

Chairman Senate calls on PM  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and discussed with him the overall political situation in the country. The meeting also discussed progress of development projects in Balochistan. The Chairman Senate paid tribute to PM Shehbaz Sharif on the restoration of work at Dalbandin Airport in Balochistan on an emergency basis.

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Marriyum grieved  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of the young son of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Leader Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry in a road accident. In her condolence message, the minister said that she shared the grief of Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry and his family.

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# Pak's foreign reserves surge by \$600m: PM

— reiterates call for Charter of Economy to ensure consistent economic policies

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday launched multiple initiatives here for promoting sports culture and welfare of the sports persons including the Rs 5 billion Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund.

In a ceremony held here, he launched Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund with initial seed money of Rs 5 billion to provide financial assistance and other facilities to the emerging players and retired sports persons of the country. The prime minister also performed soft launch of the first dedicated Sports University in the country to produce critical pool required for sports events such as planners, managers, technical staff, nutritionists, physiotherapists and others.

Similarly, PM Shehbaz launched the Prime Minister Youth Sports Initiative to develop sports across the country and to provide world class sports facilities to the youth. He also launched the Elite Sportspersons Development Programme and E-Sports development programme.

Addressing on the occasion, Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan's highly talented sports persons deserved appreciation from the the nation as despite limited resources, they promoted the positive image of the country across the world. He said out of Rs 5 billion allocated for Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund, a direct investment of Rs 2.5 billion would be made to meet various expenses of the players including tickets, logistics, hotel and other expenses.

He, however said this amount needed to be increased as it was not sufficient to meet the full requirements of the sports persons. The prime minister said Pakistan youth was not less talented then the world as if they were fully capable of competing the world. He said if they were given opportunities, they could lead the world in the area of sports.

PM Shehbaz informed that yesterday, the Exim (Export-Import) Bank of the all weather friendly country China had rolled over another US\$ 600 million for Pakistan which helped further increasing the country's foreign exchange reserves. "Our forex reserves are going up but I wish that these reserves should increase on the back of our own resources rather than the foreign

debts," he added.

Minister for Inter-provincial coordination Ehsanur Rehman Mazari said the government took structural changes in the country's sports to meet the emerging needs of games. He said during the previous government's four years, sports were totally ignored but the current government, despite financial constraints took special measures to promote the sports culture.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on special directives of the prime minister, several sports' departments that were closed by the previous government had been restored due to which some 40,000 sports persons who lost their jobs, had also been restored. She said out of Rs 5 billion fixed for the Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund, Rs 1 billion would be spent for the establishment of the first dedicated Sports University in the country.

She said during previous one year, talent hunt programme was launched for hockey, volley ball and football in all provinces including AJ&K, and GilgitBaltistan to provide platform to the youth to show their talent. Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb, renowned sports persons and high government officials were also present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated his call for the nation to unite on Charter of Economy to ensure the consistency of economic policies and put country on the course towards progress and prosperity.

The prime minister, addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of Islamabad Model Special Economic Zone, said with the signing of IMF agreement, the risks for default had ebbed away and the country would have to focus on boosting exports to compete with the neighboring states, particularly the eastern neighbor.

He said the Islamabad Model Special Economic Zone was launched with a delay of five years as nine SEZs were planned to be built under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said despite the land and designs, finalised for the SEZs in Punjab, the previous government not only impeded the projects but also made conscious efforts to undermine the Pak-China ties.

(Continued on Back Page)



PESHAWAR: Security officials and rescue workers inspecting the site of blast in Hayatabad.

## Mily courts: SC rejects govt's plea for full court

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) has turned down the plea of the federal government to form a full court for hearing pleas challenging trials of civilians in the military courts.

A six-member bench headed by CJP Justice Umar Ata Bandial comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha Malik is hearing the pleas against military courts. President of the Supreme Court Bar Association Abid Zuberi in his arguments before the court that the judgment in Liaquat Hussain's case in 1999 set the standards that a civilian cannot be tried in the military courts.

"I have submitted my answer to the SC and will assist the bench on five points," he added. Zuberi further said that the judgments of the court are already available according to which the trial of the accused can only be held in the military courts over 'direct' involvement.

Justice Yahya Afridi asked the SCBA president to clarify

whether a civilian cannot be tried in the military courts without a constitutional amendment. Yes, civilians cannot be tried in military courts without amendment in the constitution, he replied to Justice Afridi. CJP Bandial asked what will happen if the direct connection of the accused is proven. Zuberi in such a situation, a special amendment will be made in the constitution for the trial of the civilians.

Following the completion of the SCBA president's arguments, Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan began his arguments. Tariq General Mansour Usman Awan began the arguments by saying that the 21st constitutional amendment and Liaquat Hussain cases were also discussed before the court. To this, Justice Munib Akhtar asked how a civilian can be tried in the military courts.

The AGP said a 9-member bench gave judgment in the Liaquat Hussain case. Justice Ayesha Malik remarked the federal government objected to a member of the SC bench itself now, how can the gov-

ernment plead for the formation of the full court?

The government pleaded to make the full court of the available judges, AGP Awan replied. The CJP in his remarks said that he respects the opinion of every judge of the apex court. Justice Yahya Afridi spoke about the trust in the court. There are holidays, and judges are not available in Islamabad but asked the available judges to join the hearing of this important case, the CJP remarked.

CJP said that Justice Mansoor Ali Shah recused himself from the bench after the reservations raised by the government, which were a 'surprise' for the court. Later, the court rejected the government's plea of forming a full court for hearing the pleas against military courts. In the month of May, 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 PTI was arrested from the premises of the IHC on May 9.

## FM says we want cordial ties with all neighbours

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that Pakistan wants cordial relations with all neighboring countries.

Speaking at a dinner hosted in honor of foreign diplomats in Islamabad on Tuesday, he said Pakistan has succeeded in improving relationships with the community of the world for the last 15 months.

"As the foreign minister, I have visited different countries of the world and we have tried our level best to improve Pakistan's relations with other countries," he remarked. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto recalled that Pakistan has to face devastating floods last year due to climate change. He added that friendly countries promised to extend their cooperation to Pakistan during the COP27 conference.

## Muharram moon not sighted

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Muharram ul Haram crescent has not been sighted on Tuesday, Youm-e-Ashura would fall on Saturday, July 29 in Pakistan. Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad after a meeting of the committee held a press conference in Quetta and announced that the first Muharram will be on Thursday, July 20.

Representatives of the Central and Zonal Ruet-e-Hilal Committees, Pakistan Meteorological Department officials, Ministry of Science and Technology, and Ministry of Religious Affairs and Harmony attended the committee meeting for moon sighting. On the other hand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has announced a public holiday on the 1st of Muharram and also issued a notification of it.

The KP government said in the notification that the public holiday subject to the declaration of the moon of 1st of Muharram-ul-Haram by the Ruyat-e-Hilal Committee. In Saudi Arabia, the moon has been sighted and the government has announced that the crescent of the Islamic month of Muharram-ul-Haram 1445 AH was sighted on Tuesday, July 18 and according to Umm Al Qura calendar, Wednesday will be the first day of the month of Muharram, 1445 Hijri, corresponding to July 19, 2023.

In UAE, Friday, July 21, has been declared an official holiday to celebrate New Islamic Hijri Year for public and public sector employees. The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar cycle, and the Hijri New Year is celebrated on a different day of Gregorian calendar each year because lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the solar year.

## JUL-F calls for polls on time

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) on Tuesday emphasised the significance of holding the general elections on time.

Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had presided over the meeting of the JUI-F's core committee. The party had assessed the issues in line with the general elections.

During the meeting, the country's political situation was thoroughly discussed. The party constitutional amendments were also finalised in the meeting. The nominees for the federal and provincial caretaker setups were also discussed at the huddle.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

# Suicide blast near FC vehicle in Peshawar; 10 injured

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: At least 10 persons including seven security personnel sustained injuries when a suicide car bomber targeted the vehicle of Frontier Corps at posh Hayatabad township here Tuesday.

SP Cantt, Waqas Rafiq told media that seven security personnel including Havaldar Hussain, Lance Naik Wahab, FC constables Ishaq, Shafiqullah, Hidayat and Lazam sustained injuries. He said three civilians were also injured in the attack.

He said that FC vehicle was the target of suicide car bomber that exposed his vehicle at Hayatabad Phase-II where civilians were also passing. The injured were rushed to Combined Military Hospital and Mardan Medical Complex Peshawar.

KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali strongly condemned the suicide blast. He visited CMH Peshawar where he inquired after the health of the injured security forces personnel. He held sacrifices of security forces in high esteem.

Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information, Aqaf, Hajji, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel has strongly condemned the explosion near the vehicle of the security forces in Hayatabad on Tuesday and the personnel injured in the blast.

Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has taken notice of the incident and sought a report from the relevant authorities. He expressed his determination that anti-peace elements will be dealt with strictly and the safety of people's lives and property will be ensured.

APP adds: The Hayatabad suicide blast that apparently targeted the vehicle of FC here Tuesday necessitated decisive action against inimical forces and terrorists under the

National Action Plan (NAP) to defeat terrorism.

"Hayatabad car explosion targeting the Frontier Corps vehicle exposed the evil designs of attackers. Time has come to take decisive action against terrorists and their facilitators to defeat them with full might," said Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, former IGP and Home Secretary KP while talking to APP on Tuesday. "We need to talk to Afghan government to ensure that its soil should not be used against Pakistan and take strict action against banned TTP and terrorists there," he said, adding Taliban had signed an agreement with US at Doha Qatar agreeing that Afghans soil should not be used against any foreign country including Pakistan.

He said that a large-scale election campaign would start next month in Pakistan after dissolution of National and Sindh viz a viz Balochistan Assembly after completion of five years constitutional term and curbing menace of terrorism was necessary for a peaceful election in the country.

He said the frustrated terrorists targeted FC vehicle at Phase VI Hayatabad after security forces and police broke their back during successful intelligence based operations in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and merged areas in last six months. Stand strong against terrorism and militancy, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have killed 156 terrorists and proclaimed offenders (POs) besides arresting 434 terrorists including 26 hardcore terrorists carrying head money during last six months in the province.

The spokesman of KP police told APP on Tuesday that 144 police officers were martyred and 224 injured in line of duties during last six months in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said most wanted alleged terrorist, Shaukat Ullah involved in killing of DSP Lakki Marwat Iqbal Mohmand and his fellows arrested and confessed his crime.

"Another most wanted inter

provincial terrorist, Iqbal alias Bali wanted to Punjab and KP police in 35 heinous nature cases, was eliminated during an encounter with Cunter Terrorism Department (CTD), DI Khan." "Peshawar Police Lines Mosque explosion's facilitator, Imtiaz son of Ameerzada were apprehended by CTD Peshawar while a main accused involved in target killing of three sikhs and four ulema were also arrested," he maintained.

Besides arresting 1,474 narcotics sellers and 36,923 and recovered 7414 arms, 179,873 rounds in 8004 search and strike operations under national action plan, the police of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also arrested 42,910 suspects during 28,657 snap checking. "We need strict implementation of the national action plan (NAP) to defeat terrorism and bring facilitators and mastermind of Hayatabad explosion into justice," said former IGP KP, Syed Akhtar Ali Shah.

He said CTD needs to be strengthened in term of weaponry and professional training besides increasing perks and privileges of the combating policemen," he said. The police spokesman said that as many as 68 kilograms explosives, 312 hand grenades , 12 suicide jackets, three RPG, 68 RPG shell, six shot guns, 51 pistols etc were recovered during last six months operation by CTD.

He said that 190,950 kilogram narcotics were recovered and 1,453 FIRs were registered under anti narcotics act under which 1474 accused 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 seizure of arms and ammunitions and Pakistani currency, 10,220 proclaimed offenders were arrested and 50 were killed in police encounters. Similarly, 1230 Afghans refugees were arrested for illegal stay charged under foreign act and 420 persons for illegal use of loudspeakers.

## Govt committed to make KP polio free province: CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has said that the provincial government is highly committed to make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a polio free province of the country adding that concrete measures are being taken under a well-planned strategy to this end. He said that special anti-polio drive has been launched to administer anti-polio drops to those children who are still out of coverage in the southern districts of the province.

He said this while talking to a delegation of Polio Oversight Board (POB) which called on him here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Tuesday. The delegation led by Chairman POB Dr. Christopher Elias consisted of Regional Director WHO Dr. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, Acting Regional Director UNICEF Noala Skinner, Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon, Deputy Director Polio Bill and Malinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Michael Galway, WHO Pakistan Representative Dr. Palitha Mahipala and others.

Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, secretary Health Mahmood Aslam and Director General Health Services Dr. Shaukat were also present on the occasion. The participants made a threadbare discussion on various matters related to anti-polio campaigns with special focus on the strategy to eradicate polio virus from

## Gilgit-Baltistan's 14-member cabinet unveiled

GILGIT (PPI): The newly elected Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Gulbar Khan has announced his 14-member cabinet. According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division late Monday night, the cabinet comprises four senior ministers, eight ministers and two advisers.

Senior Minister Syed Amjad Zaidi has been given the portfolios of Housing, Senior Minister Gulam Muhammad the Food and Tourism, Senior Minister Engineer Mohammad Ismail the Finance, and Senior Minister Abdul Hameed the local government. Fathullah Khan has been named Development and Planning minister, Sohail Abbas Law and Health and Shamsul Haq Interior, while Gulam Shahzad Agha Education and Dilshad Bano Social Welfare and Development of Women. Mushtaq Hussain has been given the portfolio of Water and Electricity and Haji Rahmat Khaliq has been entrusted with Excise and Taxation, while Haji Shah Baig has been appointed advisor to the Chief Minister with the portfolio of Forests, Wildlife and Environment. Soraya Zaman has been named advisor to the Chief Minister with the portfolio of Information Technology.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially southern districts of the province. The stakeholders on this occasion, reiterated their commitment to continue the joint struggle till eradication of polio virus from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They also agreed that specific measures should be taken in specific spots of the southern districts to get rid of this menace.

Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan while appreciating the role of partner organizations in mitigating polio virus in the province said that eradication of polio is indispensable to give a healthy and safe future to the upcoming generations. Stressing the need for awareness with regard to polio virus he said that it is instrumental to create

awareness among the people about damages caused by polio. Azam Khan stated that parents needs to be convinced to administer anti-polio drops to their children as lack of seriousness of parents in this matter can cause irreparable damage to children. The Chief Minister said that opinion leaders and Ulema can also play their vital role in convincing parents to administer anti-polio drops to their children.

The members of the Polio Oversight Board appreciated the dedication and determination of the provincial government and the efforts of provincial anti-polio team and said that the Oversight Board will provide all out support for the eradication of the polio virus from the province.

## Toshakhana Case: Court reserves decision

ISLAMABAD (INP): The District and Sessions Court on Tuesday reserved its decision over maintainability of a plea of the PTI chairman in the Toshakhana case.

The election commission's counsel Amjad Pervaiz said in the court that the Chairman PTI has already filed a petition for transfer from the court. "It seems he has no confidence on your court," ECP counsel said while addressing the judge. "Your court is being subjected to character assassination. He wants to escape from court for last several months. He even doesn't like to sign on the exemption plea," the counsel further said.

Islamabad High Court had granted stay to the chairman PTI for one-and-half month, counsel said. "He enjoyed the stay, he knows well there is no way out, he is fleeing from the case," Amjad Pervaiz said. ECP lawyer objected over the Chairman PTI's plea about no-confidence over the sessions court's Judge Humayun Dilawar. "Chairman PTI could not be allowed to malign the court without a statement on oath," ECP counsel said. "They have brought this material for your character assassination," he said.

"PTI used to run such campaigns on social media. Today Gohar Ali Khan did, what the PTI had done," ECP lawyer said. "He shown posts in the courtroom before all in presence. Gohar Ali Khan could have opted for a judicial inquiry."









# Joint efforts stressed to root out polio virus

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry presided over a meeting with a delegation of Polio Oversight Board (POB) here on Tuesday.

Delegation of POB headed by Dr. Christopher Elias, officials of Pakistan Army, Police and government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as well as representatives from UNICEF, and World Health Organization

attended the meeting. During the meeting, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of the provincial government to completely eradicate polio from the region. He lauded the tireless efforts of polio workers who had been vanguard of anti-polio initiatives. The Chief Secretary expressed his gratitude to all partners for their technical and financial support against polio, saying that

eradication of the crippling virus was inevitable to ensure a healthy and secure future for our children. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Christopher Elias praised the determination and efforts of the provincial government in its fight against polio. He underscored the need to sustain collaborative endeavours to prevent spread of polio virus till its complete elimination from the region. The meeting concluded with a unified commitment

to continue concerted efforts to combat polio, ensuring a polio-free environment for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Later, the Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry received fifty bikes donated by WHO, which will be used for strengthening the expanded immunization program to reach every child in the high-risk mobile and nomadic population of southern districts of the province.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry presiding over a meeting with a delegation of Polio Oversight Board.

## Projects under UNFPA support reviewed

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Officials reviewed progress on different projects being implemented with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in various sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here in a local hotel on Tuesday.

On behalf of UNFPA, Country Head Lauy Shabaneh and other relevant officials participated in the meeting. On behalf of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Relief Abdul Basit, Secretary Population Welfare Asghar Ali, Deputy Secretary Social Welfare and other officials participated.

In the meeting, a detailed briefing was given on the ongoing projects under the support of UNFPA. While presenting an overview of the progress on behalf of the Population Welfare Department, it was said that work is ongoing on eight activities of the department with the support of UNFPA.

The total cost is estimated to be more than 10 million. In the meeting, the cost estimation, challenges and issues related to the ongoing projects implemented by non-governmental organizations in health, social welfare and other sectors were also reviewed.

While appreciating the progress, UNFPA officials stressed the importance of making further improvements and timely completion of the projects. While informing about the ongoing projects and procedures of UNFPA, the relevant officials said that they are working closely with around 50 implementing partners in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and are keeping a close eye on the projects to ensure transparency.

## Govt to restart family quarters in prisons

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister for Prisons, Hidayat Ullah Afridi has said that government is considering to restart facility of family quarters in prisons of the province.

In a statement issued here Tuesday, he said that Communication and Works Department has been contacted and their team has already visited existing family quarters in KP prisons.

He said that family quarters were established in prisons of Peshawar, Bannu, Haripur, D I Khan and Mardan by provincial government in 2005 but these facilities were closed in 2012 due to security situation at the time then.

## ANP condemns attack

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial President Awami National Party, Aimal Wali Khan here Tuesday condemned attack on convoy of security forces in Hayatabad and said that the incident is a matter of grave concern for all of us.

In a statement issued from Bacha Khan Markaz, Aimal Wali Khan said the occurrence of blast before Muharram is alarming. He said that perpetrators of the incident and abettors should be brought to court of law.

He also prayed for early recovery of the injured and demanded utilization of available resources to protect lives and property of people.

# PPP to win general elections, says Bacha

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial president PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Minister of State for Water Resources, Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha has said that the party will win the coming general elections with thumping majority and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be the next prime minister of the country.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the PPP leader said that after winning the general elections

the party beside all four provinces of the country will also form governments in Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. He said that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has proved through his performance that he is fully competent to lead the country. He added that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari through his hard work and competency has not only won the hearts of the nation rather leaders of the international commu-

nity are also acknowledging his leadership capabilities. Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha said that PPP will win the elections on the basis of its performance, which has already been proved in by-elections and local bodies polls. He said that PPP has regained popularity in KP in a short period and a larger number of the disgruntled workers and leaders of PTI are joining the party on a daily basis.

# DG NAB KP to hold ‘Khuli Katchery’ on 25th

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Director General (DG), National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Waqar Ahmed Chohan will hold an open court (Khuli Kachery) at NAB Office, Peshawar on July 25, 2023 (Tuesday).

The DG NAB would hear peoples' complaints personally from 2:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m at NAB Office, PDA building, Phase V, Hayatabad, Peshawar. All the concerned officers will also accompany the DG NAB.

According to a statement issued by Mian Muhammad Waqar, Director NAB KP, complaints

against any official/accused that illegally benefited anyone from government kitty or willfully inflicted losses to official exchequer or accumulated assets beyond known sources of income or has not given government projects/contracts in accordance with the set procedures or cheated public at large and embezzled people's money through fraudulent means or any institution/real estate society involved in embezzlement of money would be heard.

The complainants have been requested to bring their written complaints along with computerized CNIC and preliminary relevant documentary proof at NAB Office.

The Director General NAB said that transparent investigation would be carried out regarding all complaints and strong action would be taken against the accused under the law. Moreover, anyone having complaint against NAB officers may also file the same at the open Katchery. It is pertinent to note that Chairman NAB, Lt Gen Nazir Ahmad, in order to give access to people has decided to hear public complaints personally and in this connection has directed all the Regional Director Generals to personally hold such interactions.

# ECP holds one-day media workshop



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Election Commission of Pakistan organized a one-day media workshop under the theme "Responsible Reporting for Peaceful and Inclusive Elections" at a local hotel in Peshawar. The guest speakers were senior journalist Shamim Shahid and Ismail Khan while Provincial Election Commissioner KP Shamshad Khan presided over the closing session.

Dissemination of misleading news and hate speech through mainstream media and social media and the role of media in improving the inclusion of disadvantaged sections, women, transgender, elderly, persons with disabilities and minorities in elections, code of conduct and against the responsibility of the professional media was discussed regarding the prevention of violations.

Representatives of various print and electronic media participated in this training program. The training was started with recitation from the Holy Quran. Later, Election Commission Spokesperson Quratul Ain Fatima welcomed the attendees on behalf of the Election Commission. Trainers Director Asif Ali Yasin Office of PEC, KP, Quratul Ain Fatima Spokesperson ECP, Khuram Badr and Kulsoom Meraj (International for Electoral System) organized various sessions and conduct practical exercises related to the electoral process to the participants. Addressing the event, senior journalists Shamim Shahid and Ismail Khan briefed the participants on responsible and investigative reporting with reference to the election process. They said that this

is the age of social media and journalists should have journalistic skills for authentic and responsible reporting. Special attention should be paid to values; he further said that political intolerance is at its peak in Pakistan. In elections, there is one winner and many losers; therefore unjustified criticism of the Election Commission has become a norm. However, he further said that the orders of the Election Commission in the recent past are commendable. Along with this, the judiciary should work within its jurisdiction so that the elections in the country can be conducted in the right direction. He further said that along with the training of the media, the candidates of the political parties should also be trained. And the code of conduct should also be strictly followed.

# PPC signs MOU with IPS for higher studies

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Press Club (PPC) has signed MOU with Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) to ensure higher education of journalist's children with discounted fees, on Tuesday.

IPS will provide 80% discount to children of journalists in Higher Studies. The MOU was signed by PPC Education Committee Chairman Tayyab Usman.



The journalist community appreciated efforts of education committee and hopeful for better future of their child to compete with demands of global village.

# ANP leader slams Pervez Khattak over formation of new political party

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A leading businessman and ANP senior leader former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour strongly criticised Pervez Khattak for formation of a new political party, saying that Pervez Khattak who was remained chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and defence minister had always done

politics of interests. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, ANP senior leader alleged that leaving PTI after ruining national economy and amassing illegal billions of rupees was an old habit and demeanor of opportunistic elements like Pervez Khattak. Ilyas Bilour said former chief minister Mehmood Khan should be ashamed,

which has done politics of interests. The ANP senior leader said Pervez Khattak has formed own political party by claiming support of more than 57 parliamentarians, which couldn't have succeeded to gain a seat in National Elections. Ilyas Bilour continued to say that PTI former ministers Pervez Khattak,

Mehmood Khan, and former PTI parliamentarians' had made fools of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He made it clear that now people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cannot come into deceit tactics of opportunist elements. He said 'God willing', they will face humiliating defeat in the upcoming general elections.

## Power shutdown notice issued

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Due to necessary work at 132KV GSS Ghallani, power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM on 22, 23, 29, 30, July and 05, 06, 12, 13, August 2023 for improvement of system.

According to a press release of TESCO issued here on Tuesday, Areas connected with 11 kV Shati Khel, 11 kV Gulman Shah, 11kV Lakkari-I, 11kV Lakkari-II, 11kV Ghallani, 11kV Khwazai, 11kV Yousaf Khel, 11kV Shati Khel, 11kV Koz Gandhab, 11kV Ghallani Hospital, 11kV Ghandao Industry and 11kV Muslim Steel Furnace will be affected due to this work.

The company has regretted the inconvenience to be faced by consumers due to unavoidable maintenance work. The company has asked the consumers to utilize electricity only for lighting purpose in order to avoid load management and low voltage problems.

## ‘The English Works! Program’ concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): A six-month "The English Works! Program" funded by Public Affairs Section of US Embassy in Pakistan concluded here at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University. The 240+ contact hours English language proficiency and skills enhancement program was arranged for young adults ages from 17 to 25 year with an objective to improve the English language proficiency of underserved youth while focusing on specific language skills and vocabulary needed for employment or entrepreneurship.

In addition to improvement in English language proficiency, the program was aimed to improve the participants' skills for future study and work opportunities and develop understanding of citizenship, leadership, and critical thinking through both local and international guest speakers, and other enrichment activities.

In order to enhance the skills of the students, a two-week technology camp was organized for the students in two cohorts. In the first cohort students attended the camp in Nathia Gali, while in the second cohort students participated in the camp held at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University in Peshawar. 125 female students of SBBWU were selected for the program based on their entrance test and interviews and were given complimentary books, transportation allowances and all other necessary resources for the program without any charges. The program concluded with a closing ceremony during which the students had the opportunity to share their success stories.



PESHAWAR: Syed Zahir Ali Shah talking with Chief Executive PESCO Engr. Arif Mahmood and Director WAPDA Shakeel Safi during a meeting. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

# Citizens urged to adopt precautionary measures

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Relief, Rehabilitation & Settlement Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urges the public to adopt precautionary measures in light of the monsoon season. The department encourages everyone to adhere to the provided precautions and prioritize not only their own safety but also the safety of others during monsoon season 2023.

Secretary Relief, Abdul Basit, emphasized the importance of taking necessary precautions during rainy and stormy weather. He advises the masses to stay away from electric poles, signboards, and trees to avoid potential accidents.

Furthermore, he strongly recommends refraining

from throwing garbage in sewerage lines, as it leads to blockages and subsequent inundation of the area. Roof drainage systems should be maintained, and sewerage lines must be regularly cleaned. He further said that the Relief Department also directed the attached bodies, including Rescue 1122, PDMA, and Civil Defense, to remain alert and vigilant throughout the monsoon season.

The Relief Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, specifically instructs residents in low-lying areas to move their valuable belongings from basements to upper floors or safer locations to safeguard them from potential water damage.

Additionally, the public is advised to protect themselves from viral diseases

that tend to break out during the monsoon season. Avoiding direct contact with bare wires and refraining from using electrical home appliances with faulty, bare, or cracked electrical wires is essential to prevent electrical accidents. Taimur Ali, spokesperson for the Relief Department, said that officials of concerned departments and district administrations have been informed to remain vigilant during the current spell of rains, in order to prevent any untoward incidents. A media campaign is underway to create awareness among the public about taking precautionary measures. In case of emergencies, PDMA helpline at 1700 and Rescue-1122 helpline at 1122 are operational and can be contacted at any time.

# Tourism important contributor to economy

PESHAWAR (APP): The tourism potential of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in general and merged areas in particular is second to none in the region and through this way billions of dollars could be earned through exploring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Potential.

Tourism is an important contributor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's economy and job creation, and the number of domestic tourists traveling to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa keeps growing

rapidly. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is blessed with diverse tourism attractions, catering to all interest types. Such tools are the fundamentals of many aspects of the economics of tourism, tourism as an industry, tourism products are perishable, seasonality, interdependence of tourism products, relatively low investment costs but high fixed cost of operation, tourism as a growth sector, high income elasticity.

In order to tap this potential, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has embarked upon a strategic project to explore and develop tourism in merged areas.

This project is striving to establish multiple tourism infrastructures in seven merged districts and six merged sub-divisions. A comprehensive survey has already been conducted to identify major tourism development initiatives in these areas.



PESHAWAR: A policeman stands guard at Imambargah.





## In brief

### Police arrests alleged murderer F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Police has arrested alleged murderer along with facilitator involved in killing of his wife and sister-in-law while escaped from the crime scene in the premises of Chakesar police station, on Tuesday. The alleged murderer named Peer Zada and facilitator Arzomand while the offense was committed over oral dispute among the deceased women. District Police Officer (DPO) Shangla has ordered the concerned Station House Officer for the arrest of culprit following the incident. Police has arrested the alleged murderer from the Arzomand residence while booked him as facilitator in the offense. Police has started further investigation and interrogation.

### One killed by bandits F.P. Report

LARKANA: The heirs of Sobdar Jagirani, an elderly man who was killed for resisting during the looting of bandits in the outskirts of Larkana, held a protest by keeping his body at SP Chowk for the arrest of the accused. While doing this, Ghulam Qadir Jagirani, Abdul Razzaq Jagirani and others said that our elderly man Sobdar Jagirani was on fire from Larkana to his village Vada Mahr, armed men tried to loot him on the way, and when he resisted, the accused shot him on the spot. Many hours passed after the incident, but the police did not arrest the accused. FIA recovers 500 mobiles & laptop: FIA circle team Larkana, under the leadership of Crime Inspector Muhammad Zamam Soomro, raided a bungalow in Sachal Colony in the suburbs, in which a laptop used for the Benazir Income Support Program, 500 mobile phones with SIMs and mobile phones were raided. Set, 50 different types of thumb prints, more than 6 UPS, the accused Abdul Wahid Soho, involved in the two-digit work, was arrested, while talking to the media on this occasion, Inspector Muhammad Zamam Soomro said that the arrested agent Benazir Ancom. He used to deduct from the stipend for women under the support program, which is being investigated, while on receiving secret information, we took actions in Sachal Colony, Larkana and arrested the involved accused.

### WB water projects F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa director general water management Javed Iqbal along with DG Naseebur Rehman, district officer water management Ziaul Haq and representatives of the World Bank visited the Lower Dir district and examined various projects completed with the financial support of the World Bank here. The team met with local farmers at Gaddar in Adenzai and Chino Talash in Timergara tehsil and expressed satisfaction on the water channels, tanks and water courses completed under the supervision of the water management department. The DG directed the water management engineers to expedite work on the ongoing projects in Lower Dir so that the farmers could benefit of it. Talking to local journalists and farmers, Mr Javed Iqbal said that hundreds of small projects had been completed in all districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the merged district with the financial support of the World Bank during the last two years.

# Political, social elements seek transfer of MS

## F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: A protest sit-in of political and social elements of the tribal society against the Medical Superintendent (MS) of Headquarter Hospital was held at Iqra Chawk, in front of the health center, Landi Kotal on Tuesday asked for his accountability and immediate transfer.

The protestors were on the view that instead of serving the ailing segments of the society, the hospital has become a source of income for the MS Dr Jamshed Sherani. Leading the sit-in Ilyas Shinwari, Kaleem ullah, Samiullah Afridi and others regretted that a syringe was unavailable in the emergency to deal a casualty and the patients were compelled to buy all medicines from shops outside the hospital.

Beside income of the hospital, ten million rupees fund had been provided in the form of local purchase but a single penny had not been spent for the welfare of the patients, they remarked. In place of enhancing efficiency of the health center, MS engaged in embezzlement of funds they blamed and said because of rude behavior towards the health staff, many specialists' doctors relieved their posts that would deprive the locals of availing quality treatment in the hospital.

They accused officials in the provincial health directorate and secretariat for fevering MS and said besides the number of complaints lodged against the MS no action had been taken against him that was injustice to them. The participants demanded of the Federal Government to intervene in the matter as the provincial health high-up had turned blind eyes to their request, transfer the allegedly corrupt MS and appoint honest and competent MS who could make the health center, a true benefitted organization for the ailing tribesmen.

When MS Dr Jamshed Sherani was contacted for his version at the issue he said that as per direction of the health department ban had been imposed on private practice of the doctors and had asked the local staff to leave the residential quarters in the hospital therefore some of effectees utilized unfair means to suppress him.

**Rain affectees compensated in Landi Kotal:** Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) with assistance of district administration compensated families of the two persons who lost their lives in flood flash in previous day of heavy downpour here in Pased Khel and Loy-Shelman villages of subdivision Landi Kotal last day.

On the direction of Deputy Commissioner, Khyber, Assistant Commissioner (AC), Landi Kotal Irshad Mohmand flanked by Additional AC Rameez Ali Shah and Tehsil Chairman Haji Shah Khalid visited affected families in Pased Khel and Loy-Shelman and handed over cheques of one million rupees each to heir of late Inzeming Khan and Kausar.

The officials also sympathized with the deceased's families and offered Fatiha for the departed souls. Expressing his grief over the sad demise of the two youth AC Irshad Mohmand said that the government stood firm with the affected families in the hour of sorrow and pain and would leave no stone unturned to work for the welfare of them.

Data of the property loss due to rain across the Tehsil had been already conveyed to the PDMA and soon financial support for the damages would be approved, he remarked. The deceased's families and common men thanked the FDMA and the district administration and appreciated the speedy financial support extended to the parents of the two late youths. It is to be mentioned here that two youths have been killed and numbers of roof and boundary walls collapsed after heavy rain and flood flash in Landi Kotal.

# Security plan finalized for Muharram in Mardan

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Foolproof security arrangements have been finalized for processions and Majalis as scheduled to be held in the region during the holy month of Muharram.

Relevant officials here on Tuesday told, on the directions of Regional Police Officer Mardan Muhammad Suleman, foolproof security measures have been put in place for the processions and Majalis which were going to be in the region during Muharram.

As per details provided by the officials, there will be 13 processions and 60 mourning Majalis in the Mardan and Nowshera districts of the Mardan region. A total of 1,966 police personnel will be on duty to ensure security. The officials pointed out that 18-monitoring officers and 1,948 other officials will be appointed to provide security. Additionally, 240 policemen were assigned to duty from 1st to 10th of Muharram for the security of Imambargahs.

To monitor sensitive processions and Majalis, drone cameras and CCTV cameras have been installed, and policemen equipped with sniper guns will be deployed on rooftops. Participants in the processions will undergo security checks using walk-

through gates, metal detectors, and physical searches. The processions will receive three-layer security, and the procession routes will be regularly swept by the staff of the special branch. Control rooms have been set up in Mardan and Nowshera for effective security monitoring, operating 24 hours a day.

In order to maintain peace and order during Muharram, meetings have been held at both the regional and district levels with religious and social leaders from different schools of thought. In his message, the Regional Police Officer Mardan Muhammad Suleman has urged the public to maintain patience, tolerance as well as an atmosphere of mutual brotherhood, religious harmony and peace during Muharram. Al Haram, regardless of their religious beliefs and sects.

**Residents welcomed PHC decision regarding Mayar, Akbarpura UC:** The residents of union council Mayar and village Akbarpura here celebrated and welcomed the order of Peshawar High Court regarding the re-unification of the siad areas again to Mardan tehsil.

The dwellers of UC Mayar and village Akbarpura lauded the PHC

order and termed it, infant, the victory of justice. Mardan city mayor Himayatullah Mayar who not only belonged to Mayar area but he himself filed the writ petition in PHC tilted "Himayatullah Mayar versus Government etc." While talking on the issue, he alleged that an unjust decision was made by the previous provincial government of PTI to include Mayar Union council and village Akbarpura in 16-kilometer away Garikapura tehsil. He said that the PTI provincial government decision to include Mayar Union council in Garikapura tehsil, had created many difficulties and hurdles for residents of the area.

On the other hand, he claimed that Mayar union council was located adjacent to Mardan tehsil and now the residential areas had been connected to each other owing to its growing population. He said the PHC had set aside the impugned notification of inclusion of UC Mayar and village Akbarpura and the matter was sent to SMCB to re-examine the geographical suitability of UC Mayar and village Akbarpura and to take necessary steps to include the areas in Mardan tehsil.

# Grain's commission agent protests against dacoity, 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 facilitating 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 was at 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.

**APCA arranges sit-in:** 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.

**Two dacoity reported:** Three unknown armed robbers snatched thousands of rupees in cash and a mobile phone from a motorcycle rider near Kallianwala 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.

**Seven booked for spreading terror:** 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.

**Residents flayed poor sanitation infrastructure:** 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, Garhi 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 the 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 walk held:** Fisheries Department Hafizabad organized 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.



QUETTA: A view of illegal motorbikes parked outside DC office creating problems for traffic.

## Resolving cops' issues among top priorities: DPO F.P. Report

D I KHAN: District Police Officer (DPO) South Waziristan Upper Niaz Muhammad has said that resolving the issues of policemen by utilizing all available resources was among his top priorities. He stated this while addressing a police Darbar which he held for employees of police department in Tank police lines on the special instructions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur and RPO Dera Abdul Ghafoor Afridi.

The Darbar was also attended by DSP Eng. Sher Ullah Khan, DSP Headquarters Noor Khan, SHOs of all police stations along with a large number of police officials. On this occasion, the DPO listened to the problems of the police officials in detail and issued orders to solve the issues on the spot. DPO Niaz Muhammad said that holding this forum was aimed to resolve the individual and collective legitimate issues of the policemen.

He said that it was the basic responsibility of the police to ensure the protection the life and property of citizens. The personnel of police force must perform their duties honestly and courageously, he added. He said the doors of his office were always opened for officials and officers of the department.

The IGP was taking special measures for the welfare of the police force, adding, the officers and employees were getting benefit of these steps including scholarships, amount for daughters' marriages, semester fee of college or university for position holder children of policemen and amount for treatment of family members. The DPO said he was proud of commanding a brave and courageous force like Waziristan Police.

# Death anniversary of Bakht Baidar observed

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: 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.

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 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 footprints 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 gov-

Khan, Naeemullah (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 footprints 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 gov-

ernment 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.

# PM offering chair to student: Ali pride for Buner

## F.P. Report

BUNER: An event arranged for student named Rahman Ali resident of Katakot area of Mandant tehsil to pay tribute to for his distinction during studies who was awarded by Prime Minister with laptop and offered his chair to him.

The event was arranged by Tehsil Nazim Naseeb Khan while Tehsil Municipal Officer (TMO) Mandant Amin Khan, Bashir Ali, Syed Mehboob Bacha, Sohrah Khan and Syed Faqir accompanied him during his visit to residence of Rahman Ali to pay tribute to him.

The participants claimed that Rahman Ali is role model for other students in the areas especially marginalized youth which shows that commitment is key to success. They claimed that Rahman Ali's speech has influenced Prime Minister

Shahbaz Sharif because of his courage and talent that's the PM offered his chair to him.

The visitors claimed that the success of Rehman Ali is pride for Buner in general while proud for Mandant because his talent has inspired every nook and corner of the country including Prime Minister.

It is worthy to mention that father of Rehman Ali is laborer in a hotel at Karachi while he himself works as wagger after varsity timing to fulfill his necessities for completion of his studies.

**Gadezai-Salarzai Tehsil presents Rs 45 crore 12 budget:** The tehsil Gadezai Salarzai Nazi Sher Alam Khan on Tuesday presented Rs:45 crore 12 lakh 40 thousand 228 budget proposals during the council session for discussion and approval.

The budget proposals containing Rs: 28 cor 8 lak 6 thousand 87 for developmental purposes to be utilized for wellbeing in the tehsil for provision municipal services, claimed the Nazim. The tehsil council session held under the chair of convener Salman Salarzaiwal. TMO Anwar Shamim the finance officer Mohamad Asif the staff member Lal Zada and almost all of the members except women members attended.

Similarly tehsil council Daggar Nazim Haji Rozi Khan presented Rs: 46 crore 40 lakh 92 thousand 983 in the council for discussion and approval. Out of it an amount Rs: 21 crore 6 lak 59 thousand 801 would be spent over developmental schemes to improve life standard of the locals, Nazim shared.





# Crimean bridge attack Britain rejects Russia's accusation of UK's involvement

LONDON (Reuters): Britain rejected accusations by Russia that British intelligence services might have been involved in an attack on Russia's bridge to Crimea. "This is baseless speculation from Russia and we will not dignify it by commenting further," a spokesperson for Britain's foreign ministry said in emailed comments.

Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyanskiy, said, without providing any evidence, that British intelligence services might have been involved in the attack that killed two, injured a girl, and damaged the bridge. "I have not heard any condemnation of this act of terrorism from any of the Western sponsors of the Kiev regime," Polyanskiy told the United Nations Security Council. "And we have yet to figure out to what extent Western, in particular British intelligence agencies, were involved in the preparation and implementation of this terrorist attack. Too many things point to that."

A blast knocked out the bridge linking Russia to the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014, in what Moscow called a strike by Ukrainian sea drones. Meanwhile, a Ukrainian security official has claimed Kyiv's responsibility for an attack on the bridge linking the annexed Crimean peninsula to the Russian mainland - a vital supply line for Russia's war effort in Ukraine and a personal project for President Vladimir Putin. The nearly 12-mile crossing, also known as the Kerch Bridge, is the longest in Europe and holds huge strategic and symbolic importance for Moscow. attack on the

bridge was the second since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, after a fuel tanker exploded while crossing it in October. A source in Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) told CNN this attack was a joint operation of the SBU and Ukraine's naval forces. The source spoke on condition of anonymity because they had not received authorization to speak on the record. Ukraine's minister for digital transformation later said that the bridge was struck by "naval drones." Mykhailo Fedorov said on Telegram "It is better to act, not to reveal photos of our own production facilities and to supply the defense forces," Fedorov said.

Two people were killed and their daughter wounded in the attack, according to Russian-appointed officials. Two strikes were reportedly carried out, damaging part of the bridge, according to Telegram channel Grey Zone, which supports the Wagner mercenary group led by Yevgeny Prigozhin.

Russian President Putin called the Ukrainian strike a "terrorist attack" and vowed to retaliate. He also claimed there was no military significance to hitting the bridge. "There will be a response from Russia to the terrorist attack on the Crimean bridge. The Ministry of Defense is preparing relevant proposals," Putin said during a meeting with officials. "I would like to repeat that what happened is another terrorist act of the (Kyiv) regime." Explosions were heard around 3:04 a.m. and 3:20 a.m. local time, Grey Zone and popular Crimean blogger 'TalipoV Online Z' said on Telegram. CNN is unable to

verify those reports.

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said a girl was injured and her parents were killed while traveling in the car that was damaged in the incident. "There is damage to the roadway on spans of the Crimean Bridge," Russia's Transport Ministry said on Telegram. The spans on a bridge are the lengths between the support piers. Images showed a partial collapse of a section of the roadway portion of the bridge, which also carries railroad tracks. Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin said that the supports of the bridge were not damaged by the blast, according to preliminary assessments. He later said traffic on the bridge will only resume in nearly two months time, adding that there "are ferries available for civilian and commercial transportation" and the railway bridge was still operational. "Two-way traffic will be open for one lane only by September 15. Then two-way traffic in both lanes will open Nov 1," he said in a remote meeting with officials, including Putin, televised. "One way on the railway bridge sustained insignificant damage that is not impacting the operation of trains.

Videos posted on Telegram by Baza, Grey Zone and other Crimean news outlets appeared to show part of the bridge collapsed and a vehicle damaged in the incident. Emergency responders and law enforcement have been dispatched to the scene, said Sergey Aksenov, the Russia-appointed head of Crimea. Aksenov urged residents and those traveling to and from Crimea to choose an alternative land route.

## China cooking gas explosion kills one

BEIJING (Reuters): A gas tank explosion at a restaurant in eastern China's Jiangsu province killed one and wounded another, officials said, triggering concern over gas safety after a series of similar accidents last month. The gas tank exploded at a barbecue restaurant in the city of Yancheng.

A clip posted online showed several destroyed storefronts in a two-storey commercial complex, as a person was wheeled away from the scene by rescuers. Debris and damaged trees were scattered across the street. The owner of the restaurant had been detained by police, authorities said, and an investigation was under way. In June, a gas explosion at a barbecue restaurant killed 31 in northwestern Ningxia region, one of the deadliest blasts in recent years, prompting President Xi Jinping to order officials to address safety risks across the country. Two other restaurant explosions followed in less than a week, including one in Gansu province that injured two.

After blast, concerns and criticism resurfaced on China's popular microblog site Weibo. "Have we not learned our lesson?" questioned one user. Accidents due to gas and chemical explosions are not uncommon in China despite years of efforts to improve safety. "Those who run barbecue restaurants should all conduct self-checks," said another user.

## Many flee as Typhoon lashes China

BEIJING (Agencies): Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes in southern China and Vietnam as a powerful typhoon made landfall, prompting flood warnings and the cancellation of hundreds of flights and trains.

The China Meteorological Administration said that Typhoon Talim, the fourth typhoon of the year, roared ashore on the coast of Guangdong province, bearing maximum winds of 136.8km per hour (85 mph). Storm surges and lashing rains also hammered the southern coastline from Guangdong to Hainan province, the meteorological administration said.

An orange weather alert, the second-highest warning in a four-tier colour-coded system, was issued and nearly 230,000 people in Guangdong were evacuated to safety, according to state news agency Xinhua. Chinese authorities ordered the closure of dozens of coastal tourist destinations, while 11 rescue vessels, five helicopters, 46 salvage ships and eight emergency rescue teams were on standby to respond to the storm, it added. Talim is expected to move to the Beibu Gulf in the South China Sea, and the meteorological administration warned the typhoon may make a second landfall in the coastal area of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on Tuesday morning. Parts of Guangxi were told to brace for flash floods through Tuesday. In Vietnam, authorities said that they were preparing to evacuate about 30,000 people from the areas forecast to be hardest hit in Quang Ninh and Hai Phong provinces. Talim "might be one of the biggest to hit the Gulf of Tonkin in recent years", Vietnam's top disaster response committee said in an online statement.

Tourists have been advised to leave outlying islands and airlines have rescheduled services to avoid the storm. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh warned of possible floods late and directed disaster response teams to prepare for "immediate rescue and relief works". Hundreds of trains in southern China's Guangdong and Hainan, including high-speed trains between Guangzhou and Shenzhen, the metropolis adjacent to Hong Kong, were also suspended, the state-run China Daily reported, citing local service operators.

Authorities on Hainan island asked ships in nearby waters to return to port after the local marine forecasting station warned of waves of up to 6 metres (20 feet), Xinhua reported. Meilan International Airport and Qionghai Boao Airport, both on Hainan island, have cancelled all flights, state media reported.

# 4 slain in Georgia mass shooting memorialized as neighbors gather for candlelight vigil

HAMPTON, Ga. (AP): A few hundred people gathered for a vigil to remember four victims of a mass shooting in an Atlanta suburb, singing "This Little Light of Mine" at the end as they lit candles in their honor. Family members, friends and neighbors were still shaking off disbelief at the 10-minute span when Scott Leavitt, 67; his wife, Shirley Leavitt, 66; Steve Blizzard, 65; and Ronald Jeffers, 66, were shot and killed. Police and witnesses named 40-year-old Andre Longmore as the shooter.

"My parents loved each other," Scott Leavitt Jr. said after the vigil, a tear running down his cheek. "They always said neither one of them would be able to live without the other, so we've been able to find some comfort that they went together." Harold Blizzard said his older brother, Steve, was a lover of photography and adventure. The two had planned a trip along Route 66 in early July, but when Harold had to cancel to allow an amputated finger to heal, Steve told him they'd do it another time. "It's the biggest regret of my life," Harold Blizzard said after the vigil.

The killings set off a massive search that ended with Longmore dead in a shootout in another suburb about 15 miles (25 kilometers) north. The exchange of gunfire wounded a sheriff's deputy and two police officers, who are all recovering. Residents of the bucolic Dogwood Lakes subdivision, where about 40 houses with tidy yards flank a lake on two streets, were surprised that gun violence had come to their peaceful neighborhood about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of Atlanta. Hampton had not previously recorded a homicide since 2018. "I'm not going to say it makes me uneasy, but it does drive home that this kind of thing could happen anywhere," said Kevin Pugh, who lives next door to the house where the Leavitts lived for a few years with their adult daughter and her children. "Up until, the most ruckus we had was the Canadian geese."

Erin Leavitt, in a Facebook post, remembered her aunt and uncle, Scott and Shirley, as "fun loving and caring souls, my aunt possibly one of the sweetest and kindest souls a person could meet." They both grew up in Massachusetts and moved years ago to Georgia, where they shared their home with their daughter Jessica and granddaughters, Erin Leavitt wrote. The couple also has two other surviving children, she wrote. "Jessica and her young girls were also home at the time of the attack, however, my aunt was able to alert her and she and the girls survived," she said. "Sadly, my aunt did not." Jeffers was described as a pillar of his church. Sherry Wyatt, who works at Hampton's recreation center near Jeffers' home, said that Jeffers would regularly sing



at the senior center that shares the building. A few months ago she told Jeffers how beautiful his voice was. "I'm just so glad I told him he sang like an angel," Wyatt said. "I know he is in heaven now singing."

Tom Hannegan and his husband, Donald Smith, live two doors down from the house where Blizzard had lived since the subdivision was built in the 1990s. The only crime they ever remember hearing about was a rash of car break-ins about five years ago. Hannegan, now president of the homeowners association, said Blizzard was one of the few remaining original residents. He was vice president of the association and previously served as president. "He was just a good guy," Hannegan said. Blizzard was a military veteran and skilled locksmith, former coworker Randy Slape told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. He lamented that Blizzard's life was cut short. "I can just imagine that he was planning on doing something with his grandkids and being a grandpa," Slape said. Hampton Mayor Ann Tarpley ordered flags flown at half-staff in the city of 8,000. Officials including the city manager and police chief assured the families during the evening vigil that their community would support them over the long haul.

The shootings brought to 31 the number of mass killings so far this year, with at least 153 people dying in them, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in a partnership with Northeastern University. Longmore had needed mental help for nearly a decade, but his family and officials couldn't force him to get treatment, his mother said. Longmore had a "mental breakdown" in 2014, leading to an inpatient hospital stay, Lorna Dennis told WSB-TV. She said her son "kept deteriorating" but refused to seek medical attention, and that officials said they couldn't force him

to seek care. "It's hard to lose your son, and it's also hard to know your son cost the life of so many people," Dennis said. She said Longmore was living with her in recent years and she hopes relatives of the victims will find peace with God.

"I feel so much for the families, and that's why I just want to say I'm very, very sorry. I know words cannot really comfort them from me at this time, but I know there is a comforter, and they can refer to him at any time," Dennis said. The Army said Longmore was a sergeant, working as an automated logistical specialist from August 2000 to May 2006 overseeing supplies and equipment. He deployed to Afghanistan, served under hostile fire and was a trained parachutist, driver and mechanic. Hannegan said Longmore attended a couple of neighborhood association meetings with his mother, but he didn't really know him. Longmore sometimes rode an electric scooter around the neighborhood or drove slowly up and down the dead-end streets. "You could just tell he was a little out there," Hannegan said. "He would tell people he was a prophet."

Longmore was killed in suburban Jonesboro after a Henry County sheriff's deputy saw the SUV that Longmore stole from Blizzard and began chasing. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation said that Longmore first tried to ambush officers in Jonesboro and shot a Henry County deputy. Longmore stole a police vehicle and drove across the street, investigators said. He then fled to the backyard of a townhouse, bleeding and naked, and ran inside. When officers entered the home, Longmore fired again, wounding two Clayton County police officers. The sheriff's deputy was shot in the back and underwent surgery. Both Clayton officers were released after treatment for minor injuries.

# Xi tells Duterte to promote ties with China

BEIJING (Reuters): China's President Xi Jinping told former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte to continue to promote cooperation between the two countries, after bilateral relations cooled with Duterte's successor seeking closer ties with Washington. Ferdinand Marco Jr was elected as president for a six-year term in 2022, taking over from Duterte who had adopted a more pro-China stance.

"I hope you will continue to play an important role in the friendly cooperation (between China and the Philippines)," state media cited Xi as saying during a meeting at the Diaoyutai state guest-

house in Beijing. Under Marcos, relations between China and the Philippines have grown tense, with Manila pivoting back to its traditional ally, the United States. The Philippines and the US reaffirmed a decades-old security alliance during a trip by Marcos to the US in May, where he met with President Joe Biden, who said the US commitment to defending its ally was "ironclad". Washington has pledged to defend the Philippines, which allowed the US access to four additional military bases this year, angering Beijing. Marcos also said granting US access to the bases was a defensive step that would be "useful" if

China attacked democratically governed Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory. China has always insisted on being friendly with its neighbors, which it sees as its partners, Xi said, without commenting on the state of current bilateral ties. "During your tenure as president of the Philippines, you had resolutely made the strategic choice to improve relations with China in an attitude of being responsible to the people and to history," Xi told Duterte. Last month, Duterte told domestic media that the Philippines could become a "graveyard" if it gets caught up in US-China tensions.

# Solomon Islands leader hits back at criticism

WELLINGTON (AP): The leader of Solomon Islands hit back at criticism of his nation's deepening security ties with China, saying the United States and Australia had nothing to fear. Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare made the remarks at a news conference in the capital Honiara after returning from a visit to China, where he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other top officials.

Sogavare said that while in China, he signed nine agreements and memorandums, including a police cooperation plan. He said the plan "enhances cooperation on law enforcement and security matters with a commitment by China to provide support as needed" to strengthen the capacity of police law enforcement in the Pacific nation. The new agreements come after the

Solomon Islands signed a security pact with China last year, raising fears of a military buildup in the region. The US has countered with diplomatic moves of its own, including opening an embassy in the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands switched allegiance from the self-ruled island of Taiwan to Beijing in 2019, threatening the close ties with the US that date to World War II. Both the US and Australia have raised concerns about the secrecy of the new police plan.

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong told reporters she had asked about the plan when she met with China's top diplomat Wang Yi in Jakarta last week. Wong said Australia wants more transparency and takes the view that "security is best provided for within the Pacific family." At the news conference, Sogavare accused the US

and Australia of being "un-neighborly" by criticizing the police plan. "This is nothing but interference by foreign states into the internal affairs of Solomon Islands," Sogavare said. He said China's plan to help the police complemented existing Australian and New Zealand police programs in his nation.

"Australia and the United States should not fear China's police support to Solomon Islands," Sogavare said. Home to 700,000 people and lying about 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) northeast of Australia, Solomon Islands has been one of China's biggest successes in a campaign to expand its presence in the South Pacific. China's Foreign Ministry earlier said that Sogavare's visit to Beijing would "inject new momentum" into relations and "deepen mutual political trust."

## EU may update climate pledge

BRUSSELS (Reuters): European Union countries are debating whether to update their climate pledge ahead of this year's COP28 summit, to show they expect to exceed their current goal for CO2 emission cuts, a draft document showed. The 27-country EU has one of the most ambitious climate targets among major economies - having agreed in law to cut its net greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.

A draft document, seen by Reuters, said EU countries may notify the United Nations that they can reach a 57% emissions cut. The text was in brackets, indicating it is not yet agreed by all countries. The overshoot would only happen if countries comply with recently-passed EU policies to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change. They include obligations to expand renewable energy, and higher fees for companies that pollute. An updated pledge from Europe - the world's fourth-biggest emitter after China, the United States and India - could increase the pressure on other countries to improve their green goals ahead of this year's United Nations climate summit in November.

The United Arab Emirates, the summit's host, has asked all governments to update their targets by September, and called for faster progress. "We have to face facts. While I appreciate that progress has been made over the past years, the incremental steps taken so far to address the climate crisis are not meeting the urgency of the moment," COP28 incoming president Sultan al-Jaber told a meeting of governments last week. Countries' existing CO2-cutting targets would fail to prevent far more dangerous levels of global warming - which scientists say would bring even more disastrous and frequent impacts than the extreme heatwaves, wildfires and floods already experienced around the world today.

# Trump's classified papers case set for hearing

FORT PIERCE, Fla. (AP): A Florida judge who issued a court ruling last year that critics said was unduly favorable to Donald Trump is set to preside over the first pretrial conference in his landmark criminal case concerning the mishandling of classified documents.

Prosecutors and defense lawyers are scheduled to appear before US District Judge Aileen Cannon to discuss the rules and procedures that will govern how classified evidence is used in the case. It's a routine subject for any prosecution that concerns classified information, but it's notable because it will be Cannon's first time hearing arguments in the case since the former president's indictment last month.

At issue during Tuesday's arguments is a 1980 law known as the Classified Information Procedures Act. That statute governs how classified information is handled by the parties in a criminal

prosecution. It's meant to balance a defendant's right to access evidence that prosecutors intend to use in a case against the government's interest in safeguarding sensitive and secret information. Ahead of the pretrial conference, special counsel Jack Smith's team asked Cannon to enter a protective order that would, in part, restrict the ability of defense lawyers to share with Trump and his codefendant aide, Walt Nauta, classified information in the case. In seeking the order, prosecutors wrote that defense lawyers have told them "that they intend to object to certain provisions of the proposed protective order, but did not specify any such provisions."

Trump and Nauta have pleaded not guilty to a 38-count indictment that accuses them of conspiring to hide classified documents from Justice Department investigators that were taken from the

White House to Mar-a-Lago at the end of Trump's time in office in January 2021. Neither Trump nor Nauta is expected to attend Tuesday's hearing.

Another unresolved issue that could come up Tuesday is the trial date. Prosecutors have proposed that the trial begin Dec. 11, while lawyers for Trump, who is pursuing the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, have suggested that it be postponed until after the election. Cannon also presided over a lawsuit that the Trump team filed last year over the August 2022 FBI search of Mar-a-Lago. Cannon drew criticism and second-guessing from legal experts for granting Trump's request for a special master to conduct an independent review of the classified documents removed by the FBI from Mar-a-Lago. A three-judge federal appeals court later overruled that order and said she had lacked the authority for such a ruling.



## The Frontier Post

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# Pak-Afghan ties and rigmorale of terrorism

US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller has urged the Taliban not to allow its land to be used by terrorist sanctuaries. During the State Department media news briefing on Monday, the Frontier Post raised the query regarding serious accusations leveled by the Pakistan government against Taliban authorities for harboring terrorist groups and deteriorating the security situation in Pakistan, Matthew Miller categorically declared that the US has always asked the Taliban to follow the Doha agreement and not allow its land to be used for launching terrorists activity against any country.

The bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are currently very tense and the security situation in the greater AfPak region has deteriorated significantly, after the Pakistan Army publicly blamed the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan for the consecutive second time in a week, for taking lenient actions against TTP hideouts in their country. The Pakistani military has also warned that if the Taliban leadership continues to ignore this concern of Pakistan then Pakistan can effectively take action against those elements inside Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the military leadership has briefed the parliament regarding the law and order situation in the country and growing concerns about terrorists sanctuaries in neighboring Afghanistan, where Pakistani proscribed Tahreek-e- Taliban Pakistan has established massive terrorism and training infrastructure and avails freedom of movement in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Previously, TTP availed those liberties as a special concession during the Ghani rule when Afghan republicans and their close ally India had been using the TTP for launching terrorist activities inside Pakistan, while the TTP operations continue unrestrictedly over the past two years after their ideological mentors, Taliban took control of the country in August 2021.

Over the past months, the issue of terrorism in Pakistan has rebirth after a Taliban-brokered deal between Pakistan and the TTP failed and the banned terrorist outfit resumed its terrorist activities against Pakistan in November last year. There had been continuous terrorist attacks on Pakistani Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and military installations across Pakistan particularly in Erstwhile FATA and Balochistan that caused grave concerns in the government and the masses regarding the sharp rise of terrorism in the country, while the global community including the UN and the United States were also worried about the security situation in Pakistan's border regions and inside Afghanistan. The Pakistani authorities urged Kabul time and again, to eliminate terrorist safe havens and take action against the banned terror outfits camped on their soil and operating against the state of Pakistan from inside Afghanistan. However, Afghan interim authorities resisted any effective action against the Taliban's offshoot and offered multiple suggestions to facilitate the rehabilitation of TTP fighters in Pakistan or some parts of Afghanistan but those plans could not be worked.

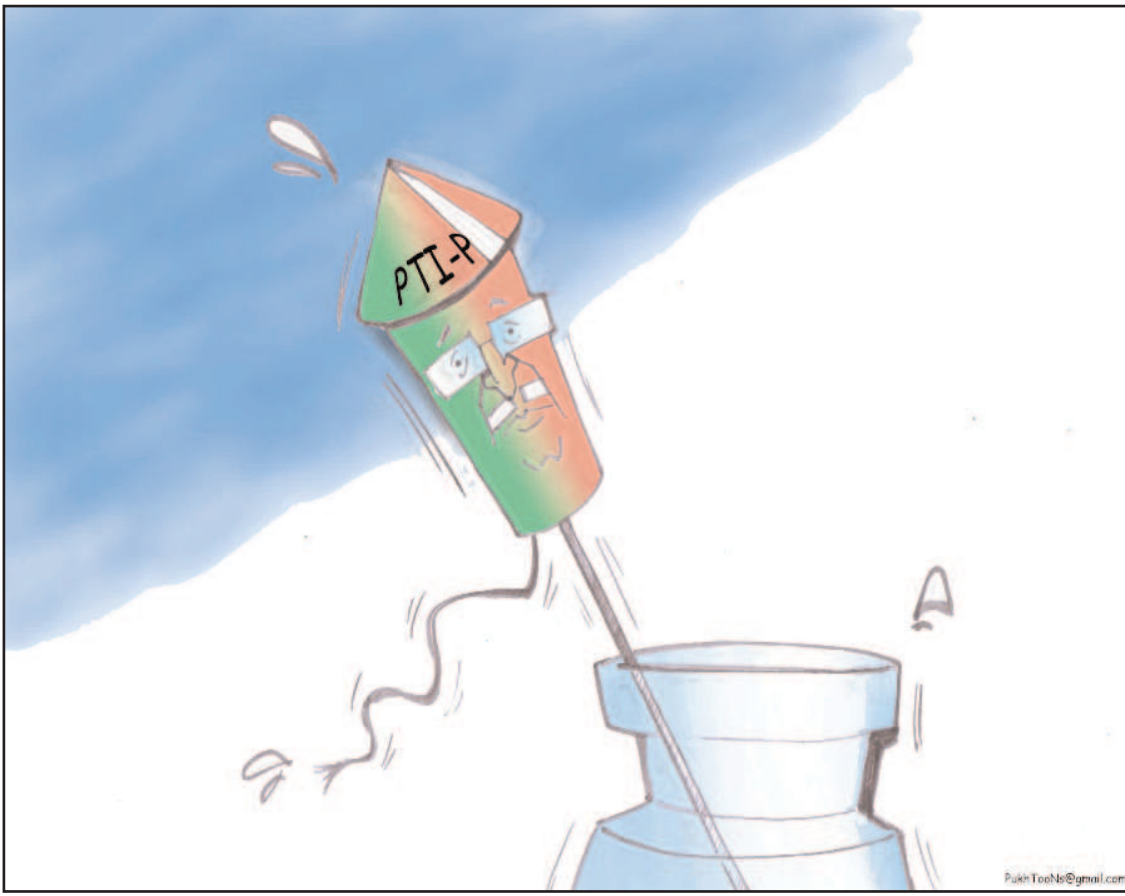
Currently, Islamabad and Kabul struck a deadlock over the issue of terrorism, as Pakistan pressing Afghan interim authorities to fulfill their commitments regarding the Doha agreement and also uphold their obligation under the recent trilateral Islamabad Summit between Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China by taking decisive actions against the militant group. Interestingly, a Spokesperson to the Afghan interim government denied the presence of the TTP and any terrorist infrastructure on Afghan soil and termed the TTP a domestic issue of Pakistan that astonished the Pakistani authorities who resultantly vowed to take action against the terrorist groups camped inside Afghanistan. Currently, the observers in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the United States think that in the coming days, the world will witness a severe hostility in the relations of two brotherly Muslim nations who always shared each other grief and have a long history of good neighborliness in the past.

In fact, reality neither be changed by verbal statements nor it could be cancelled in the broad daylight, despite one faces a vision problem. The global concerns regarding terror safe havens in Afghanistan have grown many folds in recent months while the accusations previously raised by Pakistan have now been joined by the United States, China, and Iran. The Afghan interim authorities must acknowledge the problem that lies inside Afghanistan and all of Afghanistan's neighbors have great concerns regarding flourishing terrorism in neighboring Afghanistan. Currently, the people of Afghanistan face a serious humanitarian crisis, a lack of livelihood, and shortages of food grains and food staples while millions of Afghan refugees await a dignified return to their nation as the decades long conflict has paused for a while. Realistically, all Muslim nations including first door neighbors Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and others stood firmly with the Afghan interim government during the early months of its takeover of Afghanistan and played an admirable role in reducing the economic and humanitarian issues of the Afghan nation. However, a majority of Muslim nations currently contradict Taliban policies regarding human and women's rights, girls' education, and terrorism issue that will ultimately have a negative effect on the people of Afghanistan.

Previously, the Taliban sheltered Al-Qaeda after the 9/11 attacks and the Afghan nation suffered death and destruction over the two decades, now the world unanimously calls the incumbent Afghan rulers to shed away from a terrorist group that is involved in terrorism in their friendly nation. The current situation merits wisdom, passion, and dialogue from Pakistan and the Afghan interim government. The Afghan rulers must uphold their national responsibilities under the UN charter and the global community of the world nations. Pakistan had suffered utmost from terrorism and Pakistani forces successfully wiped out terrorism from its soil and they are capable enough to repeat the history once more. However, the Afghan nation would be the biggest loser in any tussle between Pakistan and the Taliban. Hence, the Afghan rulers must review their priorities vis-a-vis terrorism, the TTP, Pakistan, and the interest/benefit of the people of Afghanistan. The government and the people of Pakistan are the biggest supporters of a free, peaceful, and stable Afghanistan, and the same must be reciprocated by the Taliban and the Afghans. Hopefully, sense will prevail and both nations will demonstrate wisdom, and patience in dealing with the thorny issue of terrorism which is a matter of survival for Pakistan and a question of culture and tradition for the Afghans.

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# Russia looks to economic redistribution to shore up the regime

Ekaterina Kurbangaleeva

**I**N any discussion over the future of Russia's economy, the issues raised are always the same: Western sanctions, growing war spending, and the redirection of trade flows to Asia. Left unaddressed, however, are two additional trends: increasing nationalization and a new wave of privatization. Seemingly mutually exclusive, these developments could prove entirely compatible - and may well transform Russia's social structure and further entrench the country's political system.

A great many assets have changed hands since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Many were left behind by Western companies that pulled out of the country, chief among them retailers and food and drink chains (like McDonald's, IKEA, and Starbucks), automakers (such as Ford and Mercedes), and retail banks (including Home Credit and Soci  t   G  n  rale). Exiting Russia has become more difficult with time. In August 2022, President Vladimir Putin issued a decree banning foreign investors from "unfriendly countries" (as determined by the Russian government) from selling or transferring their stakes in strategic companies operating in Russia's financial and energy sectors, from which only he may grant exemptions. Later, in December, the government introduced a rule forcing foreign companies leaving Russia to dispose of their assets at a discount of no less than 50% of market value.

In March 2023, those requirements were expanded to include a compensation payment to the state, while in April, Putin authorized the expropriation of foreign-owned assets in response to the seizure and freezing of Russian assets abroad. The first firms to fall victim to the latter measure were the local subsidiaries of Finland's Fortum and Germany's Uniper, both energy companies, which may not have been formally nationalized but are unlikely to ever be reclaimed by their former

parents. The holdings of foreign companies aside, state assets have remained attractive. The former Accounts Chamber head Alexei Kudrin, when making the case for large-scale privatization, pointed out that the state sector generated more than half of Russia's GDP in 2019. In the oil and gas sector, nearly 75% of revenues came from state companies. Still another source of assets for redistribution have been those Russian entrepreneurs who liquidated their assets - including parts of the internet services giant Yandex, the telecom company Vimpelcom, and online bank Tinkoff - and moved abroad, voluntarily or not.

As a result, there is an unprecedented turnover of heavily discounted assets in Russia today, from those belonging to the state to those relinquished or otherwise lost by foreign companies and Russian businesspeople. Now the authorities must decide what to do with them all. One of the options is privatization, a strategy close to the heart of state bank VTB CEO Andrei Kostin, whose bank acquired the rival Otkritie group last December in one of the largest deals in Russian banking history - without an auction or much concern for antitrust restrictions. Kostin's privatization drive is wide-ranging, targeting everything from Russian Railways to the Transneft oil pipeline company to the Rostec defense conglomerate and even cognac makers. Thanks to its status as Russia's second-biggest bank, not even record losses in 2022 will prevent VTB from taking part in the carving up of assets at bargain prices.

Kostin is joined in backing privatization by the government's financial and economic bloc, led by Central Bank Governor Elvira Nabiullina, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov, and Economic Development Minister Maxim Reshetnikov. Their preference, however, is for limited rather than mass privatization. Kostin's argument in favor of privatization - that it must be

introduced to generate interest among investors and stem the outflow of capital - is telling. According to the central bank, the volume of transfers to foreign banks tripled in 2022, suggesting that most people who wished to get their money out of Russia did so then. At the same time, nearly 30% of the total amount deposited in Russian banks came from those with more than 10 million rubles in savings. This group of people, representing just 0.1% of depositors (probably about 20,000 people), evidently cannot or do not wish to move their money abroad. The same can be said of several other tens of thousands of Russians working in government, particularly at security and supervisory agencies. Their wealth can no longer be transferred abroad, and they largely lack the knowledge and experience to invest in Asia, making their funds a dead weight gathering dust in anticipation of better times and a new round of redistribution.

What can the authorities do? The answer is clear: acquire the abandoned assets at the maximum discount, then redistribute them in such a way as benefits their industry. Financial firms, natural resources, and other energy companies will be absorbed by state banks and companies in a kind of quasi-nationalization or pseudo-privatization that Russia has perfected over time. Nonstrategic assets, such as in retail, will be redistributed among the nouveau riche and the upper middle class: generally, the generations aged 35-55 and university-educated, whose wealth has come from either state-adjacent projects such as roadbuilding, or senior positions at state companies and private firms with Western investors. According to Forbes, a significant part of Western assets have already been awarded to the old oligarchs, the former CEOs of Western companies' Russian subsidiaries, and entrepreneurs from the provinces. Also in the mix

are Asian - especially Chinese - companies, which can count on their governments' support. Public servants, including representatives of the security state, may also get in on the action, having enriched themselves through petty corruption, though they will be sure to involve themselves strictly through proxies.

All this may combine to shore up Putin's regime. Russia's social structure had started to resemble an hourglass as the middle class contracted and emigrated. Now that same middle class may also be able to benefit from the country's current direction, turning a structure that looked like it might break in half at any minute into a far more stable trapezoid shape. The regime's economic foundation will now consist of the state's expanded asset base in natural resources, energy, and heavy industry. Meanwhile, at the top of the new social hierarchy will be the trusted lieutenants of the president and their heirs, along with select officials holding significant stakes in state-adjacent companies or directorships. The more the state brings under its control, the more such people there will be. The middle layer of Russia's social structure will be shaped by the redistribution of assets among those well-off Russians forced to focus on the domestic market by international sanctions. In return for their loyalty, they will receive high-quality assets at a significant discount, which may turn them into a pillar of the regime and a source of patriotic optimism and even radicalism. There could even be a "people's privatization," in which the wealthy are awarded minority stakes in state companies.

Much will depend on the avoidance of catastrophe on the Ukrainian front, the continued apathy of the public sector, and the success of Russia's pivot to Asia. Yet the effect could be to extend the regime's lifespan - and it may well even enable a transition of power down the road.

The Moscow Times

# World powers continue to squabble as Syrians suffer

Chris Doyle

**M**ILLIONS of lives at stake. Families in dire need of international aid. Russia plays games with them all at the UN Security Council. Repeat every six months until further notice. Welcome to the Syria debate at the UN. This has been the case ever since 2014. The UNSC authorizes the UN to use one Turkish-Syria border crossing to deliver aid - just one, at Bab Al-Hawa - while rejecting attempts to open others, as was the case previously.

The Ya'roubia border crossing from Iraq into northeast Syria has been closed since January 2020. As a result of the earthquakes that hit southern Turkey and northwest Syria in February, the Syrian government did make the rare move to allow an extra two border crossings with Turkey to be used. This approval runs out on Aug. 13.

All this is an exercise in cruelty for the 4.1 million Syrians who are dependent on aid, most of whom are women and children. The Bab Al-Hawa border crossing is the lifeblood for 80 percent of those living in Idlib, one of the main opposition-controlled areas. At every vote, nobody can be certain that Russia will not use its veto. Russian diplomats have expressed their objections largely on the basis that this was the sovereign decision of the Syrian authorities and that all aid should go through them. Moscow would not even concede that such decisions should be effective for 12 months. All this happened once again last week, except Russia this time vetoed a proposal for a nine-month extension. Most observers saw this as yet another attempt to reinforce the struggling regime of Bashar Assad.

Following the Russian veto, the Syrian regime made its own announcement. The Syrian permanent representative to the UN sent a letter stating: "The government of the Syrian Arab Republic has taken the sovereign decision to grant the United Nations and its specialized agencies permission to use Bab Al-Hawa crossing." The word "sovereign" is working overtime here, as is "permission." This is the Syrian authorities attempting to reacquire a role in the decision-making process regarding the country's borders - and to take the UNSC out of the equation.

The Syrian regime, with Russian support and tacit Chinese backing, is pushing to shift the aid delivery from cross-border to a so-called cross-line mechanism. This would mean that all aid and humanitarian assistance would come to northeast and northwest Syria via Damascus, which would give it greater influence and control over these areas. As yet, the regime is not in a position to do so, but this is clearly the ambition, as part of its process to regain control of these areas through any and all means possible. Who would be shocked to learn that the Syrian regime's letter had a bevy of stings in its tail? The UN wasted little time in stating that the conditions were "unacceptable." The first condi-

tion was that the UN should not be communicating with terrorist groups or entities. That sounds reasonable, not least as there are extremist groups in northwest Syria, but by the regime's definition all groups opposing it are terrorist. The UN rightly does not want to get into a spat on this subject.

The second unworkable condition was that the regime wanted all aid in northwest Syria to be distributed by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Neither of these bodies are operational in the northwest. Few consider the Syrian group to be independent of the regime, which is one of the issues that plagues the aid that arrives via the Syrian capital. Moreover, it is just not feasible for the UN and other nongovernmental organizations not to have dealings with the de facto authorities. Certain international actors have started to consider an alternative approach. This is not before time, given that the possibility of a Russian veto grows more likely every six months. They have drawn up a new aid mechanism called the Interim North Syria Aid Fund. The UK was at the forefront of pushing for this. Whether this will go forward amid the impasse at the UN is not clear. Some international actors are reluctant to anger Russia. Others are concerned that, having sought UNSC permission for cross-border aid, a legal precedent has been set that the council has to make the decision.

The UN's role could be restricted to purchasing goods and storing them in warehouses in Turkey. This would end any UN involvement at Bab Al-Hawa. It would be for Syrian and international NGOs to transport these supplies into the northwest. The other challenge is that Turkey would have to consent. Would Ankara view this as an opportunity to exploit and seek guarantees on the Kurdish and refugee issues? That said, any intensification of the suffering in Idlib might trigger the refugee exodus it most fears.

One of the challenges is that the UN agencies may be the only ones capable of running the complex procurement delivery systems, while ensuring it reaches the intended recipients. Most of the donor states have sanctioned and outlawed Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, the extremist organization that has dominated the area since 2019. All of this comes at a time when donor aid is falling. Needs have skyrocketed and funding has plummeted. Worse may be to come. The World Food Programme announced last month it would have to cut its assistance from providing for 5.5 million people to just 3 million.

All of these political shenanigans do nothing for the Syrians suffering in the north. It is just a stunning failure that, with millions in need, the world powers bicker and squabble. It is time to put politics aside and start delivering not just aid but also the vital medium to long-term development needs of Syrians.

surrounded by deserts, and sooner or later it will be desertified. Wang's remarks reflects the dilemma US-China climate diplomacy faces and prompts us to find new ways to strengthen climate cooperation. Sino-US cooperation on climate change cannot be separated from overall Sino-US relations. The different factors that could lead to the "desertification" or "greening" of Sino-US climate diplomacy have always existed, whether they would eventually create an "oasis" or "desertify" the green space depends on whether the two sides are ready to meet each other halfway. In pursuit of the "oasis", we hope the two sides will engage in pragmatic cooperation, thereby adding new vitality to overall bilateral relations. China-US climate cooperation will gain in strength and become more dynamic if more and more people from different industries and sectors of society of the two countries attach greater importance to jointly addressing the climate crisis.

# Climate oasis requires actions by US

Liu Yuanling

**U**S Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry is on a three-day visit to China from Sunday during which he will meet with high-level officials, including China's Special Climate Envoy Xie Zhenhua . Kerry's visit to China signals the resumption of Sino-US climate diplomacy after 11 months.

The importance of US-China cooperation in the fight against climate change cannot be overemphasized. Last year's extreme weather events, including extreme heat, and the extreme heat China is experiencing since the beginning of this summer, have made us feel the devastating impact of global warming. On July 10, World Meteorological Organization scientists said preliminary data showed that the week beginning July 3 was the hottest on record, and that global temperatures were expected to rise further with the effects of El Ni  o becoming more pronounced.

That China and the United States have decided to resume cooperation to tackle the climate crisis is good for the global fight against climate change. Indeed, both countries are committed to reducing their carbon emissions as part of their contribution to the global fight against climate change. The US and China are the two largest economies and the largest carbon emitters, but they are also the biggest investors in clean energy. As such, their policies have a huge impact on whether the world will avert the worst consequences of global warming. But geopolitical conflicts are restricting the healthy development of Sino-US climate diplomacy. So what should we expect from Kerry's visit to China? Three factors deserve special attention: high sense of responsibility, stable communication, and genuine cooperation.

First, the resumption of

climate dialogue reflects the high sense of responsibility of the two sides, both to strengthen bilateral climate diplomacy and improve global climate governance. Since the Biden administration came to power, Kerry and Xie have held many meetings, including their talks in Shanghai in April 2021 and their meeting in Tianjin in September of the same year, which shows they have been making greater efforts to strengthen bilateral climate diplomacy. Second, the channels for bilateral high-level climate exchanges should be stable and smooth, so that bilateral climate dialogue can continue. This is Kerry's third trip to China as US special presidential climate envoy, and it comes on the heels of the visits by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. And like the visits of Blinken and Yellen, Kerry's

visit is also aimed at stabilizing Sino-US relations. Hopefully, Kerry's meetings with Chinese officials will signal a new beginning in the China-US climate diplomacy, and bolster cooperation in the fight against climate change.

The US-China climate dialogue gains added importance in light of the 28th UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), to be held the United Arab Emirates in November. As a matter of fact, Kerry's visit to China is an important part of the recent Sino-US "re-engagement" process, which indicates the conditions for holding high-level dialogue between Beijing and Washington are improving. And by holding regular dialogue on climate, China and the US can help improve global climate governance. And third, genuine and concrete climate cooperation between two sides are

important. In fact, Kerry has said that, "We need genuine cooperation, China and the United States are the two largest economies in the world and we're also the two largest emitters. It's clear that we have a special responsibility to find common ground." But it's also essential that cooperation is not only limited to communication (although this is very important), but also to extends to other issues, such as resuming dialogue on reducing methane (China already announced in 2021 its commitment to curb methane emissions), and multi-level and multi-track academic exchanges, especially working together to educate the public about the severity of the climate crisis.

Yet it is important to keep in mind the remarks of State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi that the United States hopes climate change cooperation will become an oasis in Sino-US relations, but the oasis is



# Geopolitical shifts help advance Russia-GCC ties

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

THE Russian capital Moscow last week hosted the sixth Russia-Gulf Cooperation Council strategic dialogue meeting. The meeting revealed the two sides' desire to progress on all issues and at all levels to forge strong, deep-rooted ties. The meeting also demonstrated that the two sides are better prepared than ever to build a long-term strategic partnership. This was evidenced by the mutual agreement on a number of issues, including the three Emirati islands currently occupied by Iran, as well as convergence on regional issues such as the Palestinian question and the disputes in Syria, Libya, Lebanon and Yemen - not to mention Gulf security, ensuring the freedom of maritime navigation, trade flow and security of oil sites.

What is more, the meeting's concluding statement highlighted the areas of cooperation in which both parties hope to advance, including political and economic cooperation and collaboration on tackling environmental and climate change-related issues. These are in addition to efforts to resolve the Ukraine dispute, ensure the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and address other problems of mutual interest. It could be said that these understandings came about within the framework of shared motives and convergent viewpoints. For its part, Russia today pays particular attention to boosting its partnership with the Gulf states, given the strategic and security imperatives that are steering Russian foreign policy.

At the head of these imperatives comes the need to assert Russia's standing as a major world power capable of protecting its interests, national security and geopolitical spheres, and of breaking the cycle of Western encirclement imposed on it, particularly Western sanctions that have been unprecedentedly expanded and accelerated since the start of the Russian war on Ukraine. It should be noted that the value of trade exchange between Russia and the Gulf states came to \$11 billion in 2018, compared to \$7.6 billion in the most recent statistics for 2021. This makes this partnership critical from Russia's viewpoint, given the conflict in which it is presently engaged with the West, which is having a severe negative effect on the Russian economy.

These understandings are also in line with Russia's efforts to enhance its role in a multipolar world order, preserve its strategic stability and build partnerships with as many countries as possible. Moscow also seeks to establish blocs to counter the West's policy that is aimed at weakening Russia

and driving it out of the power equation by preventing it from exerting influence as a global superpower.

Based on these strategic perspectives, relations with the Gulf are one of Moscow's strategic priorities, given the region's status as an important and effective partner

regional disputes and issues. This has led to Russia becoming a key player in the Middle East, to which regional powers, including the Gulf states, now turn. What is more, the Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia, have adopted a foreign policy based on diversifying partnerships with the leading world pow-

***The Gulf states also share Russia's interest in expanding partnerships and enhancing their mutual interests in light of several factors. Foremost among these are: Russia's strong involvement in regional issues over the last decade; the growing Russian political and military footprint in the Middle East, including its engagement in the Syrian crisis, which has secured its navy a base in the Mediterranean's warm waters; and its intensive involvement in regional disputes and issues. This has led to Russia becoming a key player in the Middle East, to which regional powers, including the Gulf states, now turn. What is more, the Gulf states, led by Saudi Arabia, have adopted a foreign policy based on diversifying partnerships with the leading world powers, taking advantage of the shifts in the global order to reposition themselves and expand the scope of their strategic independence.***

to Russia at the political and economic levels. Additionally, there is no doubt that Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf states have played an important diplomatic role that has gained Russia's confidence. This, in turn, could assist the Gulf states in playing mediation roles to advance political resolutions, thus building on the success of past efforts by Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, which have resulted in achievements such as the prisoner swap deal between the US and Russia, as well as efforts to mitigate some aspects of the region's humanitarian crises. The Gulf states also share Russia's interest in expanding partnerships and enhancing their mutual interests in light of several factors. Foremost among these are: Russia's strong involvement in regional issues over the last decade; the growing Russian political and military footprint in the Middle East, including its engagement in the Syrian crisis, which has secured its navy a base in the Mediterranean's warm waters; and its intensive involvement in

ers, taking advantage of the shifts in the global order to reposition themselves and expand the scope of their strategic independence.

The Saudi position on reducing OPEC+ oil production, developing strategic relationships with China and adopting a balanced stance on the war in Ukraine are the most evident examples in this regard. These developments have, in turn, dissipated Moscow's historic fears regarding the Gulf states. Similarly, Moscow's balanced approach to regional issues has played a positive role in encouraging the Gulf states to bolster ties with Russia, which has succeeded in introducing itself as a reliable partner to the region's countries. The benefits of this positive relationship are apparent in the Gulf states' balanced position toward the war in Ukraine, as well as in the high-level coordination with Russia within the OPEC+ bloc, which is based exclusively on Russian and Saudi interests. The two sides have also worked together to achieve a balance between

producers and consumers in the energy markets, contributing to global economic growth. It could also be confidently asserted that geopolitical developments in the Gulf states in recent years have created an appropriate diplomatic climate for boosting Russo-GCC relations. As part of its new foreign policy, Saudi Arabia has also opened the door for China to play a major role in the region. In light of the competition with the US, China's strategic presence in the region sets an example for Russia to follow in terms of further deepening a credible partnership with the Gulf states.

The prevalent climate of openness following the Beijing-brokered Saudi-Iran rapport deal has created the conditions for a more effective Russian role, free from the restrictions once placed on Moscow due to previous Iran-Gulf differences. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's vision for the new Middle East provides an opportunity for global powers to be economic and political partners in shaping the region's future and helping its transition from the current state of chaos and dispute into a model of stability and development. In conclusion, it could be said that, since convening the first Russo-GCC strategic dialogue meeting in 2011, conditions have never been more suitable than they are today for enacting the mutual cooperation agenda. This is taking place despite the challenges that have impeded bilateral relations in recent years. It seems that the current geopolitical shifts on the regional and global stages - in addition to the GCC states' ambitions, development plans and efforts to diversify their ties and international relationships, not to mention more independent foreign policies - will take this relationship to new highs and advance it to a deeper, more mutually beneficial stage than it is previously attained, thus enabling both sides to achieve their shared strategic interests.

This advance in relations is taking place as Russia is acknowledged as a global power with significant weight, influence and presence in the Middle East and elsewhere, along with increasing recognition of the Gulf states' new position as a major player on the regional and global stage. This is in addition to the quantum leaps achieved by the Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030, which is a truly pioneering, groundbreaking and ambitious project for the new Middle East. This, in turn, provides a vital foundation for expanding partnerships with the global powers, including Russia - away from polarization and dispute.

Arab News

# Prospect of Palestinian civil war behind Israel's desire to save Abbas

Ramzy Baroud

**P**ALESTINIAN Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has the perfect opportunity to exit the stage. But he will not. Abbas' brief visit to the devastated Jenin refugee camp last week demonstrated the absurdity and danger of the PA and its 87-year-old leader. As he walked, Abbas struggled to keep his balance, in what was promoted as a "solidarity" visit to the camp.

Thousands of frustrated Jenin residents took to the streets, hardly chanting Abbas' name. Some looked on with disappointment; others asked where the president's forces were when Israeli invaded the camp, killing 12 and wounding and arresting hundreds more. The BBC reported on a "huge armed deployment" to secure Abbas' visit, in which "PA security forces joined a thousand-strong unit of Mr. Abbas' elite presidential guard." Their only job was to "clear a path" for Abbas into the camp. On the first, most-deadly day of the Israeli invasion of Jenin, the Israeli media, citing military sources, said that 1,000 Israeli soldiers were taking part in the military operation. Yet it took more Palestinian soldiers to secure Abbas' brief visit to Jenin.

Indeed, where were those well-dressed and equipped PA soldiers when Jenin was fighting and dying alone? And why does Abbas need to be protected from his own people? To address these questions, it is important to examine recent contexts and three significant dates in particular. On July 5, Israel ended its military operation in Jenin. On July 9, despite protests by some of his security Cabinet members, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel would do its utmost to prevent the collapse of the PA. He stated outright that the PA "works for us." And, finally, on July 12, Abbas visited Jenin with a stern message to Palestinian resistance groups.

These three dates are directly related. The failed raid on Jenin has heightened the significance of the PA in Israel's eyes and

Abbas visited Jenin to reassure Israel that his PA is up for the task. To live up to Israel's expectations and to ensure its survival, the PA is willing to clash directly with Palestinians who refuse to toe the line. "There will be one authority and one security force," Abbas angrily declared, only days after the burials of Jenin's victims. "Anyone who seeks to undermine its unity and security will face the consequences." He further promised that: "Any hand that reaches out to harm the people and their stability shall be cut off." The hand referenced here is not that of Israel, but any Palestinian who resists Israel.

Abbas knows that Palestinians outright despise him and his PA. Just days earlier, Fatah party Deputy Chairman Mahmoud Aloul was chased out of Jenin by angry crowds. The crowds chanted "get out" to Aloul and two other PA officials. They did so, but Abbas returned to the scene. He was flown in a Jordanian military helicopter. Waiting for him below was a small PA army that had taken over the streets and the high buildings - or whatever remained of them - in the destroyed camp. All of this happened through logistical arrangements with the Israeli military.

But why is Netanyahu so keen on the PA's survival? Netanyahu wants the PA to survive simply because he does not want the Israeli occupation administration and military to be fully responsible for the welfare of Palestinians in the West Bank and the security of the illegal settlers. Despite their near complete failure, the Oslo Accords succeeded in doing one thing: They provided Israel with a Palestinian force whose main mission is to assist the Israeli occupation in its quest to maintain total control over the West Bank. Abbas' trip to Jenin was intended to reassure Tel Aviv that the PA is still committed to its obligations to Israel.

Another message was sent to US President Joe Biden, who last week said that "the PA has lost its

credibility," which has "created a vacuum for extremism." The message to Washington was that the hands of the so-called extremists will be "cut off" and that there will be "consequences" for those who defy the PA's will. Abbas seemed to speak not only on behalf of the PA, but also on behalf of Tel Aviv and Washington as well. Even ordinary Palestinians understand this to be the case; in fact, they always have. The only difference now is that they feel emboldened by a new generation of resistance, which has succeeded in reclaiming a degree of Palestinian unity amid factional politics and PA corruption.

The PA is now seen by most Palestinians as an obstacle in the face of full unity. That position is fully fathomable. While Israel was ramping up its deadly operations in Jenin and Nablus, the PA police was arresting Palestinian activists, angering resistance groups in the West Bank and Gaza. If this continues, a civil war in the West Bank is a real possibility, especially as Abbas' likely successors are equally distrusted, even by Fatah's own rank and file. These men were also in Jenin, standing shoulder to shoulder behind Abbas as he was frantically trying to lay out the new rules.

This time around, Palestinians are unlikely to listen. For the resistance, the stakes are too high to back down now. For the PA, losing the West Bank would mean losing billions of dollars of financial handouts from the West. A clash between the resistance and its popular support on the one hand and the West and Israel-backed PA forces on the other would prove very costly for the Palestinians. Yet, for Tel Aviv, it would be a win-win. This is why Netanyahu is anxious to help Abbas keep his job, at least long enough to ensure that the post-Abbas transition takes place efficiently. Palestinians must find a way to block such designs, to preserve Palestinian blood and restructure their leadership so that it represents them, not the interests of the Israeli occupation.

# Trump's reasons for delaying his trial are incredibly weak

Harry H. Schneider, Jr.

**I**N seeking a postponement in former President Donald Trump's federal classified documents trial, his attorneys - in a court filing last week - cited a myriad of reasons, from the upcoming 2024 elections to the use of secret information, creating complications for the court. Given my own experience handling classified material in evidence - I was one of the lawyers who represented Salim Hamdan, the first Guantanamo detainee tried by the United States in the War on Terror - I know how wrong their legal reasoning is. To cite a familiar saying, "That dog won't hunt," or their reasons for delay are incredibly weak and should fail.

To begin, Trump's lawyers argue that the "intersection between the Presidential Records Act and the various criminal statutes" creates challenges that will require additional time because of the "novel, complex and unique legal issues." That is not so. First, a document classified as "secret" or "top secret" is confidential and protected from public access regardless of whether it is a presidential record. The fact that some of the classified documents are presidential records is not relevant to a determination of whether they were unlawfully removed, improperly withheld from the National Archives or illegally disseminated. As special prosecutor Jack Smith stated in his response filing, any argument that the Presidential Records Act somehow forms a defense to the charges in the indictment "borders on frivolous."

Second, Trump's lawyers have made no effort meet their burden of demonstrating how the issues, even if considered "novel," are so unique or unprecedented that it is "unreasonable to expect adequate preparation for pretrial proceedings or for the trial itself within the time limits established by this section," under 18 US Code 316. The Trump attorneys also raise an issue with the "purportedly classified materials" and call into question whether they have any "impact on national security." But there is nothing "purported" about whether the documents at issue were classified. They were.

Once classified, they are protected until it is shown that they were declassified. They were not. An audio recording obtained by CNN and referenced in the federal

indictment shows Trump knew that he had retained "secret" military information that he had not declassified. According to the transcript of the recording, Trump said, "As president, I could have declassified, but now I can't." Next, the Trump lawyers urge that the sheer volume of documents produced in discovery is overwhelming and will be difficult to review and analyze in time to be adequately prepared for a potential December 2023 trial, because many are sensitive and cannot be reviewed by document reviewers other than themselves. That's not the case.

Magistrate Judge Bruce Reinhart has already signed off on a protective order that permits access to document reviewers who Trump's attorneys hire. Smith noted as much in his filing, writing that "[t]he order specifically authorizes disclosure to 'persons employed to assist in the defense.'" Trump's counsel also contends that the trial should be postponed indefinitely because the court is unlikely to be able to seat an "impartial jury" during the run-up to the 2024 presidential election, when Trump is a highly visible candidate. Yet our system of justice allows the court to employ various tried-and-true methods to ensure that the jurors who hear the case will be fair and objective, and bound to render a verdict that is based on the evidence presented and the instructions given by the trial judge, rather than by public opinion or media coverage.

Perhaps a larger number of potential jurors will have to be summoned because a greater percentage will be excused based on their preexisting views, their exposure to media coverage of the case or their subjective opinions of the presidential candidates or election to come. The court also may use a more detailed juror questionnaire than those commonly used in less newsworthy trials, in order to accelerate the receipt of information that might disqualify some potential jurors. But Trump's lawyers rely most heavily on the sensitive content of the classified documents in arguing for a delay. They suggest that procedures utilized to share secret information and classified testimony with the jury will be overly complex and will require a lot of time to manage. While this issue may be unfam-

iliar to the general public, it is not unusual in our federal courts and it presents no impediment to an orderly and speedy trial. My familiarity with handling classified material at trial is that it is neither difficult nor time-consuming. When I represented Hamdan, who was apprehended in Afghanistan after 9/11, I saw how capable our courts were of managing classified documents and secret information in evidence, as provided in the Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA).

Classified documents and secret testimony were utilized in Hamdan's trial at Guantanamo and in our federal courts prior to trial. And the process for our legal team to obtain the necessary security clearances to view them was not "arduous," as the Trump attorneys would have the judge believe. In our case, I obtained top-secret clearance in short order after filling out an application and sitting for an interview with two Department of Defense representatives. Sure, the Trump attorneys will have to review classified information at a sensitive compartmented information facility (SCIF). But we did that without inconvenience or disruption, both in Washington, DC, and at Guantanamo. And the government has volunteered to make classified information available to the Trump attorneys at a SCIF in Florida. Submitting classified information to the court will require that the Trump attorneys redact sensitive text from public filings and submit it in non-redacted form to the assigned judge in a confidential transmission, as provided in the CIPA. We did that, too, both in federal court and at trial.

Trump's counsel need not worry that they will be precluded from using classified information and testimony at trial if otherwise relevant and admissible in evidence. The judge presiding over the trial is able to clear the courtroom of anyone without proper security clearances so the jury can hear secret testimony in a closed session, if necessary. We also did that. Three criminal witnesses at Guantanamo gave testimony which would have jeopardized national security if made public. Our trial judge, Navy Captain Keith Allred, closed the courtroom and excused all media and press when those witnesses testified. He then promptly allowed

public access once their testimony was completed. Any notes made by the jurors during the closed session were maintained by the court as confidential and classified information, and the jurors were not permitted to take those notes with them when court recessed or adjourned. The trial court in Trump's case can appoint a classified information security officer to manage movement and storage of classified information at trial. At Guantanamo, a security officer was present throughout the proceedings, and was able to interrupt testimony mid-sentence if he or she believed the witness was about to jeopardize national security. The procedure was infrequently used and caused only minimal delay.

Finally, Trump's counsel need not worry that they will be prevented from referring to classified or secret information that they believe exculpates their client from criminal liability when arguing to the jury. Even top-secret classified documents and testimony presented earlier in the trial can be referenced in public courtroom proceedings, if one is careful. In our case, in our closing argument to the jury in Hamdan's trial, my co-counsel said to the jury, "I want to discuss, as I just said, what is contained in the Defense Exhibits I through Y, 17 documents that you have. Look at the information Mr. Hamdan provided to the United States when it mattered most... I'm not going to have the government close this courtroom; you know what Mr. Hamdan agreed to do." That's all we needed to say. The jury knew exactly what we were talking about, and no one else needed to know. Hamdan, who had been charged with two criminal counts - conspiracy to commit terror and material support of terrorism - was ultimately acquitted of the former by a military jury, and his conviction on the latter charge was vacated by the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals. In Trump's case, rather than complaining about how difficult it is to prepare for a three-week trial, his attorneys should proceed to obtain their necessary security clearances, and let the trial judge manage the handling of classified information, as our trial judge did in our case, and as federal judges do every day around the country in other cases without incident or inconvenience.

CNN

# Lebanon's political crisis

Sami Moubayed

**L**EBANON has been with no president for nine months, and soon, will be with no Central Bank governor as well. The tenure of Riad Salameh, the longest-serving governor in Lebanon's history, will formally end on July 31, 2023. And in six months so will that of army commander Joseph Aoun, leaving the country's top three posts vacant, amid a political system that is paralysed and unable to fill them.

By law, the central bank governor is appointed by the prime minister, and sworn-in before a president. Both need to be fulfilled, which doesn't apply since there is no president in Lebanon at present while incumbent premier Najib Mikati is officially in caretaker mode after his cabinet was formally dismissed last October.

A caretaker premier is constitutionally prohibited from signing off important legislation like naming of a Central Bank governor. That is why Mikati is suggesting expanding his powers, albeit temporarily, in order to appoint a new central bank governor this July, and an army commander by January 2024. The mere thought of giving such vast executive powers to a premier, with the presidential seat remains vacant at Baabda Palace, has sent shivers down the spine of Lebanon's Maronites.

They would never hear of it but while they wait for a president to be elected, the country is sinking from one low to another. Fuel shortages are chronic, and entire parts of the country gets no more than 2-4 hours of electricity per day, despite the exceptionally hot summer. Thousands have voted - with their feet - and left the country since the economic crisis began in October 2019. The brain drain has been mostly with Lebanon's brightest young talent, who have turned to a better life and future either in the US, Europe,

or the UAE. Depositors have been locked out of their dollar accounts for four years now.

On July 13, the local currency dropped to an all-time low, trading at 100,000 pounds to one US dollar. As Lebanon waits, thousands have been sent into financial ruin, affecting none of the country's political elite. One option is to extend Riad Salameh's tenure as governor, which is being peddled by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri. He claims that another six months of Salameh would be better than a power vacuum at Lebanon's leading financial institution. Salameh himself had previously said that he has no intention of staying in power beyond his tenure, but according to sources who spoke to Gulf News, he is now open to an extension anywhere between six-months to two-years.

But that has come before a brick wall, since neither the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) of Gibran Bassil, nor Hezbollah, would accept extension of Salameh's tenure. And even if they did, the Money and Credit Law says that a prime minister can either appoint a governor or renew his tenure for six years. It makes no mention of extending the governor's tenure, whether by six months or two years. Another option is to appoint Salameh as a shadow adviser to the bank, to keep running its affairs after 31 July, albeit indirectly. That too has been rejected by the FPM and Hezbollah. By law, the governor's first deputy Wassim al-Mansouri, would take over from Salameh when his tenure ends. However since Mansouri is a Shiite, that might be a problem for certain quarters in Lebanon.

Mansouri himself has threatened to resign, along with three other deputies, if no replacement is found by the end of this month. If he steps down, then the second deputy would take

over the bank's affairs, who in this case, is a Sunni. But if all four deputies resign collectively, then this would bring down what remains of the Central Bank's authority and prestige. They have all threatened to step down, fearing that with Salameh gone, they would be held responsible for the mistakes committed during his tenure. The first deputy Mansouri just returned from a visit to the US, where he met officials at the Department of Treasury. He came out with a feeling that the Biden Administration sees that electing a new central bank governor is far more of a priority than finding a new president for Lebanon. The US, he added, was pushing for Kamil Abu Suleiman, a former minister, to replace Salameh. He is a protégé of Samir Gageage and the Lebanese Forces (LF) which means that Hezbollah may not accept him. France, however, is pushing for the appointment of Jihad Azour, another ex-minister, as central bank governor. Until last month, he was one of the two presidential hopefuls, and he won 59 votes in the election that took place on June 14, which was six votes short of the 65-vote majority needed to win. Making him governor would be a fine reward for having failed to become president, despite the banking of the country's three main Christian parties.

A last and final option is to accept Wassim Mansouri as acting governor, just like Elias Busseiri, a Christian, was accepted as acting director of General Security earlier this year. If sectarian allocations were swapped at General Intelligence then they might as well be traded at the Central Bank, even if temporarily, meaning a Shiite governor of the Central Bank. Will it pass? Judging by existing tension, it may not, but given Lebanon's current situation, anything is possible.

Gulf News





# PTA between Pakistan and Azerbaijan to be finalized

ISLAMABAD (APP): A preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan and Azerbaijan is expected to be finalized in the first week of the coming month of August 2023, for evolving the trade liberalization and enhancing the bilateral trade between both countries.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan also agreed to initiate direct flight operations in major cities of both countries including Islamabad and Baku.

Azerbaijan Minister of Digital Development and Transport, Rashid Nabiye, visited Pakistan on Tuesday to meet with Federal Minister for Commerce, Syed Naveed Qamar, to discuss the finalization of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and

Transit Trade Agreement (TTA) between the two sides, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting, Minister Nabiye informed Minister Qamar that the PTA is expected to be finalized in the first week of August, while the TTA is planned to be signed by the end of August or in September.

He mentioned that discussions regarding the TTA are currently underway in Azerbaijan's relevant ministries.

In addition, Minister Nabiye revealed that Azerbaijan to initiate flights of Azerbaijan Airlines between Islamabad and Baku soon.

Syed Naveed said direct flights would further strengthen the bilateral

trade and connectivity between the two nations.

To ensure the timely finalization of the Transit Trade Agreement, Federal Minister Syed Naveed Qamar proposed the establishment of a High-Level Joint Working Group, which would actively work towards achieving the desired goals.

Both countries are presently engaged in negotiations for the Preferential Trade Agreement.

Pakistan has completed consultations to finalize its list of requested items, sharing a request list of 103 items with Azerbaijan on June 14, 2023, seeking market access.

On the other hand, Azerbaijan has shared its request list of 84 items, and the Ministry of Commerce

in Pakistan is currently conducting stakeholder consultations on these items.

Regarding the Transit Trade Agreement, the Ministry of Commerce shared the draft agreement with Azerbaijan on September 15, 2022, with the consensus of all stakeholders.

The agreement encompasses all modes of transportation, including road, railways, air, and sea.

During the discussions, tariff reduction modalities and lists were also deliberated upon, with the aim of further facilitating trade between Azerbaijan and Pakistan.

Both sides expressed their commitment to enhancing bilateral trade ties between the "brother countries" and strengthening economic cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar and Azerbaijan Minister of Digital Development & Transport Rashid Nabiye exchanging souvenir.

## Summit Bank announces name change to BML

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Summit Bank Limited is pleased to announce that the State Bank of Pakistan has granted its consent to change Summit Bank's name to Bank Makramah Limited (abbreviated as BML). This will become effective subject to other regulatory and corporate approvals. This name change follows the recent acquisition of a controlling stake in Summit Bank by prominent UAE investor, Nasser Abdulla Hussain Lootah.

Nasser Abdulla Hussain Lootah's vision for Bank Makramah Limited (BML) is to develop it into a leading Islamic bank, providing exceptional financial services and innovative products in line with Islamic principles. The name change from Summit Bank Limited to Bank Makramah Limited (BML) signifies the bank's commitment to embracing Islamic finance principles and delivering innovative and ethical financial services to its valued customers.

Bank Makramah Limited (BML) is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan to transition into a full-fledged Islamic bank. The bank's transformation will involve a complete overhaul of its operations, introduction of Shariah-compliant financial solutions, and adherence to Islamic banking practices. Bank Makramah Limited (BML) remains committed to serving its customers and ensuring a seamless transition throughout this transformative phase.

Bank Makramah Limited (BML) will continue to provide updates on its progress as it moves forward in its journey toward becoming a full-fledged Islamic bank.

## CPEC 2013-23:

# Pak's textile industry heading to next level

ISLAMABAD (INP): China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is playing a crucial role in taking the Pakistan's textile industry to the next level.

Textile is Pakistan's largest manufacturing industry, contributing significantly to the country's GDP and employment. WealthPK's report aims to discuss the crucial role of CPEC in elevating Pakistan's textile industry to new heights.

Overview of textile industry in Pakistan: E-textile industry in Pakistan is vertically integrated, covering the entire textile value chain, from cotton ginning to finished products. However, the industry is facing several challenges, including high energy costs, obsolete machinery, low productivity and intense competition from

other textile-producing countries. To overcome these challenges, the textile industry needs to modernise its machinery, improve productivity, and explore new export markets.

Under CPEC, several projects have been initiated in collaboration with China to help boost the textile industry. Some of these projects are as follows:

The Textile City Faisalabad is a joint venture between Pakistan and China, covering an area of 1,000 acres. The project includes facilities for spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing and finishing of textiles. The estimated cost of the project is around \$1 billion, and it is expected to create job opportunities for around 300,000.

Chinese company Challenge Fashion is

investing \$150 million in an industrial park on Lahore's border with Kasur district. The industrial park will house fabric units, dyeing facilities and garment manufacturing units for exporting sportswear to the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific and other regions of the world. Challenge Fashion plans to make the industrial park a regional supply chain park by inviting more Chinese accessory companies to produce zippers, labels, buttons, etc.

The company currently employs around 3,000 workers, including 28 Chinese nationals, and expects to create nearly 10,000-11,000 new jobs once the industrial park becomes fully functional. The company estimates that in five years, it can reach around \$400 million in export revenue.

# Food imports reduced by 0.88% in FY 2022-23

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food group imports into the country during fiscal year ended on June 30, 2023, decreased by 0.88 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-June, 2022-23, the country spent \$8,936 billion on the import of different food commodities as compared to the imports of \$9,016 billion in the same period last year in order to fulfil the local requirements, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

During the period under review, the imports of milk, cream and milk for infants into the country reduced by 11 percent as it came down from \$144,300 million to \$162,140 million, whereas

the imports of dry fruits and nuts decreased by 38.75 percent as it was recorded at \$39,964 million as against the imports of 65,272 million of same period of last year.

The import of tea during the last fiscal year also decreased by 9.13 percent as it was recorded at \$569,043 million as against the imports of \$626.185 million of the same period last year.

Meanwhile, the spices imports decreased by 30.04 percent as it was recorded at \$151,240 million by end of the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared the imports of \$216.183 million in the same period of last year.

However, during the period under review, the imports of food commodities including wheat grew

by 34.85 percent as wheat valuing \$1,072 billion imported to tackle with the local requirements as against the imports of \$795.286 million of same period last year.

Meanwhile, soya bean oil imports into the country also increased by 60.05 percent during the last fiscal year as soya bean valuing \$315.540 million imported to fulfill local edible oil and vegetable ghee requirements as compared to the imports of \$197.154 million of same period last year.

During the last fiscal year, the exports of food commodities from the country decreased by 7.25 percent as it was recorded at \$5,022 billion as against the exports of \$5,415 billion of the corresponding period of last year.

# Pakistan exports \$16.5 billion textile products in FY23

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned over \$16.50 billion from the exports of various textile products during the fiscal year 2022-23, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The textile goods' exports during the same period of last year were recorded at \$19,329 billion, showing a decline of 14.63 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23, according to PBS data released here on Tuesday.

The textile products that contributed positively in trade included raw cotton, the exports of which grew by 104.78 percent by growing from \$6,577 million during FY 2021-22 to \$13,468 million during FY2022-23, tents, canvas and tarpaulin by 24.93 per-

cent, from \$110.413 million to \$137,944 million, ready-made garments by

The textile goods that witnessed negative growth in trade included cotton yarn, the exports of which declined by 30.04 percent, from \$1,206,789 million to \$844,283 million.

Likewise, cotton cloth decreased by 17.06 percent, from \$2,437,875 million to \$2,021,999 million, the exports of cotton (carded or combed) declined by 31.72 percent, from \$1,631 million to \$1,114 million, yarn (other than cotton yarn) by 31.85 percent, from \$66,188 million to \$45,106 million, knit wear by 13.36 percent, from \$5,121,040 million to \$4,436,779 million and bed-wear by 18.26 percent from \$3,292,882

million to \$2,691,648 million. In addition, the exports of towels also declined by 10.05 percent by going down from \$1,111,337 million to \$999,594 million, ready-made garments by 10.57 percent, from \$3,904,654 million to \$3,491,948 million, art, silk and synthetic textile by 10.38 percent, from \$460,058 million to \$412,289 million, madeup article excluding towels by 18.44 percent, from \$849,121 million to \$692,548 million while the exports of all other textile materials went down by 6.34 percent, from \$761,377 million to \$713,096 million.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year (YoY) basis, the textile goods' exports

decreased by 13.73 percent in June 2023 to \$1,471,976 million against exports of \$1,706,245 million in June 2022. On a month-on-month basis the textile goods' exports however increased by 11.47 percent in June 2023 when compared to the exports of \$1,320,558 million in May 2023, according to the PBS data.

It is pertinent to mention here that the overall trade deficit witnessed a decline of 43.03 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the previous year (2021-22).

The trade deficit during July-June (2022-23) was recorded at \$27,547 billion against the deficit of \$48,354 billion in July-June (2021-22), a decline of 43.03 percent.

## 850,000 bales of cotton arrival recorded

MULTAN (APP): Seed Cotton (Phutti) equivalent to 858,007 bales have reached ginning factories across Pakistan till July 15 with major contribution recorded from Sindh owing to early picking and its Sanghar district alone attracting more than half of

the total arrivals so far.

According to a fortnightly report of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) issued to media on Tuesday, Punjab ginning factories recorded a cotton arrival figure of 198,873 bales while arrivals to gineries in Sindh recorded at 659,134 bales with 488,234 reached gineries in Sanghar district alone. Arrivals in Balochistan were recorded at 23,050 bales.

## Lost & Found

I have lost my documents (B.Sc. Electrical Engineering original Degree and Transcript I) European University of Lefke Northern Cyprus, here at Bilal Coach Stand Buner on 23/10/2023. The finder contact please, Abdur Rman S/O Bakht Razaq of Daggar Kalay Tehsil Daggar District Buner. Tel: 0330-5627250 Passport No: MQ9158882, St ID: 154311.

## Lost certificate

I have lost my equivalence certificate if found please contact 0333-932399 Muhammad Usman Ansari s/o Urooj Ahmed Ansari r/o Haya-tabad Phase-II, Peshawar.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Maersk Bostan, DM Dragon and Al-Dayeen, carrying Container, Chemicals and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile a gas carrier Milaha Ras Laffan also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on Tuesday. A total of 06 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a container vessel 'Maersk Bostan' sailed out to sea on Tuesday morning while three more ships, DM-Dragon, Aurelia and Andiamo are expected to sail on same day. A cargo volume of 144,412 tonnes, comprising 128,819 tonnes imports Cargo and 15,593 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,067 Containers was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Bum Shin and Milaha Ras Laffan & two more ships, Maersk Kinloss and MSC Greenwich carrying Palm oil, LNG and Container are expected to take berths at Liquid Terminal, Gas Terminal and Container Terminal respectively, while another containership, Maersk Pelepas is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

# Pakistan to utilize Chinese expertise to boost exports, operate SEZs: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said China would provide Pakistan with technical 'know-how' and expertise to increase exports and help successful execution of the Special Economic Zones (SEZs), under the CPEC project.

"We have requested China not to give us fish, [but] teach us how to catch the fish. Pakistan wants Chinese assistance to increase its exports and in successful execution of the SEZs. So China has promised to attach its experts [with quarters concerned in Pakistan]," he said while addressing an international seminar here.

The seminar titled "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor at Ten: A Gateway to Regional Connectivity," was organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI).

IPRI President Ambassador Dr Raza Muhammad, Director Pakistan Institute of China Studies (PICS) Sargodha University Fazul ur Rehman, former SAPM on CPEC Affairs Khalid Mansoor, Director China Institute of Contemporary

International Relations (CICIR) Dr Hu ShiSheng and Sohail Malik of Team Lead Climate Resourcing Coordination Center (CRC) among the leading speakers who spoke at a panel discussion of the seminar and highlighted significance of China-Pakistan relations besides various aspects of the game-changer CPEC project.

The panel discussion was moderated by Assistant Professor, Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) Dr Salma Malik.

The minister said China had a vast experience in these sectors as it itself attained economic progress by increasing exports and establish vibrant industrial units besides having global chains for marketing its products.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan needed export-oriented policies if wanted to have sustainable economic growth, stressing for clamping 'export emergency' to get exponential exports not incremental ones.

He also highlighted the importance to have surplus production of various items to increase the country's exports as otherwise it could cause 'local market distortion.'

"Next phase of the CPEC is business-to-business cooperation, not the government-to-government. Now we have to move towards industrial cooperation", he added.

Elaborating, the minister said first phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, initiated in 2013, was the infrastructure development by 2022, the second phase was industrialization from 2020 to 2025 and the third one was regional integration from 2025-30.

He said the incumbent government had revived the CPEC project, which faced slow-space during the four years of the PTI government, expressing confidence it would be game changer not only for Pakistan but the whole region.

Now, he said Gulf countries were showing keen interest to invest in diverse fields of Pakistan including agriculture, mining, information technology and energy, for which a Special Investment Facilitation Council had been set up.

The minister said the country needed at least 10-year policy consistency to get the fruits of any development project.

During 2013-18, Ahsan

Iqbal said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz achieved great progress in the energy sector and produced around 11500 megawatts of additional electricity under the CPEC and non-CPEC projects and pulled the country out of 18-20 hours of load-shedding.

Now, the incumbent government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also put the country on a path of economic stability and started completing the CPEC project at a faster pace.

He mentioned the CPEC projects in detail which helped in producing energy by different means, establishing a vibrant road and rail infrastructure across the country, special economic zones and laying of fiber optic cable for high-speed broadband services in remote areas and social welfare projects especially in Gwadar, an ultimate destination of the CPEC.

The minister said the CPEC had emerged as one of Pakistan's most successful and transformative projects, ushering in a new era of regional connectivity and economic prosperity.

Recalling the inception of CPEC, Ahsan Iqbal highlighted that the project

was proposed after the 2013 elections in Pakistan when the Chinese Premier extended the visionary concept to the newly elected Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

This led to the signing of a memorandum of understanding during Nawaz Sharif's visit to China in July 2013, establishing the joint coordination cooperation committee (JCC) to drive the implementation of CPEC.

Underlining the political will behind CPEC, Ahsan Iqbal pointed out that the MoU was swiftly followed by the first JCC meeting in August 2013.

"This remarkable start marked the beginning of an institutional mechanism for advancing CPEC, paving the way for significant progress in subsequent years," he added.

He said it was the transformative impact of CPEC that China became the top foreign direct investor in Pakistan within just three years of the project's initiation.

The minister said "This shift elevated China from a close political ally to a key economic partner, emphasizing the transition from geopolitics to geo-economics."





In brief

Futsal Championship

FAISALABAD (APP): All Punjab Inter District Futsal Championship would be organized at Kaleem Shaheed Indoor sports Complex Hall. Ghulam Muhammad Abad, here on July 23, 2023. According to Naseem Ahmad Chairman of the Pakistan Futsal Association Faisalabad, futsal teams from Faisalabad, Sargodha, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chinot would participate in the championship which would be jointly arranged by District Sports Department and Pakistan Snooker Futsal Federation Pakistan.

Warm welcome awaits Pak squad

PESHAWAR (APP): A warm welcome awaits the Pakistan Taekwondo squad after giving a superb performance of winning one gold, two silver and four bronze medals in the International Taekwondo competitions held in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. This was stated by Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo, Pakistani players made Pakistan famous by winning one gold, two silver and four bronze medals. According to the details given by Pakistan Taekwondo Team Manager Nasir Khan Mohmand, he disclosed that in the International Taekwondo Championship in Bangkok, Pakistan's youngest athlete Wanya Hassan won one gold, one silver and one brown medal and the other youngest ten-year-old Ayan Hassan grabbed one silver and one brown medal and Waqar Afridi claimed two brown medals. It is obvious that showing good performance in spite of a short time and less resources is the result of someone's hard work and efforts. Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taekwondo Association Ilyas Afridi, who gave us recognition and supported us on every platform. Pakistan team coach Engineer Hassan Afridi said. As a team manager, Nasir Mohmand said that he requested Director General sports KP for extended all-out support by awarding them with cash prizes besides announcing an annual stipend for all the medalist's winners so that they could continue their hard work in future.

Kane plays as Tottenham

LONDON (Agencies): Captain Harry Kane and James Maddison both played for Tottenham as they lost 3-2 to West Ham in Ange Postecoglou's first match in charge. Kane is in the final 12 months of his Tottenham contract and is a transfer target for German side Bayern Munich. But 29-year-old Kane played the first half of the match in Perth, Australia, while Maddison made his debut following his £40m move from Leicester. Danny Ings, Divin Mubama and Gianluca Scamacca scored West Ham's goals. Australian Postecoglou won the Scottish Premiership in both his seasons at Celtic, also guiding the club to a domestic treble in 2022-23 before he became Spurs manager in June. On Monday, he said he had a "good chat" with Kane, the record goalscorer for both Tottenham and England, and "spoke about the club and where we can improve". Over the weekend, Bayern honorary president Uli Hoernes claimed an agreement over personal terms had been reached with Kane.

Pakistan confirm additional men's T20I series with New Zealand

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board today announced its men's side will play 10 additional T20Is against New Zealand in the 2023-24 season as part of its strategic decision to provide best preparation opportunities for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Following three ICC World Test Championship matches in Australia from 14 December to 7 January, Pakistan will travel to New Zealand for five T20Is, which will kick-start their T20 World Cup preparations. These matches will be held from 12-21 January.

The schedule is:

- 12 Jan – 1st T20I, Auckland
- 14 Jan – 2nd T20I, Hamilton
- 17 Jan – 3rd T20I, Dunedin
- 19 Jan – 4th T20I, Christchurch
- 21 Jan – 5th T20I, Christchurch

In turn, New Zealand will make a return visit to Pakistan in April 2024 for five T20Is to fill the vacant window. Details of the series will be released closer to time.

The additional series will mean in the lead up to the T20 World Cup, to be co-hosted by the West Indies and the USA in June 2024, Pakistan will play 19 T20Is (10 vs New Zealand, three vs the Netherlands, two vs Ireland and four vs England). In addition to the 19 international matches, the PCB will also host its own cut-throat HBL Pakistan Super League 2024 in February/March 2024.

To schedule the additional T20Is, the Pakistan Cricket Board, in consultation with Cricket West Indies and New Zealand Cricket, has made slight changes to its Future Tours Programme 2023-2025.

The two ICC World Test Championship fixtures against the West Indies, originally planned in Pakistan in February 2024, will now be held in January 2025. Likewise, Pakistan's tour to New Zealand for three ODIs and five T20Is, originally scheduled in January 2025, will now take place in April 2025.

Pakistan and New Zealand recently played a highly-competitive and entertaining five-match T20I series in April/May in Lahore and Rawalpindi, which ended in a two-all draw. Prior to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia, Pakistan had featured and won the T20I series in Christchurch with Bangladesh as the third side.

New Zealand and Pakistan are ranked third and fourth, respectively in the ICC T20I Team Rankings with just two points separating them.

ICC Women's Championship 2022-25

Meanwhile, Pakistan women's cricket team's schedule of matches in New Zealand have also been confirmed.

The side will play three T20Is in Dunedin and Queenstown from 3-9 December, before taking on New Zealand in three ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 ODIs from 12-18 December in Queenstown and Christchurch.

The schedule is:

- 3 Dec – 1st T20I, Dunedin
- 5 Dec – 2nd T20I, Dunedin
- 9 Dec – 3rd T20I, Queenstown
- 12 Dec – 1st ODI, Queenstown (ICC Women's C'ship)
- 15 Dec – 2nd ODI, Christchurch (ICC Women's C'ship)
- 18 Dec – 3rd ODI, Christchurch (ICC Women's C'ship)

The ICC Women's Championship series against New Zealand will be Pakistan's third of the year following their home series against South Africa in Karachi from 1-14 September and October's away series against Bangladesh. Their last two series in the ICC Women's Championship will be against the West Indies (home, April 2024) and England (away, May 2024).

Pakistan has to date played three series, defeating Sri Lanka (2-1) and Ireland (3-0), and losing (3-0) to Australia. Both Pakistan and New Zealand have played three series of nine ODIs each and have 10 points apiece.

Pakistan men's revised Future Tours Programme 2023-2025 (all Tests count towards the ICC World Test Championship 2023-2025)

2023-24

- July – Pakistan to Sri Lanka (two Tests) (ongoing)
- August – Pakistan to Afghanistan (three ODIs)
- September – ACC 50-over Asia Cup in Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- October/November – ICC Men's Cricket World Cup India 2023
- December/January – Pakistan to Australia (three Tests)
- January – Pakistan to New Zealand (5T20Is)
- April – New Zealand to Pakistan (5 T20Is)
- May – Pakistan to the Netherlands (three T20Is), Ireland (two T20Is) and England (four T20Is)
- June – ICC Men's T20 World Cup USA/West Indies 2024

2024-25

- August – Bangladesh in Pakistan (two Tests)
- October – England in Pakistan (three Tests)
- November – Pakistan to Australia (three ODIs and three T20Is)
- November/December – Pakistan to Zimbabwe (three ODIs and three T20Is)
- December/January – Pakistan to South Africa (two Tests, three ODIs, three T20Is)
- January – West Indies in Pakistan (two Tests)
- February – New Zealand and South Africa in Pakistan (ODI tri-series)
- February/March – ICC Champions Trophy Pakistan 2025
- April – Pakistan to New Zealand (three ODIs and five T20Is)
- May – Bangladesh in Pakistan (three ODIs and three T20Is).

Shakeel's double ton puts Pakistan on top in Sri Lanka Test



GALLE: Saud Shakeel celebrates his double-hundred.

GALLE (Agencies): Saud Shakeel hit his maiden double century in Tests as Pakistan stretched their lead to a dominant 149 against Sri Lanka on day three of the rain-hit opening match on Tuesday.

Sri Lanka bowled out the tourists for 461 in the final session after a frustrating ninth-wicket stand of 94 between Shakeel, who remained unbeaten on 208, and Naseem Shah, who made six off 78 balls.

The 27-year-old Shakeel, who is playing his sixth Test, ruled as he cut Dhananjaya de Silva for a boundary to bring up his double century to a standing ovation.

The hosts ended the day on 14 for no loss after bad light stopped another rain-affected day. Sri Lanka still trail Pakistan by 135 runs in their second innings.

Nishan Madushka, on eight, and skipper Dimuth

Karunaratne, on six, were batting at close of play.

The Sri Lankan bowlers led by off-spinner Ramesh Mendis, who ended with a five-wicket haul, hit back in the second session but Shakeel combined with the lower-order including a 52-run seventh-wicket stand with Noman Ali, who made 25.

But it was his 177-run partnership with Agha Salman, who hit 83, that drove Pakistan's bounce back from 101-5 in their reply to Sri Lanka's 312.

Shakeel was dropped twice on 93 and 139 as he went past his previous best of 125 not out.

Both Shakeel and Salman scored runs briskly and hit regular boundaries but the run rate dipped after Salman's departure.

The day started late due to rain, which affected play on the previous two days, prompting officials to re-adjust the session timings.

Messi gets down to business in Florida heat

MIAMI (Agencies): Lionel Messi got down to business with his new Inter Miami team-mates on Tuesday, taking part in his first full training session with the Major League Soccer club.

The Argentine World Cup winner took to the club's training field at 9:00am local time with temperatures already above 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit). Along with his former Barcelona team-mate, Spanish midfielder Sergio Busquets, who signed for Miami on Sunday, Messi was given a 'tunnel' welcome from his new team.

The players lined up opposite each other and Messi and Busquets ran through the 'tunnel' to applause and slaps on the back from the other players. Chatting with Venezuelan international Josef Martinez, likely to be his strike partner for Miami, Messi was watched by over 200 media representatives who had attended the session as he did some basic drills.

Miami's training sessions had barely attracted double figure atten-

dance from the media prior to Messi's arrival. Messi had been unveiled to the club's supporters at the stadium on Sunday at a celebratory event alongside Miami co-owner David Beckham and his first game is scheduled for Friday.

Miami, who are ranked last in the 29-team MLS, face Mexican club Cruz Azul in the opening game of the new Leagues Cup, a tournament style competition featuring all top-flight teams from MLS and Mexico's Liga MX. It is not clear yet if Messi will start that game or make a cameo appearance from the substitute's bench and his coach, fellow Argentine Gerardo 'Tata' Martino has asked for patience while the 36-year-old builds up his fitness.

After watching his side's winless streak extend to 11 games, the recently appointed Martino left open the possibility that Messi might not be ready to go just yet. "We look to the future with hope (given) that the best

player in the world will play for our team, but also with the patience that we have to have so that he can get in good physical shape and can play at the right moment," he said.

Messi played his last competitive game for Paris Saint-Germain in the French league on June 4 and then turned out for Argentina against Australia in a friendly in Beijing on June 15, scoring after just 79 seconds in a 2-0 win.

- Biggest star since Pele -

Unlike in most of Europe, MLS's season runs from late February to the end of October, followed by the play-offs and the championship game, MLS Cup, on December 9.

Despite sitting rock bottom of the Eastern Conference with the worst recording in the league, Miami are not mathematically ruled out of contention for the playoffs but it would take a huge impact from the seven-times Ballon d'Or winner to turn their season around.

Pakistan women's team loses to Singapore in friendly match



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Farah Nurzahirah struck the match-winner as Singapore edged Pakistan women's football team to win the lone friendly match 1-0.

The two sides put on an engaging battle in the lone friendly, which remained in the balance till half-time.

The home side then

launched a lethal attack in the second half and got the reward in the 81st minute when Farah Noor Zahra fired the ball into the nets.

Pakistan made desperate efforts to neutralize Singapore's lead in the dying minutes but it remained intact. Notably, Maria Khan-led Pakistan women's football team

reached Singapore on Tuesday morning.

The national team was originally scheduled to play two friendly matches against Singapore. However, a delay in the issuance of the No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Pakistan Sports Board (PCB) cut the tour short to just one

fixture.

According to the details, the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) received the NOC on July 13 after Shaza Fatima, special assistant to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, intervened in the matter.

The PSB had demonstrated its incapacity to process the NOC for the national women's football team's tour of Singapore.

However, according to the PFF, the Football Association of Singapore sent an official confirmation of the tour on 26th June. Consequently, the PFF requested the NOC by writing a formal letter to PSB a day later but it was delivered after the Eid holidays.

A similar deadlock occurred between PFF and PSB when the Pakistan men's football team had to wait long for NOCs to tour Mauritius for the four-nation cup and India for South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship.

Commonwealth Games in limbo as Australian state pulls out as 2026 host

SYDNEY (Agencies): The Australian state of Victoria pulled out of hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Games on Tuesday citing major cost blow-outs, leaving organisers "hugely disappointed" and scrambling to keep the multi-sport event alive.

State Premier Daniel Andrews said the initial estimate of Aus\$2 billion (US\$1.36 billion) needed to hold the Games would more likely be around Aus\$7 billion, which he called "well and truly too much".

"I've made a lot of difficult calls, a lot of very difficult decisions in this job. This is not one of them. Frankly, \$7 billion for a sporting event, we are not doing that," he said at a news conference in Melbourne.

"I will not take money out of hospitals and schools to host an event that is three times the cost

estimated and budgeted for last year.

"The Games will not proceed in Victoria in 2026. We have informed Commonwealth Games authorities of our decision to seek to terminate the contract."

The decision to pull the pin throws a question mark over not just the 2026 event but the concept as a whole, analysts said, with fewer countries showing interest in recent times to take on a spectacle seen as losing its relevance.

The last Games in 2022 were held in Birmingham, but only after the English city stepped in to replace Durban in South Africa, which was stripped of hosting rights after a series of missed deadlines and financial problems.

The Commonwealth Games Federation insisted it remained "committed to finding a solution for the Games in 2026".

The event typically attracts more than 4,000 athletes from the 54 nations of the Commonwealth, almost all of them former territories of the British Empire.

The 2026 version -- featuring 20 sports and 26 disciplines -- was due to be held across five regional hubs, including Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland and Shepparton, with each having its own athletes' village.

Andrews said his team had looked at cutting the number of hubs or even moving the Games to the Victoria state capital Melbourne but "none of those options stack up".

- "Gross exaggeration" - He refused to say how much it cost to terminate the agreement but insisted talks with the Commonwealth Games Federation were amicable.

However, the London-based Federation blasted

the move as "hugely disappointing".

"We are disappointed that we were only given eight hours' notice and that no consideration was given to discussing the situation to jointly find solutions prior to this decision being reached by the government," it said in a statement.

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak lamented a "disappointing outcome for both fans and athletes", but said talk of Britain stepping in to stage the event was "getting slightly ahead of ourselves".

"We hope that the Victoria state government, the Games federation and Commonwealth Games Australia will now work together to find a viable solution to hosting the event in 2026," the spokesman said.

Pressed on the possibil-

ity of a British bid, he added: "Obviously the UK has been honoured to host the Games twice in the past decade (Birmingham 2022 and Glasgow 2014) so we will see what comes out of those initial discussions."

CGF chief executive Katie Sadlier told Britain's Press Association: "The UK are fantastic hosts and we would be very open to having a conversation with them about it, if that's something they would be interested in doing."

Victoria was only awarded the contract 14 months ago as the exclusive bidder, with the Federation claiming the state had decided to include more sports, added an additional regional hub, and changed plans for venues.

These additional costs were "often against the advice of the Commonwealth Games

Federation and Commonwealth Games Australia", it said, adding that it had received assurances that "sufficient funding was available to deliver the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games".

Commonwealth Games Australia president Ben Houston was equally scathing, claiming the new cost estimates were a "gross exaggeration".

But Tom Heenan, a lecturer in sport and Australian studies at Monash University, said it showed that hosting mega-events like the Commonwealth Games was not worth it.

"This venture was flawed from the start," he said. "Situating the Games in regional centres highlighted their declining global importance."

The Australian city of Brisbane in the state of Queensland will host the 2032 Summer Olympics.

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## In brief

### IRSA releases 324,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 324,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 390,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1515.67 feet and was 117.67 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 193,900 cusecs and 170,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1206.95 feet, which was 156.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 52,900 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 218,100, 172,200, 143,800 and 74,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 49,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 66,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM Islamabad Circle, COMST, Chhata Bakhtawar, Park Enclave, Lahrar, Tramirid, ISI, Rahara, PHA, Kuri Road, CM Pak Zong, Isolation Hospital Feeders, from 07:00 a.m 12:00 p.m, Islamabad Circle, I-11/1, I-11/3, Metro Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, IST, New Rawat, Qureshiabad, Girja-I, Hayal, Morat, Ranyal, Gulistan Fatima, Kohala, Rahmatabad-I Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Pindhoon, I-14/3, Noon, I-16, HPT (Radio Pak), Lakho Road, Ameer Hamza, Officer Colony, Nogzi, Bajnyal, New Milpur, F-17/1, F-17/2, Navzi Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Basharat Feeder, Attock Circle, Shikardara, Ghorghashti, Bara Zee, Maskinabad, Shah Dir, Radio Pak-I & II, Larnpur, Qaziabad, GBHP Colony Feeders, Jhelum Circle, F3 (Gul Afshan), Bakrula Feeders and surrounding areas.

### IIUI President calls on Education Minister

ISLAMABAD (NNI): President, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) H.E. Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, Tuesday, called on Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain. During the meeting, issues of mutual interests including initiatives for promotion of quality education and role of universities in society building were discussed. The Federal Minister desired that the university having two internationally reputed faculties of Shariah and Law and Arabic can help the Pakistani job seekers in Arab world. The IIUI President said that university will be happy to introduce Arabic language and refresher legal courses in this regard and it will be keen to expand its bilateral ties across the country with rest of the universities through its international level Arabic faculty. Honorable Minister, while appreciating the role of IIUI in society building and services, assured of maximum support to IIUI.

# Amin holds productive meeting with Azerbaijani minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to enhance collaboration in the digital realm, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Syed Amin ul Haque, held a productive meeting with the Azerbaijani Minister for Digital Development and Transport, Rashad Nabiyeu. During the meeting, in-depth discussions were held on digital transformation, software development, and IT revenue-related matters, with a focus on fostering stronger ties between the IT and telecom sectors of both countries.

Amin ul Haque emphasized Pakistan's deep appreciation for its relations with Azerbaijan, describing them as robust and fraternal. He expressed a keen interest in further strengthening bilateral ties, particularly in the technology sector, and lauded Azerbaijan's commitment to the development of the digital landscape.

The Azerbaijani Minister, Rashad Nabiyeu, expressed his country's desire to bolster mutual cooperation, especially in the domain of IT and software development. He also commended Pakistan's

ambitious Digital Pakistan Vision, recognizing the nation's efforts towards digital transformation and the IT industry's significant role in this endeavour.

Both sides expressed their commitment to jointly working towards the advancement of the IT and telecom sectors. They agreed that establishing a joint working group would be essential to strengthen the IT and telecom relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's delegation, led by Minister Rashad Nabiyeu, also had the opportunity to receive a detailed briefing on Pakistan's digital landscape and initiatives, presented by Member IT Syed Junaid Imam. The meeting was attended by Secretary IT, Navid Ahmed Sheikh, Member IT, Syed Junaid Imam, Member Telecom, Muhammad Omar Malik, Member International Coordination, Ajmal Awan, Member Legal, Babar Sahil, CEO of Pakistan Software Export Board, Ali Reza, and COO Ignite, Asim Shahryar Husain. Later, the Azerbaijani delegation also held meetings with CEOs of various IT companies.

# HEC sends off 156 PhD Scholars for fellowships in top 200 int'l varsities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), has awarded six-month Research Fellowships to 156 PhD scholars from the top 200 universities of the world during the 53rd award ceremony under the International Research Support Initiative Programme (IRSIP).

Under IRSIP, HEC has so far distributed a total of 6,545 awards, representing 79 Pakistani universities. Among the current awardees, six scholars are going to the top 10 universities, 44 to the top 50 universities, and 71 to the top 100 universities of the world. Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmed was the chief guest of the ceremony held Tuesday, also attended by Director General (Human Research Development Division) HEC Ms Aayesha Ikram, Vice Chancellors, faculty members, IRSIP experts and reviewers, supervisors, alumni and awardees, and parents. The event started with a pre-departure orientation by Project Director (HRD) Jehanzeb Khan.

In his remarks, Dr Mukhtar Ahmed highlighted the importance of research and training

opportunities for doctoral students at advanced research laboratories of reputed universities abroad. He said, "The programme helps enhance the quality of doctoral research being conducted in Pakistan."

Appreciating the Government for prioritising higher education despite financial constraints, the Chairman advised the scholars to exploit the opportunity, enhance their skill set, learn work ethics, and dedicate themselves to and focus on their work to deliver for Pakistan.

He said HEC is committed to facilitating the youth to get the best opportunities for higher education, research, and training so that they are equipped to make commendable contributions to the socio-economic development of the country. Director General HEC Ms Aayesha Ikram congratulated the scholars on behalf of HEC and urged them to make the best use of the opportunity.

She advised them to take this first-hand experience to adopt the quality of a good researcher and ensure their works trickledown effect. She urged them to earn different exposures to enrich their potential and skills.

She also highlighted the importance of demonstrating responsible behaviour, as it will reflect how Pakistani people at large are. She advised them to enhance their work ethics by interacting with their international counterparts. "You can prove that the Pakistanis have the capacity to be the best," she concluded. Vice Chancellor Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) Dr Mansoor Ahmed, who is a reviewer of the programme, appreciated the role of HEC, especially the Scholarship Division, in investing in human resource development. He said HEC programmes are aimed to improve the academic standards of universities, the level of research, and the quality of human capital.

He said the scholars selected for the awards are the blessed ones as they are having exposure to the world's best universities.

He urged them to ensure effective utilisation of the opportunity by managing their time effectively. Dr Rubab Zehra, a Professor at Qauid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad expressed her experience of being a Reviewer of IRSIP.

# ‘Women empowerment through innovative, skill-based interventions to meet modern challenges critical’

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at the panel discussion by the Women's Parliamentary Caucus on Tuesday said in order to ensure holistic and inclusive growth and economic development it was critical to ensure women empowerment through innovative and skill-based interventions to meet modern challenges.

The panel discussion titled "Inclusive Economic Growth and Empowerment of Women" under the Roundtable of Political Parties on Women's Manifesto. The discussion was chaired by Member National Assembly (MNA) Kishwer Zehra.

Former Minister of State for Investment and senior economist, Haroon Sharif opening the discussion said

there was a matter of mindset that needed a change to ensure economic empowerment of women.

He said there were tonnes of researches and policy papers by international organisations on empowerment and status of women of Pakistan. The financial and economic crisis of the country had no short-term solution but rather required sequencing of different aspects of economy and social structure to achieve desired dividends, he added.

"Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad told me that it took 12 years for him to improve economy in his country," Sharif said.

The country's gross domestic product (GDP) production has declined and

remained 5 times less than its competitors in the region whereas its value addition of production had also depleted drastically, he added.

Haroon Sharif added that it was not possible without mainstreaming women in productive participation in the value addition chains. He added that Asia in general had less women participation and in Pakistan in particular as it made only 20% of the total workforce.

The future of the jobs was not in labour but rather in operating machines based on advanced techs, he said, adding, "Bangladesh and Thailand banks have dedicated finance for women alone to promote female entrepreneurship that Pakistan also need to replicate."



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional and Technical Training Rana Tanvir Hussain calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## ANF seizes 16 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing operations against narcotics smugglers managed to recover 16 kg of drugs and arrested four accused.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, in an operation on M-1 Motorway Islamabad, ANF arrested an accused resident of Khyber and recovered 4.8 kg charas.

In a second operation at Islamabad International Airport, over 2.4 kg charas was recovered from the possession of a Bahrain-bound passenger resident of Peshawar going on flight no PK-287.

In the third operation, four kg charas was recovered from an accused resident of Thatha, rounded up from Boulevard Mall, Hyderabad area.

In the fourth operation conducted near Sona Khan Chowk, Quetta, ANF seized five kg charas and arrested an accused resident of Quetta.

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

## Mehfil-e-Mushaira and four books launching ceremony

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Arts Council (PAC) organized four book launching and Mehfil-e-mushaira in collaboration with International Writers Forum Pakistan here on Tuesday. Shuja Shani got the honour of reciting the Holy Quran, while Muhammad Jameel presented Naat of Naseem-e-Sahar and received applause. The poetry collection "Aftab-e-Asr" by the poetess Rukhsana Zakhmi belonging to Mandi Bahauddin, Muhammad Zaibair's poetry collection "Yeh Ankhain Dhoondti hai kya", Qaiser Imran Sialvi's poetry collection "Tesra Koi Jahan" and there was a discussion on the effectiveness of Taj Rasool Tahir's poetry collection "Adaab-e-Sukhan".

The literary event was presided over by prominent poet Naseem Sahar, while Wasif Ali Wasif, Parvez Mehdi, Mubasher Saleem, Taslim Ikram and Qaiser Imran Sialvi expressed their views on the books and appreciated the efforts of all the poets and discussed various aspects.

# Sherry Rehman hosts Italian delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman, recently welcomed a delegation from Italy to the Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination.

The delegation included representatives from the University of Milan and the Italian Association Ev-K2-CNR, with Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese leading the group. Additionally, officials from the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan and UNDP were also present during the meeting, a news release said.

Minister Rehman expressed her gratitude for the ongoing support of the Italian government in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. She acknowledged the remarkable 35-year presence of EvK2CNR in the Pakistani mountains.

The Minister specifically commended the 'Glaciers & Students' project, which is funded by the Italian Agency for Development

Cooperation (AIC), implemented by UNDP Pakistan, and executed by EvK2CNR. This initiative aims to accomplish several key objectives, including the establishment of 8 Automatic Weather Systems (AWS), the creation of an inventory of Pakistan's 7,200 glaciers, and the provision of capacity-building and training opportunities for students at Karakoram International University and the

University of Baltistan, as well as for staff at the Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency.

In her opening remarks, Minister Rehman emphasized the urgency of the situation, stating, "Pakistan boasts the largest number of glaciers outside the polar regions, and these invaluable resources are facing significant threats due to climate change. It is imperative that our universities collaborate closely to cultivate a comprehensive understanding among our students regarding climate resilience and management."

This project holds immense significance as it will enable us to effectively map and monitor the changes caused by climate stress on our glaciers. Moreover, we eagerly anticipate exploring potential solutions to mitigate the alarming rise in glacial melt, which has resulted in a staggering 300% increase in Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) events in Pakistan over the past year.

Ambassador Ferrarese expressed his gratitude for the enduring friendship and exceptional cooperation between the two nations. He underscored the fact that Italy, too, is profoundly affected by the devastating consequences of climate change. The Ambassador conveyed his heartfelt sympathies regarding the tragic events that unfolded in Pakistan last year, particularly the catastrophic floods that affected a staggering 33 million individuals.

He further emphasized the significance of the 'Glaciers & Students' project, as it will facilitate comprehensive glacier mapping, and provide an understanding of the glaciers in its entirety to effectively safeguard these invaluable resources. The Government of Gilgit-Baltistan officials provided a comprehensive briefing to Minister Rehman regarding their ongoing endeavors aimed at preserving the region's natural environment.

They also shared details about various initiatives undertaken in collaboration with the Italian government to enhance climate resilience. Minister Rehman expressed great appreciation for the significant efforts of the Gilgit-Baltistan government. She emphasized the visionary approach of Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who declared the Khunjerab National Park a protected area in 1974. Notably, Khunjerab National Park is not only the highest-altitude national park in Pakistan but also one of the largest, underscoring the commitment to conservation and environmental preservation in the region. The delegation from the University of Milan also presented a proposal for a project known as Water for Development (W4D). This three-year initiative, scheduled to commence in September 2023, aims to support sustainable development and adaptation policies in mountainous regions.

# SCP turndowns two appeals against the then DEO Mardan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court larger bench chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Atta Bandal along with Justice Ayesha Malik and Justice Hussain Rizvi has rejected two appeals against District Education Officer (DEO) Mardan Hassanat Gul while declared his promotion as per law.

Assistant Advocate General argued that DEO Hassanat Gul has recruited several employees against the law while in

2013 an inquiry was initiated while demotion of DEO was recommended by the inquiry officer while Chief Minister disagree and Peshawar High Court declared the recommendation null and void.

Latterly, DEO was promoted to BPS-19 which is illegal because an officer can't be promoted in case of pending inquiry against him, Assistant Advocate General added.

The counsel Asif Yousafzai advocate argued that PHC has declared null and void

second inquiry against DEO Hassanat Gul while Service Tribunal has granted decision in law SCP judgements.

The counsel added that petitioner has obtained fund and pension because he has been retired now while CJP observed that SCP already declared that pending inquiry didn't liability for promotion.

SCP three member bench has turndown both appeals of provincial government and declared Hassanat Gul promotion as well as provision of perks and pension is legal.

# Islamabad Police to implement comprehensive security measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad police have decided to ensure foolproof security and comprehensive measures for the upcoming Muharram processions in the capital and to protect gatherings through the use of modern surveillance technology.

In a bid to prioritize the safety of citizens during the solemn occasion of Muharram ul Haram, a high-level meeting was convened by the Islamabad Capital Police (ICP).

The meeting aimed to review and bolster security arrangements for the upcoming Muharram processions in the capital. Chaired by CPO/DIG Operations Islamabad, Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari, the gathering involved key officials and representatives, including SSP (Operations), AIG Special Branch, Zonal

DPOs, DSP Security, Chairman, members of the peace committee, and organizers.

With a focus on fostering communal harmony and providing fool-proof security for the Majalis and processions, the officials discussed various measures, including the use of modern surveillance technology, strict adherence to designated routes and timings, and stringent participant screening.

CPO/DIG Bukhari emphasized the importance of cooperation between organizers and law enforcement to ensure a peaceful and secure Muharram observance. By integrating the comprehensive security measures, he said the Islamabad police seek to foster an atmosphere of tranquility and reverence during this significant religious occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque presenting shield to Azerbaijan Minister for Digital Development & Transport Mr. Rashad Nabiyeu at IT Ministry.



### DAB to auction 14m USD

KABUL (Agencies): DAB said that it will put in auction 14 million dollars as part of its efforts to keep the local currency afghani stable by today (Wednesday). The bank has asked eligible banks and money changer services to participate in the tender, adding that the winners of the auction are obliged to settle their accounts by the end of the day. Partial settlement of transactions is not allowed and the winners of the auction are obliged to deliver the money owed to DAB in cash once.

## The Frontier Post

# AFGHANISTAN

Wednesday, July 19, 2023

### Anubha met Abdul Haq

KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Interior Minister for counter-narcotics, Mullah Abdul Haq Akhund, met with Mrs. Anubha Sood a representative of UNODC in Kabul. The deputy Interior Minister asked Mrs. Sood for cooperation in the sector of alternative livelihoods for farmers in the country and treatment of addicts. Meanwhile, Mrs. Sood vowed in this meeting that UNODC will fully cooperate in the sectors of alternative livelihood for farmers and the health of addicts.

## 4.2 magnitude earthquake hits Faizabad district

FAIZABAD (Khaama Press): An earthquake of 4.2 magnitude jolted 79 Km southeast of the Faizabad district of Badakhshan province, Afghanistan, on Tuesday.

The earthquake of Magnitude 4.2 occurred around 12:28 pm local time, on Tuesday, 79 Km southeast of Faizabad district of Badakhshan, according to the Indian National Center for Seismology on Tuesday.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.2, Occurred on 18-07-2023, 12:28 am

local time, lat: 36.58 N/71.17E, Depth 110 km, location: Ishkasim district, Badakhshan, Afghanistan."

Earlier, a similar tremor of 4.6 magnitude struck Faizabad capital city of Badakhshan province of Afghanistan.

"Earthquake of Magnitude: 4.6, Occurred on 21-06-2023, 6:25 am local time, lat: 36.51 N/71.28E, Depth 100 km, location: Faizabad district, Badakhshan, Afghanistan."

No casualties have been reported from the province as of now.

The province is one of the most vulnerable regions against natural disasters, including earthquakes, landslides, snowfall, and floods.

The recent powerful earthquake of 6.5 occurred in March of this year in the Zebak district of Badakhshan, killing 13 people and injuring more than 100 others in the country.

Meanwhile, the earthquake had financial losses, including destroying agricultural land and residential houses in the province and across the country.

## Agreements signed to conduct projects in 12 provinces

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce announced the implementation of many projects by some international organizations in 12 provinces of the country.

The administration of the ministry has signed a cooperation agreement with a number of international organizations to conduct development projects in some provinces of the country, the Ministry said on its Twitter page.

Based on these agreements, the organizations will conduct many projects in Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Kandahar, Helmand, Farah, Jawzjan, Bamyan, Samangan, Faryab, Nuristan, and Badghis provinces.

The projects include (vocational and livelihood skills training program, business development and provision of equipment to beneficiaries, support program for private entrepreneurs, support for women weavers and industrialists, (Sustainable Village Development, Regional Economic Activities and Small and Medium Business Development) projects, the Ministry added.

## Korean couple take tour to Balkh with special car

KABUL (Agencies): A Korean couple has entered Balkh in the northern province of the country with their special car, passing through six other countries.

The wife Pae Yunmin, told Bakhtar News Agency that they want to learn about Afghanistan's current situation, the life of the people, and to visit historical places.

"We spent four days in Afghanistan and witnessed the complete security of Afghanistan, while they had heard negative news and useless propaganda about the situation in Afghanistan through the Western media. All the news regarding the current security is false," he added.

"Since I have been in Mazar-e-Sharif for three days, I have been sleeping in my car at night and I have not seen any problems so far," she said.

Meanwhile, the head of Information and Culture of Balkh province, Alhaji Mawlawi Zabihullah Noorani, says that the Mujahidin of the Islamic Emirate stand firm in maintaining the security of people in the whole country.

Since the security is maintained a large number of foreign tourists traveled to the country, mainly to Balkh, and visit the natural and historical places of this province recently, he added.

Earlier, two days back, 16 tourists from Belarus, Serbia, and China also traveled to Balkh.

## US urges Taliban to prevent Afghanistan from becoming 'safe haven' for terrorists

WASHINGTON (Khaama Press): The United States on Tuesday asked the Afghan Taliban to prevent their country from becoming a "safe haven" for terrorist attacks.

Matthew Miller, a spokesman for the US State Department, made the statement a day after the Pakistan Army blamed Kabul for the rise in militancy, saying that "safe havens and liberty of action" provided by Kabul, along with the most recent weapons available to militants from Afghanistan, allowed them to conduct attacks inside Pakistan, Dawn reported.

Islamabad has expressed concern over extremists using Afghanistan territory for cross-border terrorism on several occasions. The military has said that it expects the Taliban authorities to take action against militants and follow the Doha agreement.

The Pakistani military reported that nine officers were killed after militants attacked an army installation in Balochistan province, and three others died in the exchange of fire last week.

The Pakistani army said it had "serious concerns on the safe havens and liberty of action available to TTP in Afghanistan."

According to Pakistan's military report, the main cause of the most recent wave of unrest in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the Afghan



taliban's inability to control the TTP, as Dawn cited.

The sources further noted that the militants who carried out the recent strikes in Balochistan were donning M-16 guns and typical US military uniforms.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Defense minister, Khawaja Asif, warned the Taliban authorities in Kabul, saying that "Such attacks are intolerable and would elicit an effective response from the

security forces of Pakistan."

However, the Taliban rejected all the allegations earlier, saying Pakistan should not blame its shortcoming on Afghanistan.

"The Doha peace agreement has been signed with America, and Afghanistan's soil will not be used against Pakistan, and Pakistan is a brotherly and Muslim country," said Zabihullah Mujahid, senior Taliban spokesperson.

## Afghan girls request inclusion in university examination

KABUL (TOLOnews): Female students who have completed the twelfth grade say they want to participate in the kankor exam.

They called on the Islamic Emirate to allow them to participate like boys in this year's kankor exam.

Sahar said she went to her school because of the entrance examination form, but she was not given an entrance exam card and returned home disappointed.

"This year we went to our schools to receive the entrance exam form, but they told us that they have not yet given any information from the higher education department about taking the entrance exam for

female students," said Sahar.

"When we went to school, they didn't allow us to receive the kankor exam form and said that still nothing is clear now about girls' entrance exam," said Zahra, a graduate student.

Meanwhile, some female students called on the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools and universities for them.

"Whatever law they say, we observe; they said hijab we wear hijab, we just want them to reopen universities and schools for girls," said Zakira, a graduate student.

"Reopen education doors for girls so they can serve their country," said Farkhonda, a graduate stu-

dent.

Some women's rights activists said they believe that the removal of women from society will bring unfortunate consequences.

"Removing women and girls from society has unfortunate consequences," said Azada Bakhshi, a women's rights activist.

The Ministry of Higher Education refused to talk about the entrance examination of female students.

Meanwhile, although the National Examinations Authority has not named female students, it has said that they have distributed kankor entrance forms to 150,000 students across the country.

"150,000 kankor

entrance forms have been distributed for the 1402 entrance examination, and 106,617 will be enrolled in higher and semi-higher education," said Fazal Haq Hashimi, the spokesman of the National Examinations Authority.

The National Examinations Authority said that this year's entrance exam will be held in five rounds, the first round will be held in eleven provinces on the 29th and 30th of Saratan, the second round will be held in twelve provinces, the third round will be held in ten provinces, the fourth round will be held only in the capital, and the fifth round will be a miscellaneous test.

## Gulistan residents still send letters to each other

FARAH (Pajhwok): The residents of Gulistan district in western Farah province still contact each other through satellite phones and letters as they have been deprived of telecom services since last two decades.

Javad Haidari, a resident of Gulistan district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that they still communicated with their relatives through letters as there was no telecommunication network in their district.

He added wealthy people used satellite phones to communicate and solve their problems, but economically weak people wrote letters to each other, asking the government to activate telecom services in their district.

Another resident,

Naqeebullah, also said there was no telecom tower in the district and sometimes rumors were spread that antennas would be installed, but such rumors never proved correct.

He said many people still contacted their relatives by sending letters or going to the district center to use satellite phone.

He said the government should fulfill its responsibility by providing telecom services to the district.

Grey-bearded Haji Ghafoor, a resident of Siah Goshi village, said they lived in a mountainous area which was deprived of telecommunication services.

He said their area had been deprived of telecom and other service for the past 20 years and asked the government to pay more

attention to their problems.

"When a family member or patient leaves home, his family remains unaware about his condition until he returns."

Telecommunication and Information Technology officials confirm that Gulistan district has not been provided telecom services in the past 20 years.

The department director, Abdul Majeed Abuzar, told Pajhwok they had shared the issue of no telecommunication service in Gulistan district with the center and hoped action would be taken in this regard.

He said currently new telecom sites were being established in Kandahar zone and the work would be extended to Gulistan district later.

## Bids to usurp ancient, historical areas in Ghazni frustrated

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Some people are still trying to usurp ancient sites in southern Ghazni province, but their attempts are being frustrated, an official said.

Ghazni Information and Culture director Mullah Hamidullah Nisar told Pajhwok that a number of common people last week wanted to seize 10 acres of an ancient site in order to build houses in the first district of Ghazni city, but they were prevented from doing so and the walls they had built were demolished.

He said some lands of ancient sites in Ghazni City remained usurped and a report in this regard had been prepared and would be shared with the relevant commission.

Mullah Nisar said no one was allowed to usurp or dig historical forts, minarets and other areas registered with his department in the old city. The government's action to free heritage sites from usurpers was welcomed by Ghazni residents.



He said Ghazni minarets, Sheikh Abdul Salam shrine, Sheikh Abdul Razzaq's tomb and the area around the old city had high historical value and some people wanted to usurp them.

Abdul Razaq, another resident, said a number of

areas and lands had been seized by some people taking advantage of the past political developments.

He called on the Department of Information and Culture to protect and prevent destruction and seizure of historical places.

## Melon yield in Kunduz increases by 20%

KUNDUZ (Agencies): Officials at Kunduz Department of Agriculture and Livestock say this year's melon yield has increased by 20 percent in this province.

"This year's melon yield has increased by twenty percent compared to the previous year," said Abdul Ghaffar Sediqi, head of Kunduz Department of Agriculture and Livestock.

Meanwhile, Kunduz farmers are also optimistic about the increase in melon yields in this province, but they ask the government to market their products so that they can be sold at a better price.

In addition, farmers say this year's drought and lack of water has caused them to harvest melons early.

However, a number of melon sellers state that dozens of trucks full of melons are sent to other provinces for sale every day.

"Thanks to god, the harvest is better than last year," said a melon seller.

## Sapara locality residents sans basic health facilities

ASADABAD (Pajhwok): Some residents of Sapara locality in the Watapor district of eastern Kunar province say they have been deprived of basic health facilities.

Haji Abdul Wali, a local tribal elder told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Over 1,500 families living in this locality are without health service and the inhabitants have to take their patients to the district for provincial hospitals bearing huge risks and difficulties."

Sapara area is situated is about 18 kilometers away from the district health center and the local residents were unable are not able to take the patients on time for medical service.

He asked the government to build a standard clinic in Sapara area.

Ghulam Sayed, another tribal elder of this area said, mostly the patients die on the way to the district health center.

He said: "Our life is full of problems, maternity patients face life threaten-

ing problems due to the lack of clinic in the area."

He said, most of the time women do not reach health centers and die on their way to the health center. Ghulam Sayed asked the government to build a hospital in their area.

Religious Scholar Maulavi Mohammad Anwar said the villagers are forced to travel to the district clinic or travel to provincial capital for small health problems.

The residents of this area criticized that the officials of the current and previous governments only made promises and never took practical steps, he added.

He said: "However the road to our area is broken, bumpy and rough, the vehicles do not travel every day on this way, majority of the residents are busy in ranching and agriculture, they cannot afford 3,000 or 4,000 afs fares of taxi to take their patients to the Hospital."

According to

Mohammad Anwar, having access to health services is the right of everyone; the government must facilitate standard health services for the people.

But the provincial officials of Kunar province said, they have already shared the issue of Sapara area residents with the officials of Ministry of Public Health, they hoped that the sub-health center will be established in that area.

Qari Muzafar Mukhlis, the head of provincial directorate of Public Health told Pajhwok: "We have planned the establishment of a sub-health center in Sapara area of Watapor district, the plan consisted the building of eight rooms for the health center".

He expressed hope that 24-hour health services will be provided in this area according to the needs of the people.

According to the local residents Sapara is a mountainous area and it made movement difficult for them.



# NA, Sindh PA likely to be dissolved on August 8

ISLAMABAD / KARACHI (INP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) have agreed to dissolve the National Assembly on August 8 to pave the way for a caretaker setup to take over the country affairs.

According to media reports, general election would be held within 90 days of the dissolution of the National Assembly. A summary to the effect would be sent to President Dr Arif Alvi. If the president did not sign the summary, the assembly would automatically stand dissolved within 48 hours.

Meanwhile, legal czars have also suggested Aug 8 for dissolution of the National Assembly. The assembly is going to complete its constitutional term on Aug 12 at 12am. The Sindh Assembly is also likely to be dissolved on Aug 8. The assembly secretary has received instructions in this regard. On Aug 7, members of the provincial assembly will have a photo session and get commendatory certificates.

Meanwhile, the Sindh Assembly is likely to be dissolved along with National Assembly on August 9, sources said Tuesday. Sources privy to the matter said that Sindh Assembly secretary has been tasked to complete all paper work regarding the dissolution of assembly by August 7.

The last session of the existing provincial assembly is expected to be summoned in first week of August, they say. The development comes hours after it emerged that the

## No date finalized yet to dissolve NA, says Marriyum Aurangzeb

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb Tuesday denied media reports regarding an agreement between Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to dissolve the national assembly on August 8.

Earlier it was reported that PML-N and PPP have agreed to dissolve the National Assembly on August 8, four days ahead of the term completion. However, Information Minister dispelled the notion through a tweet saying no decision has been taken yet regarding the dissolution of the assemblies.

She said the decision on the date to dissolve assemblies will be made after consulting Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and other allied parties that date will be announced officially. According to the earlier reports, the PPP had proposed to pack up the lower house of the Parliament on August 8 and the legal experts had also seconded it. Two other dates of August 9 and 10 were also under consideration for dissolution of the assembly. The term of the present National Assembly will expire on midnight on August 12. It may be mentioned here that under Article 224 the election to national or provincial assembly shall be held within 60 days of expiry of their term. The PPP has also agreed to dissolve the Sindh Assembly along with National Assembly.

National Assembly will be dissolved on August 08. The summary of dissolution of the lower house of the Parliament will be delivered to the President, sources said. "If the President kept the summary in pending, the assembly will stand dissolved in 48 hours as per the law," sources added. People's Party, the ruling party in Sindh, has also agreed with the federal government to dissolve the provincial legislature along with the NA, sources said.

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has summoned the session of the Constitutional Committee on July 20. The session will consider over matters related to the approval of the election reforms

law. All parliamentary parties' leaders have been invited to the session of the constitutional committee.

It is to be mentioned here that the lower house of the Parliament will complete its five-year tenure on August 13. "No final decision yet made with regard to the dissolution of the National Assembly on August 08," Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has clarified. "Reports about NA dissolution on August 08 are incorrect," she added. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other government ministers earlier said that the government's tenure will end by August 14 ending speculations that the ruling coalition was trying to extend its stay in power.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan, Farzana Zahir called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## NAB closes probe against power plants

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday decided to close inquiries against two power plants, causing a loss of Rs175 billion to the national kitty, annually.

Pakistan's circular debt has been continuously rising, with the total payable for the July-April FY23 period clocking in at Rs2,631 billion. In this situation decision makers are supposed to implement law across the board without fear and favour to save the exchequer from further losses.

A private television channel reported that the NAB chairman has okayed the closure of inquiries against Port Qasim and Sahiwal Coal power plants under new amended law. The Port Qasim Coal Power project was jointly set up by Saifur Rehman and the Qatari prince. The probe against the Sahiwal Coal Power project has also been closed on the orders of the graft-buster body's chairman. Both projects are causing a collective loss of Rs175 billion annually to the national kitty. Earlier this month, Acting President Sadiq Sanjrani signed the presidential ordinance for the recommended amendments to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Ordinance. The acting president issued the presidential ordinance for the NAB Amendment Ordinance.

The acting president issued the presidential ordinance for the NAB Amendment Ordinance. The acting president issued the presidential ordinance for the NAB Amendment Ordinance. The acting president issued the presidential ordinance for the NAB Amendment Ordinance.

## Qureshi bail extended

ISLAMABAD (INP): Anti-Terrorism Court in Islamabad on Tuesday extended the pre-arrest bail of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi till July 26 in two cases related to May 9 violence. ATC Judge Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain heard the case and Qureshi's council Ali Bukhari appeared before the court.

During the hearing, the counsel argued I argued that all other accused individuals in the case had been granted bail, emphasizing that if they did not play any role, they should be considered innocent. The court, in response, questioned the police authorities regarding their investigation. The police officials stated that the investigation was still ongoing and that no conclusive statements could be made at this point.

## PHC stops arrests of Ali Muhammad Khan

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Ijaz Anwar has stopped rearrests of former Federal Minister Ali Muhammad Khan while ordered provincial government as well as other respondents to submit record till 25 July, on Tuesday.

Additional Attorney Yasin Raza, Deputy Attorney General Ishfaq Daudzai and counsel for petitioner Ali Zaman Advocate while Salman Fayyaz Mir appeared on behalf of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) before PHC during hearing of Ali Muhammad Khan petition.

The counsel Ali Zaman Advocate argued that Ali Muhammad Khan is behind bars from last two months and arrested multiple in different cases while the cases are freshly booked against him.

The counsel added that

record of First Information Report (FIRs) and Inquiries against Ali Muhammad Khan didn't provide to him while requested for provision of record that petitioner can obtain relief from courts of law.

Additional Advocate General Barrister Yasin Raza informed that letters are written to concerned authorities for provision of record and added that the record should be produce before court following submission by competent department.

PHC has also ordered Deputy Attorney General and NAB prosecutor to submit record in case of inquiries initiated against Ali Muhammad Khan while adjourned further hearing till 25th July.

Meanwhile, the similar ordered competent authorities to submit reply regarding new schedule for procession and other arrangements during Muharram-ul-Haram till tomorrow (Thursday). The petition filed by Muharram Committee Imamia Jirga

while Shabbir Hussain Gigyani appeared before PHC on behalf of petitioner and Assistant Advocate General Mubashir Manzoor appear on behalf of provincial government.

The counsel argued that population as well as Imam Bargahs Ahle Tasheegh (Fiqah Jaffaria) are increased while administration had old data for processions while added that organizers booking in cases by holding procession rather than the scheduled. The counsel further added that administration didn't ready to hold meeting for new schedules with Muharram Committee, however, Assistant Advocate General informed that Chief Minister has called meeting of concerned authorities for new scheduling. PHC ordered to hold meeting with Muharram Committee regarding new schedules and ordered administration settle the issue within two days while adjourned further hearing for tomorrow (Thursday).

## S Arabia buys Turkish drones during Erdogan's visit

JEDDAH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia agreed on Tuesday to buy Turkish drones in the biggest defence contract in Turkey's history as President Tayyip Erdogan reaped the benefits of his diplomatic push to repair ties with Gulf powers and help Ankara's struggling economy.

Erdogan and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman attended the signing ceremony between Turkish defence firm Baykar and the Saudi defence ministry, Saudi state news agency SPA reported. Erdogan arrived in the Saudi Red Sea city of Jeddah on Monday for the first stop of a Gulf tour.

Saudi Arabia will acquire the drones "with the aim of enhancing the readiness of the kingdom's armed forces and bolstering its defence and manufacturing capabilities", Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman said in a tweet on Tuesday.

SPA did not give details about the value of the deal but Baykar CEO Haluk Bayraktar said it was the biggest defence and aviation export contract in Turkey's history.

"We signed a contract with the Saudi Arabian defence ministry for the Bayraktar Akinci (unmanned combat aerial vehicle) export and cooperation," he said in a Twitter post. Investments and funding from the Gulf have helped relieve pressure on Turkey's economy and its currency reserves since 2021 when Ankara launched a diplomatic effort to repair ties with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Turkey had been at odds for years with the two Gulf states over Ankara's support of pro-democracy movements in the Middle East and North Africa and the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018. Erdogan will travel to Qatar on Tuesday, the second stop of his first Gulf tour since being reelected in May. On Wednesday, he is due in the United Arab Emirates.

SPA said Erdogan and Prince Mohammed attended the signing of a defence cooperation plan by Prince Khalid and Turkish Defence Minister Yasar Guler. Developing a local military

industry has been part of an ambitious plan by Prince Mohammed to diversify the kingdom's economy away from oil.

Baykar said in a separate statement that the agreement with Riyadh entails cooperation on technology transfer and joint production "in order to advance the high technology development capability of the two countries". The two countries also inked several memorandums of understanding in various sectors, including energy, real estate and direct investments, SPA said.

Last month, Turkish Vice President Cevdet Yilmaz and Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek travelled to the UAE to discuss "economic cooperation opportunities" with counterparts, and they met President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Ankara said. Turkey's budget deficit surged to seven times the year-ago levels in June, data showed on Monday, while last month's annual inflation was close to 40 per cent with the lira nearly 29pc weaker this year.

## Alvi calls for boosting coop with Maldives

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has underlined the need for increasing trade and economic cooperation with Maldives for the mutual benefits of the two countries.

Talking to the outgoing High Commissioner of Maldives to Pakistan, Ms. Farzana Zahir, who called on him in Islamabad today, he said there is a great potential to expand bilateral trade and export of Pakistani products to Maldives, particularly textiles, fabrics, rice, cement and pharmaceutical. The President highlighted that Pakistan attaches immense importance to its relations with Maldives in bilateral context and within the framework of the SAARC, OIC, UN and Commonwealth.

He underlined the need for closer cooperation among countries of the world to counter the severity of natural disasters as well as climate change that had endangered both developed and developing countries alike. Dr Arif Alvi also emphasized on enhancing cooperation in the area of tourism and learn from each other's experience.

The President also highlighted that the isolation and persecution of Muslims by India is a matter of grave concern and the international community should take notice of the brutalities being committed by the Indian security forces against the Muslims, particularly in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He also called for revitalization of the SAARC enabling it to achieve its objectives. Referring to the rising wave of Islamophobia, the President emphasized that the Islamic countries should work together to counter the Islamophobia.

## IHC summons PCATP disputed election record

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Islamabad High Court summoned election result records from Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners (PCATP) in response to a plea challenging legality of the elections with allegations that the incumbent chairman of the body manipulated the polls in his favor.

The petitioners alleged that incumbent Chairman of PCATP Arif Changezi stole the elections claiming Changezi has declared himself as a victor in a hastily manner. Petitioner also alleged credibility of elections was shattered because of hackers' attack on the online voting system.

Advocate Supreme Court (ASC) Umer Ijaz Gilani has invoked the IHC jurisdiction in the

matter on behalf of Arch. Jehangir Khan Sherpao, Arch. Azhar M. Sualahi, Arch. Farmanullah Khan and Arch. Husnain Raza Khan. Issuing written order in the matter on Tuesday, single-member bench of the IHC comprising Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri directed PCATP registrar to depute a senior officer well conversant with facts of the case to appear, in person along with relevant record in order to assist the Court on the next date of hearing positively.

During hearing of the matter, ASC Gilani contended that elections of the Committee for the year 2023-25 were held and the result was announced on 08.03.2023 but the election process was finalized through online voting. He

apprised the bench that there is a report and the observation of the company, who was involved in the online voting that there was a hacking attack on the voting system, so the transparency of the elections cannot be guaranteed and elections have not been conducted in a transparent and clean manner.

Seeking court directives to set aside the election results, ASC Gilani further contended that out of five members of the election committee three members have also raised objections regarding transparency of the elections of PCATP. He said, "Hence on the basis of the report of the IT company as well as observations made by the members of the election committee, the election is liable to be set-aside".



PESHAWAR: KP Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan and Information Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal talking to media persons during their visit to CMH.

## Pak's foreign reserves surge by \$600m: PM

The prime minister, who earlier broke ground for the project and penned a testimonial, said that during Nawaz Sharif's tenure, \$30 billion Chinese investment came to the country in the form of CPEC, featuring power and road projects. He told the gathering that after the Chinese industry gone hitech, Pakistan had the golden opportunity to learn from the Chinese textile expertise, go for joint ventures and bring Chinese second-hand machinery to Pakistan to boost its exports.

He said during the last 14 months, the incumbent government remained in 'fire-fighting' mode as it had to cope with the unprecedented floods and record inflation, begotten by the Ukraine war. The prime minister said after the IMF agreement, the government would mainly focus on boosting industrial and agriculture sectors.

He said that a Special Investment Facilitation Council had been established with a mandate to attract investment to the agriculture, mining, information technology and exports sectors. He said the government would abide by the IMF agreement which had laid a basis for the economic reforms.

Citing Bangladesh's \$40 billion export of imported cotton, the prime minister said successful nations always learned lessons from past mistakes, and strove to cope with the challenge. "Now, we will have to get out of the loans and attract invest-

ment. This is what the Model Special Economic Zone is for to attract investment from China, UAE, Qatar and others to take Pakistan at par with the neighboring nations," he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said in the past, the SEZ turned into the development estate and the people have been minting money. Emphasising the provision of land to the investors in SEZs on easy terms, he said the land in the Bahawalpur Solar Park was leased out at just \$1 to the investors which was inevitable for them to save their capital to set up the industry. He also called for establishing a mechanism to cancel the lease agreement if the investor failed to develop the industry within the specified time-frame.

Planning Minister AhsanIqbal, in his address, said after 2020, the establishment of nine industrial zones was agreed under CPEC but the previous government put all the projects to the back-burner. The officers were implicated in false cases which begot a crisis of decision making, he added. He said the incumbent government took up the SEZs on priority basis and started reviving the stalled projects like the Rashakai SEZ which was about to be inaugurated.

Emphasising the execution of 5E framework, the minister said the country had no other option but to take its exports to \$100 billion and the SEZ would act as a powerhouse for

the purpose. He suggested that land should be provided on easy terms to the investors for the SEZs.

Federal Minister for Industries and Production Makhdoom Syed Murtaza said with the establishment of Islamabad Model Special Economic Zone, a longstanding demand of the Federal Capital's industrial community would be addressed. Highlighting his ministry's performance, he said they addressed the anomalies in the processes like the import of solar panels and that the petrochemical and coal gas policies would be finalised by July 30.

He called for taking advantage of Pakistan's cheap labour and an ease of doing business environment in the country. Secretary Board of Investment Asad Rehman Gillani said that the PM's vision of "investors are my masters" gave the government machinery a strength to execute the projects.

He told the gathering that the SEZs would help develop the people-to-people and business-to-business contacts. He said the Islamabad SEZ would be established over 1000 acres of land on the junction of N-5 and Islamabad Expressway, and would create around 1,000 jobs. Another industrial zone was already functional in the nearby area, he added. The BOI secretary said the industry with low-carbon footprints would be estab-

lished in the Zone which would bring in an investment of around \$2.5 billion.

PM stresses upon efforts to facilitate overseas Pakistanis with IT-related initiatives: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed the need of making efforts to facilitate the overseas Pakistanis with the introduction of different information technology related initiatives.

Addressing an inauguration ceremony of the launch of 'Online Temporary Mobile Registration System for the Overseas Pakistanis and Foreign Nationals', the prime minister termed the initiative a good step to facilitate millions of overseas Pakistanis, by enabling them to get registration of their mobile phones during their visit to Pakistan and without paying any taxes.

He maintained that the facility would now enable the overseas Pakistanis to use their mobile phones for a period of four months after registration on their visit to Pakistan. The prime minister also advised the relevant authorities to streamline the process and hinted that a financial package for the overseas Pakistanis would be announced by the government in the coming days.

He opined that the developed countries had made strides in the IT sector and Pakistan possessed immense tal-

ent as millions of younger people were getting IT education. He stressed that the vast opportunities in the IT sector should be fully tapped.

The ceremony was attended by ministers, parliamentarians and relevant authorities. The prime minister said that under the PM's youth programmes, a huge chunk of funds had been set aside to imparting vocational and skills development education to the youth, besides the laptops were being given to the students on merit.

Stressing upon the promotion of IT sector, he viewed the growth of IT sector, exploration of minerals and development of the agriculture sector as the main ingredients of the country's economy. He advised the authorities to expedite the work on IT park and said with the realization of the IT-related projects, the country would make progress by leaps and bounds.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed AminulHaque highlighted the efforts of his ministry in the introduction of the facility under the vision of the prime minister for a digital Pakistan. For the first time in Pakistan's history, he said, the smartphones were imported by the country.

A member of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority apprised that the online facilitation system for the overseas Pakistanis would be equipped with three link-

ages. The overseas Pakistanis, students, foreign tourists and labourers could avail the facility for a period of 120 days, he added.

PM, Punjab CM discuss matter of salaries, pensions of provincial employees: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday discussed the matter of Punjab government employees' pensions and salaries with caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi via telephone.

He discussed with the chief minister out raising salaries and pensions of Punjab government employees at par with the federal government employees. Mohsin Naqvi assured the prime minister that the matter would be presented before the provincial cabinet again.

PM grieved over sudden death of Tariq Fazal Chaudhry's son: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow over sudden death of PML-N leader Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry's son who died in a road accident here on Monday night.

The prime minister, in a statement issued by the PM office, offered his heartfelt condolence and sympathies to the bereaved family of late Anza Tariq. He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude. He also prayed for grant of eternal peace to the departed soul. Meanwhile, in his tweet, the prime minister said that for parents, nothing was more heart shattering than losing a child.