

NA session summons today
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday separately summoned the sessions of NA and Senate to be held on July 20 and July 24 respectively. The National Assembly session will be held on Thursday, July 20 at 1700 hours while the Senate would meet on Monday, July 24 at 1500 hours. The president summoned sessions of both Houses of Parliament on the PM's advice.



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Ukrainian FM due today
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba will undertake an official visit to Pakistan on July 20-21, a spokesperson of the ministry of foreign affairs said on Wednesday. During his visit, Foreign Minister Kuleba will call on the Prime Minister and hold detailed talks with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of MQM led by Convener Dr. Khalid Maqbook Siddiqui called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Civilians' military trials

Army Act does not apply to all: CJ

ISLAMABAD (INP): Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan on Wednesday detailed the losses incurred during the violent events of May 9 as he again sought the formation of a full court bench.

The development came as a six-member Supreme Court (SC) bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and consisting Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha A. Malik, heard a set of pleas challenging the military trials of civilians.

During Wednesday's hearing, AGP Awan said that the violent incidents of May 9 had caused losses of Rs2.5 billion, including Rs1.9bn to military installations. A day earlier, CJP Bandial had observed that civilians should not be put through the rigours and harshness of military courts, since they enjoy certain constitutional protections, and besides, such trials were not according to the Constitution.

At the outset of hearing, AGP Awan came to the rostrum to continue his arguments. He informed the bench that the attack on the Lahore Corps Commander House took place at 5:40pm, noting that all attacks on military installations took place "approximately at the same time".

"On May 9, sensitive military installations were attacked between 3pm and 7pm," he said. AGP Awan said that a wall was demolished at the Mianwali airbase where airplanes were parked, adding that fuel for the planes was also present there at the time. He said that the violent incidents of May 9 had caused losses of Rs2.5 billion. The AGP also showed pictures of people entering General Headquarters Rawalpindi as well as images of miscreants wearing the Lahore Corps Commander's uniform.

The attorney general said that a Canteen Store Department (CSD) store was set

ablaze in Lahore. "On May 9, the situation in Sindh and Balochistan was under control," he noted. He further said that the army showed flexibility regarding the May 9 incidents. "Military officers are not trained to deal with protesters like police officials are," he said. "Are you saying that army officers only know how to shoot?" CJP Bandial asked. At this, AGP Awan said that army officers were not taught how to disperse such crowds.

At this, Justice Naqvi interjected and said that the case concerning the 21st Amendment was completely different. "Military courts were established through a constitutional amendment," he said. "You are saying that it is the first time the people attacked military installations," the CJP remarked. He also asked AGP Awan to talk about the points raised by the petitioners. It was worth mentioned here that the petitions were filed by former CJP Jawwad S. Khawaja, Aitzaz Ahsan, Karamat Ali, and PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

Khawaja, who filed the petition through his counsel Advocate Khawaja Ahmad, requested the top court to declare the trial of civilians by military courts unconstitutional. The former CJP pleaded that Section 2(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the Pakistan Army Act were inconsistent with the fundamental rights conferred by the Constitution and therefore void, and should be struck down.

Likewise, Ahsan, who has also served as a former law minister and also spearheaded the 2007 lawyers' movement, explained that the primary purpose of his petition was to ensure that none of the thousands of civilians who have admittedly been arrested for allegedly having partaken in the May 9 violence and being nominated for trial be tried by military courts. The petitioner said he did not seek to scuttle the trial of any civilian before any lawfully established court of criminal jurisdiction.

Cypher gate was a preplanned conspiracy: Azam Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Principal secretary to the former prime minister Azam Khan on Wednesday claimed that the ex-premier had pre-planned the US cypher drama in an attempt to gain political mileage.

According to media reports, the former bureaucrat, in his confession, said when he provided the ex-premier with the cypher, he was "euphoric" and termed the language as a "US blunder". The ex-premier told him [Azam] he would display the cypher in front of the public and "twist the narrative: a foreign conspiracy is being hatched in collusion with local partners and play the victim card".

The confession further stated that the former premier kept cypher with himself in violation of the prevailing law. The issue arose first time when the former prime minister displayed a letter during a public meeting in the federal capital on March 27 2022, claiming that it was a cypher from a foreign nation, which mentioned that his government should be removed from power.

He, however, didn't reveal the contents of the letter nor mention the name of the nation that had sent it. But a few days later, he named the United States and said that Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Affairs Donald Lu had sought his removal.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) reacted to former prime minister's ex-principal secretary Azam Khan's what they said 'cypher drama' statement. As per details, PTI spokesperson said that the unverified statement associated with Azam Khan is full of contradictions.

The statement further read that Azam Khan's disappearance case is registered and the police have failed to find him out. According to legal experts, recording a statement before the magistrate under Article 164 is unimaginable. PTI spokesperson said that the former prime minister has already revealed the real reasons and outcome of the forced disappearance and illegal arrests.

Furthermore, National Security Committee (NSC) has already verified the content of the US cypher, and the cabinet committee declassified and analyzed the cypher before it was tabled to NSC, the spokesperson added.

Meanwhile, the Chairman Senate and President urged the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) to investigate the US cypher. Instead of false statement, the government should inform the nation and court regarding the whereabouts of Azam Khan and what are the charges against him, the PTI spokesperson said. On the other side, the PTI chairman and former prime minister said in his reaction to Azam Khan's statement that he will not comment on the matter until the complete information comes out. He said that it's not known yet in what circumstances Azam Khan made these statements.

sion] on this, but I think the Official Secrets Act is more relevant [in this case]," the interior minister said.

"Nevertheless, this is a punishable crime — to conspire against the country, expose a secret document and use it for your own interests and to damage the country's interest and then to steal it, take it in your possession — this is a clear crime under the Official Secrets Act and it should be prosecuted. "A punishment should be meted out over this and the [cipher] should be recovered," he said.

Responding to a question about the PTI chief's arrest in cases against him, Sanaullah said, "Whether he is arrested first or gets convicted by the court, either of these decisions could be made". Meanwhile, investigations against him in various cases were being conducted in which "evidence is also being collected and he is also being prosecuted".

While the PML-N praised the alleged confession as evidence of wrongdoing, the PTI stood firm on the "existence" of the cypher. Responding to reporters' queries after appearing for a hearing at an Islamabad court, the PTI chief said, "Azam Khan is an honest man. Until I hear it from his mouth, I will not accept any statement." PTI's Farrukh Habib responded to the development by alleging that Azam was first abducted, after which "all law enforcement and investigative agencies" denied having him in their custody.

Azam's statement a 'charge sheet' against Imran: Sana

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Wednesday that the reported confession of ex-principal secretary Azam Khan was a "charge sheet" against PTI chief Imran Khan. His remarks came as an alleged confession of Azam, Imran's principal secretary when he was prime minister, surfaced on social media wherein he claimed that the narrative behind the cypher — which the PTI chief has for long presented as evidence of a "foreign conspiracy" — to oust him from the top office — was fabricated.

Interestingly, the development comes a day after the Lahore High Court (LHC) withdrew a stay order against the call-up notice to Imran by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in an inquiry into an audio leak relating to the cypher. At the same time, a senior US official also publicly defended Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu, who was blamed by Imran for or-estraining the no-confidence vote that led to his ouster. At the outset of the press conference in Islamabad, Sanaullah said Azam's statement was a "charge sheet against Imran Khan Niazi".

"It shows who conspired against this country and its institutions and played a game for his personal and political interest while damaging the country's interests. "On the one hand, he pushed the economy into a crisis and on the other,

damaged the country's foreign ties," he maintained. The minister said this person had "committed a crime" for which he should be "punished at all costs as those who played with the country's interests have confessed their crime".

And former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also "fully involved in this crime", he added. Elaborating on the alleged crime, he said, "Making a classified document or a [piece of] information public and then taking it in one's possession — no person is legally eligible to have it (cipher) in their custody". The minister also likened the case to proceedings initiated against former US president Donald Trump on allegations of mishandling classified documents.

He also alleged that while "Imran told Azam that the cypher has gone missing, but my assessment is that he (Imran) still has it". "So the cypher is with him. He has not just committed the crime of making it public, but he continues to be guilty of a crime by keeping it in his possession until he is arrested in this case and the cypher is recovered," the minister said.

During the press conference, the interior minister was also asked about whether a case against those involved in the alleged conspiracy would be registered under Article 6 (high treason) of the Constitution. "The law department's opinion would be the final [dec-

The Frontier Post

PM, MQM discuss setup of caretaker governments

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Mutahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) led by the Convenor Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Wednesday and discussed in detail the matter of formation of caretaker governments besides overall current political situation in the country.

Federal Minister for Information Technology Syed Amin ul Haque, Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Dr Farooq Sattar and Mustafa Kamal were also part of the delegation. Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique and Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq were present in the meeting.

The meeting was held in connection with the prime minister's consultations with the allies with respect to formation of the caretaker governments. During the meeting matter of recent population census also came under discussion. The delegation paid tributes to the prime minister on personally monitoring the federal government's ongoing projects in Karachi and ensuring speedy work on these projects on priority basis.

The MQM delegation also praised PM Shehbaz Sharif and his economic team's efforts for completing the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Shehbaz urges countrymen to promote tolerance, social justice: On the advent of the new Islamic year, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif urged countrymen to strive for emulating the noble teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions besides building a society featuring principles of social justice and equality.

"Let us pledge today that we will strive to emulate the noble qualities established by our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions. Let us promote tolerance, understanding and respect for each other regardless of our differences. Let us work towards building a society that upholds the principles of social justice, equality and compassion," the prime minister said in his message to the nation at the start of Hijri year 1445.

Extending greetings to the nation

and the whole Muslim Ummah, the prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty that the new Islamic year proved to be a year of peace, progress and prosperity for Pakistan as well as the Muslim world. He also prayed that the new year also brought ease to the lives of Muslims suffering across the world and people of Kashmir and Palestine got deliverance from oppression and achieve peace, progress and prosperity.

He said the new Islamic year also reminded the moments when the family of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sacrificed their lives under the leadership of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and became immortal in the battle between truth and falsehood. The prime minister said that Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions sacrificed their lives to uphold the principles of truth and justice, and his unwavering belief against oppression and tyranny was an everlasting example of courage and sacrifice.

He said the said events were also a reminder of the values of compassion, justice, and unity which also taught the followers to stand up against injustice and oppression besides working for a society featuring peace, harmony, and co-existence. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that Allah Almighty had reduced the economic difficulties of Pakistan consequent to the government's hard work and prayed for the country's permanent riddance from the economic problems. He prayed to Allah Almighty to make Pakistan a cradle of progress and prosperity and that the whole nation got united setting aside their differences.

S Asia not to attain peace without just, peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reiterated that without the just and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute, South Asia would never be able to attain durable peace and unlock its true development potential.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said the government and the people of Pakistan expressed their unflinching support and solidarity with the Kashmiris living in Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in the world on the Day of Accession to Pakistan.

The Day marked the adoption of a

resolution by the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference at a convention in Srinagar in 1947 that called for merging Kashmir with Pakistan, he added. "We strongly condemn the relentless Indian persecution of Kashmiris & grave violation of human rights and call upon the UN and international community to ensure the implementation of the UN resolutions," he further added in a tweet.

Premier directs for swift reforms in loss-making state-owned enterprises: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the relevant authorities to introduce reforms on priority basis in the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) inflicting loss to the national exchequer.

The prime minister, who chaired a meeting to review the reforms in the SOEs, instructed to ensure the transparency in the process of outsourcing the services as well as public-private partnership. He said the government would ensure that the caretaker government carried forward the policies of the national interest to achieve consistent progress.

The prime minister said the government was taking all-out measures to uplift the working of institutions at par with international standards and provide the best facilities to the masses. In the briefing, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was told that the reforms process of the SOEs was going on swiftly.

It was told that government would ensure the inclusion of experts in the boards of the SOEs to establish modern systems and provide better facilities. The prime minister was briefed on the performance indicators of the institutions as well as the corporations and the ongoing reforms process there. Federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Syed Naveed Qamar, Makhdoom Murtaa Mahmood, Engineer Khurram Dastgir, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Advisor Ahmad Cheema and special assistants to PM Jahanzeb Khan and Tariq Bajwa, and senior officers attended the meeting. Pakistan's youth always excelled whenever given opportunities: PM

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad said the country's youth always proved their mettle at the international level whenever provided the right opportunities.

FIA summons Imran in cypher case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) Counter Terrorism Wing has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister in cypher case.

As per details, the PTI chief is summoned to the FIA Islamabad Headquarters on July 25 in the cypher case. The joint inquiry team will investigate the PTI chief and former prime minister. The inquiry team was constituted at the request of the federal cabinet.

Furthermore, the FIA notice ordered to bring all the documents related to the cypher and if the PTI chief did not appear before the FIA, unilateral action can be taken against the former prime minister. Earlier, Azam Khan, ex-principal secretary to the PTI chairman and former prime minister made startling revelations and claimed that the former PM used US cypher for his 'political gains' and to avert a no-confidence motion against him.

Khan, who had earlier been "missing" since last month, suddenly appeared before the scene and made startling revelations about US cypher, while recording his statement under the CrPC 164 before a magistrate. Reacting to Azam Khan's statement, the PTI chairman and former prime minister said that he will not comment on the matter until the complete information comes out. He said that it's not known yet in what circumstances Azam Khan made these statements.

However, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah asserted that the confessional statement of ex-principal secretary Azam Khan was a 'charge sheet' against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan and the latter should be punished for anti-state 'cypher drama'.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Municipality busy in cleaning the sewerage holes after heavy downpour in twin cities.

Rain-related incidents claim 17 lives across country

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a devastating turn of events, heavy rainfall in the twin cities led to the collapse of walls, resulting in the tragic loss of 13 lives while four people were electrocuted in Lahore taking the tally to 17.

The downpour unleashed chaos as the normally tranquil areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi experienced a series of unfortunate incidents. One such incident occurred on Peshawar Road near Golra Mor in the federal capital. When a wall of under-construction underpass, measuring approximately 100 feet in length and 11 feet in height, came crashing down, burying 11 laborers beneath its debris.

The victims, who were trapped under the weight of the fallen structure, succumbed to their injuries before rescue personnel from the renowned Rescue 1122 could reach the scene. Promptly responding to the distress call, the dedicated Rescue 1122 team sprang

into action, employing heavy machinery to commence rescue operations. Amid the perilous situation, four workers were successfully extracted from the rubble, providing a glimmer of hope amidst the tragedy.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of 12 lives due to heavy rain near Golra Mor, Peshawar Road here.

The prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this loss with fortitude. He directed the local administration to remain on high alert due to heavy rains in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Three people electrocuted in metropolis Lahore including one person near Ravi River while two children lost their lives in the rain related incidents in city. A 35-year-old person lost his

life when he was electrocuted from switch board in Harbanspura while two kids lost electrocuted from electricity pole while swimming.

Following the incident, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) President Abdul Aleem Khan tweeted his condolences to the families of the victims of Golra Mor wall collapse in Islamabad. "Deeply saddened by the loss of precious lives in the underpass accident," the politician wrote, adding that, "Our hearts go out to the affected families during this hour of grief".

Khan urged the concerned authorities to implement necessary measures to ensure the safety of workers. "May Allah grant forgiveness to the departed souls and provide a swift recovery for the injured. Amen," he added. In a separate incident, tragedy struck the Muhammad Town area of Khanna police station as an 11-year-old girl lost her life when another wall collapsed amidst the rainfall.

پراونشل آفیسر (انسپکشن) / ایکسٹرنل انسپکٹر | محلہ انرجی اینڈ پاور حکومت خیبر پختونخوا
تیسری منزل، بوائز فنڈ بلڈنگ نزد جاز بلیڈز پاور کیٹ، فون: 091-9211343

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PHC dispose-off 2 writs on submission of record

— how can prisoner (Shehryar Afridi) in MPO

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Ijaz Anwar disposed-off writ petition of former Member National Assembly (MNA) Anwar and tehsil mayor Swabi Atta Ullah on submission of record of cases registered against them, on Wednesday.

However, Justice Ijaz Anwar remarked if cases are registering for political victimization then people shouldn't trust Anti-Corruption while Assistant Advocate General Barrister Yasin Raza, Assistant Director Anti-corruption Farrukh Ser and In-charge Charsadda appeared before court.

One case at Anti-corruption Establishment and three other cases with police are registered First Information Reports (FIRs) against former MNA Anwar Taj at Mardan circle, PHC told during hearing.

PHC further informed that one case is under proceeding against tehsil Mayor Swabi Atta Ullah with Anti-corruption while there is no other cases him while Shah Faisal Advocate on behalf of petitioners appeared before court.

The counsel argued that cases are registering on daily while they are obtaining record on court directives, however, Barrister Yasin Raza argued that all available information has been produced before court

and requested for disposal of the writ.

PHC has dispose-off both writ petitions of former MNA and tehsil mayor Swabi on provision of record before court.

Meanwhile, PHC has ordered Deputy Commissioner Kohat to appear before court on next hearing along with record of cases registered against former Federal Minister Shehryar Afridi under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO).

Assistant Advocate General Barrister Yasin Raza on behalf of provincial government and counsel for petitioner Shah Faisal Ottomankhel advocate appeared before court during hearing.

The counsel argued that Shehryar Afridi is behind

the bars from 46 days under MPO while competent authorities didn't informed regarding number of cases registered against him. He further added that court has ordered for submission on previous hearing but provincial government didn't compliance to the PHC orders.

The counsel further argued that Shehryar Afridi was nominated in case under MPO when he was behind the bar, while Justice Ijaz Anwar inquired how can a prisoner shall book in the case under public order.

PHC has ordered DC Kohat to appear before court on next hearing and directed provincial government to submit record of cases registered against Shehryar Afridi.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Tori chairing a meeting at OPF regional office.

CM's aide visits Social Welfare Directorate

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister on Social Welfare and Women Empowerment, Salma Begum on Wednesday visited Directorate of Social Welfare Merged Districts and reviewed its performance and operational matters.

She was accompanied by Secretary Social Welfare, Zia-ul-Haq and other concerned officials. He also visited various sections of the directorate where she was briefed about the activities of social welfare department in merged districts, ongoing schemes of Accelerated Implementation Program, disbursement of scholarships, establishment of drug addict rehabilitation center in Khyber and Orakzai, establishment of child protection centers in frontier regions and schools for special children.

Pakhtunkhwa radio to observe simplicity

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 92.2 has announced to observe simplicity in programs that are scheduled to be aired from Muharram 1st to Youm-e-Ashura.

The news bulleting and current affair programs would be aired without background music while programs in connection with Muharram would be broadcasted in a special transmission.

Ulema and religious scholars including Qari Rooh Ullah Madni, Qibla Ayaz, Mufti Abdullah Shah, Maulana Bashir and Qari Rehmat Gul would also be invited in special transmission.

PESCO notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electrical Supply Company (PESCO) on Wednesday notified power suspension from various grid stations on Thursday (July 20) due to unavoidable maintenance work.

The power supply would remain suspended from 220 KV Mardan Grid Station from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultant consumer of 11 KV Muhabat Abad, Shekh Maltoon, Express, Industrial, Bacha Khan Medical College, Benazir Children Hospital, Bank Road, Muslim Abad, Nissata Road, Misri Abad, Rural 1, Bagh Iram, Eid Gah feeders would face inconvenience.

Peshawar FC attack: Police writes to CTD over issue of FIR

PESHAWAR (INP): On the matter of registration of an FIR into the blast near an FC vehicle in Peshawar's posh Hayatabad area, the city's Tattara police station has sent a message to the Counter-Terrorism Department.

The letter states that FC officials were performing duty in an official vehicle when a suicide bomber rammed his car into the FC vehicle.

The suicide bomber died

on the spot, while the official vehicle was completely destroyed, the letter says.

The face of the attacker remained pretty much safe and the fingerprints remained intact in the bombing, the letter adds.

Meanwhile, the CTD and investigation agencies are probing into Tuesday's suicide bombing.

The engine and chassis number of the attacker's vehicle have been sent for a forensic test.

The investigation agencies have obtained the CCTV footage from cameras installed around Hayatabad.

The engine and chassis number of the vehicle used in the attack have been sent for forensics.

The attacker's organs and blood samples have also been obtained and sent for a DNA analysis.

Six FC personnel were injured in the alleged suicide blast on Tuesday.

Eight districts declared sensitive during Muharram

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has declared eight districts of the province as sensitive during the Muharram processions. The districts include Peshawar, Kohat, Hangu, Dera Ismail Khan, Kurram, Orakzai, and Tank.

Moreover, 4,500 places of worship were declared as the most sensitive during Muharram in these eleven districts of the province.

Based on the information provided by the police and security forces, the Home Department has decided to

deploy the police, Frontier Constabulary, and

Frontier Corps to ensure security at these sensitive places of worship throughout Muharram. To prevent any untoward incidents, the police have been instructed to seal the routes of mourning processions in all these districts.

The 1st of Muharram marks the start of the Islamic new year. The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee on Tuesday announced that the Muharram moon has not been sighted in Pakistan and Youm-e-

Ashur — Muharram 10 — will be observed on July 29 (Saturday).

According to a statement issued by the committee, the first of Muharram will fall on July 20 (Thursday). The meeting for the sighting was presided over by committee chairman Maulana Abdul Khair Azad.

While making the announcement, Maulana Azad said that meetings of zonal crescent sighting committees were held in all the provinces, but no evidence was received from any part of the country.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali addressing during "Kuli Kachehri" at Qamar Din area.

Secretary expresses gratitude to UNFPA

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Relief Department, Abdul Basit on Wednesday participated in the UNFPA Mid-Year Review Meeting and shared key findings from the collaborative study "GBViE Strengthening Humanitarian Development Nexus" by RRSD and UNFPA's Gender and Child Cell. The study influenced vital policies like the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Policy and Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) framework, aimed at enhancing preparedness and response in vulnerable communities.

Abdul Basit presented comprehensive insights and recommendations from the study, serving as valuable resources for future interventions and the well-being of those affected by emergencies. The Monsoon Contingency Plan for 2023 was also discussed, outlining measures to address monsoon season challenges and protect communities from potential disasters.

Secretary Relief Abdul Basit expressed gratitude to UNFPA for their support, strengthening the partnership between RRSD and UNFPA in addressing gender-based violence and promoting sustainable development goals.

Dr Luay Shabaneh from UNFPA praised RRSD's commitment to gender equality and inclusive humanitarian responses, acknowledging the importance of the DRR Policy and GBViE framework in creating a safer environment.

PPP comes to power in next general polls, says Inqilabi

PESHAWAR (APP): The Deputy Secretary Information PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Gohar Inqilabi said on Wednesday that the party will win and come to power in the next general elections.

In a statement issued here, he said that the party is fully capable to run the affairs of the country in a better manner and steered it out of the prevailing crises.

He said that the PPP has prepared a master plan to make Pakistan a prosperous, green and developed country by providing all basic amenities of life to the people of cities, towns and villages across the country.

Gohar Inqilabi said that after coming into power in 2008, it did the historic feat of the 18th Constitutional Amendment and guaranteed rights to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other small federating units.

During the same period, he said the province was renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to meet the longstanding demand of the people of the province for granting identity to them. Furthermore, the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award was also announced to increase the shares of the small provinces in the federal divisible pool.

He said that the 18th Constitutional Amendment was the big achievement of the former President Asif Ali Zardari, which other rulers could not do in their times.

Gohar Inqilabi said that the PTI chairman Imran Khan has destroyed the country and its economy by raising the slogan of change.

He said that PPP will save the country from destruction and will again put it on the track of progress and development.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister on Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Salma Begum presiding over a meeting.

Govt sends Pakistanis abroad for employment after signing MoUs: Tori

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Sajid Hussain Tori here Wednesday said the government was sending Pakistanis abroad for employment after signing proper MoUs and agreements with the foreign countries to ensure their jobs security and dignified stay there.

The Minister said that under proper agreement and MoUs, the skilled and semi skilled workforce of Pakistan were being sent to different countries for employment to earn valuable foreign exchange for the country.

"People are not go by themselves rather being sent abroad under proper MoUs and agreements signed with 16 different countries to ensure their jobs security and dignified stay in these states," he said.

The federal minister said that uptill now, MoUs were signed with about 16 countries for abroad employment to Pakistanis and some more agreements were under consideration.

The Minister said vocational education and professional training was impera-

tive for sustainable progress and development of the country.

"Without quality education and vocational training to youth, the country's development seemed difficult and collective efforts was required to promote technical education in all areas of Pakistan," he said.

He expressed these views during separate meetings of officers and focal persons at regional office of the Overseas Pakistan Foundation (OPF), Peshawar.

Sajid Tori said that travelling abroad through illegal means should be discouraged as such negative practices were not only inflicting financial losses but also causes great difficulty to immigrants besides tarnishing the country's image overseas.

The Federal Minister said that efforts was being made to provide rights to labourers associated with mines and mineral sector in line of the standard of the International Labour Organization.

Sajid Hussain Tori directed the concerned authorities to address problems of the shortage of staff and provide all basic facilities to OPF schools.

Earlier, the Minister was informed that 114 complaints out of 151 complaints received by OPF Regional Office has been addressed. Most of these complaints were related to land and law and order issues.

Underscoring the need of spreading awareness among people regarding importance of role of overseas Pakistanis in the country's development, the Minister said shortage of staff at OPF schools would be addressed.

OPF schools at North Waziristan and South Waziristan districts would be opened.

The four years long pending funds cases have been cleared due to cooperation of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development.

As many as Rs794.86 million education scholarship to 3399 students, Rs122.8 million for marriage grants and Rs73.7 million death grant to 130 people have been provided during 2022-23.

After recommendations of the committee, one lakh journalists were being brought under jurisdiction of EOBI.

One day training session on flour fortification held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Nutrition International conducted a training of Food department officials and stake holders of Peshawar and surrounding districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on fortification processes and QAQC to scale up wheat flour fortification in the province.

The main objective of this activity is to facilitate initiation of food fortification in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to reduce micronutrient deficiencies in the province.

Nutrition International has provided necessary technical support to the government in all provinces and was able to get the food fortification enacted in three provinces of Pakistan.

Imtiaz Ali Shah, Provincial Program Manager Nutrition International told that our organization is reaching 123 million people in Pakistan with fortified food products and is the leading organization in the area of food fortification globally.

Director Food Khyber Pakhtunkhwa informed that Nutrition International had provided support in approving mandatory food fortification Act in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Food Department was able to get this approved amendments by Law Departments and the new Provincial Assembly or ordinance will

approves it soon final.

He also informed the participants that the Food Department will in near future implement fortification of wheat flour project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Imtiaz Ali Shah told that Nutrition International with the support of Food Department will launch a pilot Chakki project in the

province to help reduce the micronutrient deficiencies.

Dr. Abdul Sattar Shah, Director Technical Food Safety Authority & Halal Food Authority Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has shared the Food Safety protocols. At the end of the session Director Food has distributed shields and certificates amongst participants.



PESHAWAR: City president of PPP Zulfiqar Afghan addressing at Peshawar Press Club. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

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In brief

FC distributes ration at Tirah F.P. Report

TIRAH: Frontier Corps (FC) North in collaboration with Ehsas Foundation is continuously focusing to help out destitute families of Bazzar Zakhkhel, Tirah by providing daily utility items. For the purpose, 1000 Ration bags are distributed among the needy families. Each Ration package were having 80 Kg flour, 5 litre cooking oil, 5 Kg sugar & 5 Kg pulses. Locals appreciated the efforts of Frontier Corps North in facilitating the poverty-stricken families in current economic situation.

DPO visits checkpoints F.P. Report

WANA: District Police Officer (DPO) South Waziristan Lower Farman Ullah visited Police Station (PS) Raghzai, Checkpoints Angoor Ada and Khamrang Near Pak Afghan Border, inspected all new buildings, met local tribal elders and dignitaries. The DPO reviewed the law and order and security arrangements in detail, SHO Police station Raghzai gave a detailed briefing about the security arrangements and law and order, on which Mr. DPO expressed his satisfaction. While speaking, the DPO said that the police officers are responsible for the lives and property of the people and it is our duty to fulfill the responsibility properly. People's lives and property will be protected, only then, with positive changes in citizens' attitudes towards the police, more respect for the department will increase. The police officers should take care of the sanctity of the self-respect of all the tribal elders of the area and take full action against the criminal elements with the cooperation of the white-clothed tribal leaders, and cooperation of tribesmen will help in keeping the society free from crime. On this occasion DPO issued instructions to the police to use bulletproof helmets and jackets and to remain alert to deal with any emergency in view of the current situation.

Kohat Police seized hashish F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat Police Wednesday seized 118.305kg hashish was recovered from the secret compartments of the motor car by arresting the accused smugglers. According to details, Kohat Jangal Khel Police thwarted an attempt to smuggle a huge consignment of drugs at Gulshanabad Check Post. The operation was carried out by SHO Jangal Khel Roman Khan and his police team. A huge consignment of drugs was being smuggled from Dara Adamkhel to Mianwali. The arrested smugglers have been transferred to Jangal Khel Police Station and a case has been registered against them.

Two killed, four injured

ATTOCK (PPI): Unidentified armed men killed shot dead two people and injured four others in former Campbellpur district of Punjab province during the late hours of Tuesday night, police said Wednesday. The incident was reported in a native village Kahnda in the Jandkay tehsil of Attock district. The deceased victims have been identified as 35 years old Muhammad Shamroz, 34 years old Sala Khan Gul whereas the injured ones are 22 years old Inamullah, 24 years old Sajjad, 18 years old Jawad and 19 years old Sala Salman. Upon receiving the information about the incident the Rescue teams rushed towards the scene and shifted the injured to Tehsil Hospital Fatah Jung for medical aid.



QUETTA: Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khahir Azad addressing during Qaumi Paigham Pakistan Aman conference.

Resolution to civic problems demanded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Residents of Talash have demanded funds for the incomplete development projects, construction of a jirga hall, replacement of rusted water supply pipes, restoration of Talash Nadra office, provision of gas facility, increase in traffic police staff, ban on substandard chips and papars, ending of over-billing and replacement of decades' old power transmission lines in the area.

The demands were made during an open 'kutcheri' held at Talash with the additional deputy commissioner Abdul Wali Khan in the chair here on Wednesday. The Timergara tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanul Din and heads of various government departments including education, health, Pesco, public health engineering, agriculture, communication and works were also in attendance. The area elders Dr Noor Muhammad, former district councillor Ibrahim Khan, former tehsil councillor Malak Barkat Khan, village council chairman Noor Ahmad Jan, social activist Fazal Wahab Swati, Haji Wali Rehman, Sher Muhammad Utmankhel, Riaz Hassan, Hanifullah and others highlighted civic issues faced by local residents.

They complained that

several development projects had been incomplete for years due to lack of funds. The area elders pointed out that different diseases were spread in the area due to decades' old rusted pipelines of water supply schemes. They demanded that the administration take practical steps for replacing the old pipelines. They said the previous government and the commissioner Malakand division had announced the construction of a jirga hall in Talash but the promise was yet to be materialized. The residents said the street lights in the main Talash bazaar were out of order for several months but the tehsil municipality had done nothing to make them functional. They said that traffic at Talash always remained jammed so the traffic staff should be increased.

Speaking on the occasion the ADC Abdul Wali Khan said the administration would try its best to resolve all the issues highlighted by the elders. The ADC issued directives to heads of various departments for resolving their respective problems on the spot. He said that a letter would be sent to the caretaker government for solving some issues related to it. The official thanked the residents for extending

their cooperation to the administration.

JI stands with overseas Pakistanis demands:

Afkari: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Dir Lower District Ameer Aizaz-ul-Mulk Afkari has said that overseas Pakistanis are the capital of the country and nation, 9 million people of the country are sending billions of rupees monthly to Pakistan by working hard in foreign countries.

The government is not aware of the problems of overseas Pakistanis and they are being neglected continuously, he expressed these views while addressing the Eid Milan party organized by the overseas Pakistanis at Saffrae Kandau, a tourist place in Dir Lower.

JI overseas president Haji Ameer Zaman Khan, Haji Qari Fazlur Rehman, Haji Saeed Gul, Haji Malik Imtiaz, Hafizullah Khaksar, Atiq Rehman, Sheikh Ejaz Arshad also spoke. The service rendered by overseas Pakistanis in Arab and other countries, especially Malakand Division, overseas Pakistanis is not hidden from anyone. I want to represent the overseas Pakistanis so that they can bring the problems of overseas to the parliament house in a better way and play their role in solving them.

Admn commit to educate youth with global standards F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The district administration with support of the youth affairs department organized a session for local youths and students especially from Betanni tribal subdivision on foreign scholarship here in Lakki city.

The seminar was aimed to familiarize the youths and students with the process of availing foreign scholarships for education. A good number of students from different institutions attended the event and took keen interest in the one-day session.

Additional AC Awais Khan and district youth officer Abdul Qadir were also in attendance. Qadir said on the occasion that his department organised the session to provide the youths and students with accurate information about foreign scholarships.

He said that though many students could be eligible for such scholarships but lack of information and knowledge was the main hindrance in their way. Several participants hailed the district administration and youth affairs department for organizing the activity and declared it helpful for the youths belonging to backward regions.

A participant said that speakers shared valuable information about the process to avail and eligibility for scholarships offered by Chinese government and European countries. He said that the participants of the session were also acquainted with the process of availing the Fulbright foreign student programme. Admin commits to educate youth with global standards.

Rally held in Muzaffarabad

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Tehreek-e-Shababul Muslimen, a constituent of APHC-AJK chapter, organized a rally in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, today, to mark Kashmir's Accession to Pakistan Day, today, to commemorate historic resolution passed on July 19, 1947 in Srinagar.

A large number of people including students and Tehreek-e-Shababul Muslimen members participated in the rally and raised slogans in favour of Pakistan and Kashmir and against India. They marched on the main highway from Lal Chowk Uppar Adda to CHM Muzaffarabad.

Addressing the participants, the speakers said the people of Jammu and Kashmir are adhered to the content of resolution of July 19, 1947 even after the passage of over seven decades. They said, the historic resolution was a practical expression of the ideological and intellectual commitment of Kashmiri Muslims to Pakistan. The resolution, they added, was the expression of wishes and aspirations of the Muslim majority of Jammu and Kashmir. Among those who attended the rally included Nasir Mir, Zubair Durrani, Munir Ahmad Konshi, Faizullah Durrani, Zubair Shah, Shahid Awan, Arshad Awan, Atif Mir, Imtiyaz Awan, Raja Muhammad Faizan, Habibullah Mir, Ahmed Shaikh, Chaudhary Atif and Faraz Shaikh.

Govt sincere to facilitate students of merged districts

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Government is adopting initiatives to provide all requirements to the students of the merged tribal districts so that to bring them equal to the learners of the other parts of the country. Learnings of modern technology are the need of time.

The views were expressed by the interim Provincial Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation Taj Muhammad Afridi while addressing on occasion of the open ceremony of digital computerized laboratory in Government High Secondary School, Jamrud on Wednesday.

He said that the government was sincere to facilitate the tribesmen and establishing a computerized lab for the students was part of it. The newly established facility (computerized lab) will certainly benefit the local students to get education in science subjects, he added and said



it was the duty of the government to equip the new generation of tribal society with the learning of science and technology.

The Minister urged the students to decorate themselves with the knowledge of science and technology as the developed countries ruled the world by qualifying in modern sciences. Principal Shaheed Abdul Azam Higher Secondary School, Jamrud, Shah Jehan

Afridi, Deputy District Education Officer Shahid Ali, Chairmen Azmat Ali Afridi and Zabiullah Afridi beside students and teachers were among the participants.

Earlier, Taj Muhammad Afridi examined various sections of the schools and met with the students and teachers who apprised him of their problems. He also announced the supply of a modern photo state machine for the school.

Shandur festival: Where spectacle meets tradition

Aziz Ur Rehman

VENTURING into the heart of Pakistan's rugged mountains, I found myself amidst an extraordinary celebration of culture, sports, and unity—the Shandur Festival. Nestled at an altitude of over 3,700 meters (12,205 ft), Shandur Top, also known as the "Roof of the World," hosted this grand festival that I had the privilege to experience firsthand.

The Shandur Festival is an annual event held in the picturesque valley of Gilgit-Baltistan, often referred to as "Heaven on Earth." Steeped in history, this unique festival dates back over a century, showcasing the region's traditional sports, particularly the exhilarating and age-old rivalry between two local polo teams.

The journey to Shandur Top was an adventure in itself. The winding roads and breathtaking landscapes offered a glimpse of the region's mesmerizing beauty. As the festival date approached, the excitement among travelers and locals alike was palpable, adding an air of anticipation to the journey.

Arriving at Shandur Top, I was greeted with a breathtaking panorama of snow-capped peaks, pristine lakes, and verdant meadows. The festival grounds were adorned with colorful tents, traditional stalls, and cultural exhibitions, displaying the vibrant heritage of the region.

The highlight of the festival was undoubtedly the polo tournament, which is the highest polo ground in the world. The thrilling matches showcased the remarkable horsemanship and athleticism of the players, as they engaged in a fierce yet friendly competition. Spectators cheered and applauded each remarkable goal, enveloped in the electrifying atmosphere.

Beyond polo, the Shandur Festival also offered a myriad of cultural events. Dances, songs, and folk performances brought the region's rich cultural tapestry to life. Local artisans displayed their exquisite handicrafts, while traditional cuisines tempted taste buds with their unique flavors. While the festival was a celebration of local customs and heritage, it also served as a bridge between communities. Visitors from different parts

of Pakistan and around the world gathered here, forging connections and celebrating the diversity of this land.

Beyond the festivities, the Shandur Festival also served as a reminder of the importance of preserving cultural heritage and promoting responsible tourism. The region's pristine environment is fragile, and efforts are being made to ensure sustainable practices and conservation initiatives are upheld.

As I bid farewell to the Shandur Festival, I carried with me memories of a lifetime—a kaleidoscope of colors, cultures, and camaraderie. The festival exemplifies the unity that can be achieved through shared experiences and mutual respect for one another's traditions. In conclusion, the Shandur Festival is an extraordinary blend of sporting spectacle and cultural immersion, offering an unparalleled experience for those willing to venture off the beaten path. As I reflect on my visit to this remote paradise, I can't help but feel fortunate to have witnessed the beauty and soul of Pakistan's treasured gem—the Shandur Festival.



QUETTA: People filling their water pots due to shortage of water in their area.

Police raids continue to arrest killers of a youth in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Police on Wednesday arrested one of the nine accused involved in the killing of a school teacher Numan Haidar, 29 and injuring several others over a land dispute at Talash. According to police sources raids were being conducted to arrest the remaining eight persons charged in the case. The victim party charged nine persons including a government contractor Qadir Ahmad, his sons Murad, Wiqar, his brother Shabir Ahmad, Haidar Ali, Siraj, Bashir Ahmad, Dilawar and Memroz under sections 302, 334, 355, 148 and 149 PPC.

A school teacher identified as Numan Haidar, 29 was killed while ten others were injured when two groups clashed over a land ownership dispute at Kamrani Mountain in the jurisdiction of Talash police station here the other day, residents and police said. The land dispute among the landlords of Shamshi Khan, Utmankhel tribe of Dherai, Ahmad Galai and Bandagai Talash has been in courts since 1972.

The residents said that dozens of residents from Shamshi Khan moved to the disputed land to remove the demarcation 'burgies' erected by the residents of Bandagai. Meanwhile the residents of Bandagai reportedly attacked the Shamshi Khan residents with sticks and stones. Later when more residents from Shamshi Khan reached the site, their rivals opened fire on them. As a result one Numan Haidar got injured who succumbed to injuries and passed away. Several other residents of Shamshi Khan were injured who were shifted by the Rescue 1122 emergency team to the district headquarters hospital Timergara.

Hundreds of the Shamshi Khan residents blocked the main Timergara Peshawar road for several hours at Bandagai that caused misery to motorists and local people. The Lower Dir deputy commissioner Itfikhair along with additional deputy commissioner Abdul Wali Khan, DSP headquarters Fakhr e Alam held negotiations with the protesters and opened the road for general traffic.

Commissioner directs to ensure revenue targets

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim directed subordinate officers to take all necessary steps to ensure achievement of the set targets of government revenue. He also urged the administration to ensure provision of basic facilities to people.

He was addressing the monthly revenue review meeting in his office. The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner Naem Akhtar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Samiur Rehman and Additional Deputy Commissioner General

Mardan Engineer Shahzeb besides ADC Swabi Gohar Khan, Assistant and Additional Assistant Commissioners of Mardan and Swabi and officers of the Revenue Department.

The targets and recovery in the last financial year were reviewed in detail in terms of revenue, Agri Income Tax, mutations, stamp duty, local rate and other relevant issues. He directed the officers to take necessary steps to remove the obstacles in achieving the targets so that the goals set by the provincial government can be achieved during the current financial year.

Revenue cases at divisional, district and sub-

division levels were also reviewed in the meeting. Commissioner Mardan directed that pending cases to be disposed of as soon as possible according to law and to provide justice to litigants.

On this occasion, the operations against illegal encroachments and visits to schools, hospitals and development projects by the administrative officers during the last month were also reviewed. He directed the officers to do regular follow-up of these visits to make them productive and result oriented and to solve public problems in government offices and Patwar Khans as the first priority.



Russia carries out air strikes for second night on Odesa port



MOSCOW (Reuters): Ukrainian air defence systems were engaged in the early hours of Wednesday in repelling a Russian air attack on the southern port of Odesa for a second consecutive night, the region's governor said. Russia struck Ukrainian ports, a day after pulling out of a UN-backed deal for safe Black Sea grain exports, a decision that raised concern primarily in Africa and Asia of rising food prices and hunger.

"Do not approach the windows, do not shoot or show the work of air defence forces," Odesa governor Oleh Kiper said on the Telegram messaging app. All of the eastern part of Ukraine was under air raid alerts, starting soon after midnight on Wednesday.

In other battlefield reports, Moscow and Kyiv gave vastly different accounts of fighting in northeastern Ukraine. Six weeks since Ukraine launched a counteroffensive in the east and south, Russia is mounting a ground offensive of its own in the northeast. Moscow says the Ukrainian assault has failed. A Russian Defence Ministry spokesman said its forces had advanced by up to 2 km (1.2 miles) in the direction of Kupiansk, an important railway junction in the northeastern Kharkiv region. But Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister

Hanna Maliar said the initiative in the area had switched to Ukrainian forces.

She said Ukrainian forces made new gains near Bakhmut in the east, a town that was captured by Russian forces in May after months of battles. Valery Shershen, a spokesperson for Ukrainian troops on the southern front, reported heavy fighting around the village of Staromayorske. "We have made advances through the streets," Shershen told the Espresso TV online outlet but said Ukrainian forces did not have complete control of the village.

Russian Defence Ministry accounts said Moscow's forces had hit groups of Ukrainian soldiers around Staromayorske. Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield reports of either side. Since Ukraine began its counteroffensive last month, its forces equipped with billions of dollars worth of new Western weapons and ammunition have yet to attempt a major breakthrough across heavily defended Russian lines. At the United Nations, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said there were a "number of ideas being floated" to help get Ukrainian and Russian grain and fertilizer to global markets. Moscow's decision raised concern primarily in Africa and Asia of rising food prices and

hunger.

The Black Sea deal was brokered by the UN and Turkey in July last year to combat a global food crisis worsened by Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and its blockade of Ukrainian ports. The two countries are among the world's top grain exporters. For Ukraine's part, "we are fighting for global security and for our Ukrainian farmer" and working on options to keep commitments on food supply, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address. Moscow spurned calls from Ukraine to allow shipping to resume without Russian participation, with the Kremlin openly saying ships entering the area without its guarantees would be in danger. "We're talking about an area that's close to a war zone," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "Without the appropriate security guarantees, certain risks arise there. So if something is formalised without Russia, these risks should be taken into account."

Russia says it could return to the grain deal, but only if its demands are met for rules to be eased for its own exports of food and fertiliser. Western countries call that an attempt to use leverage over food supplies to force a weakening in financial sanctions, which already allow Russia to sell food.

Earthquake in the Pacific Ocean shakes America

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP): A powerful 6.5 magnitude earthquake in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of El Salvador shook much of Central America from Nicaragua to Guatemala, sending residents in some cities streaming into the streets. The US Geological Survey reported the epicenter was 27 miles (43 kilometers) south of Intipuca, El Salvador at a depth of 43 miles (70 kilometers). That point is outside the Gulf of Fonseca where Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua all share coastline.

In El Salvador's capital, residents ran into the streets as the ground shook, but there were no immediate reports of damage or injuries. When a radio station open its phone lines to residents around the country, there was also no immediate report of victims. In the country's Legislative Assembly, lawmakers fled their desks to get out of the building, before returning a short time later to resume the session. The country's Environment Ministry advised that there was no threat of a tsunami. In Nicaragua, the quake was felt strongly in the capital and all along the Pacific coast. Nicaragua Vice President and first lady Rosario Murillo said there were no reported victims immediately in that country.

Arresting Putin would be declaration of war: SA

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): Any attempt to arrest Vladimir Putin when he visits its South Africa would be a declaration of war against Russia, the country's president says. Cyril Ramaphosa made the warning with weeks to go before an international meeting happens in Johannesburg, to which the Russian president is invited.

But if Mr Putin leaves Russian soil, he will be subject to an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant. South Africa is an ICC signatory and should therefore help in his arrest. Yet it has refused to honour that obligation in the past - allowing safe passage in 2015 to Sudan's then-President Omar al-Bashir who was wanted for war crimes against his own people. Mr Putin has been invited to South Africa in August, when the country hosts a summit for members of the Brics countries - an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This bloc of fast-growing economies is seen by some as an alternative to the G7 group of advanced economies. South Africa's biggest opposition party, Democratic Alliance, has gone to court to try to force the authorities to carry out an arrest on Mr Putin should he set foot in the country. Court documents reveal that President Ramaphosa is firmly against any such move, stating that national security is at stake. "South Africa has obvious problems with executing a request to arrest and surrender President Putin," he said in an affidavit. "Russia has made it clear that arresting its sitting president would be a declaration of war. It would be inconsistent with our constitution to risk engaging in war with Russia."

President Ramaphosa added that South Africa is one of several African nations holding talks with Russia and Ukraine "with a view of ending the war altogether", and that attempting to arrest Mr Putin would be counter-productive.

Last month saw a peace mission to the European nations, where African presidents hoped they could bring Ukraine and Russia to the table together but ultimately failed. Much has been made of African nations' reluctance to back UN general assembly resolutions condemning Russia's war in Ukraine. Correspondents say the reasons range depending on the nation - be it South Africa's anti-apartheid ties to the Soviet Union, or Mali's present-day reliance on Russian Wagner mercenaries to fight jihadists. There are economic ties between Russia and African nations too, not least in South Africa.

UK's migration crackdown plan to become law

LONDON (AFP): Britain's controversial plan to deter migrants without papers from landing on British shores was poised to become law, prompting criticism from the United Nations. The legislation would outlaw asylum claims by all arrivals via the Channel and other "illegal" routes, and transfer them to third countries, such as Rwanda.

It was proposed in response to years of growing numbers of dangerous cross-Channel journeys from northern France in small boats. Opposition to the bill was finally crushed at a late night sitting just hours before a barge that will be used to house migrants arrived at a port on England's south coast. The Bibby Stockholm barge moored in Dorset's Portland Port is expected to house 500 asylum-seekers from later this month. The UN refugee agency condemned the passage of the government's Illegal Migration Bill as a "breach of international law" and warned it would expose refugees to "grave risks". "This new legislation significantly erodes the legal framework that has protected so many," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. It also set a "worrying precedent for dismantling asylum-related obligations that other countries, including in Europe, may be tempted to follow", added UN human rights chief Volker Turk.

Opponents in the unelected upper house had sought to soften the bill by proposing changes. But amendments to parts of the legislation including modern slavery protections and limits on how long child migrants can be detained were voted down in a series of votes. The bill will now become law following the formality of "royal assent" from King Charles III. More than 45,000 migrants arrived on the shores of southeast England on small boats in 2022 -- a 60-percent annual increase on a perilous route that has been used by more people every year since 2018. Immigration -- both legal and illegal -- has long been a key political issue in the UK and was one of the main battlegrounds of the Brexit referendum in 2016, which saw the country leave the European Union. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who has vowed to "stop the boats", has insisted the Rwanda plan would have an important deterrent effect by showing that no-one who arrives illegally in the UK will be allowed to stay. The UN, however, says the 1951 Refugee Convention "explicitly recognises that refugees may be compelled to enter a country of asylum irregularly".

The Conservative government's Interior Minister in the upper house Simon Murray said the sheer number of arrivals had "overwhelmed" the UK's asylum system and was costing

taxpayers £6 million (\$7.8 million) a day in accommodation costs. "If people know there is no way for them to stay in the UK, they won't risk their lives and pay criminals thousands of pounds to arrive here illegally," he said. "It is therefore only right that we stop the boats and break the business model of the criminal gangs exploiting vulnerable people," he added. But Alex Fraser, British Red Cross's UK director for refugee support, called it a "dark day". "It will leave many people, from places like Sudan and Syria, in detention, destitution and permanent limbo," he said.

The Rwanda plan, announced by then-prime minister Boris Johnson last year, was blocked at the last minute by the European Court of Human Rights, which is separate to the EU, and is still mired in legal challenges. The UK government last month said it would appeal a judgement by three Court of Appeal judges who ruled that Rwanda could not be considered a safe third country. Sunak said he respected the court but "fundamentally" disagreed with the judges' conclusions. To date, no deportation flights to Rwanda have taken place. Rights groups accuse Rwanda -- ruled with an iron fist by President Paul Kagame since the end of the 1994 genocide that killed around 800,000 people -- of cracking down on free speech and opposition.

US issues waiver letting Iraq pay Iran for power

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States moved to let Iraq pay Iran for electricity via non-Iraqi banks, a US official said, a step Washington hopes may keep Tehran from forcing unpopular power cuts during the sweltering Iraqi summer.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken signed a 120-day national security waiver allowing Iraq - heavily dependent on Iranian electricity - to deposit such payments into non-Iraqi banks in third countries instead of into restricted accounts in Iraq, said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Monies put into the non-Iraqi accounts, like those deposited into Iraqi banks, will also be restricted, still requiring US permission for Iran to get access to them and only for spending on humanitarian goods.

Tehran has in the past pushed Baghdad to secure US permission to release such funds by cutting Iranian natural gas exports to Iraq, limiting Iraq's ability

to generate power and forcing deeply unpopular electricity cuts. The latest waiver was expanded to permit payments to banks outside Iraq at the request of the Iraqi government, apparently in the hopes that this might transfer some of the pressure that Iran has exerted on Baghdad to other countries. "We have to help the Iraqis with this perennial pressure from the Iranians to access the money," said the US official. "The Iraqis have requested, and now we have agreed, to expand the waiver," said the US official, saying this might help ensure better compliance with the US requirement that any disbursements be for humanitarian purposes. "It also helps the Iraqis, at least somewhat, to have an argument to make (to Iran) that they are not in control of the money that they have paid (into non-Iraqi accounts)," he added.

It is not clear, however, whether Iran might ease up on Iraq as a result. Tehran could decide it has greater

leverage over Iraq than over other nations and continue to exert pressure. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Iran is under extensive US economic sanctions reimposed in 2018 after then-US President Donald Trump abandoned the nuclear deal that Tehran struck with major powers Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States in 2015. Trump believed his policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran would force it to accept more stringent restrictions to its nuclear program, which the United States, European powers and Israel fear may be designed to obtain a nuclear weapon. Iran has long denied such ambitions. As a result of Trump's withdrawal from the deal and US President Joe Biden's failure to revive it, Iran could make the fissile material for one bomb in 12 days or so, according to US estimates, down from a year when the accord was in force.

UN agency slashes cash aid to Syrian refugees

BEIRUT (AP): The United Nations food agency said it will reduce monthly cash aid for 120,000 Syrian refugees living in two camps in Jordan because of what it described as an "unprecedented funding crisis."

Jordan is a country of 11 million people and hosts some 1.3 million refugees from Syria. Most of them live in towns and cities across the kingdom, while several tens of thousands have settled in two camps - Za'atari and Azraq. Starting in August, the monthly cash allowance for camp residents will be reduced from \$32 to \$21, the World Food Program said. Jordanian officials have warned that the kingdom cannot fill the gap left by international donors.

The announcement by the World Food Program comes after the agency said last week it would gradually cut off 50,000 refugees in Jordan from its assistance altogether. The program had initially covered 465,000 refugees. UN agencies and international humanitarian organizations for years have struggled to reach budgetary requirements for their assistance in Syria and for Syrian refugees in neighboring countries due to donor fatigue, the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic and Ukraine's war with Russia. Though Syrian President Bashar Assad's government was able to reclaim large swaths of territory with the help of allies Russia and Iran, the crisis in the war-torn country remains in a stalemate. "As funding dries up, our hands are tied," said Alberto Correia Mendes, the WFP representative for Jordan. The agency said that even with the current cuts, it still faces a funding shortfall of some \$41 million and may have to impose additional measures.

Funding cuts have also impacted millions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Turkey, where anti-refugee rhetoric and calls for mass deportations have surged in light of economic and political turmoil. Syria's uprising turned civil war, now in its 13th year, has killed nearly half a million people and displaced half of its prewar population of 23 million.

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi spoke about the kingdom's inability to fill in funding gaps at this year's annual donor conference on Syria in Brussels last June. Last week, he warned again that "refugees will suffer". "This is not on Jordan. It is on those who are cutting support," he said. "Providing dignified lives to refugees is a global responsibility. It is not ours alone as host country." Dominik Bartsch, the UN refugee agency's representative to Jordan, said the aid rollback has forced agencies to look only to the most vulnerable families, leaving many in need without assistance.

UNSC meets for first time on AI risks

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): The United Nations Security Council held its first meeting on artificial intelligence where China said the technology should not become a "run-away horse" and the United States warned against its use to censor or repress people.

Britain's Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, who chaired the meeting under Britain's July presidency of the body, said AI will "fundamentally alter every aspect of human life."

"We urgently need to shape the global governance of transformative technologies because AI knows no borders," he added after saying that AI could help address climate change and boost economies. But he also warned that the technology fuels disinformation and could aid both state and non-state actors in a quest for weapons. The 15-member council was briefed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Jack

Clark, co-founder of high-profile AI startup Anthropic, and Professor Zeng Yi, co-director of the China-UK Research Center for AI Ethics and Governance.

"Both military and non-military applications of AI could have very serious consequences for global peace and security," Guterres said. Guterres backs calls by some states for the creation of a new UN body "to support collective efforts to govern this extraordinary technology," modeled on the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Civil Aviation Organization, or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. China's UN Ambassador Zhang Jun described AI as a "double-edged sword" and said Beijing supports a central coordinating role of the UN on establishing guiding principles for AI.

"Whether it is good or bad, good or evil, depends on how mankind utilizes it, regulates it and how we bal-

ance scientific development with security," Zhang said, adding that there should be a focus on people and AI for good to regulate development and to "prevent this technology from becoming a runaway horse." Deputy US Ambassador to the UN, Jeffrey DeLaurentis, also said there was a need for countries to also work together on AI and other emerging technologies to address human rights risks that threaten to undermine peace and security. "No member states should use AI to censor, constrain, repress or disempower people," he told the council. Russia questioned whether the council, which is charged with maintaining international peace and security, should be discussing AI. "What is necessary is a professional, scientific, expertise-based discussion that can take several years and this discussion is already underway at specialized platforms," said Russia's Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanski.

Fears of Sudan refugee influx to West misplaced: US official

WASHINGTON (AFP): Concerns about a possible influx of Sudanese refugees to the West are misplaced, a senior US official told AFP, as millions in the war-torn nation flee their homes. The conflict between the army and rival paramilitary forces entered its fourth month on Saturday, leaving at least 3,000 dead according to a conservative estimate, and numerous truces have fallen apart.

Three million people have been displaced internally or fled to other countries, according to the International Organization for Migration. As Western governments face pressure to lower migrant arrivals, Julieta Vall's Noyes, US Assistant Secretary of State for population, refugees, and migration, said the

international community needed to address the root causes of the Sudan crisis. "I don't think that the tragedy or the concern is where these people wind up. The tragedy and the concern is that they have to flee in the first place," she said in an interview in Kenya's capital Nairobi. "What we need to focus on is not where the people are going but why they are leaving," she said. Many Sudanese who would otherwise have fled "haven't been able to move because there's no safety, there's no fuel, they can't get out of where they are", she added.

"That's the tragedy." She said the US government would provide \$380 million in humanitarian assistance to Africa -- including towards the crisis in Sudan

-- adding to the \$4 billion in funding from Washington to the continent this financial year. Last month, the United Nations said a record 110 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced from their homes. The war between Sudan's army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), erupted in mid-April. Diplomatic efforts to end the violence continue but have failed to bear fruit, and numerous ceasefires have been broken. Talks brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia were adjourned last month after several truces were violated.

China to deepen cooperation with Algeria

BEIJING (Reuters): Longtime trading partners China and Algeria agreed to strengthen cooperation in other areas including security and national defence, boosting Beijing's already robust ties with a major nation on the African side of the Mediterranean.

Following Algerian President Abdelmajid Tebboune's meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing, the two countries also agreed to support each other's core interests and safeguard each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, according to a joint statement released by

China's foreign ministry. The North African nation has strategic importance to China given its location on the Mediterranean Sea. Relations between Beijing and the governing National Liberation Front go back to the late 1950s, when Algeria sought independence from France.

In 2014, the two upgraded their ties to a so-called comprehensive strategic partnership, with gas-rich Algeria the first Arab nation to form such a partnership with China. In their statement, both sides agreed to deepen their comprehensive strategic partnership, stress-

ing the need for close political and security cooperation. China's security pacts with other nations have drawn suspicion and concern. Earlier this month, the United States, Australia and New Zealand called on the Solomon Islands prime minister to disclose details of the Pacific nation's policing deal signed with Beijing. China and Algeria agreed to work together to fight extremist terrorist organisations within their borders, and support other countries including Somalia and Sudan in their security efforts, according to the joint statement.

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Saudi Turk ties, beginning of a new era

ACCORDING to the media, Saudi Arabia and Turkey signed a historic defense deal for the purchase of Turkish armed drones manufactured by the renowned Baykar corporation while the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan personally attended the signing ceremony of this landmark agreement between the two countries. According to the Saudi Defense Minister, Saudi Arabia will acquire drones to enhance the readiness of the kingdom's armed forces and bolster defense and manufacturing capabilities in the country. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will procure the Bayraktar Akinci (unmanned combat aerial vehicle) from Turkey, which entails cooperation on technology transfer and joint production to advance the high technology development capability of the two friendly nations. The two countries also inked several memorandums of understanding in various sectors, including energy, real estate, and direct investments.

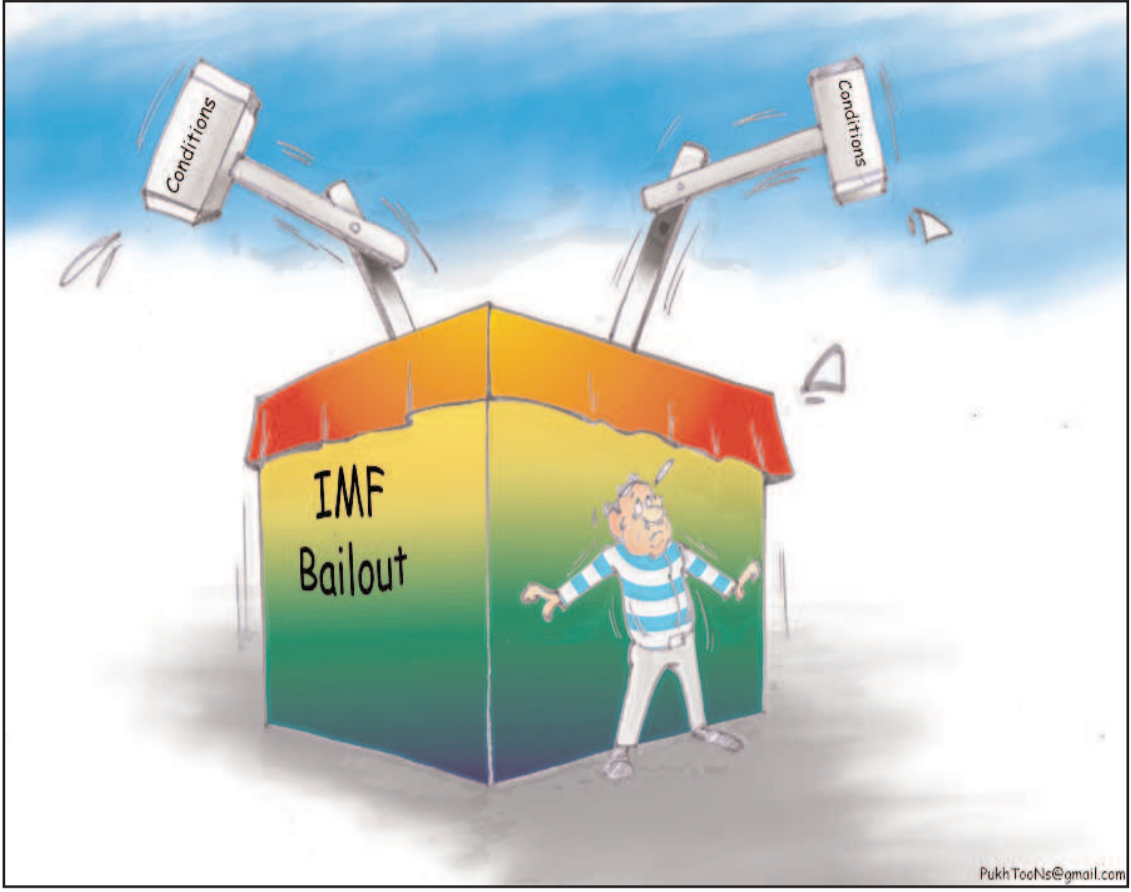
Erdogan is currently on a mission to revive Ankara's ties with Saudi Arabia and its constellation states including UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Kuwait after a decades-long rift that aroused after Ankara stood in support of the Muslim Brotherhood and Arab Spring, the movement for democracy in the Gulf region that shattered Arab monarchies in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan landed in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia during the first leg of his weeklong tri-nation trip. During the visit to the Kingdom, Erdogan met with the top Saudi leadership and struck multiple bilateral agreements besides attending the signing ceremony of a landmark defense deal between the two brotherly nations. After Saudi Arabia, Erdogan will land in Doha followed by Abu Dhabi to lay the foundations of a new chapter of economic and defense partnerships with important Gulf nations. Historically, Turkey had been at odds for years with the Gulf states over Ankara's support of pro-democracy movements in the Middle East I and the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018. Erdogan's government launched a diplomatic initiative to mend its ties with the Middle Eastern neighbors amid serious economic challenges and domestic political pressure because of growing inflation and the high cost of living over the past two years. Earlier, the Turkish Vice President, Finance Minister and head of the Turkish central bank traveled to the UAE, the KSA and Qatar last month to discuss economic cooperation opportunities with those oil rich Gulf nations. In fact, the investments and funding from the Gulf have helped relieve pressure on Turkey's economy and its currency reserves which went through acute depletion since 2021. Qatar and the UAE provided crucial \$ 20 billion in currency swap agreements while Saudi Arabia agreed to deposit \$5 billion into the Turkish reserve bank to help support the lira and dwindling Turkish economy. In fact, Teyyip Erdogan is currently reaping the benefits of his diplomatic push to repair ties with the Gulf states and help Ankara revive its struggling economy.

On the other hand, the coalition of Saudi-led Gulf Sunni states has experienced severe defense and security challenges during the years-long Yemen conflict in the Middle East. The United States of America betrayed Saudi Arabia and the UAE by withdrawing crucial air defense system and strategic intelligence sharing amid heightened hostilities and across-the-border missile/ drone attacks by the Houthi militia. Historically, developing a local military industry and diversifying the Kingdom's economy away from oil has been an important part of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's ambitious agenda to bring a pivotal change in the political, economic, and military outlook of Saudi Arabia, that had become entirely dependent on oil export and security guarantees from Washington over the past several decades. Over the past few years, Riyadh gradually distanced itself from Washington, liberalized its economy, and introduced important economic, and social reforms that laid the foundation for modern Saudi Arabia that will compete with the challenges of the 21st century.

Interestingly, the political and strategic interests of Riyadh led Arab nations and Turkiye completely align with each other, as the majority of the Muslim countries in Western Asia and the Middle East are currently camped in anti-US bloc led by China and Russia. Meanwhile, Arab nations rejected the Biden's plan to form a military alliance with Israel against Iran and sharply moved toward normalization of their relations with Tehran. Meanwhile Turkiye's Erdogan, Egypt's Alsisi and former Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa Alhawi worked to resolve mutual disputes between various Arab nations and forge better understanding and cooperation between them. At the same time, Riyadh and Tehran felt the need to settle their issues and use their resources for the well-being and development of their nations. Currently, an economically stable and politically strong Saudi monarch intends to build it's military muscles to deter future security threat and NATO's sole Muslim member, Turkey was ready to provide Riyadh with modern western defense hardware to meet urgent needs of the Kingdom. This is a marriage of convenience that better suits to the needs of both parties. Realistically, Muslim Ummah has no scarcity of resources, human capital and technical expertise, only political wisdom and leaders' sagacity was required to benefit from each other strengths and better serves the Muslims around the globe.

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Israel moving closer to widespread civil disobedience

Yossi Mekelberg

NEWTON'S third law states that for every action in nature there is an equal and opposite reaction. If evidence were required that the same law is applicable to politics, one need look no further than the struggle between the current antidemocratic Israeli government and the legions of ordinary Israelis who are determined, in a way the country has never before experienced, to protect the power and independence of the judiciary, and by that the democratic system, as fragile as it may be.

In recent weeks, the stakes have been raised between those who insist on wrecking the pillars of Israel's democracy and those who are ready to defend it - literally with their bodies. Last week, the level of altercations between police and protesters was stepped up, especially the readiness - on some occasions, apparent eagerness - of the police to exercise brutality against peaceful protesters. For now, the albeit-halfhearted efforts to negotiate a compromise facilitated by President Isaac Herzog have failed. This is not only because the president himself is a rather lackluster and uninspiring character, but because any kind of compromise would be very difficult to achieve. The basic tenets of a democratic system, including the separation of powers and the checks and balances mechanisms, cannot be diluted. They either exist or they do not, and both sides know this.

Last week's main trigger for the eruption of mass demonstrations across the country, which included disruption at the country's major airport, was the Knesset's approval of the "reasonableness" bill on a first reading. In its current version, it will prevent courts from using the reasonableness test to invalidate or even scrutinize decisions made by the Cabinet, its ministers and "other elected officials, as set by law." In other words, the proposed legislation would allow the executive branch to be as reasonable, or more likely as unreasonable, as it chose to be, with no judicial oversight. This is wrong in principle, and a brief glance at the makeup

of the current Cabinet gives little cause for confidence in their reasonable behavior. A number of these ministers have previous criminal convictions; the prime minister is currently undergoing a prolonged trial on charges of corruption, breach of trust and bribery; and six months of irresponsible and erratic behavior

ance they have met with has forced them to take a different track.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition has not changed its objectives, only its deceitful methods of achieving them. Instead of passing all these pieces of legislation almost at once, it has adopted the salami

But those in power are wrong; very wrong. The instant response from the protesters to the passing of the reasonableness bill was one of anger, injecting momentum into their resistance with the call for a "disruption day," which has become a showcase of the opposition's strength and has also brought back to public discourse the refusal of many hundreds of reservists to show up for military service for as long as this legislation continues to be enacted. There are discernible pressure points on the government - especially on those members who are still in touch with reality - that it cannot ignore.

by this government has only underlined the need to retain the current reasonableness clause, which allows the courts to be an objective referee.

Back in January, when the protests began, had you asked most commentators how long they would last, most would have expected them to peter out within days or possibly a week or two. Nearly seven months later, the protesters have defied all predictions and claims that they lacked the stamina for a long battle. They have responded to the government's successive ploys to irreparably water down the liberal-democratic system, they have been energized by their considerable successes in limiting its progress in this regard, and they have been constantly inspired by their cause and by their actual participation in these regular rallies.

If in the early days of the government's vandalism of the judiciary, the members of the coalition behaved like children let loose in a sweet shop, and in their greed and callousness believed that winning an election was a license to do as they wished, including tampering with the very system that brought them to power, the massive resist-

tactic. This bunch of democracy destroyers are treating the public with utter disrespect. They imagine that by getting rid of democracy slice by slice, they will lull the public into a false sense of security and the belief that they have averted the danger of their lawful democratic rights and privileges disappearing.

But those in power are wrong; very wrong. The instant response from the protesters to the passing of the reasonableness bill was one of anger, injecting momentum into their resistance with the call for a "disruption day," which has become a showcase of the opposition's strength and has also brought back to public discourse the refusal of many hundreds of reservists to show up for military service for as long as this legislation continues to be enacted.

There are discernible pressure points on the government - especially on those members who are still in touch with reality - that it cannot ignore. First is that, 29 weeks into the protest, it has a clear leadership and organization that can disrupt normal life very effectively and still, for the most part, stay within the law. It is the police who are losing

their nerve and increasingly resorting to violence against the protesters, while making wrongful arrests that end in a quick release thanks to dedicated lawyers who are on 24/7 standby to represent those detained, while other very noisy protesters are rushing to the police stations where they are being held. Second, the threats of the reservists, who are crucial for Israel's security, whether in the air force, the cybersecurity forces or the special units, not to show up for service is putting immense pressure on army chiefs and the government. The unconvincing and vitriolic attacks on these reservists by members of the government, many of whom have never served in the armed forces, are frankly insults to the intelligence and speak volumes about how desperate, not to mention pathetic, this administration has become, while most of the public falls for none of its lies.

Third are the signs of economic slowdown as a consequence of the political instability. And last but not least is the growing criticism from Israel's closest ally, the US, including unambiguous remarks from President Joe Biden. Hence, Israel's anti-government protests are continuing with a strong sense of purpose, while rallies in support of the government are few and far between. If Netanyahu's coalition does not stop its reckless and cynical dragging of the nation toward dictatorship, the calls for civil disobedience by notable people such as former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and former deputy head of the army Maj. Gen. Yair Golan will only find more and more fertile ground and grow to a point at which such actions could paralyze the country. The suggestion by some members of the government to put these two respected figures and others who stand with them on trial for treason is laughable.

At the end of the day, whenever the coalition throws more fuel on its bonfire of the country's democratic institutions and arrangements, it sees more firefighters arriving in the name of democracy, who know that leaving this conflagration uncontained will see the kind of country they want to live in go up in smoke.

Japan's discharge plan toxic to fishing industry of whole world

Wu Meng

THE International Atomic Energy Agency recently released its report on the safety review of the nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, creating doubts in Japan as well as the rest of the world over its authenticity. The IAEA report therefore should not be seen as the international community's "green light" to Japan's plan to discharge the nuclear-contaminated water into the sea.

It is difficult to assess the damage the contaminated water would cause to the economy of Japan, the marine ecology and the food chain. The discharge of the radioactive water into the sea will make people around the world lose confidence in Japan's aquatic products, which could deal a huge blow to the country's fishing industry and thus the Japanese economy. The nuclear-contaminated water of Fukushima contains more than 60 radionuclides, including tritium, carbon-14, cobalt-60, strontium-90 and iodine-129, which are very harmful to the marine environment and ecology. According to Japanese media, a report released by Tokyo Electric Power Company, which owns the destroyed Fukushima Daiichi plant, says the radioactive element Cs-137 in black rockfish caught in the Fukushima harbor in May far exceeded the safety levels - as high as 18,000 becquerel/kilogram, 180 times higher than the standard maximum stipulated in Japan's food safety law.

These factors will prompt consumers to stay away from Japanese aquatic products, dealing a severe blow to Japan's fishing industry, which in turn could force the closure of many seafood enterprises, leading to the loss of a large number of jobs. Data from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries show the country's total marine product output fell below 4 million metric tons - to 3.86 million tons - for the first time last year. This is a record low since record-keeping began in 1956. The shortage of marine products in Japan will cause a series of problems including hoarding, price rise and social instability.

The sharp decline in sales and profit will deplete Japan's fishing industry, which in 2022, had about 66,000 management bodies and about 125,000 workers, a large number of whom could lose their jobs if Japan goes ahead with its contaminated water discharge plan. Japan's radioactive water discharge plan has already raised global consumers' concerns over Japanese marine products and related goods, prompting many governments to take preemptive measures against the import of Japanese seafood. For example, China's General Administration of Customs has banned the import of food products, including seafood, from Fukushima and nine other

prefectures in Japan in order to safeguard Chinese consumers' health and life. While people in the Republic of Korea are also strongly opposing Japan's plan to discharge the contaminated water into the sea, those in Southeastern Asian and Pacific island countries have voiced their serious concerns against Japan's decision.

Besides, the discharge of the radioactive water into the sea will deal a deadly blow to Japan's related industries, employment, and even the whole world's fishing industry. According to a study by a German marine research institute, within 57 days of the release of the radioactive water, the radioactive elements will spread to most of the Pacific Ocean and in 10 years, they will spread across all oceans and seas. According to the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022 released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, an estimated 58.5 million people were employed in the primary fishing and aquaculture sector in 2020. Including subsistence and secondary sector workers, and their dependents, it is estimated that about 600 million livelihoods depend at least partly on fisheries and aquaculture. While the total fisheries and aquaculture production reached a record 214 million tons and inland and marine capture production in the Pacific reached 45.8 million tons, the output in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea was 20.3 million tons. Japan's fishing industry fears the government's decision will destroy the reputation of the country's seafood. Moreover, some scientists say the environmental impact of long-term, low-dose exposures to the radioactive elements in the Fukushima water is still unknown, while others are calling for more transparency and greater access for cross-checks. Japan's Economy and Industry Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura recently met with national fishing association officials to persuade the fishing communities to accept the Japanese government's decision, saying the release of the contaminated water is unavoidable if the daunting task of decommissioning three melted reactors in the Fukushima plant is to be completed.

During the talks, National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations chief Masanobu Sakamoto said their opposition to the plan remains unchanged. Given the opposition of its own fishing industry and the ill effects the contaminated water will have on global fisheries and aquaculture, Japan should pay greater attention to the health of the fishing industry and marine environment and ecology, handle the contaminated water issue scientifically, and fulfill its moral responsibility and international obligation by abandoning its plan to discharge the contaminated water into the sea.

Climate action is an insurance policy for the world

Gernot Wagner

CLIMATE change is no longer a future problem. It is here, and the effects are all around. Worse, today's extreme weather events are just a preview of the pain that awaits humanity in the coming decades, almost regardless of how fast we manage to decarbonize the economy this year or next. Such sobering observations tend to provoke arguments about the importance of "climate optimism." Pessimism, after all, demotivates. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream, not a nightmare, for the future his children would inhabit.

I typically join these calls for optimism. The accelerating pace of the clean energy race is heartening, as is the emergence of positive socioeconomic feedback loops to match all the negative ones associated with climatic tipping points. Still, while the pace of clean energy deployment is faster than it has ever been, the world overall is racing in

the wrong direction: global greenhouse gas emissions are still rising. So, how should we talk about this challenge, with these two dynamics tugging in opposite directions?

One answer is to embrace the language of risks and uncertainties. Not too long ago, those resisting climate action were the ones playing up the issue of uncertainty. The "merchants of doubt" - marginal scientists and other commentators in hock to the fossil fuel industry - focused on our lack of complete knowledge to challenge the strengthening consensus around anthropogenic climate change. Uncertainty was their friend. But for the rest of us, it is public enemy No. 1. The unknowns and unknowables are what make climate change such an urgent problem. Over the past few decades, advances in climate science and economics have helped to quantify more climate-related uncertainties. This progress has been both helpful and

alarming, because it has further underscored just how dangerous those uncertainties truly are.

Above all, it shows that we need climate action not only to keep relatively slow-moving averages from increasing further, but - even more importantly - to keep uncertainties in check. The floods, droughts, wildfires and other extreme climate-driven phenomena are what make the problem so costly. Conversely, climate policymaking that cuts off the tail end of the extreme weather distribution should be regarded as a major success. Sometimes, this will literally mean taking out insurance against the worst phenomena. Insurance mandates, for example, would compel homeowners to account for the cost of floods and wildfires when deciding where to live. As the price of homeowner's insurance rises in disaster-prone areas, mandates could

become one of the most effective ways to encourage climate change adaptation. Similarly, investments in low-carbon energy sources are often best viewed as investments in resilience - and thus in decreased uncertainty. Lowering one's average carbon footprint ought to be valued and appropriately rewarded. But whether you are installing solar panels on your roof, using a battery pack as backup storage or switching to a heat pump and induction stove, the biggest payoff comes in extreme circumstances, or the lack thereof.

The solar panels and battery packs will ensure that your lights stay on even if the grid goes down because of extreme weather. Similarly, a heat pump and induction stove will allow you to cut off your gas line and declare independence from future gas supply shocks that directly affect

your heating bill (the indirect effect via the electric bill points immediately back to solar panels and battery packs, and it further reinforces the urgency to decarbonize the overall electric grid). The cost of solar and all-electric appliances will only decline over time, whereas natural gas and oil markets will continue to fluctuate, owing to the vagaries of geopolitics and the global economy. A sure-fire way to prevent so-called fossilization is to get off fossil fuels altogether. What is true for homeowners is also true for whole economies. Less dependence on fossil fuels means less uncertainty. True, the clean energy transition also relies on potentially volatile commodities like copper, lithium and other critical minerals. But there are crucial differences between these and fossil fuels. For one, the millions of tons of material going into clean technologies are orders of magnitude smaller than the

billions of tons of fossil fuels being burned every year. And still better technologies with ever-lower costs are likely to emerge as we rapidly climb the learning curve on clean energy solutions.

The trend lines support a cautiously optimistic outlook on the clean energy future. But there are plenty of hurdles still to overcome, many of them erected and propped up by fossil fuel incumbents trying to delay the inevitable. There is also plenty of climate-driven pain and destruction still in store.

Things will get worse before they get better. But even if we can no longer prevent climate change, we can still mitigate it by minimizing the accompanying uncertainties. We must embrace these uncertainties for what they are: a wake-up call to prevent the worst. Climate risk is financial risk, and climate action is an insurance policy - for the world as much as for individual companies and for us as individuals.

With their leader still missing, who will control Wagner forces in Africa?

Joyce M. Davis

IT'S a safe bet that the drama still unfolding between Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin and Russian President Vladimir Putin will not end well. But however it ends, Africa looks likely to suffer. Since it first emerged in 2014 during Russia's annexation of Crimea, the Wagner Group has operated in at least a half-dozen African countries, with a presence of some 5,000-strong across the continent, including fighting forces, former convicts and foreign nationals.

Much more than a mere contingent of mercenary troops, Wagner is a complicated network of businesses intertwined with fighting forces, with operations intricately linked with Russia's military and intelligence community. But for the past several days, the whereabouts of the mercurial man who leads the vast operation have been unknown. Prigozhin has been missing in action since shortly after launching a mutiny last month, in which thousands of his forces departed Ukraine on what appeared to be a march on Moscow. His troops turned around some 200 kilometers (about 125 miles) from the Russian capital. Where he is now and what has become of him has become a matter of intense speculation. Is he in hiding? Has he been executed? The answers may not become clear for days or weeks. Another unanswered question is, what will now become of Wagner's immense Africa operation that provided security services and paramilitary assistance and launched disinformation campaigns for troubled regimes in the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya, Mali and Sudan?

Whatever Prigozhin's fate, there is no plausible scenario where African countries from Mali to Sudan will not face significant upheaval and outright bloodshed from Russia's internecine quagmire. If Putin has ordered that Prigozhin be dispatched with - as some analysts suspect may be the case - that would leave a major fighting force of armed-to-the-teeth mercenaries in Africa and without a leader. Putin wouldn't be able to just absorb these fighters into the ranks of the Russian military. Wagner forces appear to despise the Russian military, as Prigozhin's reckless march from Ukraine toward Moscow made abundantly clear. As we have seen since the start of the Ukraine conflict, upheaval in Russia has wrought global mayhem, not just in Africa, but in the rest of the world.

Warlords like Libya's Khalifa Haftar, the CAR's President Faustin-Archange Touadéra and Burkina Faso's interim leader Ibrahim Traore have ample reason to worry. They were reportedly terrified as they watched Prigozhin confront Moscow, threatening Putin's generals, if not Putin himself. Prigozhin's decision to stand down didn't put any of the African leaders who depend on Wagner at ease, nor should it.

They have hitched their wagons to Prigozhin's Wagner mercenaries, paying them millions in gold, diamonds and cold, hard cash to protect their hold on power. They also allied themselves with Russia, and the last thing they want to see is

trouble at the top that could undermine their sweet security deals. That's why when Wagner forces started withdrawing from Ukraine last month, many feared the same might happen in Africa. It hasn't happened yet, but might still. Haftar depends on about 2,000 Wagner fighters to maintain control of Eastern Libya. He needs to know those forces will stay on the job and under someone's strong control. He doesn't care about their

the country would be staying. "There will be no problem here. There may be some changes at the top but the mechanism will stay the same: the people on the ground, the money men in Dubai, the contacts, and the resources committed to Libya," said the Russian envoy, according to a former senior Libyan official, the Guardian reported. "Don't worry, we aren't going anywhere."

It's not as if Russia could repa-

“We may see rebranding of these assets or reestablishment of Wagner as a more independent entity, which however will continue to serve the interests of the global anti-Western - looking to change the status quo-movement,” Kostelyanyets said. As if the question of who will control Wagner isn't enough, there's another issue that is very much on the minds of many African leaders. They are being put in an untenable position. They may have to choose between loyalty to Prigozhin and obeisance to Putin. But they need both men on their sides, united, and not at war. Haftar, Goita, Touadéra, Traore - they all need Prigozhin to maintain a strong grip on Wagner's fighters. They need Wagner to remain strong, well-funded, disciplined and in-place to protect their regimes. They also need Putin to keep sending them arms as they abstain from joining international condemnation of his invasion of Ukraine. The last thing Wagner's African patrons need is what has happened, a battle at the top between Russia's president and the man who controls the mercenaries that keep them in power. That's a no-win scenario for anyone caught in the middle. It's important to keep in mind that Wagner and Russia have supported whoever will pay the bills and give them access to Africa's bounty. In Sudan, they're not supporting the country's leader, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. They're supporting Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, leader of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces, who is vying for power. Sudan actually could become more stable if Wagner weren't in the picture, even if it doesn't become more democratic.

brutality or human rights abuses against his opponents, as is well-documented by international human rights agencies. He needs to make sure they don't turn on him. The same is true for Touadéra and Colonel Assimi Goita, Mali's interim president.

Wagner forces have been loyal to Prigozhin, not necessarily to Putin. And they are definitely not loyal to generals in the Russian army. If Putin dispatches Prigozhin, who will control Wagner? And who can guarantee Wagner forces won't turn on African leaders who decide to side with Putin? The Guardian reported that four days after Wagner group mercenaries marched on Moscow, a Russian envoy flew into Benghazi to reassure Haftar that more than 2,000 Wagner fighters, technicians, political operatives in

triage and replace Wagner forces with verifiably loyal Russian troops - even if it wanted to. As Sergey Kostelyanyets of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute for African Studies told Newsweek recently, "Russia's Ministry of Defense and other Russian security agencies have neither capacity nor will to replace Wagner, which has come to possess extensive physical and logical infrastructure in Africa." "We may see rebranding of these assets or reestablishment of Wagner as a more independent entity, which however will continue to serve the interests of the global anti-Western - looking to change the status quo-movement," Kostelyanyets said. As if the question of who will control Wagner isn't enough, there's another issue that is very much on the minds of many African leaders.

They are being put in an untenable position. They may have to choose between loyalty to Prigozhin and obeisance to Putin. But they need both men on their sides, united, and not at war. Haftar, Goita, Touadéra, Traore - they all need Prigozhin to maintain a strong grip on Wagner's fighters. They need Wagner to remain strong, well-funded, disciplined and in-place to protect their regimes. They also need Putin to keep sending them arms as they abstain from joining international condemnation of his invasion of Ukraine. The last thing Wagner's African patrons need is what has happened, a battle at the top between Russia's president and the man who controls the mercenaries that keep them in power. That's a no-win scenario for anyone caught in the middle. It's important to keep in mind that Wagner and Russia have supported whoever will pay the bills and give them access to Africa's bounty. In Sudan, they're not supporting the country's leader, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. They're supporting Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, leader of Sudan's Rapid Support Forces, who is vying for power. Sudan actually could become more stable if Wagner weren't in the picture, even if it doesn't become more democratic.

All of the possible outcomes of Russia's chaos spell serious upheaval in much of Africa, since people could be forced to flee their destabilized countries if a power struggle emerges as Wagner and Moscow fight for supremacy. Not surprisingly, the entire situation has Washington worried. At the beginning of the year, the US labeled the Wagner Group a transnational criminal organization and slapped sanctions on the organization. Wagner, Washington said at the time, has been committing "widespread human rights abuses" in Africa, and "extorting natural resources from their people." In the immediate aftermath of the failed mutiny, the US Treasury Department late last month imposed sanctions on four companies and one individual with ties to Prigozhin and the Wagner Group. "The Wagner Group funds its brutal operations in part by exploiting natural resources in countries like the Central African Republic and Mali. The United States will continue to target the Wagner Group's revenue streams to degrade its expansion and violence in Africa, Ukraine, and anywhere else," a Treasury statement read, noting that Wagner "has committed widespread human rights abuses and has appropriated natural resources across multiple countries in Africa."

Long-term, it may be in Africa's best interest to weaken the grip of Wagner forces on the continent and watch despotic regimes fall, but that might be more easily said than done. And quite frankly, Africa will only emerge better-off if democratic governments emerge after Wagner forces are shown the door. Short-term, the picture is much grimmer. Wagner's departure could unleash a bloody fight for control of countries throughout Africa, with millions of innocent people caught in the mayhem. In the long run, there's still another shoe to drop in this ongoing saga. And when it does, Africa will almost certainly feel its thud.

CNN

EU's pioneering green credentials face two-pronged attack

Andrew Hammond

THE philosophical roots of modern-day environmentalism can be traced back at least as far as the 19th century, to thinkers such as the US naturalist Henry David Thoreau. It was in North America too that green politics first took significant root, as conservation movements were founded, such as the Sierra Club in 1892, helping influence public and private sector leaders like President Theodore Roosevelt.

However, it is Europe that has in recent years been at the center of key sustainability megatrends. For instance, the EU was the first power in the world to introduce - in 2005 - a large-scale carbon trading system, which has helped set the policy agenda for many other governments around the world, from the Asia-Pacific to the Americas. This trajectory has only intensified since the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There is growing momentum behind the European Green Deal project, with more than 50 major sustainability initiatives rolled out since the signature policy agenda was announced in 2019 by the Ursula von der Leyen-led European Commission.

As the EU seeks to become the world's first major player to be climate-neutral - its target is by 2050 - its positioning at the forefront of such green agendas is helping to create a pathway for policy innovation, especially around the growing urgency of the energy transition. This is creating new incentives to transform the bloc into a more resource-efficient and competitive economy. One cornerstone of the EU's green strategy is its taxonomy for sustainable activities - a sustainable finance framework and an important market transparency tool in which Europe is yet again a pioneer and world leader. The taxonomy helps direct investments toward the economic activities most needed for the transition, in line with the European Green Deal's objectives. In short, it is a classification system that defines criteria for economic activities that are aligned with a net-zero trajectory by 2050 and broader environmental goals other than climate.

The EU taxonomy allows financial and non-financial companies to share a common definition of economic activities that can be considered environmentally sustainable. In this way, it plays an important role in helping the 27 EU member nations to scale up sustainable investment by creating security for investors, protecting private investors from greenwashing, helping companies become more climate-friendly and mitigating market fragmentation. Yet, while the European Commission continues to double down on this sustainability pathway, there is growing domestic and international discontent. On the latter, as the EU increasingly evolves into a global regulatory superpower, there is significant international concern about elements of its green agenda, including the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, which is part of the latest phase of reform to the EU's carbon trading system.

The adjustment mechanism relates to imports of products in carbon-intensive industries. The goal is to prevent greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts being offset by increasing emissions outside EU borders through the relocation of production to non-EU countries, where policies applied to fight climate change are less ambitious, or increased imports of carbon-intensive products. China, whose bilateral trade with the EU was in the magnitude of \$850 billion in 2022, is one of the biggest critics of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, with Beijing arguing that it is inconsistent with international trade principles and rules. It asserts that this mechanism will discriminate against imported products and limit market access, especially from developing World Trade Organization member nations.

However, discontent within the EU regarding the bloc's green agenda has captured more headlines recently. The timing of this backlash reflects not just the challenging economic landscape Europe has faced since the pandemic and the outbreak of the Ukraine war, including high inflation. In addition, the bloc is facing a huge election year in 2024 with the European Parliament ballots, in which the cost-of-living crisis may take center stage. One of the initial big signs of green discontent came earlier this year, when Germany, the EU's largest economy, delayed a deal to ban new internal combustion engines in the EU by 2035. Then the other traditional twin motor of the bloc, France, called for a pause on EU environmental regulation, saying that now is the time for the EU to implement existing rules before adopting new ones.

French President Emmanuel Macron has been particularly concerned by America's passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, fearing it will expose European firms to unfair competition from North America, not to mention from developing countries that have significantly lower environmental standards. Other national leaders have also expressed concerns, including in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Romania, Ireland and Poland. Most recently, green discontent has focused on the EU's nature restoration law, which will require member states to introduce measures restoring nature on a fifth of their land and sea by 2030. The intent is to reverse the decline of Europe's natural habitats, more than four-fifths of which are deemed as being in poor health.

The right-of-center European People's Party, the largest body of lawmakers in the European Parliament, opposes the measure, asserting that it will endanger food security and undermine the economics of the agricultural sector. After a big lobbying campaign, the proposal was only narrowly adopted by the legislature earlier this month, by 336 votes to 300. The EU may, therefore, be at a key pivot point with its green strategy. The domestic political backlash may significantly subside if the bloc enjoys a new period of sustained economic growth after the 2024 election cycle. However, international criticism of key supranational elements of this agenda, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, may only grow if the bloc's influence as a regulatory superpower continues to increase.

Arab News

We're ignoring the real lessons from Ukraine

Michael Fallon

HOW big an army do we need? Are we buying the right amount of high-tech kit? Similar issues have confronted every defence secretary - but today, as we reckon with war in Europe, there is one overriding question: what does the current war in Ukraine tell us that might reshape our military for our next conflict? This week's Defence Command Paper should have been the moment to provide real answers.

Surely, the first lesson of Ukraine is that size matters. A country with an international role - in Nato, at the UN, and in partnership with the United States and key strategic allies across the globe - needs armed forces to match. When friends call for help, we have to be there to defend their freedoms and our values - and to be able to deliver that, an army of just over 70,000 is too small. Kyiv's formidable forces have shown the power of having the numbers ready to fight. Ben Wallace is right, of course, that a larger army would require a bigger defence budget. We're spending just over the Nato minimum, at 2.1 per cent of GDP. But Russia was spending a higher proportion of its GDP in the run up to the invasion and even that hasn't proved enough for them. Meanwhile, China is developing a third aircraft carrier, nuclear ballistic submarines and a massive surface fleet.

If you still think 2.1 per cent is enough, consider this: at the turn of this century, before 9/11 and international terrorism,

before Russia invaded Crimea, before Iran and North Korea developed long-range missiles, before China openly threatened Taiwan, we were spending 2.7 per cent. The Prime Minister and Chancellor have talked of a new target of 2.5 per cent but, despite all encouragement, this is still just talk. Without a firm glide-path towards it, the need to plan and pay for new and expensive weaponry means that the Army in particular will continue to shrink. Whitehall jargon about "draping capabilities across platforms" and "it's all about the effect you deliver" is no substitute for hard numbers of well trained and deployable troops.

The second lesson of Ukraine is that you must plan for the unexpected. In my first few months as defence secretary, we had to organise our new Nato deployment of hundreds of troops to Estonia; we had to send men to join a huge allied training programme to help rebuild the Iraqi forces struggling against Daesh; we started to plan British Army training of the Ukrainian army resisting the original Russian advance into the Donbas back in 2014. In the midst of all this, we suddenly had to dispatch 700 troops and helicopters to tackle the deadly outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone.

And all of it came on top of existing commitments in Northern Ireland, in Cyprus, in different trouble spots in Africa and across the Middle East, and alongside domestic prepared-

ness here to help with floods, tanker driver and ambulance disputes, and backing up armed police guarding against key terrorist targets.

The next defence secretary may have to be ready to send hundreds more troops to reinforce Nato's eastern frontier, to defend British interests in the Gulf, to stand by allies under threat in the Indo-Pacific. You simply can't honour all these commitments with small packets of soldiers, endlessly rotated. The third lesson is perhaps the most important of all. Ukraine mobilised extraordinarily quickly to combat the Russian invasion. It has been a whole of nation effort, involving not just regulars and reserves but civilians, too. It is a war of technology, to be sure, involving drones and long-range missiles, but it is also a war of territory. And defending territory means holding and recapturing ground. That requires infantry supported by armour and artillery. Even with earlier and better air support from the allies, this would still have been a ground war fought by soldiers.

Ukraine, like Russia, has thrown thousands of men into this fight. If Nato's north-eastern border is breached, if Russia again threatens Georgia and Moldova or the western Balkans, we would have to mobilise here in numbers, too. These are, as the Defence Secretary acknowledges, very dangerous times. Far from cutting Army numbers, we should be increasing them, and supplementing them with stronger reserves.

The Telegraph

China's transformative role in regional stability and development

Naseem Khan Achakzai

IN an era of evolving global dynamics, it is imperative to recognize and acknowledge the significant role countries play in fostering regional stability and prosperity. Among these, China stands as a key player, dedicated to promoting peace, harmony and cooperation in various regions. Through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has actively contributed to the stability and prosperity of countries including Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

China's commitment to economic connectivity through the BRI has served as a catalyst for trade facilitation, infrastructure development and regional growth. By investing in critical infrastructure projects, such as ports, roads, railways and more, China has paved the way for enhanced connectivity, increased trade opportunities and robust economic growth. The BRI has the potential to reshape regional dynamics, fostering collaboration and shared prosperity among participating nations. China's constructive role in advancing regional stability is particularly evident in countries like Afghanistan. Through its diplomatic efforts, China has played a vital role in bringing together stakeholders to the negotiation table, seeking peaceful resolutions to longstanding conflicts. China's commitment to stability and peace in the region is exemplified through its active support of initiatives like the Afghan peace process. By supporting dialogue and reconciliation efforts, China aims to create a stable environment conducive to prosperity and development.

Moreover, China's engagements extend beyond economics and politics. By promoting cultural exchanges and people-to-people bonds, China fosters greater understanding and cooperation. Investments in academic collabo-

rations, tourism promotion and cultural exchanges lay the foundation for stronger relationships built on trust and respect. These efforts contribute to stability by promoting dialogue, cooperation and an appreciation for diverse perspectives. China's dedication to sustainable development is evident through various initiatives. Its focus on green energy projects and investment in renewable sources underscores its commitment to environmental protection.

Additionally, China's poverty alleviation efforts have uplifted millions of people out of poverty, not only within its own borders but also through international partnerships. By sharing its experiences and resources, China has contributed to reducing economic disparities and enhancing stability in the region. While recognizing China's substantial contributions, it is important for countries in the region to view this support as an opportunity for self-reliance and independent growth. By leveraging China's assistance, countries can develop their own mechanisms and strategies to foster sustainable development.

This approach ensures a win-win situation for all parties involved, enabling Pakistan and Afghanistan to harness their potential, achieve self-sufficiency, and contribute to the overall peace, prosperity and development of the region. To capitalize on this opportunity, countries can prioritize domestic capacity building by investing in education, skills development and technology transfer. By fostering a conducive business environment, attracting foreign investment and promoting entrepreneurship, nations can stimulate economic growth and job creation. Investments in critical infrastructure projects, coupled with good governance and anti-corruption

measures, will further enhance stability and economic integration.

Furthermore, countries can actively engage in regional cooperation mechanisms such as the BRI, seizing opportunities for economic collaboration, trade facilitation and enhanced connectivity. By embracing these initiatives and pursuing policy coordination through regular high-level consultations, countries can shape the direction of cooperation, ensuring it aligns with their own development goals and priorities.

By embracing China's support and building upon it, the region can forge a path towards sustainable growth and prosperity. Collaboration, dialogue and connectivity among nations are key to addressing shared challenges and capitalizing on mutual opportunities. Through this collective effort, countries can pave the way for a brighter future where stability, connectivity and prosperity prevail for the benefit of all nations and people involved. Additionally, countries in the region can explore opportunities for knowledge exchange, research collaborations and technology transfer with China. By leveraging China's advancements in science, technology and innovation, nations can enhance their own capabilities and drive sustainable development. Establishing partnerships in areas such as renewable energy, information technology, agriculture and healthcare can foster mutual learning and create a platform for shared progress.

Furthermore, investing in human capital development is crucial for long-term stability and prosperity. Countries can work closely with China to establish scholarship programs, exchange initiatives and vocational training centers. This will empower individuals with the necessary skills

and knowledge to contribute effectively to their nations' growth and development. By investing in education and training, countries can unlock their potential and nurture a talented workforce that can drive innovation and economic diversification. Moreover, collaboration in the field of cultural heritage preservation and tourism promotion can unlock the potential of the region's rich historical and cultural resources. By jointly developing and promoting heritage sites, countries can attract tourists, stimulate economic growth and promote cross-cultural understanding. These initiatives not only contribute to economic prosperity, but also foster a sense of shared heritage and identity among nations. It is essential for countries in the region to foster an environment of open dialogue, trust and mutual respect when engaging with China. Through constructive engagement, transparent governance, and a commitment to upholding international norms and standards, countries can ensure a mutually beneficial relationship that promotes peace, stability and prosperity.

In conclusion, China's positive role in fostering stability and prosperity in the region cannot be understated. Through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative, diplomatic engagements, cultural exchanges and sustainable development initiatives, China has made significant contributions to regional stability and prosperity. By leveraging China's support and building upon it, countries can develop their own mechanisms, harness their potential and drive sustainable growth. Collaboration, dialogue and connectivity will be key in shaping a brighter future for the region, where peace, stability and shared prosperity prevail for the benefit of all nations and people involved.

The China Daily



SBP designates domestic systemically important banks for 2023

F.P. Report

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan on Wednesday announced the Domestic Systemically Important Banks for the year 2023 under D-SIBs framework aimed at further strengthening risk management capacities and resilience against shocks.

According to a statement issued here, the central bank has designated National Bank of Pakistan (NBP), Habib Bank Limited (HBL) and United Bank Limited (UBL) as D-SIBs for the year 2023 after carrying out the annual assessment based on banks' financials as of December

31, 2022 in line with D-SIBs framework.

In addition to the implementation of the enhanced supervisory requirements, the designated banks have to follow additional Common Equity Tier-1 (CET-1) capital requirements according to the specified bucket.

The NBP has been assigned bucket D with 2.5 percent additional CET-1 requirement, the HBL has been placed in bucket C with 1.5 percent additional CET-1 requirement and UBL in bucket A with 0.5 percent additional CET-1 requirement.

The enhanced requirements aim to further strengthen the resilience of

the systemically important banks against shocks and augment their risk management capacities, the SBP spokesperson informed.

Besides, branches of Global-Systemically Important Banks (G-SIBs) operating in Pakistan would also be required to hold additional CET-1 capital against their risk-weighted assets in Pakistan at the rate as applicable on the respective principal G-SIB, it added.

D-SIBs Framework notified in April 2018 by SBP is consistent with international standards and global best practices and takes into account the local dynamics, the statement said adding that the frame-

work specifies the methodology for the identification and designation of D-SIBs, enhanced regulatory and supervisory requirements and implementation guidelines for D-SIBs.

Giving details of two steps process of identification of D-SIBs, the spokesperson stated that in the first step, sample D-SIBs were identified each year based on the quantitative and qualitative criteria while in the second step, D-SIBs were designated from amongst the sample D-SIBs based on institutions' composite systemic score in terms of their size, interconnectedness, substitutability and complexity.



HYDERABAD: Vendors displaying mangoes to attract customers at fruits market.

Gold rates increase Rs5,400 to 226,400

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs5,400 and was sold at Rs226,400 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs221,000 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs4,630 to Rs194,102 from Rs189,472 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs177,926 from Rs173,683, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewelers Association reported.

The price of per tola increased by Rs250 to close at Rs2900 and 10-gram silver also rose by Rs214.34 to close at Rs2486.28.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$06 to \$1,973 from \$1967, the Association reported.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): PQA shipping activity was recorded at the port where five ships namely, Maersk Kinloss, MSC Greenwich, Bum Shin, Chai and Milaha Ras Laffan, carrying Container, Palm oil, Gas oil and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, FOTCO Oil Terminal and Pakistan Gas Port Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, four more ships, Gas-Chem War-now, JBU Opal, NV-Minerva and Gas Zeus also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Rong Hia Wan and Duyen Hai-1 are expected to sail on Wednesday.

The cargo throughput of 154,210 tonnes, comprising 131,100 tonnes imports Cargo and 23,110 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,870 Containers (3,600 TEUs Imports and 1,270 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are 07 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Gas-Chem War-Now and Gas Zeus & another ship, Maersk Pelepas carrying Chemicals, LPG and Container are expected to take berths at Engro Vopak Terminal, Sui Southern Gas Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on 19th July, while two more container ships, CMA CGM Ivanhoe and MSC Tia-II are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

PSX's 100-index gains 85.77 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday gained 85.77 points, a positive change of 0.19 percent, closing at 45,095.11 points against 45,009.34 points the previous trading day.

A total of 245,453,654 shares were traded during the day as compared to 254,960,671 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs9,402 billion against Rs7,322 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 319 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 96 of them recorded gains and 197 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 26 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 18,495,834

shares at Rs1.31 per share; TLP Properties with 10,309,470 shares at Rs13.22 per share and Pak Petroleum with 8,961,317 shares at Rs68.66 per share.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs100.00 per share price, closing at Rs6800.00, whereas the runner-up was Khyber Textile with an Rs57.00 rise in its per share price to Rs901.00.

Colgate Palm witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs121.49 per share closing at Rs1498.43, followed by Unilever Foods with Rs50.00 decline to close at Rs22,450.00.

Rupee gains 76 paise against US Dollar: Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday gained 76 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs283.80 against the previous day's closing of

Rs283.04. However, according to Rs283.04 the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs286 and Rs290 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 19 paise to close at Rs318.55 against the last day's closing of Rs318.36, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise to close at Rs2.03, whereas a decrease of Rs2.70 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs367.62 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs370.32.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 21 paise and 20 paise to close at Rs77.26 and Rs75.64 respectively.

37th MMC delegation visits SCCI in Sialkot

SIALKOT (APP): A delegation of the 37th Midcareer Management Course of National Institute of Management, Lahore visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI).

SCCI Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir while welcoming the course participants appreciated the role of National Institute of Management in capacity building of government officers and hoped that all the officers would play their role in the development of Pakistan after being posted at different federal, provincial or district levels in the coming days.

Wahub briefed the officials about the export culture of Sialkot, the quality of products produced by

ernment and bureaucracy was of key importance in the sustainable development of business.

He said that it was on the basis of business-friendly policies of the government and the bureaucracy, the country's private industrial sector would move forward and opportunities for foreign direct investment arise.

He said the Sialkot Chamber always played its role for cooperation with the government institutions and for the promotion of industrial and business activities.

Wahub briefed the officials about the export culture of Sialkot, the quality of products produced by

Sialkot and their consumption in the international markets and the mega projects being established with the support of business community of Sialkot.

The course participants thanked the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) for the warm welcome and appreciated the role of the Chamber in the development of Sialkot, and also appreciated the services of the Sialkot Chamber in the promotion of domestic exports.

The meeting was attended by Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) Vice President Amer Majed Sheikh and Executive Committee members.

Most markets track Wall St rally but China weighs on optimism

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets mostly rose Wednesday following a Wall Street rally as investors grow increasingly optimistic that the Federal Reserve will soon end its interest rate hiking cycle and the US economy will avoid a feared recession.

Another batch of forecast-topping earnings in New York added to the upbeat mood as the corporate earnings season gets under way, though worries over China's growth outlook cast a shadow.

Data last week showing US inflation continued to fall towards the Fed's target was among a series of indicators pointing to an econo-

my that was slowing but still in rude health.

Reinforcing that view, the latest readings showed retail sales rose less than expected in June, though that was offset by an upward revision for May, while industrial output also came in slightly below estimates.

However, traders looked past those figures to focus on news that earnings from Morgan Stanley, Bank of America and Charles Schwab all topped estimates. That came after similarly positive reports from JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo.

"The markets appear to be focused more on the forward outlook from

Corporate America than the backward insight from the macro (figures)," said SPI Asset management's Stephen Innes.

"When viewed through the cooling inflation lens, investors are shifting gears from inflation/recession concerns to higher soft landing/disinflationary probabilities."

Traders are now looking ahead to the Fed's policy meeting next week, where it is expected to hike rates once again, though the focus will be on its guidance for the future, with analysts debating whether it will hold or announce one more this year.

Fears over global inflation have seen central banks ramp rates higher for more than a year, fuelling uncertainty among investors, though they were given hope Wednesday with news that the Asian Development Bank had cut its inflation forecast for developing Asia.

The move came as food and fuel prices eased, supply chain disruptions waned, and interest rate hikes started to bite.

In New York, the Dow clocked a seventh-straight gain -- its best run in more

than two years -- as all three indexes piled higher.

Most of Asia followed suit, with Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore, Wellington, Taipei and Manila well in the green.

However, Hong Kong was hit by a sharp drop in tech firms while Shanghai and Seoul were also down.

While the outlook for the US economy is looking brighter, there is increasing worry about China's after news Monday that it had grown far slower than forecast in the second quarter while consumers remained cautious and inflation had flattened.

Months of disappointing figures have stoked talk that authorities will unveil a range of stimulus, but apart from small interest rate cuts in June and some pledges to support the struggling property sector, there has been little of substance out of Beijing.

48 officers attend 2 courses of performance audit

LAHORE (APP): Performance Audit Wing (PAW) has conducted two courses on 'Procurement Management in Performance Auditing' and 'Contract Management in Performance Auditing' which was attended 48 officers from across the country.

The PAW spokesman told media here Wednesday that the courses were focused to familiarize the participants to the concepts of procurement and contract management in performance auditing. Main scope of Public

Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) is to regulate the public procurement of goods, works and services and the matters ancillary there to; within the ambit of the federal government whether within or outside Pakistan, he added.

The spokesman mentioned that prime objective of procurement is to reduce costs through more effective purchasing by buying wisely, efficiently, and ethically to obtain the best value for money.

Contract management,

he said, enables to streamline and automate approach to manage existing contracts and creating new ones. It helps control costs, oversee payments, improve productivity and to reduce financial risk.

He said, the purpose of contract review is to ensure that legal agreements and the terms contained within them are robust and that legal and financial risk are reduced as far as possible to protect the interests of your business. Case studies, short scenarios and practi-

cled exercises were also discussed to engage the participants and make the learning experience more interactive and meaningful.

During the courses, the officers shared their feedback regarding the training sessions and gave their views that these sessions increased their knowledge & skill capacity of performance auditing. They appreciated the efforts of this wing and assured to implement entire knowledge in practical field work.

At the end, Muhammad

Samiullah Teepu, Director General (PAW) addressed the course participants and hoped that these short courses would improve practical skills in your field work.

He appreciated the resource-person who came fully prepared in their respective training sessions. He also appreciated the officers and staff of Performance Audit Wing for their support to make these courses successful. He awarded certificates to the participants and wished them best of luck in their future.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 135/1, Institution. 7/4/2023. Date of hearing 29/7/2023. Ashtar Khan Vs Mst Zebunisa widow. Notice to No. 3. Fazal Subhan. 4. Fazal Wahab sons of Abdul Haq late residents of Topdara Tehsil Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. A.m dated 29/7/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal No. 37/13. Institution 17/4/2023 Date of hearing 30/8/2023. Faren etc Vs XEN C&W etc. Notice to No. 5. Faisal Engineer contractor Umer Hayat resident of Kandargay Dokada Tehsil Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 30/8/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Father's Name Correction

My father's correct name is Salah Ud Din Khan while mistakenly written in my Educational documents as Shah Salauddin please make the required correction. Madiha Shah D/o Salah Ud Din Khan.



In brief

FIFA Women's World Cup to kick off today

A N K A R A (Agencies): The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand will kick off on Thursday. In the opening match, New Zealand will face Norway at Eden Park, Auckland. The Group A game will start at 0700GMT. Later Thursday, the World Cup's other host nation Australia will play against Ireland in a Group B match at Stadium Australia, Sydney. The quadrennial international top-tier football championship will run through Aug. 20 with the final to be held at Stadium Australia. For the first time, 32 teams will play 64 matches during a month. The best two teams in eight groups will qualify for the last 16. The Round of 16 will be followed by quarterfinals, semifinals, and final. The third-place play-off will be held on Aug. 19. The US, who were the 2015 and 2019 world champions, are among the favorites. The Stars and Stripes have won four World Cups to be the record holders. Germany, England, Spain and France will also fight for the title. FIFA confirmed that the 2023 World Cup's total prize pool is \$110 million, which is a tournament record. It was \$30 million in 2019. The 2023 world champions will get a total of \$10.5 million. The winning association will get \$4.29 million, and the rest will be paid to the players. Meanwhile, runners-up will get \$7.5 million.

Vingegaard on track for Tour title

L O N D O N (Agencies): Jonas Vingegaard climbed into a rock-solid lead in the Tour de France on Wednesday as his main rival Tadej Pogacar lost almost six minutes on the toughest climb on the 21 stages. Felix Gall won stage 16, billed as the "Queen" stage with 69km of Alpine climbing, ahead of Simon Yates. Defending champion Vingegaard of Jumbo Visma increased his lead in the overall standings to a crushing 7min 35sec, with Pogacar second and his UAE teammate Adam Yates up to third at 10min 45sec. Ineos rider Carlos Rodriguez slipped to fourth. He is 1min 16sec behind Adam Yates and 18sec ahead of twin Simon Yates of Jayco Alula. After Vingegaard pulverised Pogacar in the individual time trial the day before, the Slovenian vowed to fight back, saying he was hoping for bad weather. But the forecast storms passed in the early hours of the morning and the run from Saint-Gervais Mont Blanc to Courchevel took place in searing heat. Both the leading riders and their entire teams were done tested an hour before the race set off from the pretty Alpine resort. With around 7km remaining of the final climb up the Col de la Loze, Pogacar told his team radio "I'm dead! I can't go on." Vingegaard skipped away. Adam Yates, freed of his services pacing Pogacar, was on the Dane's tail. On a Tour where motorbikes have been much in the news, Vingegaard was stopped by one on the upper reaches of the last mountain after a vehicle stalled, blocking the race director's car. The cool Dane was far from flummoxed and was even slightly annoyed that spectators then gave him a shove to help him get moving again.

Pakistan lose 3-wickets in chase of 131 to raise Sri Lanka's hopes

GALLE (Agencies): Pakistan lost three wickets in a tricky 131-run chase on day four of the rain-hit opening Test on Wednesday to give Sri Lanka a glimmer of hope in the contest.

The tourists reached 48-3 at stumps in Galle, needing another 83 on the fifth and final day to take the lead in the two-match series.

Pakistan spinners Noman Ali and Abrar Ahmed took three wickets each to help bowl out Sri Lanka for 279 in the final session despite a stubborn 82 by first-innings centurion Dhananjaya de Silva.

Pakistan opener Imam-ul-Haq, on 25, and skipper Babar Azam, on six, were batting at close of play. Left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya struck twice with the wickets of Abdullah Shafique, caught behind for eight, and Shan Masood for seven.

Noman was sent in as

nightwatchman but he was run out on nought.

"Ideally, we should have had another 100 runs more on the board but since the first innings lead (by Pakistan) we were always playing catch up cricket," Sri Lanka assistant coach Naveed Nawaz told reporters. "If we can get another two-three wickets without conceding too many runs tomorrow it could turn out to be a good contest."

Left-arm Noman, Abrar and Agha Salman, who took two wickets, struck regular blows in Sri Lanka's second innings. Pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi snared another two to help clean up the tail.

De Silva, who scored 122 in Sri Lanka's first-innings total of 312, built key partnerships including a 76-run seventh-wicket stand with Ramesh Mendis, who made 42. Shaheen, a left-arm quick, finally got de Silva

caught behind with a rising delivery after Pakistan took the second new ball.

Shaheen got his second before Abrar ended the innings. Salman sent back Dinesh Chandimal for 28 to break a 60-run stand with de Silva and then Samarawickrama for 11 to put Sri Lanka in trouble, but de Silva stood firm.

Abrar struck first earlier with his leg spin to send back skipper Dimuth Karunaratne for 20 to check Sri Lanka's brisk start.

Batsman Saud Shakeel has remained the star for Pakistan so far with his unbeaten first-innings 208 -- his maiden Test double century -- in his team's 461 all out on day three. Shakeel's marathon knock handed Pakistan a handy lead of 149 as rain interrupted play on the first three days. Rain stayed away on day four, which started late due to a damp patch on the field.



GALLE: Imam-ul-Haq dives forward to take the catch to dismiss Dinesh Chandimal.

England's Broad joins 600 Test wicket club



OLD TRAFFORD (Agencies): England's Stuart Broad became just the fifth bowler to take 600 Test wickets when he dismissed Australia's Travis Head in the fourth Ashes Test at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

By having Head caught hooking to Joe Root at fine leg for 48, the 37-year-old paceman joined Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan (800), Australia's Shane Warne (708), England's James Anderson (688) and India's Anil Kumble (619) in an exclusive club.

Broad and Anderson are the only fast bowlers to have taken 600 Test wickets.

Broad, the son of former England batsman Chris Broad, started this match, his 166th Test, on 598 wickets.

But after England captain Ben Stokes won the toss and elected to field on Wednesday, Broad struck an early blow when he had Usman Khawaja lbw for three to leave Australia 15-1.

He had to wait until his 11th over of his innings for the landmark wicket, with left-hander Head hooking a bouncer and Root holding a low catch as he came in off the boundary.

Head's exit left Australia on 189-5 as England, 2-1 down with two Tests to play, chase the win they need to maintain their hopes of regaining the Ashes.

Sudharsan ton aids India A thump Pakistan Shaheens in Emerging Asia Cup

COLOMBO (Agencies): Sai Sudharsan scored a magnificent century and led India A to a thumping eight-wicket victory over Pakistan Shaheens in the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup on Wednesday.

Set to chase a modest 206-run total, India comfortably accumulated 210/2 in 36.4 overs at the back of a dominating century knock by Sai Sudharan. India A openers Sudharan and Abhishek Sharma scripted a solid start to the pursuit with a 58-run partnership.

The pair tested Pakistan Shaheens' bowlers before Mubasir Khan found a much-needed breakthrough by

casting Sharma, who scored 20 off 28. Sudharsan and Nikin Jose then put India A in complete control with a ter-

rific 99-run partnership with both scoring half-centuries.

Jose, however, fell briefly after amassing the milestone as Mehran Mumtaz got him stumped. He scored 53 from 64 deliveries, laced with seven boundaries.

Skipper Yash Dhull (21 off 19) then joined India A mainstay Sudharsan in the middle and stitched a match-winning partnership.

Sudharsan remained unbeaten with a brilliant century. His 110-ball 104 featured 10 boundaries and three sixes. For Pakistan, only Mubasir Khan and Mehran Mumtaz could pick up a wicket.

Opting to bat first in the high-octane clash against arch-rivals India A, Pakistan Shaheens' batting lineup failed and could only

accumulate 205 before being bundled out in the 48th over. Pakistan Shaheens had a dismal start to their innings as the green shirts lost Saim Ayub (0) and Omair Bin Yousuf (0) in the fourth with just nine runs on the scoreboard.

Opening batter Sahibzada Farhan looked to anchor the innings with Kamran Ghulam after back-to-back dismissals.

The pair could add 36 runs to the total before Riyan Parag got rid of Farhan, who could score 35 off 36 deliveries, hitting eight boundaries. Following Farhan's dismissal, Kamran put on a brief partnership with Haseebullah before both perished in the 23rd over to leave Pakistan in trouble at 78/5.

Int'l Para TT wheelchairs player honored

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Para Table Tennis International medalist Altaf-ur-Rehman met with Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad

Shahbaz Sharif during PM Initiative for Sports Program in Islamabad recently. According to details given by Altaf-ur-Rehman, a program of PM Initiative for Sports was organized in Islamabad in which the Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif graced the occasion as chief guest.

International Para-Table Tennis medalist Altaf-ur-Rehman from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was invited in this program due to his excellent performance when he won a bronze medal in the Wheelchair Table Tennis in World Islamic Games in

Turkey. During the program, this talented medalist from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during his meeting with the Prime Minister gave him details of his performance and also thanked the Pakistan Sports Department, NPC and Friends of Paraplegics for their support.

Apart from this, he also informed him about the step mother attitude of the Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who did not extend any support to Altaf-ur-Rehman during his visit to the World Games. He was rewarded and encouraged twice by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, but he did not receive any recognition in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and even when he goes to the sports department, he has to wait for hours in the office

and for international tours.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif highly appreciated the performance of Altaf-ur-Rehman in sports, and also expressed his surprise at the injustice and treatment to superstars like Altaf. Altaf-ur-Rehman said that he would continue his hard work to make the name of the province and country high at international level.

The Prime Minister assured him that he would be supported at all levels so he and other players like him would achieve name and fame for the motherland. Altaf-ur-Rehman said that by supporting players like me and others we would get a chance to excel at the national and international levels.

Bayern Munich wins 27-0 in first preseason match

LONDON (Agencies): To say Bayern Munich's opening preseason friendly was a one-sided affair would be something of an understatement.

The defending German champion beat ninth-tier Rottach-Egern 27-0 on Tuesday as Bayern showed no mercy against the amateur side -- perhaps the team doesn't need Harry Kane after all. The Tottenham Hotspur and England striker has been reportedly linked with a move to the Bundesliga club over the summer.

The score was already 18-0 by half time, but Rottach-Egern managed to

limit the damage in the second half to just nine goals.

Jamal Musiala, Mathys Tel and Marcel Sabitzer all scored five goals each, while Serge Gnabry scored a hat-trick.

The match took place at Bayern Munich's training camp near the town of Tegernsee, with head coach Thomas Tuchel playing two entirely different teams to start each half.

Back in 2019, Bayern beat Rottach-Egern 23-0.

In attendance was Bayern's new signing Minjae Kim, who put pen to paper just hours before

the preseason friendly.

The South Korean defender joins after a standout season with Napoli, helping the Italian club to win its first Serie A title in 33 years.

"FC Bayern is a dream for every footballer," Kim told Bayern. "I'm really looking forward to what's to come in Munich. It's a new beginning for me. I'll continue to develop here."

"In discussions with the club, it was made clear to me from the start how interested they are in me. My first goal is to play a lot of games. In addition, I want to win as many trophies as possible."



New signing Konrad Laimer got his first goal in a Bayern Munich shirt.

Men's ODI Asia Cup 2023 schedule announced as Pak-India clash fixes in Kandy on Sept. 2

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan will host the opener against Nepal in Multan on August 30 while Kandy will be the venue of Sri Lanka's first match against Bangladesh on August 31 and Colombo is going to stage the final on September 17, 2023.

Pakistan-India marquee match in Kandy on September 2, if both sides progress to the Super-4 stage, they will meet again in Colombo on September 10. Asian Cricket Council President Jay Shah in his talks said that Asia Cup is a celebration of cricketing excellence that unites the nations of Asia in the spirit of competition and camaraderie. PCB Chairman Zaka Ashraf in his reply said: "Our arrangements and hospitality are second to none and this will be a great opportunity to once again showcase this at an international level."

The Asian Cricket Council and the Pakistan Cricket Board Wednesday announced the schedule of the Men's ODI Asia Cup 2023. The 50-over format tournament would be held from August 30 to September 17 with event host Pakistan staging four matches and Sri Lanka holding nine matches.

Four venues will be used for the 13-match competition. In Pakistan, Multan will host the tournament opener between Pakistan and Nepal on August 30 before the action shifts to Lahore for the remaining three matches. Sri Lanka will use Kandy for the three first round matches and Colombo for the five Super-4 stage fixtures and the September 17 final.

Sri Lanka will open their campaign against Bangladesh in Kandy on August 31, while India's first match in

the tournament will be against Pakistan in Kandy on September 2. If both Pakistan and India progress to the Super-4 stage, they will meet again in Colombo on September 10.

After hosting the tournament opener in Multan, the remaining three matches in Pakistan will be held at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. On September 3, Bangladesh and Afghanistan would go head to head, before Afghanistan took on Sri Lanka on September 5. If all goes according to the pre-event seeding, then Pakistan will take on Bangladesh in both sides' first Super-4 match on September 6.

Pakistan and India are seeded as A1 and A2, respectively with Nepal as the third side in Group A, while Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are seeded as B1 and B2 in Group B, respectively with Afghanistan as the third side. If Nepal and Afghanistan progress to the Super-4 stage from their respective groups, they will take the seeding of the sides that have dropped out in the first round.

Jay Shah, President of the Asian Cricket Council: "We are thrilled to announce the highly anticipated Men's ODI Asia Cup 2023, a celebration of cricketing excellence that unites the nations of Asia in the spirit of competition and camaraderie. As President of the Asian Cricket Council, I extend my warmest regards and heartfelt wishes to all participating teams."

He said: "The Asia Cup holds a special place in the hearts of cricket enthusiasts across the continent. It goes beyond being just a tournament; it symbolizes the rich tapestry of cultures, tra-

ditions and shared passion for the game that binds our diverse nations together. This prestigious event not only showcases the cricketing prowess of the players but also fosters a sense of unity and brotherhood among Asian countries."

"Let the tournament be a celebration of cricket's beauty, a display of sporting excellence and a reflection of the unity that binds our nations together," he said, adding, "Together, let us witness cricketing magic unfold, as each match becomes a chapter in a larger narrative of friendship and sportsmanship."

"On behalf of the Asian Cricket Council and cricket lovers across Asia, I extend my gratitude to the fellow board members, teams, organizers, sponsors and fans who make this event possible. Your unwavering support is the driving force behind the success of the Asia Cup, Mr. Jay Shah said.

"May the Men's ODI Asia Cup 2023 be an unforgettable journey, filled with moments of triumph, joy, and togetherness. Let us come together to witness the best of Asian cricket," he said.

Chairman PCB Zaka Ashraf, said: "As Event Hosts, the ACC's Asia Cup 2023 schedule announcement provides us absolute clarity on how we will plan and deliver this tournament so that it is enjoyable for the participants and the fans. Our arrangements and hospitality are second to none and this will be a great opportunity to once again showcase this at an international level."

"For Pakistan, it will be the homecoming of the ACC Asia Cup after 15 long years. Our fans have waited for this for a long time and, as such, we look

forward to making it bigger and better so that the fans and participants can start counting down days leading up to the ICC Champions Trophy, which Pakistan will host in February 2025.

"I want to congratulate Nepal on qualifying for the Asia Cup and look forward to welcoming them along with Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have previously played in Pakistan, it will be the first of many times for Nepal and Afghanistan, and I remain confident they will take away memories that will stay with them for a very long time," Zaka Ashraf said.

"I am extremely happy for the Multan fans who will be the host of the ACC Asia Cup 2023 opener and will see their national side in action in a multi-team tournament for the first time since 1994. It remains one of my top priorities to ensure competitive cricket returns to historic venues across the country," he added.

"From the Pakistan team's perspective, it will be an excellent opportunity for them to play in high-profile pressure matches and also aim to reclaim the title they last won in 2012. They have all the potential and capability to do that and a strong performance in the Asia Cup will give them the encouragement and confidence for subsequent series and events," he added.

MEN'S ODI ASIA CUP 2023 SCHEDULE (start times to be confirmed in due course):

Group A – Pakistan (A1), India (A2) and Nepal (Nepal will take position of the side, which fails to progress to the Super-4 stage)

Group B – Sri Lanka (B1), Bangladesh (B2) and Afghanistan (Afghanistan will take position of the side, which fails to progress to the Super-4 stage)

30 Aug – Pakistan v Nepal, Multan Cricket Stadium, Multan, Pakistan
31 Aug – Bangladesh v Sri Lanka, Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, Kandy, Sri Lanka

2 Sep – Pakistan v India, Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, Kandy, Sri Lanka

3 Sep – Bangladesh v Afghanistan, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Pakistan

4 Sep – India v Nepal, Pallekele International Cricket stadium Kandy, Sri Lanka

5 Sep – Afghanistan v Sri Lanka, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Pakistan

6 Sep – A1 v B2 (Super-4), Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Pakistan

9 Sep – B1 v B2 (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka

10 Sep – A1 v A2 (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka

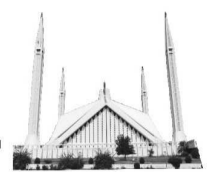
12 Sep – A2 v B1 (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka

14 Sep – A1 v B1 (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka

15 Sep – A2 v B2, (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka

17 Sep – Final - 1 v 2, R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka

18 Sep – Reserve day for the final.



In brief

ANF seizes 23067 liters chemical

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its ongoing operations against drug smugglers managed to recover 23067 liters prohibited chemicals and 150 kg narcotics. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, in an operation on Kandahari Road Chaman, ANF recovered 23067 liters prohibited chemicals from a godown. The chemical was concealed there to smuggle abroad. In the second operation conducted in a deserted area of 'Gogodan' village in Turbat, ANF recovered 100 kg charras concealed in bushes. The spokesman informed that in the third operation conducted in a deserted area near Zero Point, Pasi, ANF recovered 50 kg charras concealed in bushes. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

21 dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Administration had registered around 290 FIRs on violations of anti-dengue SOPs from January 1 to date in various areas of the district. Director Health Rawalpindi, Dr. Ansar Ishaq while giving details of the punitive actions, told APP that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had sealed 108 premises, issued Challans to 215, notices to 1,106, and a fine of Rs 317,600 imposed on violations of dengue SOPs in 2023. He informed that as many as 21 confirmed cases had been reported in the district this year, while the number was 13 in 2022, and two in 2021 during the period. The health officer further stated that among the cases, four of each were reported from the Rawalpindi Cantonment, Chaklala Cantonment and Municipal Corporation area, two from Potohar town urban area, while one of each case had arrived from Potohar rural, Gujjar Khan and Kotli Sattian. During indoor vector surveillance, Dr. Ansar informed that larvae was detected at 11,507 sites while during outdoor surveillance larvae was found at 2,010 spots this year.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 am to 02:00 pm Islamabad Circle, Anguri, NCP, Mangyal, Shahdara, Shahpur, Khayaban Iqbal, Pir Suhawah, Quaid-e-Azam University, Bri Imam, Mandala, Athal, NIH, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP Feeders, From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Highway, Zia Masjid, Service Road East, Iqbal Town Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Chakri, Arslan Poultry Farm, SPD, Haskol, Paryal, Kahota City-II, Hanif Shaheed, Old Rawat, New Rawat, CWO, AOWHS, Sparko Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Badhana, Fazahia, Azizabad Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Doulatia, Adi, Dera Muslim, CS Shah, Basharat, Tharpal Feeder, Attock Circle, Maniawala, Taxila-I & II, Sher Shah Suri, Kamra Rural, Mansar, Gondal, Haji Shah Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Chakwal, Jakhar, F-9 Chak Daulat.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman, addressing during the launching ceremony of Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) Annual Report-2022.

400 projects worth over \$330m benefited beyond 21.2m people including flood affectees: PHF

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) Annual Report launched here on Wednesday unveiled its progress throughout the year highlighting that its member organizations (INGOs) implemented 400 projects throughout Pakistan including AJ&K and Gilgit Baltistan with a dedicated 296 projects providing humanitarian assistance, particularly in response to 2022 floods, and 104 focused on development interventions.

These initiatives, worth over \$330 million, benefited more than 21.2 million people across the country emphasizing the importance of long-term recovery and efforts. Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) serves as an independent and registered organization, acting as a voice for international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in their engagements and coordination with the Government of Pakistan, UN agencies, humanitarian actors, and civil society organizations. It represents 42 INGOs and 8 affiliate members, including the National Humanitarian Network (NHN), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and IFRC/ICRC in Pakistan.

In his opening remarks Country Coordinator, PHF Syed Shahid Kazmi provided a brief overview of the forum and its efforts in compiling the annual report. He said the PHF Annual Report launch was a regular event where the forum was established in 2003 as a platform of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) which at present comprised of 42 international organizations approved by the government of Pakistan.

"The annual report is a tedious process in that we gather information from all 42 member INGOs. It takes 3-4 months to collect data," he said. He thanked the international donors and partners contributing to the cause. A documentary screening of the PHF Annual Report 2022 was also showcased depicting relief and humanitarian efforts, testimonials of partner organisations' heads sharing their experiences and comments on the flood response. A panel discussion was also moderated by PHF Country Coordinator, Syed Shahid Kazmi. Country Director, of Save the Children, Muhammad Khuram Gondal, Country Director of International Rescue Committee, Shabnam Baloch,

Executive Director, of Muslim Hands, Syed Javaid Gillani, and Country Director Helvetas, Dr Arjumand Nizami expressed their comprehensive insights on the flood response 2022 and humanitarian efforts made by the PHF partner organisations.

USAID Country Director, Rachel Grand in her keynote address said the US deeply appreciated PHF's leadership for coordinating flood response as its contributions were very important. She also applauded PHF partners' perseverance while facing challenges in relief and humanitarian efforts. "We are proud of US's longstanding partnership with international organizations. US-Pakistan Green Alliance is an effort to jointly learn from experiences for energy shift, environmental conservation and other issues."

Rachel Grand added that the US understand the depth of underdeveloped countries facing a climate crisis and its USAID was supporting climate-smart technologies in agriculture and water. Jo Moir, Development Director British High Commission said PHF is the eye and hands in the field whereas the vast population of Pakistan was extremely challenging to deliver services.

Search operation conducted in Islamabad to ensure citizens' safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): The police in collaboration with the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) have carried out a comprehensive search and combing operation within the jurisdiction of Sangjani police station. In response to special directives from Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the search and combing operations had been extended to various areas of the city.

The primary objective of these operations is to ensure the safety and security of the residents.

Under the supervision of DSP CTD, joint teams consisting of CTD, FC, and local police conducted the search and combing operation at different locations within Sangjani police stations. During this operation, 25 individuals who raised suspicion and 10 motorcycles were taken to the police station for verification. Additionally, 50 houses, five vehicles, and 25 motorcycles were thoroughly checked.

The ICCPO emphasized the importance of these operations in elevating security levels within the federal capital.

All zonal officers have been instructed to continue implementing similar measures in their respective areas. The cooperation of the citizens during these checks is greatly appreciated which are purely aimed to ensure a safe and secure environment for all.

Women's political inclusion vital for stable democracy, proactive Parliament: Raja

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf on Wednesday said no society could develop without inclusion and active participation of women in all spheres of life.

The political inclusion of women was imperative for a stable democracy and proactive Parliament as those societies remained backward and underdeveloped where they were not encouraged and promoted, he said while addressing the closing ceremony of the two-day 'Roundtable of Political Parties on Women's Manifesto', organized by the Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in collaboration with the UN Women.

The NA speaker said the Pakistani women were talented and taking active part in politics. The women parliamentarians had been on the forefront and proactive in the legislative process.

He said the Constitution discouraged gender-based discrimination. He also said that women empowerment should be central goal of manifestos of all political parties. Raja Pervaz said stable politics and a strong Parliament were interlinked with political empowerment of women.

"Women comprise more than 50 percent of population and their representation in politics will strengthen the Parliament and democracy," he added.

He felicitated the organizers on holding

a successful roundtable conference and appreciated the consensus evolved on its manifesto. WPC Secretary Shahida Rehmani, in her remarks, said the Caucus had always been at the forefront to legislate for protection of fundamental women's rights.

She said the political participation of women was vital for the country's progress and development, and all political parties were in unison to represent women at every political forum. Shahida Rehmani said empowerment of women and ensuring their participation in Next 16th National Assembly was essential for their economic and social empowerment. Freeha Omar, UN Women Representative in Pakistan, said the political participation of women was pivotal for empowering them. She appreciated the support of NA speaker and WPC general secretary for organising a successful conference.

Shaista Pervaiz Malik, ex-WPC general secretary, appreciated the support of Speaker Raja Pervaz for always promoting women's participation in legislative arena. She said all parties would remain committed to their manifesto. Member of the National Assembly Farrukh Khan of PML-Q praised the role of NA speaker and WPC secretary for their role in promoting and supporting the Women Parliamentary Caucus.

HEC unveils graduate education policy for implementation from fall 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has unveiled its highly anticipated Graduate Education Policy 2023 (GEP-2023) which marks a crucial milestone for higher education institutions in Pakistan and is available at <https://www.hec.gov.pk/site/gep>. It is effective and applicable from Fall 2023 semester onwards, said a press release on Wednesday.

Drawing upon the Commission's extensive two-decade experience and feedback from academia, the new policy has been meticulously crafted to embody the core principles of university autonomy, flexibility, and quality assurance, while also upholding academic freedom, relevance, and originality. One of the notable features of GEP-2023 is its liberal approach, which allows for intra-disciplinary admissions, enabling students to explore diverse academic fields within their chosen discipline. The policy recognises the value of both local and foreign expertise by introducing external evaluation conducted by

indigenous Professors alongside foreign evaluators. This inclusive approach aims to ensure a comprehensive assessment of academic standards.

Furthermore, the policy demonstrates its flexibility by introducing relaxation to the CGPA requirements for admission and offering a more dynamic assessment of the time duration for degree completion. It also streamlines the process for determining faculty relevance, and the requirements for HEC's NOC (No Objection Certificate) and approval to become a doctoral supervisor. The policy provides clear guidelines and suggests mechanisms to strengthen the implementation of these principles at the institutional level, ensuring consistency and transparency.

GEP-2023 recognises the significance of a rigorous and comprehensive degree-obtaining process. It introduces detailed guidelines for conducting comprehensive examinations, writing doctoral dissertations, and interpreting similarity reports. These guidelines are designed to

enhance academic standards, foster originality, and maintain the integrity and ethics of research and study within higher education institutions.

A key aspect of the new policy is its emphasis on doctoral research governance. It delineates the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, supervisees, and the departments overseeing advanced studies and research. By doing so, it aims to cultivate a culture of academic integrity and ethics while effectively managing academic grievances that may arise during the research process. HEC firmly believes that the implementation of this policy will make a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of graduate programmes across the country. However, the successful realisation of these objectives depends upon the committed support of the higher education community as a whole.

Overall, the policy is a progressive and forward-looking initiative that prioritises the improvement of graduate education in Pakistan.

Standing Cabinet Committee delegation visits Rawalpindi to review Muharram arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): A delegation of members of Standing Cabinet Committee for Law and Order led by Provincial Minister for School Education Manzoor Qadir here on Wednesday visited Rawalpindi and held a meeting to review the arrangements finalized for Muharram ul Haram. The members of the Committee included Provincial Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram, Provincial Minister of Awqaf Barrister Azfar, Provincial Information Minister Aamir Mir.

They directed the authorities concerned to adopt zero-tolerance policy in violation of the code of conduct issued for Muharram ul Haram.

Additional Secretary Home, Mian Shakeel, Additional IG, CTD, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatha, District Commissioner (DC), Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Khurram Ali,

Additional Commissioner (Coordination) Syed Nizarat Ali, City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, DCs and DPOs of Jhelum, Attock, Chakwal and other administrative officers attended the meeting.

Mansoor Qadir said that the administration should ensure the implementation of procession timings and the route.

Dr. Javed Akram said we should forget the differences and talk about commonalities. All hospitals have been put on high alert to deal with any emergency, he added.

Amir Mir said, in the holy month of Muharram, efforts should be made to foster the atmosphere of religious harmony and tolerance. The ban on the use of loudspeakers should be enforced strictly, he directed.

Barrister Azfar said that solid steps were being taken to ensure law and order. The holy month of Muharram ul Haram teaches unity, love and tol-

erance, he said.

Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chatha informed the delegation that special security arrangements were being finalized by the district administration and police. Night vision cameras have also been installed for 100 percent monitoring of A category processions, he said and added that all-out efforts would be made to ensure peace in the division with the help and cooperation of religious scholars of all sects.

Arrangements have been finalized by conducting division-wide visits, the Commissioner said and informed that all the scholars had been taken on board that those who make hateful and provocative speeches should not be invited under any circumstances. The RPO told the delegation that a s Muslims, we should respect each other's beliefs, ideas and thoughts. Three safety tiers would be set up to protect the Muharram processions, he informed.

NUTECH places among world's top 100 innovative universities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's National University of Technology (NUTECH) Islamabad has been selected as one of the hundred most innovative universities worldwide in 2023 by the World University Ranking for Innovation (WURI). According to the details, the global ranking agency has included the National University of Technology among the 100 universities around the world in terms of new inventions for development in the industrial sector.

The international agency has termed the university programs with respect to the industrial sector as having individual trends in global standards.

The World University Ranking for Innovation has for the first time included the National University of Technology Pakistan in the list of the most innovative universities in the world with MIT, the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University at the top.

Surprisingly, it also includes a number of lesser-known but remarkably innovative higher education institutions that have not previously appeared in other traditional university rankings, including Pakistan's National University of Technology,

Minerva University in America, Ecole 42 in France, Simon Fraser University in Canada, Abdullah Gul University in Türkiye, Burapha University in Thailand and Samar State University in the Philippines. The methodology for ranking is not based on tradition, fame, or popularity, but focuses on new concepts such as innovation, entrepreneurship, industrial sector development, social responsibility, openness, crisis management, and on the fourth industrial revolution.

The World University Ranking for Innovation wrote in its congratulatory message to the Rector National University of Technology that we highly value your innovation-based programs for skill and industrial development, which we think makes them invaluable to have in institutions of higher learning. On this success of the university, Rector Lieutenant General (ret'd) Moazzam Ijaz said that NUTECH being counted among the hundred universities for innovation is not only an honour for the university but also for Pakistan. He said that NUTECH has got the honour of being among the hundreds of universities in the world that are making their mark in industry development.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the participants of the 37th Mid-Career Management Course, Quetta, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Work for thousands created

HELMAND (Agencies): Local officials of Helmand say that thousands of people have been provided work opportunities in the three districts of the province through the Social Livelihood Program. Local officials at the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of Helmand told BNA that this project is being conducted with the financial support of the International Bank, and will be completed within a year.

Drinkable water networks built

GHOR (Agencies): Two drinkable water networks will be built in the Charsada and Dawlat Yar districts of Ghor province of Afghanistan with financial support from UNICEF. The two networks were built in Dawlat Yar and in Charsada districts with the financial support of UNICEF with a cost of 14.7 million Afghanis, said local officials at the Department of rural rehabilitation and Development of the Ghor province of Afghanistan.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

‘640 children killed, hurt by explosive remnants of war’

KABUL (Khaama Press): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has said that at least 640 children were killed or injured in 541 incidents involving explosive remnants of war and landmine explosions in Afghanistan between January 2022 and June 2023. This figure represents 60% of the 1,092 civilian casualties resulting from these incidents.

In addition, the ICRC emphasized the urgent need for more initiatives to address the problem of weapon contamination and intensify public education campaigns on the risks and perils of landmines and unexploded ordnance.

According to the report, 541 incidents resulted in these children's deaths. Unexploded bombs and other wartime ordinances

continue to threaten Afghan people severely. The report said efforts to remove landmines and other dangerous items were unsuccessful.

“Children have been particularly vulnerable to fatal or life-changing injuries as they unintentionally step on landmines or pick up unexploded ordnance littered around the places they stay, play or do household chores.” Since the Taliban took control of the country in August 2021 and a series of restrictions on women and girls, many donor states and organizations withdrew their funding. ICRC says that the funding shortfall has affected landmine clearance efforts in the country.

“The dramatic drop in resources and funding had an equally dramatic impact on efforts to clear landmines and unexploded ord-

nance,” ICRC added.

“There is, however, still a desperate need for the international community to provide technical and financial assistance to reduce the number of human casualties caused by unexploded devices.”

In a recent incident in Samangan Northern province of Afghanistan, at least three children were killed, and two others were injured in a mine explosion.

The unexploded and abandoned ordnance pose a real threat to people, particularly children and women. Afghanistan reportedly has one of the worst levels of explosive ordnance contamination globally. In 2023, \$18.3 million will be required for a survey, explosive ordnance disposal, and landmine removal, according to the UN.

DAB President meets Head of UNAMA

KABUL (Agencies): The head of UNAMA, Roza Otunbayeva, in a meeting on Wednesday with the Acting President of Da Afghanistan Bank, Mullah Hidayatullah Badri, praised well management of the bank, despite various economic challenges and problems.

A series of discussions were held on joint cooperation in the development of Islamic financing of micro-enterprises in Afghanistan, the banning of the banking sector, the situation of the banking, and a number of related topics, between the two sides, according to a statement released.

Da Afghanistan Banking acting president Badri said that the economy of Afghanistan was broken partly due to the corona epidemic and partly due to the sanctions imposed on the banking sector of Afghanistan, but despite all these challenges, the banking sector of Afghanistan has been well managed and overall banks have maintained fairly strong capital ratios.

“Da Afghanistan Bank supported the banks by forming a special committee in the recovery to get loans, where the profits of the banks increased,” he added.

Badri said: “Da Afghanistan Bank is fully committed to the development of the Islamic financing sector of micro-enterprises and has established a comprehensive regulatory framework for licensing, services, and supervision of Islamic financing of micro-enterprises in accordance with Islamic principles.”

He says that Da Afghanistan Bank is ready to work together with the United Nations and related organs in this respect.

For her part, Mrs. Otunbayeva, termed the stability of the Afghani currency better than ever, adding that the value of the Afghani currency has had a surprising development and the best stability in the world so far.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Otunbayeva assured all-around cooperation in the development of the banking sector and the Islamic financing sector of micro-enterprises.

Only e-IDs or passports accepted

KABUL (Agencies): Officials at Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA) say from now on, applicants should have an electronic ID card or a passport with them when they buy a SIM card, as paper IDs will no longer be accepted.

This plan was approved after being presented by ATRA and the Ministry of Telecommunications to the Islamic Emirate's cabinet.

Jalal Shams, ATRA's spokesperson, said that if a person does not have an electronic ID card or a passport when buying a SIM card, someone with the required documents needs to stand as guarantor. “According to the change in obtaining a SIM card, the person who wants to get a SIM card must have an electronic ID or a passport,” said Shams.

He said that telecommunication companies are obliged to implement the new rule and accept only passports or electronic IDs. Paper IDs are no longer acceptable as there is the possibility of fraud, he said.

Members of the public have however said that the government should improve facilities for them to get electronic IDs and passports.

Afghan women protest against beauty parlour ban



KABUL (AFP/APP): Security officials shot in the air and used firehoses Wednesday to disperse dozens of Afghan women protesting in Kabul against an order by Taliban authorities to shut down beauty parlours, the latest curb to squeeze them out of public life.

Since seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban government has barred girls and women from high schools and universities, banned them from parks, funfairs and gyms, and ordered them to cover up in public.

The order issued last month forces the closure of thousands of beauty parlours nationwide run by women -- often the only source of income for households -- and outlaws one of the few remaining opportunities for them to socialise away from home.

“Don’t take my bread and water,” read a sign carried by one of the protesters on Butcher Street, which boasts a concentration of the capital's salons.

Public protests are rare in Afghanistan -- and frequently dispersed by force -- but AFP saw around 50 women taking part in Wednesday's gathering, quickly attracting the attention of security personnel.

Protesters later shared videos and photos with journalists that showed authorities using a firehose to disperse them as shots could be heard in the background.

“Today we arranged this protest to talk and negotiate,” said a salon worker, whose name has not been published by AFP for security reasons.

“But today, no one came to talk to us, to listen to us. They didn’t pay any attention to us and after a while they dispersed us by aerial firing and water cannon.”

In late June the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice gave salons a month to close down, saying the grace period would allow them to use up stock.

It said it made the order

because extravagant sums spent on makeovers caused hardships for poor families, and that some treatments at the salons were un-Islamic.

Too much make-up prevented women from proper ablutions for prayer, the ministry said, while eyelash extensions and hair weaving were also forbidden.

A copy of the order seen by AFP said it was “based on verbal instruction from the supreme leader” Hibatullah Akhundzada.

Beauty parlours mushroomed across Kabul and other Afghan cities in the 20 years that US-led forces occupied the country.

They were seen as a safe place to gather and socialise away from men and provided vital business opportunities for women. A report to the UN's Human Rights Council last month by Richard Bennett, the special rapporteur for Afghanistan, said the plight of women and girls in the country “was among the worst in the world”.

“Grave, systematic and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid,” Bennett said.

Akhundzada, who rarely appears in public and rules by decree from the Taliban's birthplace in Kandahar, said last month Afghan women were being saved from “traditional oppressions” by the adoption of Islamic governance and their status as “free and dignified human beings” restored.

He said in a statement marking the Eid al-Adha holiday that steps had been taken to provide women with a “comfortable and prosperous life according to Islamic Sharia”.

Women have also mostly been barred from working for the UN or NGOs, and thousands have been sacked from government jobs or are being paid to stay at home.

Islamic Emirate abolishes Attorney General’s Office

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has abolished the Attorney General's Office (AGO). The Islamic Emirate's spokesperson told TOLONews that the Attorney General's Office (AGO) has been turned into the “Directorate of Supervision and Prosecution of Decrees and Orders,” and some of the AGO's duties have been given to the courts and intelligence services based on the decision of the Islamic Emirate's leader.

The purpose of abolishing the AGO, according to Zabihullah Mujahid, Islamic Emirate's spokesperson, is to prevent the congestion of departments. Mujahid said that the “Directorate of Supervision and Prosecution of Decrees and Orders” will monitor the implementation of the orders of the Islamic Emirate's leader in both public and private institutions.

“Too much bureaucracy should be avoided, which is why the intelligence agencies also have the authority to monitor and can watch over the implementation of orders. Second, in the courts, if there is a disputed case of the people, it will be handled by lawyers, and if the system has its disputes it will proceed through its own channels in whatever way things can be done best,” Mujahid said.

The spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate added that this institution will have

representation in 34 provinces of the country.

“Its structure and methodology both changed but the staff has remained the same. The same force that had been employed at the Attorney General's Office will be employed at the Directorate of Supervision,” he said.

According to the decision of the leader of the Islamic Emirate, the responsibility and stages of investigation, supervision and prosecution of legal and criminal cases have been entrusted to the courts and the Intelligence Directorate.

Some legal experts believe that by restricting the AGO authority, justice will not be properly implemented in the nation.

“The supervision of discovery and investigation has been removed, the litigation has been removed; therefore, the Attorney General's Office as a department for monitoring and prosecuting the orders and directions of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, has limited authority,” said Abdul Shukor Dadras, a legal expert.

“We can handle people's complaints and prevent crimes with the the AGO,” said Farooq Alim, ab legal expert.

Earlier, members of the Afghan Independent Bar Association (AIBA) also claimed that the Islamic Emirate had shut down the association's Kabul headquarters, halting all activity.

WHO: CCHF Cases in Afghanistan increased



KABUL (TOLONews): The WHO in a recent report said that Acute Watery Diarrhea and Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) cases increased in June.

“The CCHF-associated deaths were reported from 12 provinces (13 from Kabul, 6 from Balkh, 3 from Parwan, 3 from Takhar, 2 from Jawzjan, 2 from Kandahar, and 1 each from Baghlan, Faryab, Ghazni, Kapisa, Paktya, and Sar-i-Pul).”

According to the report,

just in June in various sections, 1.4 million people were reached with humanitarian health services.

“In June 2023, WHO conducted monitoring visits in 34 provinces, 113 primary healthcare facilities, 96 hospitals under HER project, 98 Therapeutic Feeding Units (TFU), 4 Family Health Houses (FFHs), 19 hospitals (including integrated infectious disease and COVID-19 hospitals), 7 ambulatory services.”

In total, 136 CCHF samples were tested since the

beginning of 2023, of which 53 samples were positive, WHO said.

“Some of our people smuggled some animals from the provinces to Kabul, which were not sprayed with drugs, and our people play a special role in the rise of Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) events in the country,” said Farid Ullah Omari, a doctor.

The WHO emphasized that COVID-19, Measles, and Dengue Fever decreased in June.

Ulema in Kabul fully ready for Muharram events

KABUL (TOLONews): The members of the council of Shia Ulema in Kabul said that they have fully prepared for mourning of Muharram days.

The deputy of the council, Mohammad Hassan Salehi, told TOLONews that there have been no restrictions on the ceremonies of the Muharram.

“The Islamic Emirate official announced that the Shia people can freely hold their ceremonies and there are no restrictions in this regard,” he said.

“It has not been said 100 percent that you will not be holding a Muharram event here and are forbidden from using whips,” They only provided us a guideline, saying that it would be better if we don’t stage ceremonies in areas where they are needed,” said Ali Alizada, a spokesman for the council of Shia religious scholars in western Kabul.

Khalid Zadrán, a spokesman for the Kabul

department of security said that two committees were formed to manage the security affairs during the Muharram ceremonies.

He said on Twitter that the first committee will be led by the Kabul governor's office and the second will be led by the Ministry of Information and Culture.

According to Zadrán, the committees include officials from the Ministries of Vice and Virtue, Information and Culture, the Kabul municipality, leaders of Shia citizens as well as the security department.

Meanwhile, residents of Kabul stressed that security officials should provide tighter security during the Muharram days.

“We call on the Islamic Emirate to provide good security for the mourners, so the event can be performed in a better way,” said Mohammad Hassan Ahmad, a resident of Kabul.

“The job of the government is to provide security for the people, and we call on the interim government to provide good security,” said Hamza, a resident of Kabul.

The Islamic Emirate's spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid on Tuesday said on Twitter that the freedom of the Shia citizens of Afghanistan during the Muharram days is protected.

Mujahid said in a statement that the security forces have taken full measures for the Muharram event in the country.

The statement said that large gatherings and group travel have been restricted in a bid to provide good security and the views of the Shia religious scholars have been considered in this regard.

The Muharram month begins on July 19. The Muharram event is observed worldwide by Shia Muslims across the world.

Ministry repairs more than 300 different military vehicles

KABUL (Agencies): The National Defense Ministry says that the technical and professional engineers' team in joint cooperation Hazrat Ibn Masood training department repaired 327 different types of military vehicles.

327 different types of

military vehicles were delivered for repair to the technical and professional engineers in the Department of the Military and have been ready for use after repair, the Ministry said on its Twitter page.

The repaired vehicles

include 204 Rangers, 21 Humvee tanks, 22 transnational vehicles, 21 Ford Everest, 11 forklifts, and many other military vehicles and equipment.

The officials of Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Masood R.D. Military Joint Training

Command regularly parked these vehicles and will use them in time of need.

This must be noted, that thousands of different types of military vehicles belonging to the ministry have been delivered for use after restoration.

Residents complain of lack of uniforms on security forces

B A D K H S H A N (TOLONews): Some residents of Badakhshan province told TOLONews that they are worried about military personnel without uniforms in their province.

Residents of Badakhshan said that it is challenging to distinguish between official military personnel and others due to the lack of uniforms.

According to residents, the distribution of uniforms is a serious need and officials should pay serious attention to the matter.

“They must have uniforms and proper clothes. In every area we go, there is a gun on someone's shoulder and it stops us. We do not understand who they are and from which region and which field they belong,” said Ahmad Shekib, a resident of Badakhshan.

“Soldiers who work illegally are not wearing uniforms and disturb people in the city and market,” said Khodabakhsh, a Badakhshan resident.

The residents of Badakhshan want the current government to distribute uniforms to the military



forces. “We say to the government that the police should have uniforms. The army must have army uniforms and security must have security uniforms so that everyone knows in which department they are,” said Aslam, a Badakhshan resident.

However, the Badakhshan security commander said that the

responsible security forces in this province wear military uniforms and the people who are with civilian clothes belong to the local commanders.

“Our soldiers have received their uniforms from the Ministry of Interior. All of them are at the checkpoints with the uniform of the Islamic Emirate. There are units of

people belonging to many of the commanders who enter the city, they don't have uniforms,” said Abdul Wasil Abuzar, Badakhshan province security commander.

The current government's security officials had previously said that they will distribute military uniforms to all the soldiers of the country.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan, Ibrahim Yala Al Madani, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Govt takes steps for revival of economy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the present government had taken immediate and concrete steps for revival of the country's economy.

During a meeting with Australian Ambassador to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins who called on her here, she said Pakistan valued relations with Australia. Bilateral relations, economic stability, cooperation in the fields of film, art and culture were also discussed during the meeting. The ambassador appreciated the current government's efforts for stabilizing the country's economy and the International Monetary Fund agreement.

"Thanks to government initiatives, positive results have started coming on the economic front," the minister maintained. She also briefed the ambassador about the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Marriyum said this council would ensure the forecasting, continuity and

effective implementation of the policy for economic recovery. The SIFC would function as the apex decision-making forum, she added.

Stating that the present government fully believed in freedom of expression, she said the government introduced the Freedom of Expression Bill in Parliament in first week after coming to power. The minister said that the Journalists and Media Professionals Protection (Amendment) Bill was in the process of approval.

An ample amount of money had been allocated for the health insurance of journalists and artists in this year's budget, she informed the ambassador. The minister said that PEMRA law was being amended in Pakistan and for the first time journalistic organizations had also been represented in PEMRA authority. For the first time, she said, budgetary allocation had been made for the film industry in the ongoing fiscal year.

The minister said the government wanted to show Pakistani culture, civilization and heritage to the whole world through screen tourism. She also informed

the Australian Ambassador about the National Amateur Film Festival aimed to highlight the creativity of Pakistani youth. She said that 25 high achievers had recently left for Australia for National Amateur Film Festival Awards.

The government had not only established a film finance fund at a cost of Rs 2 billion, but also given many concessions to the film sector, she added. "The government will provide funds for producing films, documentaries and dramas under the new film policy", she said. Marriyum said that foreign filmmakers should benefit from special concessions in the field of photography and filmmaking in Pakistan.

The minister appreciated Australian media for reporting situation in Pakistan in an objective and impartial manner. The ambassador said that an Australian company was working in Balochistan on the Reko Diq project which would undoubtedly open the door for development of Pakistan. He also appreciated Marriyum Aurangzeb's efforts for promoting film and culture and freedom of expression in the country.

Earthquake shakes parts of Swat, adjoining areas

MINGORA (PPI): A 5.1 magnitude earthquake shook Swat and adjoining areas on Wednesday. No loss of life or property was reported. According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre, Islamabad, the origin of the quake was Hindukush Region, Afghanistan with depth of 208km.

Residents of Swat, Abbottabad and adjoining areas came out of their residential and commercial properties and started reciting special prayers. On 25 June 2023, an earthquake measuring 4.4 on the Richter scale hit Swat and adjoining areas with the depth of the earthquake recorded 139 kilometres and its epicentre in the Hindukush mountain range.

On 9 June 2023, earthquake tremors had been felt in the Swat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and nearby areas. According to the Seismological Centre, the magnitude of the earthquake was recorded at 4.4 on the Richter scale, the depth was 124 km underground, and the epicenter was in the border region of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan.

In 1st Jan 2023, an earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale hit parts of the Swat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC) confirmed that tremors were felt in Swat and adjoining areas of the city.

In March 2023, an earthquake measuring 4.5 on the Richter scale jolted Swat and its adjoining areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In Feb 2023, an earthquake of moderate intensity has jolted the Swat Valley and its adjoining areas. The earthquake was measured 4.4 on the Richter Scale. According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre, the earthquake struck at a depth of 203 kilometres while its epicentre was located near the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

No hike in fares of people's bus service:

Sharjeel
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has announced the good news that fares for the People's Bus Service will not be increased.

In the Sindh Cabinet meeting, the Sindh government has made the decision to refrain from raising the fare of the People's Bus Service for a period of 6 months.

On the recommendation of Sindh Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Sindh Cabinet has approved a decision to refrain from increasing the fares. Additionally, on the suggestion of Information and Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, a subsidy of Rs 493.356 million has been approved to support this initiative.

Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon shared the good news through one of his tweets, stating that there will be no increase in the fares of the People's Bus Service. In a statement, Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has announced that the fare of the People's Bus Service will remain unchanged for the next 6 months. Furthermore, the government of Sindh will provide a subsidy to the people in the form of fare support.

Bilawal praises MoFA over country's removal from FATF's grey list

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday stressed upon adoption of new diplomatic approaches in the fast changing world and expressed the hope that the recently introduced change management reforms in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would bring further efficiency, accountability, agility and dynamism.

Addressing a ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the change management reforms initiatives taken during the last one year, the foreign minister said that a total of 51 reform works were carried out at the ministry, among which 19 were fully implemented, 3 were partially completed and 29 initiatives were on the track of completion in the areas of automation and digitization processes, improvement in the diplomatic, administration, finance and consular services abroad etc. The foreign minister enumerated the significant achievements of the ministry at the global level under his stewardship including Pakistan's removal from the FATF grey list, successful hosting

of COP27, effective role at the OIC Foreign Ministers Council, etc besides, endeavors to enhance the relationships and diplomatic outreach.

The foreign minister said "The world is changing at the lightning speed with technological advances shifting power dynamics while the interconnectedness have become the new norms on diplomatic fronts." To embrace these changes, after assuming the office, he said that he embarked upon reforms process to create a robust and agile ministry so that it could tackle any challenge that come their way.

Bilawal Bhutto said that they were now living in the fast paced and dynamic world and emphasised the need of an adaptive approach to ensure evolving and to stay ahead of the multi-dimensional challenges. It was crucial to embrace changes and management for their benefits, enabling them to navigate with agility, as living in the fast paced and interconnected world, the traditional management approaches were no longer relevant.

He said they should be adoptive to

the needs and requirements of the national and international realities and the needs of overseas Pakistanis, underlining a paradigm shift to conduct their diplomatic business with effectiveness. Change management reforms also catered to the well being of the overseas Pakistanis, he added.

The foreign minister shared that they had realized to improve the morale of the diplomatic service as the bureaucracy was fraught with the red tape, old approach and outdated tools which were not suffice to tackle the issues head on. A transformative plan for the ministry was put in place and for the purpose, they sought inputs from all relevant quarters, receiving overwhelming response and critical insight, he added.

He opined that they must embrace the significance of future knowledge based economy, global dynamics and must be willing to challenge the status quo. He said that they were launching a movement of change with the ongoing reforms process which was crucial for successes at the diplomatic landscape and transforming the ministry as a forward looking institution.

Imposition on taxes at erstwhile Fata: PHC observes FCR still intact

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Ijaz Anwar has suspended Tribal Electricity Supply Company (TESCO) notification regarding imposition of sales tax along with other in electricity bills of four steel mills in district Khyber, on Wednesday.

PHC has also stopped competent authorities from any adverse actions against the steel mills and ordered to submit reply in this regard while Shumail Ahmad Butt and Haris Khan advocates appeared before court.

The petition stated that earlier different taxes were imposed in electricity bills but steel mills approached High Court while PHC has declared null& void taxes expect sales tax and ordered that it should be submit in 36 equal installments. The counsel argued that steel mills are submitting

sales tax as per High Court's orders but now TESCO demanding further taxes and notices had issued in this regard to manufacturers with warnings.

Rs900 million further taxes are claimed from the steel mills otherwise action should be taken against family members along with sealing the production plants by disconnecting power to the facility, the counsel informed. Shumail Ahmad Butt argued that it is against the law because High Court has granted judgement in this regard.

However, Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that is Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) intact in erstwhile Fata that TESCO are threatening petitioner with arrest. PHC has suspended notification issued in this regard while ordered TESCO to submit comments.

Similarly, PHC has stopped Cantonment Board Peshawar from taking adverse action against woman

petitioner and granted status quo against new law regarding property taxes in the premises while ordered applicant to submit taxes on old standards at Cantonment Office.

The counsel Mian Zakir Hussain argued that taxes are imposed under Section 64(B) of Cantonment Board Act 1924 on different properties but on 28 March 2022 residential buildings into commercial which has multiplied taxes while fine notices are also issued to petitioners for didn't made compliance with new law.

PHC has already stopped Cantonment Board from adverse actions while petitioners directed to submit taxes on previous rates and added that residents are compelling for submission of further taxes, the counsel argued. PHC has stopped any adverse actions against petitioner woman and ordered Executive Officer Cantonment Board Peshawar to submit reply in this regard.

PTI chief to face penalty on basis of evidence: Atta

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Assistant Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday hinted at the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) 'on the basis of evidence'. While addressing a press conference, Attaullah Tarar said that the PTI chief will definitely be arrested and questioned. He added that the PTI chairman will face penalties 'on the basis of evidence'.

He claimed that Azam Khan has declared the PTI chief a criminal before the nation. He added that Azam Khan's statement was irrefutable evidence against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief. "The possession of the cypher and waving the confidential document in a public gathering was an illegal action. He is now in the grip of law. An

inquiry can be launched against the PTI chairman following a court order." He blamed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman for creating a political crisis in Pakistan through the cypher matter. Tarar also criticised the PTI chairman for filing a petition against the judge in the Toshakhana case to exhibit a lack of confidence.

Attaullah Tarar said that Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has been directed to launch a probe into the cypher issue. He added that the court has also withdrawn the stay order on the cypher matter. He demanded to immediately initiate a trial against the PTI chief. Earlier, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah asserted that the confessional statement of ex-principal secretary Azam Khan was a 'charge

sheet' against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan and the latter should be punished for anti-state 'cypher drama'.

"Azam held Imran Khan responsible for hatching Cipher conspiracy, harming Pakistan's diplomatic relations, undermining country's economy and spreading hate in the society," Rana Sanaullah said while addressing a press conference. The federal minister claimed Imran Khan deliberately used the cypher to build a narrative against the then opposition - Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). "Taking a U-turn, now Imran Niazi claims that cypher has lost," he added. He said the culprits involved in carrying out anti-state activities should be brought to book and given an exemplary punishment as per law.

Imran apologizes in Judge Zeba threat case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister has apologized before the court in a female judge threat' case.

According to details, a female judge 'threat' case was heard against the PTI chairman in the court of the judicial magistrate Islamabad. Imran Khan's lawyer Salman Safdar appeared before the court along with his client. PTI Chairman, in court, stated that he had formed a political party 27 years ago. I went to the courtroom of Judge Zeba Chaudhry to apologise for whatever I said in a political gathering. "I apologise, If I had crossed the line and hurt anyone," the former prime minister in his statement said. The PTI chairman on Aug 20, last year, condemned police as well as the judiciary over the alleged custodial torture on Shabbaz Gill and announced that his

party would file cases against Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the DIG and AD&SJ Zeba Chaudhry. He was booked under vari-

ous sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). Besides, Islamabad High Court (IHC) also initiated contempt of court proceedings against him.

PTI chairman's bail extended in three cases till 26th: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday extended interim bail of the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief in three cases.

The court extended the PTI chairman's interim bail till July 26 in three cases registered against him at the police stations Kahna and Bhara Kahu. Earlier, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and other party leaders in two arson cases.

The ATC judge Abher Gul Khan issued non-bailable arrest warrants for the PTI chief and other party leaders including Mian Aslam Iqbal, Hamid Azhar, Jamshed Iqbal Cheema, Musarrat Jamshed Cheema and Hassan Ullah Niazi. The arrest warrants were issued for their con-

tinuous absence in the hearings of the two arson cases - 23/366 (Model Town police station) and 23/1078 (Naseerabad police station). It is pertinent to mention here that the PTI chief had been facing over 100 cases under different charges in the country.

Congo virus confirmed in a woman

F.P. Report

BARA: The Congo Virus has been confirmed by the doctors of the Hayatabad Medical Center in a 27-year-old woman from Tehsil Bara, Khyber District.

The confirmation of Congo virus announced by the doctors of the Hayatabad Medical Complex Hospital wherein the woman is being treated in the isolation ward, the hospital authorities said here Wednesday.

Congo virus was confirmed in a 27-year-old woman from Khyber district, the hospital authorities said here, adding, "The patient named Noor Khailah belongs to Tehsil Bara."




A MOMENTOUS OCCASION

SINDH GOVERNMENT GRANTS LANDTITLES TO FLOOD AFFECTEES

The Government of Sindh remains committed to restoring hope and normalcy in the lives of **2 million** families affected by the devastating floods. In addition to financial assistance, the government has taken a significant step forward by granting land titles to the beneficiaries.

This remarkable campaign will be inaugurated by
Pakistan's Foreign Minister and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party,
Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

The first phase of this historic initiative will witness over **5,000** families in District Larkana receiving land titles of their respective houses.



SINDH GOVERNMENT

AT THE FOREFRONT OF SERVING ITS PEOPLE



INF/KRY/3111/2023