting the traders of the grain market, who do business worth millions and billions of rupees, while thieves, dacoits and criminals are busy in the robberies and dacoities day-by-day in the district.

According to details, President Commission Agents of Grain Market Muhammad Azam Samor and Secretary General Abdul Hameed Rahmani, Vice President Ch. Javed Ashraf Hanjra, Ch. Nadeem Aslam Ranjha, Saqib Iqbal Ratu, Muhammad Rafiq, Shaikat Ali and other traders held a joint press conference against theft and robbery. Expressing outrage and condemnation of the increasing incidents, they said that a few days ago, two motorcycle-riding armed robbers looted Rs. 4 lakh and escaped while shooting indiscriminate firing.

The police, showing their traditional negligence, only registered the case, but so far no trace of the accused could be found. The traders of the grain market, who do business worth billions daily, are suffering from severe insecurity. They say that local traders have to transact money from banks on daily basis, but

due to the lack of security in and around the market, they are in fear and criminals are at large in committing robberies.

They demanded that the suspects of the previous day's robbery should be arrested immediately and the money snatch should be returned and a police post should be established in Grain Market Hafizabad. They further said that if the accused of dacoity were not arrested, Association of Commission Agents of Grain Market would also protest on a large scale against the increasing incidents of dacoity and the laxity, negligence and indifference of the police.

Passport office is facilitating the general public: Passport office is facilitating the general public and special people in getting passport. These views were expressed by Assistant Director Passport Mohammad Basharat Raza with a meeting of Chairman Press Club Tanzeel-ur-Rehman Butt, various issues related to passports were discussed. Muhammad Basharat Raza said that our office is providing complete passport facilities to all areas of Hafizabad district. 150 to 200 people are benefiting daily.

We have made all the steps for issuing of passport very easy. People submit their government fees online and every effort is made to complete all data entry steps on merit. Apart from this, he said that disabled persons and women are given special importance as special persons.

On this occasion, the chairman visited the entire counter and consideration was given regarding giving more convenience to the public. He further said that from the platform of the press club, I want to convey the message that if applicant has any work, come to my office, my doors are open for the public 24 hours a day.

Education Department employees hold protest: The employees of Hafizabad Education Department, under the leadership of APCA District President Nasrullah Hanjra and Education Wing President Suhaib Hassan Mann, staged a sit-in demonstration in the Education Complex and locked all the offices, protesting for salary hike and other demands.

The district leaders of APCA, Imran Ahmed Farooqui, Muhammad Qasim Tarar, Rana Sadaf Ejaz, Abdul Majeed Gujjar, Rana Amjad Faridi, Liaquat Ali Bhatti, Shahid Shabbir, Naseem Ahmed and others said that the provincial government has been treating the employees like a step-mother. Until our salaries are increased according to the federation, their protest, sit-in and locking of offices will continue.

They said that the employees are already suffering from economic problems and due to this inappropriate behavior of the provincial government, their problems will increase further, so the salaries of the provincial employees should also be increased by 35% on the federal

pattern. **Thousand of rupees snatched:** Three unknown armed robbers snatched thousands of rupees in cash and a mobile phone from a motorcycle rider near Kaliaanwala in Sadar police station area. According to police source, the armed accused stopped Auon Raza son of Boota Khan at gun point and took twenty-seven thousand rupees in cash and a mobile phone worth Rs.36 thousand and fled. The police have registered a case.

The second incident also took place near Canal Garden in the area of Sadar Police Station, where the shopkeeper Akbar Ali, a resident of Gajargola, was coming to buy goods from the city for his grocery store. The robbers snatched Rs. 76,000/- cash and wallet and fled. The Police have registered a case. Here it is worth mentioning that robbers and bandits have been lurking in city and the Sadar police station jurisdiction while the police are looking helpless.

Case registered: A case has been registered against 7 accused for spreading fear and terror by firing indiscriminately in Iqbal Garden. According to the details, Abdul Razzaq son of Barkat Ali resident of Iqbal Garden was allegedly doing more constructions on his personal area with the house when the accused Muhammad Bilal resident of Seray Tarar, Muhammad Talib, Jafar Hussain, Muhammad Mohsin etc., came and started firing.

Fear and panic spread in the area, on which the police registered a case against seven accused Rana Javed Iqbal, Muhammad Bilal residents of Seray Tarar, Muhammad Talib, Jafar Hussain, Muhammad Mohsin etc. It is worth mentioning here that daily firing has become a routine in Iqbal Garden, due to which the residents of the adjacent communities are suffering from insecurity.

Poor management of sanitation: Poor management of sanitation in most areas of Hafizabad city. The Municipal Committee officials and sanitation workers are showing negligence due to which there are stagnant sewage, many areas started turning into swamps.

According to the details, in most areas of Hafizabad including Hassan Town, Bahawalpura, Peer Kalay Shah, Garrih Awan, Bagh Road, Graveyard Railway Line Road, Jaganwala Road, Kashmir Nagar etc., dirty water is standing all the time due to the negligence and carelessness of the municipal committee staff, not only the stench is breaking out here but also the dangers of dengue spread are arising.

The residents of affected areas have demanded that the standing dirty water should be removed immediately and proper sanitation arrangements be made so that they can avoid further trouble in case of rains in the coming days. It is worth mentioning here that the staff of

Municipal Committee, allegedly, fill his pockets and inject the government with thousands of rupees in the form of petrol but no sanitation is done, further, the workers and officials of MC are seen in cleaning private places on Sundays, it is owing to the poor management of sanitation across the city, the citizens are in dire stress. Citizens have demanded from the Deputy Commissioner to improve the condition of the sanitation and reform the municipal committee staff.

Anti-dengue seminar and walk held: Fisheries Department Hafizabad organised an anti-dengue seminar and walk. According to details, under the supervision of Assistant Director Fisheries Mohammad Rafiq, Agriculture Officer Faraz Hussain organised a seminar and walk for dengue awareness at district complex. The officers, officials and public participated in the seminar and walk.

Assistant Director of Fisheries Muhammad Rafiq said that on the instructions of the Punjab government, efforts are being made by the Department of Fisheries to prevent the spread of dengue mosquito and to end the growth of its larvae. Special awareness is being provided to the employees as well as to the general masses and especially people doing fishing business. At the end of the seminar, a walk was also conducted from the district office to the agricultural complex.



Iraqi premier in Syria for first visit in over a decade

DAMASCUS (AP): Iraq's prime minister held talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad in Damascus during the first trip of its kind to the war-torn country since the 12-year conflict began. The two leaders told reporters that they discussed fighting drugs, the return of Syrian refugees and the imperative of lifting Western sanctions imposed in Syria. They also talked about Israel's strikes on the war-torn country and water shortages in the Euphrates River that cuts through both countries because of projects in Turkey.

Iraq and Syria have had close relations for years even after many Arab countries withdrew their ambassadors from Damascus and Syria's membership in the 22-member Arab League was suspended because of the crackdown on protesters in 2011. Assad received Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, who was heading a high-ranking delegation, at the presidential palace in Damascus. They discussed mutual relations and cooperation between the two neighboring countries among other issues, according to the office of Syria's president. Al-Sudani's office said in a statement that talks revolved around ways of expanding cooperation in the fields of trade, economy, transportation, tourism, how to combat climate change and collaboration to fight terrorism.

Security cooperation against extremist groups was likely to top the agenda for the two-day visit. The two countries, where Iran enjoys wide influence, have a joint 600 kilometer-long (373-mile) border. In June 2014, the Islamic State group declared the establishment of a self-styled "caliphate," a traditional model of Islamic rule, in wide areas under its control in Iraq and Syria. After a yearslong campaign that left tens of thousands dead in both countries, IS was defeated in Iraq in 2017 and in March 2019 in Syria. In recent years, Syrian government forces regained control of much of Syria with the help of Russia and Iran. Earlier this year, Syria's membership in the Arab



League was reinstated and Assad attended the Arab summit that was held in Saudi Arabia in May.

Assad referred to Turkey without naming it as being behind the "theft" of Iraq and Syria's shares in the Euphrates River in what is affecting agriculture in both countries. Assad also said that they discussed cooperating on fighting drugs, a scourge he said is "no different from terrorism as it can destroy the society the way terrorism does." Syria's conflict that started in March 2011 has killed half a million people and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million, including more than 5 million who are refugees. "We are interested in working through official and government channels to solve the issue of refugees and guarantee a safe return for them as soon as the situation becomes stable in places where they reside," al-Sudani said. Iraq is hosting about 250,000 Syrian refugees. Al-Sudani was invited to visit Damascus during a trip by Syria's Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad to Baghdad last month. The Iraqi prime minister said countries around the world that have citizens in Syria's al-Hol camp, home to tens of thousands of mostly women and children linked to IS, should start working on repatriating them as Baghdad is doing. Al-Hol camp in northeast

Syria near the Iraqi border holds about 51,000 people, including the wives, widows and other family members of IS militants. Most are Syrians and Iraqis. But there are also around 8,000 women and children from 60 other nationalities who live in a part of the camp known as the Annex. They are generally considered the most die-hard IS supporters among the camp residents. Many countries are refusing to repatriate their citizens out of concern that they might be a security threat. Iraq has repatriated hundreds of families over the past months where they undergo rehabilitation programs.

The US has a presence in both Syria and Iraq and Syrian officials have been calling for the withdrawal of American troops from the country who first arrived in 2015. On any given day there are at least 900 US forces in Syria, along with an undisclosed number of contractors attempting to prevent the resurgence of the Islamic State group. US special operations forces also move in and out of the country but are usually in small teams and are not included in the official count. US-led coalition forces have officially ended their combat mission in Iraq, but continue to play an advisory role to Iraqi forces in the fight against the Islamic State extremist group.

Ukrainian drones intercepted over Crimea

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russia's air defence forces and fleet in the Black Sea have shot down ten Ukrainian drones over the Crimean port of Sevastopol, according to a Moscow-installed official.

Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol, said the drone attack took place over the port of Sevastopol and the city's Balaklava and Khersones districts.

"No objects, either in the city or in the water area were damaged," he said on the Telegram messaging app. One drone was shot down over the sea, five were intercepted by Russia's electronic warfare forces and two water surface drones were destroyed on the outer shore, he added. There was no immediate comment from Kyiv on the attack on the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. Ukraine almost never publicly claims responsibility for attacks inside Russia or on Russian-controlled territory in Ukraine but has been saying in recent months that destroying Russia's military infrastructure helps Kyiv's counteroffensive.

More people flee Spain's La Palma

MADRID (Agencies): At least 4,000 people have been evacuated as a wildfire rages "out of control" on the Spanish Canary Island of La Palma while Europe struggles to cope with a heatwave, according to authorities. The fire in La Palma started in El Pinar, a wooded area in the northern part of the island. The blaze forced the evacuation of people from the villages of Puntagorda and neighbouring Tajarafa.

Ten aerial units and 300 firefighters on the ground sought to bring the wildfire under control on the island, which forms part of a Spanish archipelago off the coast of western Africa. At least 13 houses were destroyed as the fire advanced, and it has now affected more than 4,650 hectares (11,490 acres) of land, local authorities said. "The fire has spread very fast," said Fernando Clavijo, president of the Canary Islands. "The fire is out of control." He urged residents to be responsible and heed the calls for evacuation as many did not want to abandon their homes.

Clavijo also voiced his concern about the possibility of shifting winds at night, saying they could make the evacuation operation more dangerous. He said that 10 aircraft were battling the fire and that water-dropping planes were expected to arrive. Puntagorda's mayor, Vicente Rodriguez, told Spanish public broadcaster RTVE that the fire started within the limits of his municipality. He added that the area has seen below-average rainfall in recent years, just like large parts of the drought-stricken

mainland, because of changing weather patterns impacted by climate change. In Tenerife, another of the eight Canary Islands, a forest fire that also broke out forced the evacuation of 50 people and destroyed about 60 hectares (148 acres), authorities said. According to the Spanish royal household, King Felipe VI of Spain telephoned Clavijo to express his support for the people of La Palma.

The forest fire is the first natural crisis on the island since a volcanic eruption in September 2021 that destroyed more than 2,000 buildings and many thousands of people were forced to leave their homes when lava began pouring out of the Cumbre Vieja volcano. The fire comes amid a blistering heatwave in southern Europe. Spain saw record high temperatures in 2022 and this spring as it endures a prolonged drought. Authorities and forestry experts are concerned that conditions are ripe for a difficult wildfire season.

Extreme heat grips three continents as wildfires rage

LONDON (Agencies): Scorching weather is gripping three continents, whipping up wildfires and threatening to topple temperature records. Predictions of historic heat hung over swathes of Asia, Europe and the United States. In the Vatican, 15,000 people braved sweltering temperatures to hear Pope Francis lead prayer, using parasols and fans to keep cool. But in their black robes, priests like Francois Mbemba said they were "sweating like hell".

The 29-year-old said it felt hotter in St Peter's Square than in his Democratic Republic of Congo diocese. In Japan, authorities issued heat-stroke alerts to tens of millions of people in 20 of its 47 prefectures as near-record high temperatures scorched large areas and torrential rain pummelled other regions. National broadcaster NHK warned the heat was life-threatening, with the capital and other places recording temperatures of nearly 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit). Japan's highest temperature ever - a record 41.1C (106F), in Kumagaya city, Saitama in 2018 - could be beaten, according to the country's meteorological agency. Some places experienced their highest temperatures in more than four decades, including Hirono town in Fukushima prefecture, which hit 37.3C (99.1F).

The United States National Weather Service reported that a powerful heatwave stretching from California to Texas was expected to peak during an "extremely hot and dangerous weekend". California's Death Valley, often among the hottest places on Earth, is also likely to register new peaks, with the mercury

possibly surpassing 54C (129F). At a Texas construction site outside Houston, a 28-year-old worker who gave his name only as Juan struggled in the blazing heat. "Just when I take a drink of water, I get dizzy, I want to vomit because of the heat," he told the AFP news agency. Southern California is fighting numerous wildfires, including one in Riverside County that has burned more than 3,000 hectares (7,413 acres) and prompted evacuation orders. Further north, the Canadian government said wildfires had burned a record-breaking 10 million hectares (25 million acres) this year, with more damage expected as the summer drags on. Saleemul Huq, director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development in Bangladesh, told Al Jazeera the current conditions in the northern hemisphere are related and were predicted.

"The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which is a scientific body that studies climate, has predicted that this was going to happen," Huq said. "They had predicted it would happen much later, but it's happening now, so unfortunately climate change is now upon us and this is due to the fact that we have raised global temperature well above one degree centigrade [Celsius] because of the emissions of greenhouse gases and we're on track to go even higher."

In Europe, Italians were warned to prepare for "the most intense heatwave of the summer and also one of the most intense of all time". Predictions of historic high temperatures in the coming days led the health ministry to sound a red alert for 16 cities including Rome, Bologna

and Florence. Temperatures are likely to hit 40C (104F) in Rome by Monday and 42C-43C (108-109F), smashing the record of 40.5C (105F) set in August 2007. Sicily and Sardinia could wilt under temperatures as high as 48C (118F), the European Space Agency warned - "potentially the hottest temperatures ever recorded in Europe". The Acropolis in Athens, one of Greece's top tourist attractions, closed for a third day running during the hottest hours. In Romania, temperatures are expected to reach 39C (102F) on Monday across most of the country.

Little reprieve is forecast for Spain, where the meteorological agency warned of a new heatwave Monday through taking temperatures above 40C (104F) in the Canary Islands and the southern Andalusia region. On La Palma island, which endured a volcanic eruption in 2021, a fire burned 5,000 hectares (12,360 acres) this weekend, forcing the evacuation of 4,000 people.

"I feel powerless to see how everything is burning," Patricia Sanchez, a Spanish Red Cross worker, told AFP. "To see two entire villages evacuated, to know that there are people who lost everything because of the volcano and have rebuilt their lives in the north, and now they are evacuated again and at risk of losing everything again," the 37-year-old said. Despite the heat, parts of Asia have also been battered by torrential rain. In South Korea, rescuers battled to reach people trapped in a flooded tunnel, after heavy rains for the last four days triggered floods and landslides that killed at least 37 people and left nine missing. The country is at the peak of its summer monsoon season, with more rain forecast.

Yoon orders all-out effort after heavy rains kill 39 in South Korea

SEOUL (Agencies): South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has ordered an all-out rescue and recovery effort after days of torrential rains unleashed devastating floods and landslides that killed at least 39 people. The death toll on Monday included 13 people found dead in a submerged underpass in the central city of Cheongju in North Chungcheong Province.

Yoon, on his return to Seoul following a trip to Ukraine, convened an intra-agency meeting on the disaster response and called for authorities to make the utmost effort to rescue victims. "There is no way to suppress my sadness. I pray for the souls of those killed in the heavy rains and offer words of comfort to the bereaved families," the president said. "We all need to take the situation gravely and mobilise all available resources."

Yoon also pledged support for recovery work, including designating affected areas as special disaster zones. South Korea, which is at the peak of its summer monsoon season, has been battered by heavy rains since July 9.

The downpours have caused widespread flooding and landslides, mostly in the country's central and southern regions. In Cheongju, rescue workers pulled four more bodies overnight from a tunnel where some 16 vehicles, including a bus, were swamped by a flash flood after a levee of a nearby river collapsed. Another nine bodies had been pulled out of the tunnel. Seo Jeong-il, chief of the city's fire department, said nine survivors were rescued from the tunnel and that the exact number of passengers trapped in vehicles was not immediately clear. Fire officials estimated the tunnel filled with water in as little as two or three minutes. Nearly 900 rescue personnel, including divers, were dispatched to the scene where photos and videos showed workers establishing a perimeter and pumping brown water out of the tunnel. Al Jazeera's Jessica Washington, reporting from Cheongju, said the search effort was "still very much under way". "In terms of progress, most of the water has been drained from the tunnel. Some of the factors

hampering the rescue process has been heavy mud, while the central parts of the tunnel, still has waist-high water," she said. "Many residents here are beginning to ask hard questions of the local officials, including why this underpass has been open despite the severe weather."

The Korea Meteorological Administration, meanwhile, issued more heavy rain warnings for the surrounding province as well as southern parts of the country. It said the central and southern provinces were likely to receive an additional 100mm to 200mm of rain. The Yonhap news agency, citing disaster authorities, said the highest death toll was recorded in the south-eastern North Gyeongsang Province, where 19 people died, largely due to huge landslides that engulfed houses with people inside. Nine people remain missing, including eight in North Gyeongsang, while 34 people have been reported injured, it said. Across the country, the rains forced the evacuation of some 10,570 people from their homes and left 28,607 households without elec-

tricity, it added. Yoon, speaking at the disaster response meeting, said, "This kind of extreme weather event will become commonplace." South Koreans "must accept climate change is happening and deal with it," he said.

The idea that extreme weather linked to climate change "is an anomaly and can't be helped needs to be completely overhauled", he added, calling for "extraordinary determination" to improve the country's preparedness and response. South Korea is regularly hit by flooding during the summer monsoon period but the country is typically well-prepared and the death toll is usually relatively low. It endured record-breaking rains and flooding last year, which killed at least 11 people. They included three people trapped in a Seoul semi-basement apartment of the kind that became internationally known because of the Oscar-winning Korean film Parasite. The South Korean government said at the time the 2022 flooding was the heaviest rainfall since Seoul's weather records began 115 years ago.

Sudan army returns for talks in Jeddah as war enters fourth month

KHARTOUM (Agencies): Sudanese army representatives have returned to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia for talks with their paramilitary foes, according to news agencies citing government sources, as the war between rival generals entered its fourth month. "A delegation of the armed forces has returned to Jeddah to resume negotiations with Rapid Support Forces (RSF) rebels," a government source told the AFP news agency.

There was no immediate comment from the RSF on returning to the talks in Jeddah, which Saudi and US mediators adjourned last month after a series of violated ceasefires. Separately, a mediation attempt launched by Egypt began, an effort welcomed both by the Sudanese army - which has close ties to Egypt - and the RSF.

On April 15, a power struggle between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, burst into an all-out war, killing at least 3,000 and displacing more than three million people. The delega-

tion in Saudi Arabia signalled a return to diplomatic efforts by the army, after it boycotted talks last week in Ethiopia hosted by East African regional bloc, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Khartoum's foreign ministry had objected to Kenyan President William Ruto's leadership of the IGAD quartet, accusing Nairobi of siding with the RSF. Before the Jeddah talks were suspended, US mediators had grown increasingly frustrated with both sides' reluctance to work towards a sustained truce. Experts believe that both Burhan and Daglo have opted for a war of attrition instead, hoping to extract greater concessions at the negotiating table later. For three months, barely a day has passed for residents of the capital Khartoum without their homes shaking from air raids, artillery blasts and gun battles. To escape the brutal urban warfare and rampant looting, 1.7 million people have fled the capital, according to the United Nations. Millions remain in the city, shelter-

ing at home as the violence shows no signs of abating.

Witnesses again reported "clashes using various types of weapons" in the capital's northwest as well as air raids from army fighter jets in the south. Sudan's health ministry said at least four civilians were killed and four others were injured in a drone attack that targeted a hospital in the city of Omdurman. The ministry accused the RSF of carrying out the attack. The UN has said that most hospitals in combat zones were out of service. Outside Khartoum, the worst fighting has taken place in the western region of Darfur, where a quarter of Sudan's 48 million people live. Villages and neighbourhoods there have been destroyed, with reports of mass civilian deaths and assassinations of officials, blamed on the RSF and allied militias. The International Criminal Court has launched a probe into suspected war crimes, including sexual violence and civilians being targeted for their ethnicity, its chief prosecutor announced. Some of those who fled

from Darfur to Chad told Al Jazeera they witnessed killings and torture of civilians as they escaped the regional capital of el-Geneina.

"I was among a group of 37 people ordered by the militias, specifically the RSF, to cover the bodies," Zayed Abbas, a refugee told Al Jazeera from Adre camp in Chad. "I know of six similar groups in the city. We were given iron hooks with which we dragged the bodies, covered them in plastic sheets and then placed them in trucks that are transporting construction materials. The group picked up more than 300 corpses in three days on the orders of the armed men." The RSF has denied targeting civilians. Al Jazeera's Hiba Morgan reporting from Omdurman said that Human Rights Watch (HRW) has accused the RSF of targeting civilians in the city of Misterei in West Darfur. "The RSF have responded to the allegations by HRW saying that the sources to the report was inaccurate - the sources of course being refugees who fled Geneina and Misterei to neighbouring Chad," Morgan said.

Iran's 'morality police' return as authorities enforce hijab rule

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran has relaunched patrols by the so-called morality police as authorities escalate their efforts to enforce the country's mandatory hijab rules. Saied Montazeralmahdi, the spokesperson for the Iranian law enforcement force, confirmed that police patrols were now operational on foot and with vehicles to crack down on people whose covering is not deemed appropriate in the Islamic Republic.

The morality police would "issue warnings and then introduce to the judicial system people who unfortunately insist on their norm-breaking behaviour without concern for the consequences of their covering that is outside of the norm", he was quoted as saying by state media. Montazeralmahdi said police expect everyone to conform to accepted dress codes so officers will have more time to deal with "other vital police missions". The officers are tasked with warning women - and sometimes men - to correct the way they are dressed. This could range from ordering women to adjust headscarves to demanding a

change of clothing to something that is more loose-fitting and deemed more appropriate. Women deemed to be in breach of the rules could be arrested and taken to so-called re-education facilities run by the police.

The news comes 10 months after Mahsa Amini, 22, died in police custody after being detained over an alleged dress code violation. Her death sparked mass protests across the country that lasted for months in which morality police were largely absent from Iranian streets. After the protests, Iranian authorities had largely refrained from highly confrontational methods of enforcing mandatory hijab laws that were imposed shortly after the country's 1979 Islamic revolution. That approach appears to be gradually shifting. For the past few months, police have been employing surveillance cameras to identify hijab violators who are given warnings, fines or sent to appear in court. People found to be in violation of the dress code while in their vehicles could have their cars impounded. Businesses have also been increasingly targeted, with many cafes,

restaurants and even sprawling shopping centres facing closures for offering services to women with loose hijabs. There were several high-profile, hijab-related incidents this week. The authorities released a video which showed who appeared to be a group of police officers - accompanied by a camera crew - go around and tell women of all ages to fix their hijab. The camera zooms in on the women's unblurred faces and shows an animation indicating they have been identified and referred to the judiciary.

"Either you fix your hijab or you enter the van," a man, whose voice has been digitally distorted, tells a young woman in the video. "If you believe in freedom, I will leave all the thieves and rapists free to let you know how things work". Another incident occurred when actor Mohamad Sadeghi was arrested. He had released a reaction video online a day earlier, in which he responds to another clip which showed a female officer holding a woman against the wall over her wearing of the hijab. "If I see a scene like this in person I might commit murder."

The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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Pak-Iran ties and prospects for the future

A high-level military delegation led by the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir concluded a two-day official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Army Chief met with the top civilian and military leadership in Iran including President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, and Iranian Chief of General Staff of Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri during his visit to the Islamic Republic. According to the Pakistan Army Media wing, the Army Chief discussed bilateral military relations, regional security, and Counter Terrorism cooperation between the two brotherly nations. As said, the military leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran commanders on both sides vowed to eradicate the menace of terrorism in the border areas through intelligence sharing and practical actions against the terrorists' networks, and explore avenues for enhancing cooperation in the security domain.

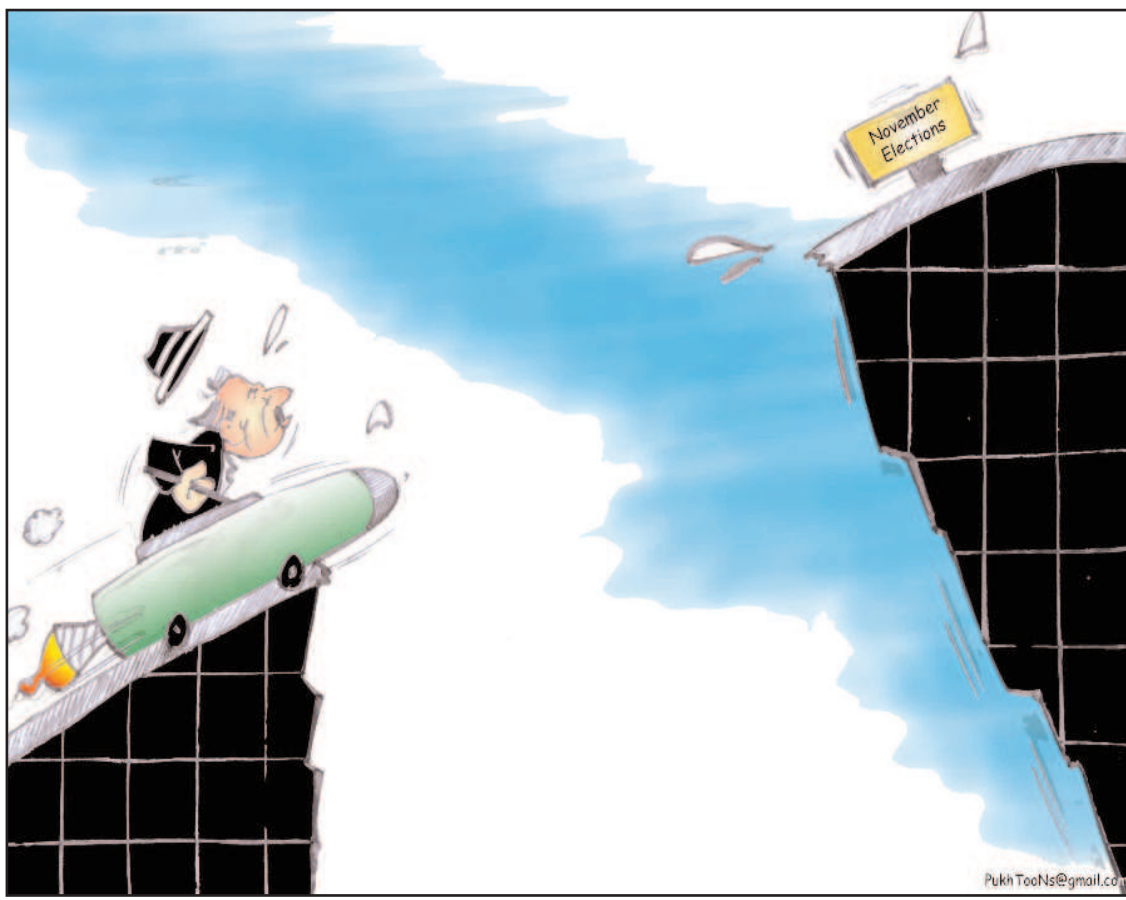
Pakistan and Iran are two brotherly Muslim States, first-door neighbors, and friends. Both nations are linked in diverse relationships of history, religion, geography, cultural heritage, and linguistic bonds. However, their socio-religious connections could not be transformed into meaningful economic, trade, and security partnerships over the past decades. Historically, the Successive governments in the country did not make enough efforts to boost bilateral relations with their Western neighbor mainly due to foreign pressure from Riyadh and Washington and the unforeseen anxiety linked to global economic sanctions against Tehran, which resulted in non-completion of Pak-Iran gas pipeline and the estranged relationship between the two first door neighbors in the past. In the absence of large-scale government-to-government (G2G) and business-to-business (B2B) trade, the irregular trade and smuggling of Iranian oil and goods had been on the rise, while terrorist groups and foreign pawns excessively used the Pak-Iran border for their illegal movements and terrorist activities on both sides of the border. The reports suggest that Baloch separatist leader Allah Nazar Baloch and his hundreds of terrorists took refuge in Iranian border areas while Iranian officials blamed Iranian Sunni separatist groups for using Pakistani territory for attacking Iran.

Historically, the successive Pakistani governments have a track record of a haphazard policy and taking one step forward and two steps back with respect to the country's trade and economic ties with Tehran, however, all governments had consensus over improving security ties with Iran to control armed insurgency and terrorism in Balochistan. Interestingly, Iran faces a trust deficiency and remained hesitant in forging an effective security partnership with Pakistan because of Islamabad's historic security and defense ties with Washington. Over the past few years, Pak-Iran ties had improved significantly. Both nations have set up border markets along their common borders at several places to boost trade and economic activities in their border regions. Similarly, the security cooperation between Pakistan Army and the Iranian military had increased many folds and a comprehensive mechanism had been in place to curb cross-border illegal movement, terrorism, smuggling of goods, and drug trafficking between the two countries. During the recent visit of the Army Chief, both nations agreed to increase their bilateral interactions to expand military, educational, defense, and security cooperation. Currently, both sides have a genuine stride towards the comprehensive expansion of ties to achieve the maximum positive outcome of this bilateral endeavor.

In fact, Pakistan and Iran are two important Muslim Countries, and both nations lay at important geostrategic location on the coast of the Indian Ocean and Strait of Hurmoz respectively that act as a gateway to oil riched Gulf region and control important sea trade routes connecting Europe with South and East Asia. Islamabad and Tehran are embattled with local insurgents and terrorist outfits, while both countries face serious repercussions of global rivalry between major powers that restricted their mutual cooperation, and recurrently destabilized these nations to fulfill their strategic objectives in the region. Realistically, both nations fell prey to regional and extra-regional conspiracies, and failed to achieve any remarkable success in the bilateral relations. Both countries have tremendous potential for bilateral trade, economic cooperation, and mutual collaboration in the defense and security domains that will equally benefit Islamabad and Tehan in the future. To that end, both neighbors must remove their mutual distrust, support each other against their common foe and make wholehearted approach to make a shared and prosperous future.

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How Israel weaponises museums to erase Palestinian existence

Somdeep Sen

ERASING Palestine and Palestinians is a vocation of the Israeli state. After all, the myth of Palestinian non-existence is part of its founding ethos. During the Nakba of 1948, this vocation was on full display when Palestinian communities were erased from the land in a systematic military campaign. The ongoing settler violence inflicted with impunity on Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank is further evidence that this urge to erase Palestine and Palestinians persists in the present day.

But this erasure is not just a matter of physically or materially making Palestinians invisible. It is equally done through the stories that are told of the past. Israeli museums play an important role, as active participants in this colonial effort. I noticed this while conducting fieldwork at the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2015. The campus today looks like a museum celebrating Jewish history heritage, as it is lined with archaeological artefacts - like a marble statue of a ruler from the Temple of Augustus in Samaria built by King Herod and a stone from the Third Wall of the Second Temple that adorns the façade of The Institute of Archaeology. The idea is to exhibit the Israeli-ness of the land - while willfully perpetuating ignorance about the fact that the university was built on stolen Palestinian lands. The Tower of David Museum does something similar. Officially, the museum's website notes that the Citadel of Jerusalem is the "meeting point of ancient and modern, east and west, history and innovation, experience and creation" and that the museum exhibits the history of Jerusalem as intertwined with the citadel's importance to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Yet, the museum has long been accused of systematically erasing its Islamic and Palestinian heritage. After Israel captured the site, authorities prevented prayers at the mosques. The Israeli Antiquities Authority also removed the dome and crescent at the citadel. And labels identifying artefacts clearly stress the city's Jewish-ness and

Israeli "national perspectives".

The Museum on the Seam claims to relay the divided history of Jerusalem and its exhibits are meant to "raise diverse social issues for public discussion and bridge the gaps". Yet, in practice, they do little to acknowledge that the building that houses the museum was once owned by the Palestinian Barkami family, which was forced out of Jerusalem in the Nakba. Museums celebrating the role of Jewish paramilitary organisations during the creation of Israel also work to keep up the myth of Palestinian non-existence. These organisations authored much of the violence in places like Jaffa, Haifa, Acre and Tiberias during the Nakba. The paramilitary organisation Palmach, for instance, established new Israeli settlements and was active in "cleansing operations" in rural Palestinian communities. When I visited Beit HaPalmach, or the Palmach Museum, in Tel Aviv in 2013, this politics of erasure seemed to be ongoing. At the time of my visit, the exhibition at the museum was three-dimensional, and visitors walked through a film re-enactment of the life of young Palmach recruits during the Israeli "War of Independence". While the targets of the Palmach's violence were Palestinian communities, Palestine and Palestinians were absent from the story. In fact, the terms "Palestine" and "Palestinian" were never used in the film. Instead, Palestinians were simply referred to as "Arabs". This, in and of itself, symbolised a manner of non-recognition of Palestinians as a national community distinct from others in the Arab world.

But even when the Palestinian (or "Arab") presence was addressed, it was swiftly pushed to the margins of the narrative. Specifically, there were only two instances when "Arabs" were mentioned. The first was when the characters in the film refer to Palestinian fighters as simply "marauding Arab gangs." The second was during a discussion between two Palmach recruits where they are seen momentarily agonising over the "problem" of

Palestinian refugees. One character asks, "What should we do with the refugees?" The other, in a nonchalant tone, responds "Do what you think is best." It was as if both characters were unaware of how these refugees became refugees and seem to simply not care about the tragedy that was the mass expulsion of Palestinians from a place they consider their national home. A similar erasure of Palestinians seemed evident during my visit in 2015 to the Haganah Museum in Tel Aviv, especially in the exhibit on the Great Revolt of 1936-39 against the British Mandate and its policy of open-ended encouragement to Jewish immigration. The historian Rosemary Sayigh has described the revolt as one of the first significant nationalist outbursts by Palestinian peasants in the long trajectory of the Palestinian liberation struggle. The violent response from paramilitary factions like the Haganah was a prelude to the Nakba. The revolt also had regional significance as the longest-lasting "militant anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab world" until the onset of the Algerian War of Independence.

But the exhibit at the museum does not recognise the historical significance of the revolt or the existence of the Palestinian people and their national cause. Instead, it describes the Great Revolt as simply "riots" and "bloody disturbances" that were led by "Arabs" in Palestine and targeted Jews as well as the British. The museum visitor is left with the impression that the violence was conducted without cause or reason other than to harm the Jewish population. Of course, museums in general have long been used as a medium for displaying and celebrating colonial power and the exploits of empire-building. In fact, the historian Robert Aldrich has argued, "Empire-building and museum-building went hand in hand". Flora and fauna specimens, statues and precious stones, mummies and skulls - collected or stolen - displayed in museums often help establish hegemonic, metropolitan narratives about "primitive" peoples and cultures in faraway exotic lands.

The Royal Museum of Central Africa in Brussels was established in 1898 by Leopold II to celebrate the Belgian "civilising exercise" in Congo, ward off critics of his brutally repressive policies there and proclaim the civilisation superiority of Belgians compared with the "uncivilised Congolese tribes".

In Hawaii, at the Honolulu Academy of Arts or the Bishop Museum, the exhibits only tangentially refer to colonialism. And this omission is meant to perpetuate ignorance about the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom by white businessmen and the United States military and the violent process through which Hawaii became a settler colony. The British Museum in Bloomsbury, London, is one of the grandest examples of how empire-building and museum-building went hand in hand. The expansiveness of the exhibits hailing from all corners of the world is a metaphor for the limitless power of the power of the British Empire. Historians have also described its catalogue of exhibits as an "imperial war chest". As Palestinians face Israel's incessant military terror, the violence of museums may seem inconsequential. But it reminds us how history and heritage can be weaponised. That is why using the same tools of history and heritage is vital to resist Israeli oppression. In the United States, the Museum of the Palestinian People in Washington, DC, strives to preserve and celebrate Palestinian history, arts and culture. It has witnessed a spike in monthly average attendance from 132 people in 2022 to 277 people in 2023, amid shifting public perception in favour of Palestine. In 2016, the Palestine Museum was inaugurated in Birzeit in the occupied West Bank. The first exhibit was titled "Jerusalem Lives" which showcased the "living aspect" of a city plagued by Israeli militarisation, closure and "exclusionary policies" targeting Palestinians. The settler may weaponise historical narratives and heritage to erase the signature of Palestinian existence in the Holy Land. But these Palestinian efforts show how it's possible to challenge those efforts with a bold retort: "We are here, and we exist".

Can Europe's marauding far right be slain?

Simon Tisdall

PRIME minister Pedro Sánchez will be fighting three battles at once when Spain goes to the polls on Sunday 23 July after a hot, short-tempered summer campaign. Whether Sánchez, leader of the social democratic Socialist Workers' party (PSOE), can pull off an improbable hat-trick will shape not only Spain's future trajectory but also potentially that of Europe as a whole.

First, Sánchez must save his own political career. His surprise decision to call a general election six months early, after his coalition's drubbing in May's local polls, was daring, even possibly self-defeating. Most politicians would have hung on, hoping for a shift in public mood. But like a matador challenging an angry bull, Sánchez waved his capote at voters and said, in effect: "Back me or sack me." Second, Sánchez's PSOE and Sumar, a newly unified alliance of leftwing, hard-left and green parties led by the popular Labour minister Yolanda Díaz, must defeat a resurgent centre-right People's party (PP). It's a moving target.

The PP is averaging a six-point poll lead, putting it within striking distance of victory - assuming its leader, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, can find acceptable allies of his own. Which brings Sánchez to his final, more widely significant battle - or, as bullfighters say, *tercio de muerte* (third act of the death): the struggle, mirrored across Europe, to slay the "post-fascist" far right, which in its anti-migrant xenophobia, racism, Islamophobia and regressive social attitudes very much recalls the fascism of old. In Spain, a land of long memories despite its "pact of forgetting", that means the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, who died in 1975. As matters stand, the far-right Vox, the third-largest party and Francoist tribute act, could win sufficient votes - it is now on 14% - to help Feijóo's PP, with its projected 34% national share, gain a winning margin.

With Sánchez's PSOE on an estimated 28% and Díaz's Sumar on 13%, Vox is a likely kingmaker. Its price for backing the PP is power. If successful, it would mark the first time the far right has held national office since the Franco era. Santiago Abascal, Vox's leader, says Sánchez's "social-communist" coalition is worse than anything the caudillo ever imposed on Spain. Yet Vox seems fairly keen on Franco-style diktats. It wants to ban Catalan and Basque separatist parties, for example, and erect walls round Spain's north African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla to deter migrants. Like Giorgia Meloni's ruling Brothers of Italy, a close ally, Vox is hostile to LGBTQ+ rights and gender equality. Vox councillors are suspected of censorship - and of trying to rebury the past. The party wants to repeal the landmark 2007 law of historical memory, which offered reparations to victims of the civil war and later repression, and declared Franco's regime illegitimate. Abascal accuses Sánchez of "lying to the

Spanish people and making deals with the enemies of democracy" - a reference to coalition cooperation with separatist parties.

Opposition criticism of the government focuses on the rising cost of living, strict pandemic lockdowns, migration and a controversial sexual consent law.

For his part, Sánchez accuses Abascal and Feijóo of trying to "put us in a time machine and take us back to who knows where" - meaning the fascist era. Vox is already in coalition with the PP at regional and municipal level. Sánchez's belief that voters will recoil in horror from a national Vox-PP pact supposedly explains his decision to call early elections. It's plainly a gamble. Sánchez's potential saviour, Díaz of Sumar, puts the choice more starkly still. "On 23 July, Spain will decide between two kinds of government - two coalitions," she said at a recent campaign appearance. "The coalition of rights, freedom and progress - a coalition of us and the Socialist party - and the coalition of hatred, which rejects the rights of women and LGBT people, and which pits businesses against workers." This latest, passionate war of the Spanish succession has obvious, broader relevance. Spain holds the EU presidency. Brussels is understandably nervous about importing the far right. A Vox triumph would reverberate loudly across Europe. And the fight against authoritarianism, bigotry and intolerance is global. "Spaniards need to decide if they want a government on the side of Biden or Trump," Sánchez warned. "The PSOE has kept social democracy a viable political force in Spain at a time when it has struggled for relevance elsewhere in western Europe," analyst Omar Encarnación noted. "While social democratic parties in Italy, France, and Germany have in recent years either collapsed or become shadows of their former selves, the PSOE has thrived." But is that era drawing to a close in Spain, too? Díaz, a lifelong communist, believes in the need for more radical approaches - and in taking the fight to the right - if the democratic left is to prevail in Spain and elsewhere. She's pledged to prioritise the climate emergency, introduce a shorter working week and improve social mobility by offering universal financial grants to 18-year-olds. Strong support for the hard-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon in last year's French presidential contest shows that Díaz is not alone in seeking a more fundamental change. Others in Germany and the UK suffering far-right blight - and seeking robust remedies - will watch closely to see whether Sánchez's traditional social democratic model survives this latest reactionary onslaught. It's much the same story across the western world. As stressed and divided electorates turn on themselves, the extreme, anti-democratic forces of reaction, control and repression exploit the fissures. It will be a close-run thing. But who knows? Perhaps Sánchez can buck the trend.

The Guardian

False accusations cannot sour Sino-Russian ties

Xu Wenhong

WESTERN media's speculation shows the US-led West is not sure how to deal with China and Russia. On the one hand, Western leaders and media are pushing China and Russia closer by labeling them as the biggest threats. On the other, realizing their baseless claims and accusations are having the opposite effect, they are also trying to drive a wedge between the two sides by playing up the so-called competition between them in Central Asia.

In line with the West's policy toward China and Russia, the communique of the just-concluded NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, said: "The deepening strategic partnership between the PRC and Russia and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests. We call on the PRC to play a constructive role as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, to condemn Russia's war of

aggression against Ukraine, to abstain from supporting Russia's war effort in any way, to cease amplifying Russia's false narrative blaming Ukraine and NATO for Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and to adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter." NATO talking about the UN Charter is like the devil swearing by the Bible. The West should realize that the China-Russia relationship is one of comprehensive strategic partnership, with both sides vowing to support each other and cooperate closely and effectively in every field, so as to promote regional and international peace, and maintain stability, development and prosperity.

The Western politicians and media are, sadly, still using old geopolitical tricks to maximize their political interests, exposing their lack of knowledge about the desires and aspirations of the people of Central Asia. Take Afghanistan for example. A

peaceful, stable and prosperous Central Asia could contribute more to the development of Afghanistan, which has been devastated by decades of war and internecine conflicts, with the general public being the worst victims. Besides, all the ongoing projects and economic routes initiated by China connect Russia with Central Asia or pass through Russia, thereby benefiting Russia too. That the Russian media have maintained a studied silence on the Western media's provocative reports and false claims means they know the reality and believe that peace, stability and development of the whole region is important to all. However, the fact that relations between Russia and China are friendly does not mean they are against any third parties, or bilateral relations are affected by third-party factors. Especially, in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, China,

without taking sides, adheres to the policy of promoting negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv to help end the conflict. In fact, Beijing maintains normal relations with both Moscow and Kyiv, and as a result of that, China-Russia trade reached a record high of \$190.2 billion in 2022.

In the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, more than 40 countries, including the United States and European Union states, have imposed sanctions on Russia. But these sanctions have not been approved by the United Nations Security Council, and no international law supports them. More important, the US, the EU and the rest of the West do not represent the whole world. More than 140 of the 193 formal member states of the UN have not announced any sanctions against Russia. And China, as a sovereign state, has the right to carry out normal friendly exchanges with

Russia or any other country. China's normal, friendly relationship with Russia is not only a manifestation of its independent diplomacy, but also a reflection of the principle of "not affected by third parties". Even in terms of contribution to the global economy, the added value of G7 countries' manufacturing industry is not as much as that of China and, in terms of population, the G7 countries' population is much less than China's. Yet the G7 countries point fingers at China, criticizing its foreign policy and demand that China do as they say, perhaps because they still believe they control and run the world.

China has been following an endogenous model of development and maintaining friendly relations with neighbors for thousands of years. As former Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad said, "we have been friendly with China for 2,000 years". China has been benefiting from friendly relations with its neighbors,

and vice-versa. And a peaceful and stable environment is essential to sustainable development. That's why China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative and the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind. While the Belt and Road Initiative is aimed at improving connectivity and thus promoting overall economic development, the goal of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind is to build an inclusive global society - unlike the US' development model of profiting from turmoil and wars.

China has a huge domestic market and an efficient, high-quality workforce and a thriving economy, and through friendly exchanges with China, other countries have been benefiting from its development. And friendly Sino-Russian relations are necessary to maintain the stability, security, development and prosperity of Eurasia, as well as for the benefit of China and Russia.

The China Daily

NATO Summit produces signs of a sea change for Turkiye

Yasar Yakis

At the NATO Summit that was held last week in Vilnius, the capital of the Baltic state of Lithuania, the agenda was dominated by the Ukraine war and Sweden's bid to join the alliance. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan surprised NATO by announcing before his departure for Vilnius that he was prepared to accept a trade-off on the subject of Sweden's membership. His proposal could be summarized as follows: "You resume Turkiye's accession process to the EU and Turkiye will open Sweden's accession process to NATO." Erdogan's statement made headlines in the Turkish press and in the media of many NATO and EU countries.

However, Turkiye's EU accession process is a separate issue. Ankara has to fulfill several political and economic criteria before joining the bloc. In fact, an important component was missing in this trade-off. Turkiye could unblock Sweden's accession to NATO, but the other component of the equation, the EU, was missing. It is only the European Council that can decide whether Turkiye's EU accession process will be resumed. And just as Turkiye was entitled to block the consensus in letting Sweden join NATO, so any EU member country can block the resumption of the accession negotiations with Turkiye. The updating of the Turkiye-EU customs union is a major headache between the two parties. Turkiye is losing money because of the postponement of the upgrade.

So far, Turkiye has not been able

to stop the activities of terrorist organizations that are operating in NATO countries, such as Germany and France. Bearing this precedent in mind, Sweden may also tolerate the resumption of the activities of terrorist organizations once its accession to NATO becomes a done deal. According to what Erdogan explained during the press conference after the summit, the procedure to be followed by Turkiye will unfold as follows: The foreign relations committee of the Turkish parliament will draft a report on Sweden's NATO accession and incorporate it into its agenda; then, when the parliament resumes its work on Oct. 1, it will debate the report according to its work program. In his press conference, Erdogan repeatedly mentioned: "We have a parliamentary holiday before we resume our work." This gives the impression that Erdogan is not in a hurry to push through Turkiye's approval of Sweden's NATO accession. This is so that he will have plenty of time to pressure Stockholm to pass as many laws as possible to restrict the activities of the terrorist organizations operating in Sweden. The pro-government media in Turkiye celebrated Erdogan's performance at the NATO Summit with great fanfare, while the opposition circles claimed that the EU will again disappoint Turkiye. Meanwhile, the Swedish Supreme Court, one day after the NATO Summit, refused Turkiye's request to extradite two Turkish citizens. Turkiye claims that these two men were using a mobile telephone applica-

tion that is used by the followers of Fethullah Gulen, a self-exiled Turkish Muslim cleric living in the US. This app is used by the Gulen group to communicate with each other without being detected. Swedish law provides that using an app is not sufficient reason for a person to be extradited. The court added that the people in question had acquired immigrant status in Sweden and stated that, if they were extradited to Turkiye, they may be tortured. This attitude of the Swedish Supreme Court suggests that mutual recriminations will continue between the two countries for a long time.

The extradition of alleged members of Gulen's clan has been one of the key issues regarding Turkiye's approval of Sweden's NATO accession. So the refusal of the Swedish court in this case was the first test on this subject. The final decision on similar cases is made by the Swedish government but, as an established practice, it does not make decisions based on the request of a foreign government. During the summit, Erdogan met with the leaders of several NATO countries, including the US, Germany, the UK, France, Spain, Greece and the Netherlands. In his talks with US President Joe Biden, the pair exchanged views about the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Turkiye and the upgrading of parts of its existing fleet. The US president put the ball in Congress' court and promised that he would do his best to persuade some leading lawmakers to give their approval. Meanwhile, promising progress

has been achieved in the Turkish-Greek dialogue. As has happened on previous occasions, earthquakes in the region have brought the neighboring countries together. This time, Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis decided to resume discussions and hold a meeting in Thessaloniki in the autumn. The fact that both Erdogan and the Greek prime minister are at the beginning of their respective mandates suggests that, if their wave-lengths match, concrete progress may be achieved. Even if the core issues cannot be addressed at an early date, they may begin by cooperating to solve some less controversial issues. Erdogan believes that the two countries have immense opportunities to cooperate. The Greek media adopted an appealing tone with Turkiye after the Vilnius summit. The foreign ministers of the two countries will probably play major roles. Erdogan will visit Greece for the first time in six years and will also co-chair the Turkiye-Greece High-Level Cooperation Council. Another possibility for the two leaders to meet will be in New York on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September. This warmer atmosphere may also allow the resumption of confidence-building measures in the Aegean Sea after an interval of more than three years. There are signs of a sea change between Turkiye and Greece and the upgrading of parts of its existing fleet. The US president put the ball in Congress' court and promised that he would do his best to persuade some leading lawmakers to give their approval. Meanwhile, promising progress

Does the West still want a democratic Kosovo?

Sidita Kushi

After decades of consistent bipartisan support, United States foreign policy has soured against Kosovo in a bid to lure Serbia's authoritarian government away from Russia's orbit. The European Union, meanwhile, has imposed crippling sanctions on the vulnerable country. This is surprising because Kosovo's very existence is the result of Western support and it currently ranks as the region's top performer in democratic progress and aspirations.

A NATO-led intervention in 1999 rescued the majority ethnic Albanian territory from Serbian ethnic cleansing campaigns, which murdered 10,000 people and displaced more than 1 million. Ever since, Kosovo has been a grateful ally, doing everything the US asks. Kosovo has taken in hundreds of Afghan refugees at Washington's request; it has controversially opened an embassy in Jerusalem as demanded by the US; and it is home to Bondsteel, a large US military base. Kosovo also has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, sanctioned Moscow alongside the US and accepted Ukrainian refugees. Despite all this, the US and EU are pressuring Kosovo to halt its path towards greater sovereignty and institutional capacity as a condition for Western support.

After decades of near-perfect obedience to its Western partners, Kosovo remains in a fragile limbo. It has no way of solidifying its sovereignty because several EU and NATO states still refuse to recognise it, and Serbian President Alexander Vucic insists that his country will never recognise Kosovo, no matter what. Recent Kosovo-Serbia tensions culminated in Serbia "arresting" three Kosovo police officers without a clear cause, an act that Kosovo called a "kidnaping" and "foreign aggression" within Kosovo's borders. The US demanded that Serbia immediately and unconditionally release the officers. Yet at the same time, the US, EU and NATO carried on with "both sides" appeals to de-escalate, and they punished Kosovo with diplomatic ire and sanctions. Ultimately, it was Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban who received public credit for persuading Serbia to release the Kosovar policemen, not the US or EU.

It's clear that the US and its European partners look at Vucic's regime through foggy, rose-coloured glasses. Despite Serbian-sponsored violence that recently injured 30 NATO peacekeepers and more journalists, US Ambassador Christopher Hill praised Vucic as a "good partner", and Senator Chris Murphy went as far as to call Vucic "a friend". As the US scolds and the EU sanctions Kosovo, their "good partner" synchronises its policies with Russia and grows more autocratic and closer to its irredentist goals. Vucic also refuses to sign on to pivotal Western agreements, let alone implement the demands. Yet while Russia and China came out in support of Serbia in the face of the recent escalation, Western allies rebuked Kosovo for upholding its rule of law. Even when Western diplomacy isn't actively against Kosovo, it's laden with "both side-isms" that embolden Belgrade to maintain de facto rule over the chaotic north.

If they're not careful, Western diplomats will repeat the same placating policies that emboldened Serbia's "Butcher of the Balkans", Slobodan Milosevic, more than 20 years ago. The Western powers need to reverse course urgently if they're serious about ensuring Kosovo's sovereignty and protecting NATO's legacy in the Balkans. If the US abandons its historical commitments to Kosovo, it will debilitate the most successful Western state-building and democratisation project in the post-Cold War era. It will also open the floodgates to more violent crises and anti-Western influences over a strategic region in Europe. This isn't the first time that Serbia has escalated tensions in northern Kosovo and then de-escalated to Western praise. In the past two years alone, Serbia has stationed troops on the border with Kosovo multiple times. Each time Serbia "escalates to de-escalate", US and EU diplomats rush to condemn Kosovo, but never Serbia. In December, Serbia sent tanks to the Kosovo border to squelch a reciprocal policy on license plates. Kosovo

had insisted that Serb citizens swap their Serbian-issued plates with Kosovo-issued ones to gently promote Kosovo sovereignty in the north. Then the US and EU told Kosovo to stand down after Belgrade sponsored unrest among the Serb minority, which culminated in the resignation of all Serb public officials in the north. Kosovo's leader agreed to Western demands and postponed the enforcement of reciprocal policies. The Serbs conceded nothing, and the northern municipalities remained vacant. More recently, Belgrade-sponsored mobs armed with guns and explosives attacked NATO troops, journalists and bystanders in northern Kosovo.

This time, the spark was the Kosovo government's insistence on guiding four newly elected municipal mayors into their offices. Under orders from Belgrade, the Serbs in the north had boycotted April elections despite Western assurances that the Serbs would participate. In fact, Belgrade pressured the last of the Serb political candidates to drop out of their races days before the municipal elections. This resulted in ethnic Albanian and Bosniaks being elected to fill the vacant spots. The US and other Western countries approved the results of the elections. But when it was time for the new mayors to start their jobs, the Serbs in the north blocked them from entering their offices. Facing the Serb protests and barricades, the Kosovo police needed to escort the elected politicians into the municipal buildings, which ignited clashes between ethnic Serbs and Kosovo police. In response, Serbia placed its military on high alert on the border once again. The election results and the plan to escort the mayors into the buildings did not come as a surprise to the US or the EU. Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti had announced the swearing-in of the majors days in advance. Despite this, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken blamed Kosovo for enforcing the results of the US-supported elections. The Quint, NATO, and the EU all followed suit in lambasting Kosovo for enforcing its institutional integrity.

Blinken did not blame Serbia for placing its military on full combat alert and positioning troops on the border. US and EU diplomats said little after the first round of rioters set fire to police cars and attacked journalists. Without chastisement from the US, it is no surprise that the rioters pushed the limits of Western appeasement and continued on the next day to injure 30 NATO troops, destroy media vehicles and mark multiple KFOR and EULEX cars with Z symbols. Instead of condemning the Serb-instigated attacks, the US annulled Kosovo's involvement in NATO exercises and stopped its active support of Kosovo's global recognition campaign. As the EU imposes clear sanctions, many wonder whether the West still seeks an independent, democratic Kosovo.

The pattern of US and EU appeasement in the Balkans is obvious, and it corrodes regional credibility in Western diplomatic capacity and principles. US diplomacy appears to favour stronger authoritarian regimes like Serbia's while condemning weaker actors like Kosovo. Kosovo was the only country in the region this year that saw democratic improvements. Yet for the sake of stability and to bring Serbia under Western influence, the US has promoted many of Serbia's regional priorities as its own, such as the Association of Serb Majority Municipalities within Kosovo, which would allow the Serb minority to hold executive powers akin to a separate sovereign power in the north, without any promise of formal recognition of Kosovo's statehood in exchange. Against the backdrop of Serbia's biggest anti-government rallies in decades, Vucic provokes violence in Kosovo to distract from domestic resentments. And with each military provocation, Vucic pushes the boundaries of what are acceptable to the West. Even after days of Serbian-led violence, the West demands immediate concessions from Kosovo while gently asking Vucic to "urge calm among Kosovan Serbs". While Kosovo's government has agreed to hold new elections and offered clear steps to de-escalate, its Western partners demand even more. But

Kosovo is unwilling to abandon the north to a de facto rule by parallel institutions while Vucic's regime provokes with impunity. Kosovo's aspirations are the same as those proclaimed by much of the West: to promote Kosovo's statehood, build a multicultural and multiethnic society with robust minority rights, and grow closer to NATO and EU structures. Yet current Western diplomacy promotes Vucic's goals even though Vucic's regime has defied the US over and over, such as when Trump's envoy to Kosovo and Serbia Richard Grenell demanded that Serbia end its de-recognition campaign against Kosovo. Serbian Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić outright refused. The Serbian regime still buys sanctioned weapons from Russia, sponsors criminal and destabilising elements in northern Kosovo, promotes Milosevic's legacy and refuses to sign on to major Western-led normalisation agreements. All without an ounce of Western sanctions.

These policy shifts are bringing us back to the Western legacy of "stabilocracies" of the early 1990s, which ended in genocide, mass crimes against humanity and several NATO interventions in the Balkans. Vucic's aggressive stance against Kosovo allows his unpopular regime to consolidate power by reactivating ethno-nationalist myths and mobilising along ethnic lines - a strategy that mirrors that of his predecessor Milosevic. Instead of preventing the rise of another Milosevic, US diplomacy has invigorated Serbia to escalate tensions for reward. Instead of supporting Kosovo's democratic progress and pro-Western fervour, the US implicitly supports Serbia's de-recognition campaigns and dangerous ethno-nationalist mobilisations, which may trigger a crisis across Bosnia as well. In response to the Serbian-sponsored attacks against NATO, the best that Blinken could do was to utter vague "both sides" rhetoric, repeating the same narrative that led us here. My research shows the detriment of deploying a "both sides" equalisation narrative during security crises. Even after Serb attacks against NATO troops, representatives of the US and EU did not name the aggressor and instead called on "both sides" to de-escalate. This strategy culminates in the appeasement of the stronger aggressor state and the punishment of the victims of aggression.

The ethnic Serbs living in northern Kosovo also suffer at the hands of the Serbian government because they serve as faceless political pawns. Under the accusation of "treason", Serbia has sometimes arrested Serbs from the north when they collaborated with Kosovo institutions. Most recently, another local Serb politician withdrew from politics in the north due to threats to his life and family. Belgrade's policy, therefore, punishes the integration of ethnic Serbs under legal Kosovo institutions and rejects a multicultural framework. Without swift change, the Western alliance will wade into a damaging dependency that relies on illiberal leaders to maintain stability. This path allows leaders like Vucic to comfortably grow in their authoritarian tendencies and even praise Milosevic's intentions to impose Serbian domination. This path stomps on democratic principles and turns its back on Western allies in favour of wooing Russia's friends. Currently, both the US and EU are carving a path for an emboldened autocratic Serbia that uses the same playbook as Milosevic to maintain power. On that road, the West is abandoning Kosovo's democratic and liberal aspirations, leaving its decades-long investments to wither. Western diplomacy should shift gears before it's too late and the path is set in stone. US and EU diplomats must lead with carrots for allied Kosovo to promote cooperation with an unapologetic Serbia, which refuses to take accountability for the crimes of its past and is even ripe to repeat them. The US especially should also dish out some degree of diplomatic chastisement or sanctions for Serbia's patterns of escalations and refusal to negotiate in good faith with Kosovo the state, not Kosovo the former province. If the West is still serious about Kosovo's sovereignty and the security of the region, it ought to act like it.

Aljazeera

No winners as Netanyahu and Nasrallah goad each other into war

Baria Alamuddin

Just over 40 years ago my family fled our homeland, along with many thousands of others, as the Israeli army swept through southern Lebanon and up into Beirut. It would be many years before Israel vacated the regions it captured. Recent tensions are a reminder that there are many areas that Israel's invading forces never left.

Following that 1982 invasion, Israel's Defense Minister Ariel Sharon personally oversaw hideous massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, along with brutal actions against Lebanese civilians. These culminated in events such as the 1996 Qana massacre during Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath, when an artillery barrage (called in by a certain Naftali Bennett) on a UN compound killed more than 100 Lebanese civilians and mutilated many more. In 2006 there was a reprise of such brutality against an apartment building in the same area, with 26 dead and calamitous destruction of homes.

We may loathe Hezbollah for a host of excellent reasons, but the movement does tap into the fundamental truth that millions of Lebanese, Palestinians and Arabs have lost everything at the hands of Israel. They cannot simply forgive and forget, particularly when Israel continues dispossessing those still clinging to their homes. One reason for never forgetting such atrocities and crimes against humanity is to stir us into restraining reckless actors from recreating the escalatory conditions that will allow their recurrence, resulting in death and terrible suffering for millions more innocent people.

With agreement this year over Israel-Lebanon maritime borders, attention has returned to the contentious issue of land borders - particularly in disputed locations such as Ghajar, Shabaa Farms and Ras Al-Naqoura Lebanese citizens will not accept occupation of a millimeter of their land, but these are matters that governments are mandated to address. It doesn't help our cause for a discredited militia to unilaterally drag the country to war over such causes, whatever their merit. Hezbollah perhaps has ten times the firepower it had in 2006, but this is still dwarfed by Israel's destructive capabilities, particularly if Western allies intervene on its behalf. If Hezbollah incites the youth of Jenin and Gaza to throw rocks and fire home-made rockets in order to ignite a wider regional conflagration, Israel's response will be yet more decisive, probably serving as a pretext for reoccupation of areas of southern Lebanon.

The community of Ghajar has for many years been a closed military zone, despite Israel's promises in 2010 to withdraw from northern areas of the village. Whether Ghajar is Lebanese, Syrian or both, it certainly isn't Israeli. Israel similarly has zero right to the occupied Golan Heights, or any of the Palestinian territories occupied under force of arms, despite building illegal settlements the length and breadth of these territories to render compromise impossible. Hezbollah set up two tents in protest at Israel's wall-building provocations at Ghajar. In a speech

marking the anniversary of the 2006 war, Nasrallah pledged not to allow Israel to consolidate its hold over these disputed areas. "Liberating Ghajar is the responsibility of the Lebanese people, state and resistance," he said. Already this year Hezbollah has staged numerous attempted incursions into Israel, along with ostentatiously inviting Iranian VIPs to make border inspection visits. In April, 34 rockets were fired into Israel, and Hezbollah last week made a show of removing equipment from an Israeli observation post.

The Israeli and American air forces last week staged joint exercises, in a signal of shared perceptions of the continued military threat from Iran and its proxies. Meanwhile Israel's army carried out a conspicuous military drill on the border, provocatively simulating an attack on Bint Jubail, the scene of bitter clashes in 2006. As students in pre-civil war Lebanon, we spent our holidays rebuilding homes and schools in Bint Jubail, following Israeli retaliation for Palestinian rocket firing - a reminder of how long local people have suffered such perpetual violence. Even if neither side desires wholesale war, both parties apparently believe it suits them to massively inflame tensions to distract attention from domestic political woes. Hezbollah grapples with ever-growing unpopularity, especially as it can indefinitely throw spanners in the works of processes such as the election of a president, but has no affirmative vision of its own for extracting Lebanon from its dire predicament.

One senior Israeli security figure commented that Nasrallah had been "toying with a powder keg" and "no longer has deep-seated concern about a possible escalation into a day or a few days of limited fighting. It might even be good for him."

Nasrallah is emboldened by the scent of weakness, indecision and chaos wafting across from the Israeli side of the border, in the form of mass civil disobedience in protest at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attempts to eviscerate the judiciary. A recording was leaked of an unhinged rant by Netanyahu after elite military divisions went on strike, with hundreds of senior military reservists considering resigning en masse. An Israeli poll revealed that 67 percent of Israelis feared civil war - Israelis at war with themselves, let alone conflict with Hezbollah or the Palestinians. Lebanese authorities and the citizens they represent sincerely believe that justice is on their side when it comes to contested border locations. Lebanon's claims should therefore be asserted through arbitration and international justice, irrespective of Israel's hostility to global institutions that have repeatedly called out its illegal behavior. Lebanese land is sacred, but so are Lebanese lives - despite Nasrallah gambling so cheaply and recklessly with the latter.

If we are to patriotically assert Lebanon's right to Ghajar and Shabaa Farms, let's be equally patriotic in liberating all of Lebanon from economic ruin, political dysfunction, cultural meltdown, malign foreign interference, and the tyranny of over-mighty militias.

Arab News

Moderate Muslim voices deserve to be heard in America

Dalia Al-Aqidi

US far-left Rep. Ilhan Omar and two of her colleagues have reintroduced the Combating International Islamophobia Act, which they claim will tackle the global rise in Islamophobia. The bill mandates the creation of a special envoy for monitoring and combating Islamophobia within the State Department, along with a comprehensive strategy to establish US leadership in fighting Islamophobia worldwide. However, the bill's narrow focus on Islamophobia raises concerns about biased priorities. Singling out one religious group potentially undermines the principles of equality and fairness that lawmakers should uphold.

The bill aims to establish US dominance on this issue, raising questions about the appropriateness and effectiveness of such an approach. Collaboration and cooperation with other nations would be more conducive to fostering understanding and promoting tolerance on an international scale. Omar, with her usual zeal, implored US lawmakers to expedite the passage of this bill, emphasizing that "anti-Muslim bigotry is a global phenomenon." By framing the issue as interconnected and genuinely global, she attempts to rally support for her cause. Her partnership with Sen. Cory Booker and Rep. Jan Schakowsky is touted as a means to establish a special envoy tasked with eradicating this alleged bigotry. Despite the bill's previous failure to pass the Senate in 2021, Omar remains determined to build momentum and secure its enactment into law. However, her statements should be critically examined. While it is essential to acknowledge and address instances of discrimination, her portrayal of anti-Muslim bigotry

as a sweeping global problem oversimplifies a complex issue. By presenting it as a monolithic phenomenon, she risks disregarding the unique regional and cultural contexts in which such incidents occur.

But why is an American Muslim like myself standing against this bill, along with many other similar-minded Muslims who know firsthand what political Islamism is all about? Upon initial examination, the creation of this special envoy position may appear commendable, as the leader of the free world acknowledges the victims' plight and stands ready to defend them if necessary. That being said, the reality reveals quite the opposite upon closer scrutiny. The term "Islamophobia" itself raises skepticism, particularly as it emerges as nothing more than a fabrication of political Islamists who seek to silence the dissenting Muslim voices that question their motives and oppose their totalitarian ideology in the name of religious freedom. Astonishingly, the bill passed the US House of Representatives in 2021, despite failing to provide a precise and accurate definition of what constitutes Islamophobia.

The very concept of Islamophobia, as proposed by political Islamists, presents a troubling scenario. It weaponizes the term to stifle any criticism or questioning of their actions, eroding the fundamental principles of freedom of speech and intellectual discourse. This not only silences the Muslim voices that dare to challenge the political Islamist agenda, but it also hinders the ability to have an open and honest dialogue about the complex issues surrounding Islam in the West. Without a solid foundation or widely agreed under-

standing of the term, its implementation and enforcement become subjective and potentially open to abuse. This lack of clarity undermines the bill's effectiveness and raises questions about its true intent and purpose. A more robust and thoughtful approach is necessary to address discrimination and protect religious freedoms without compromising the principles of free speech and intellectual debate in the land of the free.

Can categorizing Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad or the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as terrorist groups be labeled as Islamophobic? Similarly, when condemning suicide bombings or stabbings perpetrated by extremists, does that automatically lead to accusations of bigotry? Perhaps the most crucial issue is whether opposing the Muslim Brotherhood and its advocates inside the US would result in one being labeled an Islamophobe and subjected to cancellation. It is crucial to distinguish between genuine critique that is rooted in the pursuit of truth and justice and actual prejudice or discrimination against Muslims as a religious or ethnic group. Conflating the two stifles necessary conversations and prevents the real issues affecting Muslim and non-Muslim communities from being addressed.

Last week, Omar made it clear that she would not be attending Israeli President Isaac Herzog's upcoming address to Congress. Taking to Twitter, she stated: "There is no way in hell I am attending the joint session address from a president whose country has banned me and denied Rashida Tlaib the ability to see her grandma." This statement referred to an incident in 2019, when Israel decided to prevent both Omar



Pakistan Stock Exchange loses 25 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday lost 25.37 points, a negative change of 0.06 percent, closing at 45,042.61 points against 45,067.98 points the previous trading day.

A total of 314,785,498 shares were traded during the day as compared to 267,514,280 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 6.770 billion against Rs 6.783 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 342 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 138 of them recorded gains and 171 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 33 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Bank of Punjab with 49,139,000

shares at Rs 4.27 per share; WorldCall Telecom with 45,870,042 shares at Rs1.32 per share and Telecard Limited with 18,641,703 shares at Rs.8.29 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 500.00 per share price, closing at Rs 22,500.00, whereas the runner-up was Colgate Palm with an Rs 107.81 rise in its per share price to Rs 1,545.33.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 468.00 per share closing at Rs 8.445.00; followed by Mehmood Textile with Rs 16.60 decline to close at Rs 722.90.

Rupee sheds Rs1.67 against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Monday witnessed Rs1.67 devaluation against the US Dollar in the interbank trad-

ing as it closed at Rs 279.26 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.59.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs282 and Rs285.5 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 2.18 to close at Rs 313.91 against the last day's closing of Rs 311.73, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs2.01, whereas an increase of Rs1.48 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs365.67 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs364.19.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 46 paisa and 45 paisa to close at Rs76.03 and

Rs74.43, respectively.

Gold rates increase Rs.1,600 to 214,800 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,600 and was sold at Rs 214,800 on Monday against its sale at Rs 213,200 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,371 to Rs 184,156 from Rs 182,785 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 168,810 from Rs 167,553, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and 10 gram silver remained unchanged, i.e., Rs2,650 and Rs 2,271.94 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$2 to \$1,957 from \$1,955, the Association reported.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, Duyen Hai-1 and Andiamo, carrying 24,000 tons of Palm Kernel and 59,600 tons of Coal, berthed at Multipurpose Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile, four more ships, Bum Shin, Ellora, DM-Dragon and Al-Daayen with Palm oil, Mogas, Chemicals and LNG also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours. A total of 06 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Meratus Jayawijaya and Jenz Oldendorff sailed out to sea on Monday morning. A cargo volume of 84,909 tonnes, comprising 36,874 tonnes imports Cargo and 48,035 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,313 Containers (607 TEUs Imports and 2,706 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 05 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, DM-Dragon and Al-Daayen & another ship, Maersk Boston carrying Chemicals, LNG and Container are expected to take berths at, Engro Vopak Terminal, Engro Elengy Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on 17th July, while two more ships, Maersk Kinloss and MSC Greenwich are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

Domestic edible oil, ghee output increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): Domestic production of cooking oil, and vegetable ghee during the 11 months of the financial year that ended on June 30, 2023, increased by 12.57 per cent and 10.44 per cent respectively as compared to the output of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-May, 2022-23 about 513,206 metric tons of edible oil were produced locally in order to fulfil the domestic requirements as compared to the manufacturing of 455,884 metric tons of same period last year.

Meanwhile, during the period under review, about 1.421 million tons of vegetable ghee were locally manufactured as against the production of 1.286 million tons in the same period last year, which was up by 10.44 per cent, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

The Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) in the country grew by 5.88 per cent during the month of May 2023 as compared to the previous month of (April). The Quantum Index Numbers of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (QIM) for May 2023 estimated at

110.60 as compared to 104.46 during April 2023.

The provisional quantum indices of LSMI for May 2023 with the base year 2015-16 have been developed on the basis of the latest data supplied by the source agencies including Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC), Ministry of Industries and Production, Ministry of Commerce and Provincial Bureaus of Statistics.

In 11 months 27, 728 tractors were locally assembled as compared to the assembling of 51,772 tractors in the corresponding period of last year.

Meanwhile, 2,083 tractors were assembled during the month of May 2023 as compared to the production of 4,362 tractors of the same month of last year.

The LSMI production during July-May 2022-23 as compared to the corresponding period of last year has increased in wearing apparel, furniture and other manufacturing (foot-ball), while it decreased in food, tobacco, textile, coke & petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, non-metallic mineral products, machinery and equipment, automobiles and other transport equipment.

Jubilee Life Insurance and Daewoo Express join hands — to introduce insurance protection for passengers

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Jubilee Life Insurance, Pakistan's largest private sector insurance company, and Daewoo Express, the country's premier transportation service provider, are pleased to announce a one-of-a-kind strategic partnership offering insurance coverage to Daewoo passengers.

Daewoo Express serves over 6 million passengers annually, primarily in the age range of 25 to 35 years. This insurance product is specifically designed to address the unforeseen risks associated with accidents during transit. Considering that insurance penetration in Pakistan is less than 1 per cent, this key collaboration aims to provide a sense of security and well-being to all Daewoo Express passengers. Once a ticket is issued, the insurance automatically comes into effect and remains



valid throughout the passenger's journey. The comprehensive benefits of the policy include coverage for accidental death, disability, and medical expenses.

Speaking on the occasion, Javed Ahmed, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Jubilee Life Insurance said, "We are delighted to partner with Daewoo Express to introduce this innovative insurance policy for their passengers. At Jubilee Life Insurance, we believe in safeguarding lives and empowering individuals with financial protection.

Through this collaboration, we aim to offer convenient and reliable insurance coverage to the passengers, ensuring their well-being during their travels across the country."

Faisal Siddiqui, CEO - Daewoo Express, expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "As a customer-centric organization, Daewoo has always strived to go beyond expectations in delivering superior services. We are excited to collaborate with Jubilee Life Insurance to introduce this unique insurance policy, which aligns perfectly

with our commitment to passenger safety and well-being. This joint endeavor will further enhance our passengers' experience, making their journeys more secure and worry-free."

The signing ceremony took place in Lahore that brought together key representatives from Jubilee Life Insurance and Daewoo Express. This event marks a significant milestone in the insurance and transportation sectors, reinforcing both companies' dedication to providing innovative solutions and enhancing customer satisfaction.



LARKANA: People purchasing mangoes displayed by vendors during at fruit market.

ICCI for harnessing hydropower potential

ISLAMABAD (APP): President, of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Monday said that the high energy cost in Pakistan is a major hurdle in promoting business and industrial activities.

He called upon the government to focus on harnessing the hydropower potential to promote economic activities, a press release said.

He stressed that the share of hydropower generation should be increased by at least 50 per cent in the total energy mix in order to provide cheap energy to industry, reduce the cost of doing business and facilitate the growth of business activities that would pave the way for the early revival of the economy.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the government has itself conceded that LNG-based electricity will cost over Rs.51 per unit this fiscal year, furnace oil-based electricity over Rs.48 while the hydropower costs only Rs.6.94 per unit, which shows that the LNG and oil-based power generations have caused an unprecedented hike in the energy cost in Pakistan.

He said that according to WAPDA's estimate, Pakistan has the potential to generate 60,000MW hydro-electricity, but this untapped potential has not been harnessed so far due to which our industry is finding itself uncompetitive causing further decline in exports.

President ICCI said that the high transmission and distribution losses in Pakistan are also contributing towards high energy costs as the government has to increase power tariffs to cover up the rising T&D losses of DISCOs.

He urged the government to develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce T&D losses and power theft besides increasing the share of hydropower in the total energy mix in order to produce cheap energy and make Pakistan an attractive destination for business and investment activities.

He said that the low energy cost would also help in promoting FDI, creating more jobs, reducing unemployment and putting Pakistan on the path of sustainable economic growth.

Pak's trade with Korea flourishes as exports doubled: Sung Jae Kim

KARACHI (APP): The bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea witnessed a significant boost with Pakistan's exports to Korea doubling to reach \$306 million in the previous year. It was stated by Director General of Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) in Karachi, Sung Jae Kim, during his visit to the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI), said a statement issued here on Monday.

Kim highlighted growing trade relations between the two countries and emphasized the need for further bolstering cooperation as well as technology transfer from Korea to Pakistan. He noted that promising growth in trade and investment between Pakistan and Korea bodes well for strengthening

bilateral relations and fostering economic growth in both nations.

Kim mentioned that Korean companies were working in Pakistan in fish food processing and chemical sectors while YouTubers from Korea were showcasing the beauty of Pakistan to the world.

He said that over 10 thousand Pakistanis were residing in Korea while there were opportunities of investment in Fisheries and Textile sectors in Korea available to Pakistanis.

Kim acknowledged the brotherly trade ties between the two nations and praised the talent and proficiency of Pakistani youth in speaking English.

President of KATI, Faraz-ur-Rehman, in his telephonic address, stressed the importance of exchange-

ing delegations to promote trade between Pakistan and Korea.

He said that a committee has been formed by KATI for enhancing bilateral trade and investment while a delegation of KATI was scheduled to visit Korea shortly to explore investment opportunities.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice President KATI, Muslim Mohammadi, highlighted various trade opportunities between Pakistan and Korea, particularly in the fisheries, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and furniture industries.

He emphasized the need for organizing bilateral trade exhibitions to facilitate business exchanges and called for relaxing Korea's visa policy to facilitate tourism between the two nations.

Lahore Chamber following IHC verdict for elections

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) stated on Monday that it is strictly adhering to the directives of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) regarding elections and personal opinions have no place in the matter.

In an official statement issued here, the LCCI spokesperson clarified that following the suspension of the notification, issued by the Directorate General of Trade Organisations (DGTO), no chamber is authorised to announce the election schedule as it would be considered a contempt of court.

Additionally, the DGTO has referred the case to the Senate Standing Committee

on Commerce, and the approval of the Rules 2022 is pending with the prime minister.

The Lahore Chamber has already filed a reference to the DGTO regarding the election declaration. Therefore, all trade organisations must await the directive from the DGTO. Furthermore, it was emphasised that the election schedule should have been legally and constitutionally announced by July 15. However, in the light of the recent decision by the Islamabad High Court, the fixed date has already passed.

It is crucial to understand that any trade organisation holding elections despite

the ruling from the Islamabad High Court would lack legal standing and could be easily challenged. Such actions would clearly violate the court's orders. It was further stated that individuals who continue to provide election dates or express false information in are in contempt of court.

The spokesperson affirmed that the Lahore Chamber refrained from announcing the election schedule due to the ruling by the Islamabad High Court. As soon as the Rules 2022 are passed or a decision is reached by the High Court, the necessary proceedings will be conducted accordingly.

FCCI announces polls schedule

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has announced its election schedule for the year 2023-24. A meeting of the executive committee of the FCCI was held here with Dr. Khurram Tariq, president FCCI, in the chair. The executive committee formed a 3-member election commission to conduct the election in a fair, free and impartial manner. The election commission will be composed of former presidents, Muzammil Sultan, Chaudhry Muhammad Nawaz and former senior vice president

Mian Tanvir Ahmad.

According to the election schedule, the FCCI secretary general displayed the election schedule on the notice board in addition to up-loading it on the FCCI website. A copy of the election schedule has also been dispatched to the regulator, Director General Trade Organisation.

The provisional voters list will be issued on July 20, 2023 after updating it. After seeking objections etc., the final list will be displayed on notice board and also uploaded on FCCI website on August 23, 2023.

Poor industrialization means poor economy & poor economy means poor state

Salwa Khokhar

Industrialization is a crucial driver of economic growth and development, as the quote goes, 'Poor industrialization means poor economy and poor economy means poor state.' The relationship between industrialization, the economy, and the state is complex. Poor industrialization leads to a stagnant economy. The development of industries is fundamental for a country's growth and progress, as it can have a profound impact on different areas of the economy such as employment rates, trade activities, agriculture, economic stability, poverty levels, and national security. The establishment of new industries creates job opportunities and reduces unemployment rates. As more people become employed, they have disposable income, which leads to an increase in con-

sumer spending. This, in turn, further boosts economic growth. However, industries can be negatively impacted by various factors, ultimately leading to a decline in their strength and success. These factors can include:

Low foreign investment:

Undoubtedly, developing countries cannot afford to ignore the significance of foreign investment. If I take a glimpse of the current situation in Pakistan, due to inflation, a number of industries are shutting down their operations nationwide, leading the country towards more inflation. To sum up, low foreign investment is a major challenge for developing countries like Pakistan, and steps must be taken to address the issue. One solution is for the government to create a more business-friendly environment by reducing bureaucracy, improving

infrastructure, and providing incentives for foreign investors. Another solution is to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation by providing education and training in these fields. Furthermore, developing countries should focus on improving their human capital by investing in education and healthcare. This can lead to a more skilled and productive workforce, which can attract more foreign investment. By taking these steps, developing countries can attract more foreign investment, create more jobs, and ultimately improve their economies.

Trade imbalance:

Another factor that weakens industrialization is trade imbalance. A significant portion of a country's economy relies on trade. However, trade imbalance can lead to disastrous inflation. If a state imports luxury goods like heavy machinery, elec-

tronic appliances, and petrol from any country but experiences a decline in exports, it will cause a trade imbalance. In contrast, global powers like the USA, Russia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and China balance their trade, resulting in a boost to their economies day by day."

Increase in unemployment:

From the process of manufacturing to delivering goods, many people directly or indirectly rely on the industry, including employees, laborers, security guards, transporters and retailers. We can easily assume that a large number of people solely rely on the industry. However, if any new industry starts operation in the country, we can see how many job opportunities can be produced within one industry. On the other hand, if any industry shuts down its operations in the country, a terrifying

number of people can become unemployed, leading the state towards poverty and increase in crime rates.

Questionable industrial policies:

Industrial policy is a fundamental factor for a country's industrial development. The government's industrial policy can have a significant impact on the country's industrial sector, which in turn can affect the overall economy. However, if there is a lack of focus on research and development, and the policy is not doing enough to promote innovation and entrepreneurship, it can lead to questionable industrial policy. Furthermore, factors like corruption and lack of transparency can also contribute to discouraging investment and growth of local industries, and negatively affect the country's economy. By prioritizing research, innovation and transparency,

the government can foster an environment that encourages local industries to flourish, and contribute to the overall well-being of the economy.

Insignificant role of mineral resources:

Mineral resources are like straw for making bricks; they are essential for a country's economic development. Without them, a nation can not progress its economy. Mineral resources such as iron, copper, and aluminium are worth their weight in gold. For instance, Saudi Arabia, one of the world's largest oil producers, has used advanced technology in their industries and utilized their mineral resources efficiently. This example can be useful for developing countries like Pakistan and India. Therefore, it is crucial for countries to use their mineral resources effectively and efficiently to promote their economic

growth.

Devaluation of currency:

When a country's currency is devalued, it becomes cheaper relative to other currencies. This makes imports more expensive, which can reduce demand for imported goods. However, it also reduces the purchasing power of the consumers, making it difficult for them to afford locally produced goods. This can lead to a decrease in demand for locally produced goods which can cause a reduction in Industrialization.

On the whole, poor Industrialization can have a detrimental effect on a country's economy, which can lead to a poor state. To avoid this, countries should invest in their industries and promote innovation and technology to keep up with the changing times.

(The writer is a student at Szabist Larkana Campus)

SMEDA to hold webinar on July 19

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is going to organize a webinar on "How to sell on Daraz" for profitable business growth tomorrow (Wednesday).

The session is being offered by SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to a source in the authority.

The programme will provide opportunities to the SMEs on high trending and most demanding e-commerce tools and platforms. The training provides information about introduction to e-commerce, introduction to daraz, signing up for daraz seller account, daraz ad creation guide and introduction to daraz live.



In brief

Pakistan team beat UN representatives

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's street football team outclassed the United Nations Pakistan representatives' team by 5-0 ahead of their participation in the Norway Cup. The Pakistan Street Child Football team, who are currently undergoing a final training camp at the Islamabad Sports Complex to participate in this year's Norway Cup — the largest international football tournament for players between 10 and 19 years old — played a friendly match to bolster their preparations for the event. The national team dominated the friendly match and thumped the UN representative XI by a massive 5-0 margin and gathered massive praise from foreign ambassadors. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan's street football team will participate in the Norway Cup, scheduled from July 29 to August 5 in Oslo. Last year, Pakistan finished second in the Street Child World Cup in Doha, Qatar after impressive performances. They remained unbeaten throughout the tournament but lost the final against Egypt on penalties (4-3). Pakistan's forward Tufail Shinwari, who scored 13 goals, was adjudged the best player of the tournament. The 16-year-old hit back-to-back hat-tricks against Bosnia and Qatar before his side entered the knock-out stage.

China wins more diving gold

FUKUOKA (AFP): Chinese divers continued their dominance at the world championships in Japan on Monday, winning another two gold medals to make it seven out of seven so far. Chang Yani and Chen Yiwen won the women's 3m synchronised springboard before compatriots Lian Junjie and Yang Hao took gold in the men's 10m synchronised event. China won every diving gold at last year's world championships in Budapest and have so far maintained a perfect record in the southern Japanese city of Fukuoka. Chen, who picked up a fourth world championships gold medal, said she preferred diving in pairs events because it gave her "a sense of security". "The Chinese team is strong because we get a lot of support from our coaches," the 24-year-old said. "They have encouraged us for many years." Chang and Chen scored 341.94 to finish ahead of Britain's Scarlett Mew Jensen and Yasmin Harper on 296.58 and Italy's Chiara Pellacani and Elena Bertocchi on 285.99. In the men's 10m synchronised, Lian and Yang finished first with a score of 477.75. Ukraine's Oleksii Sereda and Kirill Boliukh were second on 439.32, with Mexico's Kevin Berlin Reyes and Randal Willars Valdez third on 434.16.

Anderson replaces Robinson

LONDON (Agencies): England have made one change to their team for the fourth Ashes test against Australia, with fast bowler James Anderson replacing Ollie Robinson in the side that won at Headingley, the country's cricket board (ECB) said on Monday. The fourth test begins on Wednesday at Old Trafford, Anderson's home ground, where England must win to level the series. Australia lead the series 2-1 and even a draw would see them retain the urn.

Shakeel, Salman help Pakistan counter Sri Lanka's spin

GALLE (Agencies): An unbeaten century stand between Saud Shakeel and Agha Salman rescued Pakistan from a precarious 101-5 on the second day of the rain-hit opening Test on Monday.

In response to Sri Lanka's 312, Pakistan reached 221-5 when rain stopped play with the tourists still 91 runs behind. Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya took three wickets, including skipper Babar Azam. Sri Lanka batsman Dhananjaya de Silva had earlier made 122 to hand the hosts a respectable total.

"I know I can absorb the pressure with my experience of having played in 50 Tests and can control the game," said De Silva. "That is why the captain and management has trusted in me and given me the number six spot to bat."

But De Silva said they still fell "100 runs short" after they elected to bat first at the start of the two-match series. Pakistan faltered in their reply before Shakeel, on 69, and Salman, on 61,

put on 120 runs to steady the innings and thwart the Sri Lankan spinners.

The left- and right-hand batting combination of Shakeel and Salman mixed the right dose of caution and aggression, with 12 boundaries and a six between them.

The pair showed maturity in tackling the spinners by using their feet to get to the pitch of the ball, with Pakistan scoring at nearly five runs an over.

- 'Even-seven position' - "Coming into these conditions one thing Sri Lanka does really well is hold opposition to miserly run rates and they get the wickets in between as well," Pakistan batsman Shan Masood told reporters.

"We lost wickets but the way we played allowed us to stay in the game and once we got that healthy partnership going the two teams are in an even-seven position." Sri Lanka had come out roaring when pace bowler Kasun Rajitha got Imam-ul-Haq out for one and Jayasuriya sent back Abdullah Shafique for 19.

The left-handed Masood hit back as he smashed 39 off 30 balls but fell lbw to Ramesh Mendis, who was denied the wicket by the on-field umpire before Sri Lanka successfully reviewed.

Azam fell when he got an inside edge onto his pads and the ball looped to short leg, taken by wicketkeeper Sadeera Samarawickrama.

De Silva earlier moved from his overnight 94 to register his 10th Test ton in his 50th match to bolster Sri Lanka's position from a shaky 54-4 on Sunday.

Pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi, fellow quick Naseem Shah and leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed ended on three wickets each to bowl out Sri Lanka and lunch was called. The second day's play began early with revised timings for each of the three sessions and de Silva soon got to his hundred off Shaheen.

De Silva, who smashed 12 fours and three sixes, got useful runs with the lower order before he finally fell to Naseem, who struck twice after Pakistan took the second new ball.



GALLE: Saud Shakeel congratulates Agha Salman after the latter got to his half-century.

Sarfraz Ahmed becomes first Pakistani wicketkeeper to score 3,000 Test runs

GALLE (Agencies): Sarfraz Ahmed Monday amassed 3,000 Test runs, becoming the first Pakistani wicketkeeper to achieve the feat.

The former skipper of the Green Shirts achieved the feat during Pakistan's first Test of the two-match series against Sri Lanka at Galle. During the first innings of the ongoing opening Test of two-match series against Sri Lanka in Galle, Sarfraz scored a boundary to achieve the milestone in 91 innings.

He is the 20th Pakistani batter who has scored 3000+ runs in the longer format of the game. As a wicketkeeper batter, he is the first one from Pakistan to achieve this feat.

Sarfraz, who made his Test debut in 2010 against Australia in Hobart, scored 21 fifties and four centuries so far in his career. His last century came against New Zealand earlier this year when his team needed his experience the most. Sarfraz's century helped Pakistan draw the second Test against the Kiwis in Karachi. In the ongoing Test against Sri Lanka, Sarfraz could only score 17 runs off 15 balls. He got LBW while attempting a sweep shot against Prabath Jayasuriya. At tea, Pakistan were struggling at 132-5 in reply to Sri Lanka's 312.

In the first innings, Sarfraz impressed his fans and critics by taking four crucial catches.

Sarfraz was highly criticised for poor work behind the stumps in Pakistan's last Test against New Zealand in Karachi back in January this year. Despite saving the second Test by scoring a hundred, Sarfraz remained under the knife for dropping catches and missing stump chances. His selection in the ongoing Test was also questioned by fans as they thought Mohammad Rizwan was a better choice in terms of wicketkeeping.

Messi unveiled as Inter Miami player in front of crowd of thousands

MIAMI (Agencies): Lionel Messi followed in the footsteps of Dwyane Wade, Dan Marino and LeBron James on Sunday as he was unveiled as Miami's latest sporting superstar.

Messi is in the twilight of his career, and is unlikely to match the achievements of those three stars during his time in Florida, but he comfortably equals them in pedigree. His first official appearance as an Inter Miami player — he announced his decision to join the club in June — was televised live, and took place in front of thousands of cheering fans at Fort Lauderdale's DRV PNK Stadium. There was a slight delay as one of Florida's familiar summer storms pounded the area before the Argentinian took to the stage to roars of appreciation from the packed stands and a firework display in the skies above the stadium.

"I'm very moved to be here in Miami," Messi told the crowd in Spanish, a language spoken by around two-thirds of the local area's population. "I want to thank you for the kindness and love that you have given me. This has happened so fast ... I'm anxious to train and compete. Our objective is to be here and win. I'm sure we're going to have a wonderful experience."

Messi's contract ties him to the club until the end of the 2025 season, and will pay him between \$50m and \$60m a year. The deal also

includes a signing bonus and a stake in the team. He is expected to make his debut for his new team on Friday against Mexico's Cruz Azul in the Leagues Cup.

Although the 36-year-old is past his prime, he is one of the greatest football players of all time. After a wildly successful career at Barcelona, where he won a haul of Champions League and domestic titles, he joined Paris St-Germain where he struggled compared to his best years in La Liga. However, he cemented his legacy last year, when he led Argentina to victory at the World Cup. Messi has scored 715 goals in 885 club games and won the Ballon d'Or, the most prestigious individual prize in football, a record seven times.

Inter Miami are part-owned by David Beckham, one of the few footballers who can rival Messi for global fame. The move also represents a publicity coup for MLS as it continues its push to become a major player in US sports with the US co-hosting the World Cup in 2026. The last time the league attracted a player of Messi's fame was when Beckham joined Los Angeles Galaxy in 2007.

"There will always be a before and after Lionel Messi," said Inter Miami managing owner Jorge Mas before his new signing took to the stage.

Earlier on Sunday, Inter Miami announced they had signed Messi's former Barcelona teammate,

Sergio Busquets. The 35-year-old captained Barca during a golden era for the club, during which he won La Liga nine times and captured three Champions League titles. He also lifted the 2010 World Cup with Spain, for whom he won 143 caps.

"This is a special and exciting opportunity that I'm very excited to take. I'm looking forward to this next step in my career with Inter Miami," said Busquets, whose contract lasts through the 2025 season. "I was impressed by the club when I came with Barcelona last year and now I'm happy and ready to represent the club myself. I can't wait to help bring the success that this ambitious club strives for."

The next few weeks may be a comedown for Busquets, Messi and new Inter Miami coach Tata Martino, who was also at one point the pair's manager at Barcelona. They join a club that sit bottom of MLS's Eastern Conference, last won a league game on 13 May and still do not have a permanent home. However, fortunes can turn around quickly in MLS, a competition that is designed to have more parity than the European leagues Messi is used to. Still, Inter Miami are 12 points adrift of ninth place, where they would qualify for an elimination game to make the end-of-season playoffs. The project looks like a long-term one.

Tanveer off to Czech Republic to compete at World Archery Para C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's visually impaired archer Tanveer Ahmed flew to Czech Republic on Monday to feature in the World Archery Para Championships 2023.

The week-long Championships that commenced in Pilsen on Monday will conclude on July 23.

The 39-year-old Tanveer claimed the first-ever silver medal for the country in the last edition of the Championships that was held in Dubai, last year. "That was my first appearance in the event and I returned home with a silver medal. Now I'm targeting another medal; hopefully gold this time," Tanveer, who has low vision and shoots blindfolded told APP on phone.

Tanveer has won several medals in national and international competitions since taking on archery in 2017. Prior to that he was a blind cricketer where he showcased his talent for 16 years. "I've been a crick-

eter. But it is archery that gave me real recognition." The 2022 has been a year of success for him as he earned five international medals in it, including the first-ever mix team gold medal in Andorra International Open for VI Archery, silver medal in 30-metre individual event of VI Archery and bronze medal in 18-metre individual event of VI Archery in Andorra International Open for VI Archery, bronze medal in World Ranking Event & European Cup and silver medal in World Archery Para Championships. "I'm the only archer from Pakistan, who has won five medals in a calendar year," he added.

He said he had been training hard for the World Archery Para Championships and believed he was fully fit to take on the challenge and emerge victorious. "My coach Muhammad Ijaz is a seasoned trainer. I wanted him to accompany but due to visa issues he could not

accompany me.

"I will be competing in the event without my coach," said Tanveer, who is being sponsored by the BARD Foundation for the event. "The BARD Foundation is also sponsoring me for World Blind Games where I will be again the only archer to represent my country."

The 2023 World Games is the largest high-level international event for athletes with visual impairment, with more than 1250 competitors from 70 nations. The games, staged every four years are the pinnacle of the international sporting calendar outside the Paralympic Games.

The sports taking place during the 2023 World Games include archery, chess, cricket, blind football, partially sighted football, women's football, goalball, judo, powerlifting, showdown, tenpin bowling and tennis. Pakistan's men blind cricket team is also scheduled to feature in the Games.



MELBOURNE: The World Cup trophy at Hosier Lane in Melbourne.



In brief

AIOU offers Matric, FA programs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has offered admissions in matric and intermediate programs in the first phase of the autumn semester of 2023 for Overseas Pakistani and international students. According to the university, the last date to apply for these programs is August 15, 2023, and students can only apply online. AIOU is the only university in the country providing educational opportunities for Pakistanis living all over the world. AIOU is offering more than 40 educational programs for international students from the semester autumn 2021 by using the latest online technologies. In the last semester, more than 460 students enrolled from 36 countries including Australia, Russia, South Korea, Japan, China, America, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, France, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, South Africa, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Iraq, Oman, and others.

IRSA releases 319,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 319,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 357,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1514.77 feet and was 116.77 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 176,700 cusecs and 180,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1205.65 feet, which was 155.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 51,300 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 215,200, 166,500, 139,100 and 77,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 45,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 55,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Play "Mera Ishq Vi Tu" staged at the PAC

RAWALPINDI (APP): The drama "Mera Ishq Vi Tu", based on the cure for the scourge of drugs, was presented at the Punjab Arts Council (PAC) in collaboration with AIMS Association. The chief guest of the play was Naheed Manzoor and Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed. The play was written and directed by William Parvez while Zabar Sarhadi, Ali Shan, Sofia Ali, Imran Rushdie, Rizwana Khan, Kashif Ali, and Maimoona were among the famous artists. Speaking on the occasion, Naheed Manzoor said that the drug dealers were killers of the talents of the young generation and were destroying and ruining the future of millions of youth. "Distressed youths are addicted to drugs by saying it is a medicine to solve the problems." She urged the government to take adequate measures on an emergency basis to save future generations from drugs' harmful effects. Director of Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that theatre was the name of thought, movement and dialogue. "Thinking, movement and dialogue are the nurseries of the evolution of human civilization and culture," adding "If we ponder our responsibility and try to eliminate this evil, time will come when we will be able to rid the country of the scourge of drugs."



ISLAMABAD: Chairman WAPDA, Lt. Gen. (R) Sajjad Ghani calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

HRCP calls for electoral empowerment of marginalized groups at national consultation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) held a national consultation on Monday on the political participation and electoral empowerment of marginalized groups in Pakistan.

The participants discussed barriers in the electoral system leading to disenfranchisement and proposed measures to increase inclusiveness and transparency, said an HRCP press release.

President of the Potohar Mental Health Association Zulqarnain Asghar underscored inaccessibility at polling stations for persons with disabilities, stressing that a variety of disabilities must be catered to instead of simply providing wheelchairs or other token efforts. Special wings for persons with disabilities in political parties were also proposed.

HRCP's Council member Farhatullah Babar urged for an increase in women's seats in the legis-

lature, noting that women legislators' actual participation exceeded the arbitrary 5 per cent quota allocated. He also emphasised easing cumbersome CNIC registration requirements for women, persons with disabilities and non-Muslim minorities, a matter seconded by the Director General for Inclusive Registration at the National Database and Registration Authority Reema Aftab.

Minority rights activist Jennifer Jagiwan, the electoral process must be reevaluated from a lens of representation and recognition, and political parties must make an effort to raise religious minorities' issues in their internal forums. Member of the National Democratic Movement and former senator Afrasiab Khattak agreed, stating that all political parties must take collective responsibility and work towards representing marginalized groups adequately.

Gaps in population data were also discussed. Trans activist Nayyab Ali highlighted how transgender people were under-counted in the 2017 census; among those counted only 18 per cent were documented.

Joint census commissioner for the Federal Bureau of Statistics Qazi Ismatullah agreed that census data must include minorities, persons with disabilities and transgender people. The Election Commission of Pakistan's Director General for Gender Nyghat Siddique said that the commission has implemented ceiling budgets for election campaigns, and other checks and balances are steadily being devised. Finally, the federal Ombudsperson for protection against harassment at the workplace Fauzia Vigar and HRCP secretary-general Harris Khalique emphasised that political institutions must empower statutory institutions instead of forwarding their own interests.

PSF seeks applications

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) has invited applications from young Pakistani science students to participate in the 20th International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO) to be held in December.

The IJSO, scheduled to be held from December 1-10 in Bangkok, Thailand is a science competition for students under 16 years of age on December 31.

Talking to APP, a senior official informed, "IJSO is aimed at promoting interest in science among school students, fostering problem-solving, critical thinking, and experimentation."

About the application process, the official informed, "Interested students (boys and girls) under 16 years of age on December 31, and who have passed SSC-I level/IX class or equivalent school education, may send their applications on the prescribed Proforma available on the website of PSF: www.psf.gov.pk."

"The applicant must be a regular science student in a public or private sector (Government recognized) institution with proficiency in written and spoken English," he added.

The official informed, "Only shortlisted candidates based on educational credentials will be called for a test and interview for final selection. Six students will be selected for the event while the decision of the panel of Scientists/Experts will be final in that regard."

10 nabbed for carrying illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 10 illegal arms holders and recovered arms, and ammunition from their possession during the crackdown here on Monday. According to a police spokesman, Rata Amaral police held Balaj and Sikander and recovered 02 pistols of 30 bore from their possession.

Similarly, Bani police nabbed Zaheer and recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from his custody.

While, Airport police netted Hasnain and recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from his possession and 01 pistol of 30 bore was recovered from Ahmed Ali.

Following operation, Taxila police recovered 01 rifle 12 bore from Zubair. Wah Cantt police recovered 01 of pistol 30 bore from Aamir.

Govt launches crackdown against illegal loan application: Amin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Amin-ul-Haque Monday said in a decisive move to combat fraudulent loan applications, the government initiated a crackdown against illegal loan providers.

In a statement, he said, that Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Major General (r) Hafeezur Rehman directed immediately to take swift action on the illegal loan applications. Under the orders issued, 43 loan applications had already been blocked, said Amin-ul-Haque. The targeted companies, operating within the lending industry, were registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, he added.

Highlighting the severity of the issue, Amin-ul-Haque shed light on the involvement of mafia groups operating through social media platforms, particularly Facebook. These unscrupulous entities have resorted to blackmailing innocent individuals, exploiting their financial vulnerabilities. To raise awareness and safeguard the public, a comprehensive public awareness campaign has been launched.

The citizens are urged to report any suspicious loan applications or incidents involving the loan mafia groups to the PTA, the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) Cybercrime wing, or their local police stations. The collaborative efforts of various law enforcement agencies aimed to address the increasing cybercrime wave

in the country. To ensure effective coordination, the minister has a direct contact with the Director-General of FIA, providing regular briefings on the progress of the operation. Amin emphasized the need for proactive measures, rather than waiting for complaints to accumulate, against those involved in fraudulent loan schemes.

He stressed the importance of protecting the public from financial exploitation and curbing such illegal practices within the lending industry.

The minister condemned the tactics employed by loan mafia groups, including threats of violence, blackmail, and misuse of personal data.

He reaffirmed that these actions were in clear violation of the law and must be halted immediately.

The citizens are advised to exercise caution when engaging in online financial transactions and refrain from sharing personal information with unknown parties.

The ministry has noted the prevalence of online posts promoting money-making schemes, urging individuals not to respond to such advertisements and avoid sharing sensitive data or money.

The government's crackdown aims to safeguard the interests of the public and maintain a secure online environment for all citizens. As the operation progresses, the authorities remain vigilant in their efforts to bring the culprits to justice and protect the citizens from falling victim to fraudulent loan schemes.

'Ulema's role imperative for promoting religious harmony'

RAWALPINDI (APP):

Caretaker Provincial Minister Primary and Secondary Health Care and Population Welfare Dr Jamal Nasir on Monday urged the ulema to play a role in promoting religious harmony and unity during the holy month of Muharram UI Haram.

He said while presiding over a meeting of the divisional peace committee here at the Commissioner's office. The minister said that Ulema had always played a crucial role in maintaining religious harmony and asked them to coordinate with the district administration for Muharram security arrangements, adding "Sectarian unity is the need of the hour".

Dr Jamal added that scholars belonging to dif-

ferent schools of thought in the province had assured the implementation of the Muharram code of conduct.

He said Rawalpindi was sensitive to Muharram and asked them to keep an eye on those who spread religious hatred and sectarianism through social media.

On the occasion, Commissioner Laiqat Ali Chatta stressed the need for utilizing all resources for maintaining religious harmony, brotherhood and peace during Muharram ul Haram. He said security arrangements could only be successful with the cooperation of Ulema and civil society.

Regional Police Officer Syed Khurram Ali briefed the meeting that security arrangements for Muharram were underway, adding a foolproof plan

has been evolved to monitor processions and public gatherings.

"Maintaining religious harmony a task for religious scholars", he said.

On the occasion, Ulema also assured the meeting of their commitment to maintain communal peace.

"Islam teaches brotherhood, tolerance, fraternity and patience and by adhering to these principles, peace in the country can be achieved," they said and added that enemies of Islam would not be allowed to destroy the peace of the country.

Scholars of different sects from Rawalpindi, Attock, Jehlum, and Chakwal besides traders representatives and officials of the district administration attended the meeting.

'More monsoon rains expected this week'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast more monsoon rains in different parts of the country during this week.

The monsoon currents from the Arabian sea are likely to penetrate in upper and central parts of the country from July 18 (night) which are likely to intensify on July 19.

Under the influence of these weather systems, rain/wind-thundershower with heavy falls are expected in Kashmir, (Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Havelli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur), Gilgit Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Murree, Galliyat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Kasur,

Mianwali, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang, Sahiwal, Bahawalnagar, Okara, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Kurram, Lakki Marwat, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Karak and Waziristan from July 18 (night) to 23 with occasional gaps.

Rain/wind-thundershower is also expected in Barkhan, Loralai, Kalat, Khuzdar, Zhob, Lasbela, Awaran, Musakhel, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Multan, Bhakkar, Layyah, Kot Addu, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur, Larkana and Jacobabad from July 19 (night) to 21 with occasional gaps.

Dust-thunderstorm/rain with isolated heavy falls likely in Tharparkar, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Larkana,

Jacobabad, Dadu districts from July 19 (evening/night) to 23. Dust-thunderstorm/rain with isolated heavy falls likely in Shaheed Benazirabad, Hyderabad, Sanghar, Badin, Thatta and Karachi districts from July 20-22 with occasional gaps.

About the impacts, the PMD warned that heavy rain may cause urban flooding in low-lying areas of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Gujranwala, Lahore from July 18 (night) to July 22 and may trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the period. Farmers have been advised to manage their activities keeping in view the weather forecast.

Tourists and travelers are advised to remain extra cautious to avoid any untoward situation during the wet spell.

13 held, 104 kg drugs recovered during 7 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country on Monday, managed to arrest 13 accused besides recovering over 104 kg of drugs.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, 152 drug-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of four suspects, residents of Bahawalnagar and Pakpattan.

The accused were going to Bangkok (Thailand) via flight no TG-350.

In another operation, 10 kg hashish was recovered from the accused resident of Balochistan arrested near HD Hotel Jacobabad in Sukkur.

In the third operation, two accused including a woman, resident of Karachi traveling in a rickshaw were rounded up near Etihad Town, Kemari Karachi on recovery of seven kg charras.

In fourth operation at Bacha Khan International Airport, 102 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from the possession

of a Doha-bound passenger, a resident of Khyber, going on flight no PK-285.

In the fifth operation, ANF recovered 12 kg charras concealed in the toolbox of a rickshaw intercepted near Charsadda Road in Peshawar. An accused resident of Mardan was also rounded up during the operation. The spokesman informed that in the sixth operation, 39.4 kg opium, 25.2 kg charras, 8 kg prohibited chemicals and 2 kg Ice drug were recovered from a tractor near GT Road Kamoki Gujranwala. An accused resident of Rawalpindi was netted during the operation.

In the seventh operation, three accused residents of Karachi and Peshawar along with the facilitators were arrested from a vehicle intercepted near Sambrial Interchange Sialkot and recovered 800 grams of heroin concealed in a laptop.

The accused had to leave for Sharjah from Sialkot Airport, he added.

"Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are in process," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for health Abdul Qadir Patel inaugurating ground breaking ceremony of Cancer Hospital in PIMS.

Low-quality oil returned

FARAH (Agencies): The Afghanistan National Standard Authority has returned 25 petrol and diesel oil tankers to Iran, after assessing them low-quality. "At least 25 low-quality oil-laden tankers had been stopped at Abu Nasir Farahi Port of the country's western province of Farah and returned to Iran for being low-quality," a statement said. The National Standard Authority has recently taken necessary steps to prevent the import of lowquality oil into the country.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Hajj 29, 1444 — Tuesday, July 18, 2023

Tourists in Takht-e Rostam

SAMANGAN (Agencies): 160 foreign tourists have visited Takht-e-Rostam, a thousand year old stone made artificial in Samangan. The foreign tourists, who are from different countries, visited Takht-e-Rostam Stupa besides visiting other historic sites of Samangan, said, Mohammad Amin Azizi to Bakhtar News Agency. "After the establishment of the Islamic Emirate in the country, the number of domestic and foreign tourists in this province has increased." He added.

Muttaqi says countries moving toward positive engagement with Kabul



KABUL (TOLOnews): Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the negative engagement of some countries and organizations has been directed toward more positive engagement.

Speaking at a gathering inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Muttaqi said that the world failed to implement its goals through pressure during the past 20 years and also with the Islamic Emirate within

the past two years. "The negative engagement which some countries had... is now becoming positive gradually," he said. The acting Foreign Minister also said that the international community

has reached an understanding that Afghan soil is no longer a threat to the world.

He furthered said that the international community has acknowledged the improvement of the economic condition, banking system and counter-narcotics as well as the reduction of corruption in Afghanistan. "You might have heard that...Afghanistan has made significant progress in countering corruption. You might have also heard that the whole world acknowledged that the cultivation and production of narcotics have dropped in Afghanistan by a rare level," he said.

This comes as the international community has repeatedly voiced concerns and called on the interim Afghan government to fulfill its promises regarding the issue of human rights, women's rights and the formation of an inclusive government.

Farmers showcase animal products

BAMIYAN (TOLOnews): A variety of animal products were recently displayed in Bamiyan in collaboration with the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, aiming to promote knowledge sharing among livestock farmers and the utilization of new technologies.

Mohammad Yousif Haidari, head of the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan's office in Bamiyan, emphasized the program's objective of introducing new technology to farmers from different villages. Among the demonstrations was a bottle-powered wool shaver, showcasing innovative techniques.

The exhibition showcased carpets, clothes, and other items made from animal wool, meeting the local demands of the people of Bamiyan. However, farmers voiced concerns about the challenges they face, such as drought, lack of fodder, and various animal diseases.

Ghulam Hassan, a livestock farmer, highlighted the dire conditions: "The springs have dried up, almost in some places where people go, water cannot be found. The pastures are not in good condition."

Sayed Mohammad, another farmer, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn about new machinery and technologies. "We didn't use these machines before, and we didn't know how to use them, but we can learn and will use them now," he said.

The agriculture and livestock department in Bamiyan reported a significant decrease in livestock farming, attributing it to the droughts experienced over the past two years.

"Livestock has grown a lot in the past years. Unfortunately, in the last two years, we can say in the form of statistics that livestock has decreased by 30%," said Sayed Sadat Alemi, the head of the department.

According to statistics from the Department of Agriculture and Livestock of Bamiyan, over 50% of the province's residents rely on animal husbandry as their primary source of income, highlighting the significance of this industry for local livelihoods.

50th anniversary marked of collapse of Zahir Shah's govt

KABUL (TOLOnews): 50 years ago today, on July 17, 1973, Mohammad Daud Khan staged a coup d'état against King Zahir Shah and established the first republic government.

Daud Khan used his influence with the army and leftists to stage a coup in the middle of the night, while Zahir Shah was in Italy.

On the morning of July 17, 1973, Daud Khan announced in a radio message that the royal government had collapsed.

"My beloved countrymen, I want to inform you that this government has been eliminated and the new republic government, which is in the real spirit of Islam, has replaced it."

A military veteran, Abdul Wahid Taqat, who was part of Daud Khan's coup, told TOLOnews that

few military personnel stood against the coup.

"When the movement began, when the revolution began, very few (military leaders) of the royal government stood against the revolutionaries. One of them was the commander of a Nangarhar military base and there were one or two more people, who might have not been able to fight a lot," he said.

Daud Khan, who was a cousin of the king, Zahir Shah, opposed the way of governance of the royal family. The coup happened in a way that very few people stood against Daud Khan.

"He made his plan in a way that the youth in the military bases set up a coup against their heads and rebelled. So, his plan was effective and good. There were rumors initially that

there was a compromise between Zahir Shah and Daoud Khan but later it was clear that it was a coup," Sayed Ishaq Gailani, National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan.

"Daud Khan staged a coup through some military officers. Daud Khan worked for 10 years with the military and army. He announced the coup through the officers. Zahir Shah was in Italy. They attacked here during the night, they detained the supporters of Zahir Shah and announced in the morning that the coup was successful and a republican government was established," said Dawlat Waziri, former spokesman for the Ministry of Interior. Daud Khan was Afghanistan's president for a period of five years.

MP suggests reopening Britain embassy in Kabul

KABUL (TOLOnews): In the UK, Tobias Ellwood, MP chair of the Defense Select Committee, said that the UK must review its diplomatic approach to Kabul, and Ellwood suggested that the UK should open its embassy in Kabul and start negotiations with Afghanistan.

Tobias Ellwood, in an article for the Telegraph, said that the UN Afghan Mission should now recalibrate, and if the West "continues to sulk we could be making another blunder which pushes the nation to a fiscal cliff, potentially igniting another cycle of instability, terrorism and mass migration."

"I am not a Taliban appeaser. Far from it. My brother was killed by Islamist extremists in 2002. I recognise their policies will never align with our ideals. But I witnessed unreported compromises the war-exhausted nation is currently willing to accept," Ellwood said.

Ahmad Khan Andar, a



political analyst, said that the reopening of the UK embassy in Kabul could be a green light for regional and world countries.

"The reopening of the UK embassy could be a green light for regional and world countries and I hope the Islamic Emirate takes good advantage of the new remarks of the UK member of the parliament in diplomatic and political relations of the region and world," said Ahmad Khan Andar, a political analyst.

"My opinion is that the

countries which are worried about Afghanistan can only counter problems in one way, and that is to engage closely with the ruling government in Afghanistan," said Janat Fahim Chakari, a political analyst.

After the Islamic Emirate came to power, many countries including the UK closed their embassies in Kabul.

However, the European Union has a small presence in Afghanistan and a number of regional countries have kept their embassies opened.

UNAMA releases report on Afghan human rights situation

KABUL (TOLOnews): The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a new report that the "de facto authorities" continue to restrict the rights of women and girls.

The seven-page report--that covers the period from May to June--highlighted the restrictions imposed on women by the interim Afghan government.

"On 3 May 2023, the de facto Ministry of Public Health announced that only male medical students would be permitted to take the 'Exit Supplementary Exam' in order to pursue further specialized medical studies," the report said, adding that the move was in addition to the earlier bans preventing women from participating in the medical school exit examinations.

The report said that UNAMA recorded instances where the "de facto authorities" took steps

to enforce previously announced limitations on women's freedom of movement and participation in employment.

UNAMA referred to its report of 27 May 2023 about the impact of improvised explosive devices on civilians in Afghanistan from "15 August 2021 - 30 May 2023", saying that despite a significant reduction in civilian casualties recorded as a result of armed conflict in Afghanistan since the "Taliban takeover of the country on 15 August 2021, UNAMA continues to document significant levels of civilian harm resulting from deliberate attacks employing improvised explosive devices (IEDs)."

The report said that UNAMA continues to document cases of "extrajudicial killing of former government and military personnel across Afghanistan."

"For example, on 17 May in Takhar, a former Afghan National Army soldier was shot and killed by two men on a motorcycle -- reportedly de facto security force members -- while he was on his way home," UNAMA said. "On 24 May in Samangan, de facto security forces conducted a search operation at the home of a former Afghan National Defence and Security Force official, during which he was shot and killed."

The report said that "arbitrary arrests and detentions" of former government and military personnel -- often accused of affiliation with the National Resistance Front -- are also ongoing, particularly in Kabul and Panjshir provinces.

"Killings of individuals accused of affiliation with ISIL-KP (Daesh) were also recorded in May and June

in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces," the report reads.

The report also criticized the establishment of a committee by the "de facto Departments of Information and Culture" which aimed at monitoring activities of the media in their respective provinces.

These committees are headed by the de facto Department of Information and Culture and include members from the de facto General Directorate of Intelligence and de facto Department for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, UNAMA noted. "No announcement has been made explaining the exact mandate of these committees."

The Islamic Emirate has yet to react to UNAMA's report but earlier said that the rights of women are observed within an Islamic structure.

Security challenges in Afghanistan to effect region, world: Iran FM



KABUL (TOLOnews): Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that if the international community does not pay serious attention to the security challenges caused by the "movements of terrorist groups" in Afghanistan, its negative impact will affect the region and the world.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, in a meeting with Feridun Siniirlioglu, Special Coordinator of the UN, discussed the importance of forming an inclusive government and fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, Iran's foreign ministry said.

Iran's Foreign Ministry in a statement quoted Hossein Amir-Abdollahian saying that "Afghanistan needs urgent solutions and

if the international community does not pay serious attention to the security challenges of this country caused by the movements of terrorist groups, its negative consequences will affect the region and the world."

Iran's foreign minister also emphasized the need to support regional initiatives to help solve Afghanistan's challenges.

In this meeting, Feridun Siniirlioglu also stressed the need to support regional initiatives and the framework of neighbors to help form an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, the ambassador of Iran to Afghanistan said that the countries of the region agree to cooper-

ate and interact with the Taliban, to fight against terrorism and drugs.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, in the meeting with Feridun Siniirlioglu, Special Coordinator of the UN, once again emphasized the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan and discussed UN support for regional initiatives on the issue of Afghanistan.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi said they also mentioned solving the health and educational challenges of Afghan refugees in Iran.

So far, the Islamic Emirate has not said anything in response to these statements but repeatedly denied the presence of terrorist groups, including Daesh and Al-Qaeda, in Afghanistan.

2 killed in traffic accident in Samangan

SAMANGAN (Khaama Press): At least two security officers were killed, and 12 passengers were injured in a traffic accident in Samangan province, Afghanistan.

According to a statement from the provincial police office on Sunday, two security officers dead and 13 passengers were injured in a traffic accident in the Northern Province of Samangan late on Saturday.

According to the statement, the incident occurred when a motorbike carrying two security employees crashed a head-on passenger bus in Zuhrahi, near the provincial capital Aybak City. Two security officers died on the spot, and 13 other people, including a woman, were injured.

The injured people were taken to the provincial hospital for medical treatment.

Earlier, a traffic accident killed one person and injured three others in the Northern Province of Parwan.

The statement said a Toyota Corolla car collided with a motorcycle in the Sar-e-Khwaja Sayaran area of Charikar City in Parwan province.

Recently, traffic accident has surged unprecedentedly, killing several people in different parts of the country.

Experts attribute the rise in traffic accidents nationwide to reckless driving, poorly maintained vehicles, cracked and unpaved roads, and disregard for traffic regulations since it has been reported that during the last three months, approximately 400 people have died in traffic accidents.

PenPath concerned by prolonged detention of Matiullah Wesa

KABUL (TOLOnews): The PenPath Foundation said in a statement that the administration and volunteers in the organization are concerned about the continuing imprisonment of Matiullah Wesa, president and founder of the organization.

"Wesa has been detained for 114 days without any just cause. Afghan tribal leaders, scholars, the public, and followers of Wesa have repeatedly asked about his unlawful detainment," the statement said.

The statement furthered said there is no clarity about Wesa's situation, as

his case was "recently transferred from GDI to the Ministry of Interior's Criminal Offense Division, even though he should have been released by now."

Wesa was an educational activist who launched widespread campaigns across Afghanistan for the reopening of schools for girls after the Islamic Emirate banned female students from grade 7 to 12 from going to their schools.

"So far, only one justification has been given, but there were widespread reactions to his arrest, nothing else is clear, even on

both Eids," the statement said. "He was not allowed to visit his family by phone or face to face."

PenPath called on the leaders of the Islamic Emirate to prevent injustice and to responsibly perform God's will to protect the poor children of their Muslim and oppressed nation.

The statement questioned the detention of Wesa, saying that he neither had any "political aim nor was a member of any political group, but he is treated so unfairly and without justice."



On March 27, 2023, Wesa was arrested while he was returning from evening prayer at the mosque.

Wesa's arrest sparked reactions at the national and international level.

Turkey deports 138 undocumented Afghan refugees

KABUL (Khaama Press): Turkish government deported 138 Afghan migrants to their home country as part of its efforts to tackle illegal immigration.

A charter flight from Ighdir Airport carried out the deportation. As more undocumented immigrants try to enter Turkey illegally, the country is forced to take this action.

Turkish authorities have promised to keep up extradition efforts to address the issues of illegal immigration, demonstrating their dedication to safeguarding their borders and tackling the problems caused by illegal immigration.

The current condition of Afghan immigrants seeking shelter in neighbouring nations is worsened by Turkey's recent expulsion of 138 Afghan asylum seekers. Iran and Turkey, dealing with their own



immigration issues, have increased their deportation efforts and taken steps to reduce illegal immigration.

Recently, close to 230 Afghan migrants have been deported from different cities in Turkey, according to officials. Out of the 124,441 illegal migrants deported by

Turkey in the previous year, the General Directorate of Migration earlier reported that 68,290 of them were Afghan asylum seekers.

According to the General Directorate of Migration, 68,290 Afghan citizens, 12,511 Pakistanis, and immigrants from other

countries were deported from Turkey in the preceding year. The migration office of the Turkish government asserts that it would deport more unauthorized immigrants and asylum applicants this year, including 227 Afghan nationals.



KARACHI: Members of Jamaat-e-Islami and his alliance stage a protest in front of Mayor desk during the meeting of City Council.

US calls for ‘urgent action’ on climate crisis at China talks

BEIJING (Agencies): United States climate envoy John Kerry has called for “urgent action” to tackle the climate crisis after four hours of talks with his Chinese counterpart in Beijing as the two countries revived stalled diplomacy on reducing planet-warming emissions.

“In the next three days we hope we can begin taking some big steps that will send a signal to the world about the serious purpose of China and the United States to address a common risk, threat, challenge to all of humanity created by humans themselves,” Kerry said after the talks on Monday, noting the proliferation of storms and fires as extreme weather grips much of the globe. The world’s two biggest greenhouse gas emitters restarted the climate talks after political tensions stalled them last year.

“The climate crisis demands that the world’s two largest economies work together to limit the Earth’s warming,” Kerry tweeted after meeting his Chinese counterpart, Xie Zhenhua, on Sunday night for a one-on-one dinner. Beijing said after the talks that “climate change is a common challenge faced by all mankind”. China would “exchange views with the United States on issues related to climate change and work together to meet challenges and improve the wellbeing of current and future generations”, foreign

ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said.

As the leading emitter of the greenhouse gases driving climate change, China has pledged to ensure its carbon emissions peak by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. President Xi Jinping has also said China will reduce its use of coal from 2026. But Beijing approved a major surge in coal power in April – a move Greenpeace said prioritised energy supply over the emissions reduction pledge – fuelling concerns that China will fail to meet its targets.

Li Shuo, global policy adviser for Greenpeace in East Asia, said that while China has been the largest manufacturer and deployer of wind and solar energy, both Beijing and Washington are “strongly addicted to the burning of fossil fuels”. “The climate crisis is inescapable at this point,” Shuo told Al Jazeera. “If you look at the summer that we’re having across the world, this really drives the message of climate urgency.”

Global temperatures headed towards alarming highs and extreme weather proliferated this month with scientists saying the target of keeping global warming within 1.5C of pre-industrial levels is moving beyond reach. Prolonged high temperatures in China are threatening power grids and crops and raising concerns about a repeat of last year’s

drought, the most severe in 60 years. In the US, a quarter of the population fell under extreme heat advisories, partly due to a heat dome that has settled over western states.

Kerry’s trip follows two other high-profile visits by US officials – Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen – that were aimed at stabilising US-China ties. Talks were suspended in August when the then-speaker of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, enraged Beijing by visiting self-ruled Taiwan, which China considers part of its territory.

Al Jazeera’s Katrina Yu, reporting from Beijing, said Kerry’s visit “comes amidst heightened tensions between the US and on a range of issues including trade, Taiwan and the war in Ukraine. Analysts say both must set aside differences and work together on climate change and set a positive example ahead of the COP28 conference in Dubai later this year.” While China said cooperation with the US on climate change was “generally good”, sticking points remained. “China accuses the US of unfairly criticising its climate record while failing to meet its own pledges, including financing developing countries,” Yu said. China has bristled at US calls that it should do more to cut greenhouse gas emissions, saying it is a developing country with historical emissions that remain significantly lower than those of the US.

Francis govt to extend 3m support for Afghan refugees in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government of France has announced to extend a financial support valuing three million Euro for supporting UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency for its critical programmes for Afghans in the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan.

The funding will enable the agency to intensify the provision of lifesaving assistance and protection for some of the most vulnerable refugees and their local host communities, said a press release issued here on Monday. In Pakistan, EUR 2 million will enable UNHCR to boost primary and secondary level education, strengthen skills and vocational training, and reinforce access to public health care in host communities in 2023.

A particular focus of the Government of France’s support will be on supporting women and girls. This funding comes in addition to another contribution of EUR 2 million for 2022 activities, which has already delivered results in the area of increasing girls’ access to education and expanding skills training for women. In Iran, France has allocated EUR 1 million to support UNHCR’s programmes in 2023. This contribution will help strengthen ongoing efforts to provide lifesaving assistance to Afghans and host communities, including access to essential health-care, education, and protection services. This new funding is in addition to a similar contribution of EUR 1 million for UNHCR Iran in 2022.

UNHCR deeply appreciated France for their unwavering support in addressing one of the world’s most enduring refugee crises. This funding

represents France’s recognition of the urgent need to alleviate the suffering of millions of Afghans affected by displacement while emphasizing the importance of international solidarity and responsibility-sharing in finding solutions to their plight.

French Ambassador to Iran, Nicolas Roche, noted that, “by contributing to UNHCR’s work in Iran for the second year in a row, we are committed to supporting the Afghan people driven out of their country following the 2021 developments in Afghanistan. It is also essential for us to support the resilience of the local Iranian population through this assistance.” One of UNHCR’s top 10 donors, France is a committed partner providing predictable and flexible contributions. In 2022, some 20 per cent of the annual contribution from France was earmarked, giving UNHCR critical flexibility to address emerging crises or underfunded situations.

Iran and Pakistan host over 9.2 million Afghans of varying statuses, including 2.3 million registered refugees. Many of them have left their country, propelled by insecurity, instability and grinding poverty. Despite limited resources and strained economies, both Iran and Pakistan, through their refugee inclusive policies, have demonstrated a commitment to upholding the principles of hospitality and protection. The international community must rally behind and support Afghanistan’s neighboring countries, enabling them to maintain and further expand their progressive policies.

“Our support is a gesture of solidarity and gratitude for the four decades of hospitality extended by

the governments and people of Pakistan for Afghan refugees,” noted Nicolas Galey, Ambassador of France to Pakistan. A co-convenor at December’s Global Refugee Forum, the funding also reflects France’s commitment to increasing cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries. “It’s important that communities hosting Afghan refugees are not forgotten and continue to see the international contribution towards local essential services,” he added.

UNHCR is committed to supporting Afghanistan’s neighboring countries and providing protection to millions of Afghan women, men, and children, and with the support of the government of France, the funding will help ensure that this work can not only continue but expand in the coming years.

Qaiser gets protective bail

KARACHI (PPI): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday granted 10-day protective bail to former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser in the Swabi anti-corruption case.

The court stopped the anti-corruption authorities from arresting Asad Qaiser for 10 days, ordering the latter to submit Rs50,000 worth of surety bonds. The court also ordered Asad Qaiser to join the investigation and appear before the court concerned. “If you were not available on Friday last, the petitioner should have come,” the court said to Asad Qaiser’s lawyer.

PTI chairman skips NAB appearance

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Chairman has skipped National Accountability Bureau (NAB) appearance in the Toshakhana case, citing security concerns. The graft-buster body has summoned the chairman of PTI to appear before its investigation team at 10 am on Monday (today) for a probe in the Toshakhana case.

The former prime minister in his response submitted to NAB stated that due to security concerns he cannot appear before the bureau today (Monday). The PTI chief in his response said that he is scheduled to appear before a court in Islamabad on July 19 and asked the NAB to fix his appearance on the same day.

The reference, which alleges that the former PM failed to share details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana (during his time as the prime minister) was filed by lawmakers from the ruling coalition last year. The Toshakhana issue became a major sticking point in national politics after the Election Commission of Pakistan disqualified the PTI chief for making “false statements and incorrect declaration” last month.

IHC orders PTI chief to remove objections on Toshakhana plea: The Islamabad High Court Monday directed the PTI chairman to remove the objections raised by the registrar office on his petition against the trial court’s decision to declare the Toshakhana criminal proceedings admissible.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the petition with objections. He remarked that time has changed, values have changed, but we still have old values. The judge remarked that may be in such cases stakes are high as these are political issues. PTI lawyer Khawaja Haris told the judge that today their case is in the trial court. He said this case should not go before the same judge. He requested the court to hear this case today. The chief justice, however, said that the court could not hear his case today, but it would take it tomorrow.

Khawaja Haris Advocate said that their transfer application is also pending in this court. The court directed PTI chairman to remove the objections of the registrar office.

‘Election on 2017 census unacceptable’

KARACHI (INP): Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) on Monday came out strongly against the decision of the coalition government to hold elections on the basis of the old census. Addressing a press conference, MQM-P Convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui whose party is a stakeholder in the government said the population of Karachi is around 30 million, which was about 14.9 million in the 2017 census, and his party would not accept figures less than this.

The MQM-P leader vowed to resist the move after Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah announced that the government would not notify the recently concluded census as the results are not authentic and the Election Commission of Pakistan needs at least four months to complete the delimitation process. Under laws, the census is done after every 10 years, but the last one becomes controversial, and it was decided to conduct a fresh exercise to address reservations and carry out a fresh delimitation process.

Global food security at stake as Russia kills Ukraine grain deal

KYIV (Agencies): In a sudden development, Russia announced on Monday it would no longer be participating in a significant UN-brokered agreement that allowed Ukrainian grain to be exported to the world through the Black Sea — a move that is bound to worsen the commodities crisis.

The deal, brokered by the United Nations and Turkey last July, aimed to alleviate a global food crisis by allowing Ukrainian grain blocked by the Russia-Ukraine conflict to be exported safely. The last ship left Ukraine under the deal on Sunday. Russia’s February 2022 invasion and blockade of Ukraine’s Black Sea ports sent global grain prices soaring. Ukraine and Russia are among the world’s top grain exporters.

Nearly 33 million metric tons of corn, wheat and other grains have been exported by Ukraine under the arrangement. Russia has officially notified Turkey, Ukraine and the United Nations that it is against extending the Black Sea grain export deal, the RIA news agency reported on Monday, citing Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova. This decision came just hours after Moscow accused Ukraine of attacking the Crimean bridge.

The attack on the 19-kilometre road and rail bridge, which connects Russia to Crimea, was portrayed by Russia as a terrorist act targeting a crucial route for Russian troops involved in the conflict in Ukraine. The bridge, a project personally inaugurated by President Vladimir Putin, holds significant prestige for Russia.

Tragically, two individuals lost their lives in the blasts, while their daughter sustained injuries. Despite the timing, the Kremlin emphasized that the suspension of the grain agreement was unrelated to the bridge attack. According to Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, Russia’s decision was based on the fact that certain aspects of the Black Sea grain deal, which aimed to address the global food crisis exacerbated by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, were not fulfilled.

Consequently, Russia declared the agreement null and void, with the intention of rejoining once the conditions pertaining to Russia were met. The agreement, originally set to expire on Monday, now faces an uncertain future. While the Ukrainian military suggested that the attack could potentially be a provocation orchestrated by Russia itself, local media sources, citing unidentified sources, point towards Ukraine’s Security Service as the responsible party behind the incident. Further investigation is underway to determine the true culprits behind this tragic event.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said on Monday that

millions of people facing hunger will “pay the price” of Russia’s decision to exit the Ukraine grain deal. He told reporters at the United Nations headquarters in New York that the move by Moscow will “strike a blow to people in need everywhere”. “Hundreds of millions of people face hunger and consumers are confronting a global cost-of-living crisis. They will pay the price,” Guterres said.

The UN chief’s statement comes after the Kremlin said it was exiting a major agreement to facilitate Ukraine grain exports hours after drones struck Russia’s only bridge connecting its mainland to the annexed Crimea peninsula. Moscow, which has for months complained about the implementation of the grain pact, said the attack on the Kerch bridge had nothing to do with its withdrawal from the deal designed to avoid food shortages in vulnerable countries. The UN chief said today that he deeply regretted Russia’s decision but added it would not stop the world body’s efforts to “facilitate the unimpeded access” to global markets of food and fertilisers from Ukraine and Russia.

“Looking ahead, our goal must continue to be advancing global food security and global food price stability. “This will remain the focus of my efforts, taking into account the rise in human suffering that will inevitably result from today’s decision,” he said. Guterres lamented that a letter he had sent to Russian President Vladimir Putin last week with a new proposal to keep the initiative alive “went unheeded.”

The letter, the contents of which had not been made public until now, proposed that a subsidiary of Russia’s main agricultural bank, whose activities are hampered by sanctions, be reconnected to the global SWIFT banking system. Russia has long complained that sanctions had hampered its own exports of grain and fertiliser, meaning that its terms for extending the initiative were not being met.

Guterres noted progress in this area, writing to Putin that “Russian grain trade has reached high export volumes and fertiliser markets are stabilising with Russian exports nearing full recovery.” Earlier at the UN, US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield accused Moscow of holding “humanity hostage” by exiting the grain deal. She said Russia had “dealt another blow to the world’s most vulnerable,” just a week after it blocked renewal of a key aid route to Syria that is a lifeline for millions of people living in rebel-held areas of the country. “This is really another act of cruelty,” Thomas-Greenfield said of the grain deal withdrawal. “While Russia plays political games, real people will suffer,” she added.

First Judicial Protection Unit established

ISLAMABAD (INP): To enhance the security of judges in the wake of growing need for improved security measures, the security division of Islamabad police has been revamped along with the setting up of the first Judicial Protection Unit.

Lead by the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Security Division underwent a comprehensive reorganization to fortify the security of judges’ offices, court premises, and residences. The measures were taken on special directives of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif which reflect the government’s commitment to safeguarding judicial authorities.

The newly formed Judicial Protection Unit will be placed under the vigilant supervision of the

SSP Security Division, a police spokesman said. To ensure enhanced surveillance, a standard operating procedure (SOP) has been issued, along with the installation of over 500 high-tech security cameras within court premises.

These cameras are integrated with the advanced surveillance system of the Safe City Islamabad project, allowing for real-time monitoring of court premises. Recognizing the importance of adequate personnel, the Ministry of Interior has received a request for the recruitment of 550 individuals to further bolster the security of residences and courts. Once the necessary financial resources are allocated, the performance of this unit is expected to improve significantly.

Previously, the Islamabad Capital Police

established various units to address specific security concerns in the federal capital. Among them are the Diplomatic Protection Unit (DPU), tasked with safeguarding foreign diplomats and delegations in Islamabad, and the Special Protection Unit (SPU), responsible for ensuring the safety of Chinese nationals and other foreigners residing and working in the city.

Furthermore, the VVIP Protection Unit focuses on providing comprehensive security measures for the President and Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Lastly, the High-Security Zone Protection Unit (HSZPU) is entrusted with protecting members of the National Assembly, federal ministers, high-ranking officials, ministries, and civil offices.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force.

‘Masses bearing brunt of economic destruction brought by project Imran’

(Continued from Page 1)

She said PM Shehbaz Sharif himself monitored the situation continuously and ensured that relief, rescue and reconstruction efforts were carried out in an effective way. He himself undertook visits across the country to review the ongoing efforts for the flood victims. A staggering sum of Rs 70 billion was directly distributed to the affected individuals through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), providing crucial financial assistance during the challenging period, she added.

The minister said 100 houses were constructed in Tank to provide shelter for flood-affected individuals, and damaged schools were successfully reconstructed. Reconstruction efforts were still underway in many areas. She said PM Shehbaz Sharif raised his voice at international forums, including the United Nations, advo-

cating for climate finance funds to address the urgent needs of countries affected by climate change.

At the Geneva conference, she said, he secured an assurance of \$10 billion in funds, emphasizing the crucial role played by the Foreign Minister and the Climate Change Minister, who tirelessly worked day and night on the matter. The Ministry of Information also worked diligently to raise awareness among the people of Pakistan and the global community about the prevailing situation on flood, she added.

Despite the challenges, she said, the government did not succumb to despair or chaos. Instead, the prime minister showed unwavering dedication to the well-being of the people, particularly farmers. The introduction of the Rs 200 billion Kissan Package, which included initiatives such as youth business loans, subsidies on fertilizers, electricity, and tubewells,

proved instrumental in supporting farmers.

Marriyum said the prime minister turned the flood crisis into an opportunity and took initiatives that led to a bumper crop due to his hard work, visionary approach, strong determination, and foresight regarding potential damages. To bridge the development gap between urban and rural areas, a Rs 20 billion rural development package was announced for Islamabad, she said, adding the package included projects related to road infrastructure, parks, mass transit, and schools.

She questioned as to why such a package had not been introduced during the past four years of PTI government. The minister also stated that the prime minister resumed the metro project in Islamabad soon after coming into the power. The metro project which led to the airport, was halted during the previous government

tenure.

Today, the metro project operated on all routes within Islamabad, with Orange, Blue, and Green buses catering to the transportation needs of various segments of society, including labourers, teachers, students, professionals, and government employees, the minister noted. She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif successfully completed projects such as Margalla Avenue, 7th Avenue, and Colonel Sher Khan Avenue, which significantly improved the city’s road infrastructure.

PM Shehbaz Sharif was scheduled to inaugurate Bara Kahu flyover project on July 30 that aimed to alleviate traffic congestion on one of the busiest routes in the area, she added. The minister said the timely completion of the project in just 14 months raised questions as to why similar initiatives were not accomplished during the four years of the previous

government’s tenure.

In a bid to enhance recreational spaces and promote healthy activities, she said, a plan was underway to establish 35 new parks across the city. Additionally, an Olympic Village was worked out to foster sports and fitness-related endeavours. The minister said the Benazir Income Support Programme’s (BISP) allocations, which were Rs 235 billion in 2022, had been increased to Rs 404 billion in the 2023 budget and further soared to Rs 464 billion recently.

The BISP stipend witnessed an increase of 25 per cent similarly, she added. The programme’s name was changed to Ehsaas by the PTI regime, which was nothing more than a political maneuver, she added. During the times of difficulty, such as the recent floods, she said, the government allocated a substantial amount of Rs 70 billion to provide relief to the BISP beneficiaries and those affected by

the calamity. Emergency funds amounting to Rs 25,000 per family were distributed through a scientific and transparent process, ensuring that aid reached those who needed it the most, she added.

Additional measures had been implemented to alleviate financial burdens on the public, she said while recalling petrol subsidies, the Ramadan package, and the distribution of Rs 70 billion worth of free wheat flour throughout the country during 14 months of the government, she said. Recalling difficult negotiations with the IMF for restoration of bailout package, she said the prime minister and the finance minister held multiple meetings with its representatives to restore Pakistan’s credibility. As a result of those talks, Pakistan signed the standby agreement with the IMF which ushered into economic stability and 2446 points increase in the KSE 100 index, she added.