

**Court acquits PM, Hamza**  
**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore made a decision on Thursday acquitted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son, Hamza Shahbaz in the money laundering case. The case, which involved Rs7 billion, was filed in August 2020. After the two leaders sought acquittal, the court granted their plea, leading to their exoneration.



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**SC summons Imran**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday summoned PTI chairman in a case related to the killing of a lawyer who had accused him of high treason. The apex court has ordered the former prime minister to appear before it at 10:00am on Monday in the case. Earlier this month, the top court turned down a plea seeking a stay order against the PTI chairman in the murder case.

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# Premier vows to boost IT exports to \$25b

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that Pakistan was required to boost its IT exports to \$25 billion and investment to \$20 billion within a span of two to three years, as the government had already devised a mechanism to ensure one-window operations to facilitate the investors.

"This is something doable. This is difficult but not impossible. We have to achieve this target under all circumstances through your support and expertise," the prime minister said addressing an information technology (IT) seminar and launching ceremony of multiple IT-related projects. He told the gathering of diplomats, IT experts, investors, entrepreneurs, professors and students that the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would sit with them to discuss issues and find out solutions, and move forward like a corporate culture.

He said Pakistan was rich with immense youth potential having modern skills, particularly IT, but the export figure hovering around \$2.5 billion did not justify it - owing to lack of support and archaic procedures. Citing the example of a neighbouring country that had excelled in the IT field and its exports, the prime minister said Pakistan was also positioned to claim its space. Calling the investors his "masters", he said the government would extend all-out facilities to them through the SIFC as he himself chaired the Apex Committee meeting and Chief of the Army Staff General Asim Munir was also playing his full role.

He said the SIFC would focus on boosting investment in agriculture, IT, mining and defence production. "This is seriously a one-window operation with the whole of government sitting there and extending facilities to potential investors without any delay. No delay will be tolerated at any cost," he assured. The prime minister said that the Gulf states were willing to invest in Pakistan and the country would also benefit from their investment to generate revenue and enhance exports.

He urged all the stakeholders to march with unity and do everything in their capacity to change history as "we have expertise and energy to do the wonder". He said the government would act as a partner and catalyst to provide all kinds of support to the investors. Mentioning the "wastage of energies" during the last four years of the previous government, the prime minister urged to move forward to change the landscape of history.

**Shehbaz thankful to Allah over acquittal in 'false' money laundering case:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that he was thankful to Allah Almighty as the Accountability Court of Lahore acquitted him and his son Hamza Shehbaz in a "false and baseless" case of money laundering based on political revenge.

He said that that was the same case in which the National Crime Agency of Britain with a global reputation, searched the 40-year record, collected from three countries, for two years and gave him clean chit after finding nothing. The prime minister recalled that a news item was deliberately published in UK's Daily Mail about the alleged embezzlement of DFID funds, but even in that, Allah vindicated him and the publication had to apologize.

"This was the same case in which I was wrongfully arrested twice, Hamza Shahbaz was kept in prison and Hamza was not even taken to a doctor despite being seriously ill during the Corona pandemic. He was not even allowed to meet his minor daughter," Prime Minister Shehbaz recounted in a Tweet. He questioned whether there could be any compensation for the "Whatsapp accountability", the "worst" media trial, and imprisonment despite being innocent. He said those who were indulged in political revenge had received an answer in the world, but they would have to give an account of that cruelty on the day of judgment. The prime minister also thanked his benefactors, friends, lawyers and public for supporting him and his son, believing in their innocence and encouraging them everywhere in that period of victimisation.

## PM calls for settlement of Ukraine conflict

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday highlighting the significant global impact of the Ukraine conflict hurting economies of many countries, stressed the need for a negotiated and diplomatic settlement in line with the UN Charter.

The issue was discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz and Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba, who is on a bilateral visit to Pakistan from July 20-21. They recalled the warm and friendly relations between their countries ever since Ukraine gained its independence.

The two sides resolved to enhance bilateral relations in diverse fields such as trade, investment, defence, education and culture as well as on regional and global matters of mutual interest including the security situation in South Asia and Eurasia regions. Foreign Minister Kuleba briefed the prime minister on the current situation in Ukraine, recalling that their countries had always enjoyed long-standing and cordial relations grounded in cooperation and friendship with the common objective to contribute towards global peace and regional stability.

**Mengal calls on Shehbaz:** Chairman of Balochistan National Party and Member of National Assembly Sardar Akhtar Mengal on Thursday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here. In the meeting, they discussed the overall political situation in the country, ongoing development projects in Balochistan as well as the law and order situation. The prime minister appreciated the BNP's role in implementation of government's reforms agenda. He also thanked the BNP for its support to the government in every of its decision aimed at national development.

## KP CM flays Bara blast

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has strongly condemned the heart wrenching incidents of blast in Bara Tehsil compound of district Khyber and firing at the police check post in Regi area of Peshawar and expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of police personnel.

In his statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister said that targeting the police officials deputed on the security of the public is an extremely inhumane and heinous act. He expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolence to the heirs of the martyred police officials. He also prayed for the higher ranks of the martyrs and patience for the bereaved families.

Later, the Chief Minister also visited Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar, where he inquired about the health of police officials who were injured in the aforementioned blast in tehsil compound Bara. The Chief Minister met the injured persons one by one and inquired about their health and treatment facilities being provided to them in the hospital. Muhammad Azam Khan also expressed his well wishes for the early recovery of the injured and directed the hospital administration to provide them best treatment facilities available within the hospital.

Talking to the media persons on this occasion, the Chief Minister said that our security forces have rendered matchless sacrifices for establishing and maintaining law and order in the region. The provincial government and all relevant departments and agencies are taking all possible steps in order to stop those inhumane activities.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing during National IT seminar. Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir also present.

# Three cops martyred, 11 hurt in Bara blast

**F.P. Report**

BARA: Three police personnel martyred and eleven others sustained injuries when two suicide bombers exploded themselves at main gate of tehsil compound of subdivision Bara district Khyber on Thursday.

It is to be mentioned here that police station, Bara is also located inside the tehsil building. The police official said that due to heavy intensity of blasts, a portion of the building collapsed. Soon after the incident, reinforcement of the security agencies and Rescue 1122 officials rushed to the spot, cordoned off the area and started rescue operation in the building.

According to the District Emergency Officer, Rescue 1122 Syed Shoab Mansoor said that three police officials were killed in the suicide blasts while eleven others including police officials and civilians got injured who were shifted to Hayatabad Medical Complex and other nearest health centers for medical treatment.

The deceased were identified as Tayyab Afridi, Sher Bahadar and Anwar Shah. Injured were including Muhammad Hanif, Bakht Nawaz, Muhammad Jamil, Shamshad, Zubair, Abdul Hadi, Gul Zeb, Muhammad Nawaz, Anwar Khan, Muhammad Arshad and one unknown.

As per police official body parts of two suiciders were also recovered from the site of the explosions. People from different walks of life condemned the suicide attack in Bara and expressed their deep sorrow and grief over the loss of police soldiers.

Heavy machinery of Rescue 1122 conducted the rescue operation. There was also reports of heavy firing between the police and the terrorists following the blast. The market has been closed for security reasons after the incident, the rescue sources said. Tense situation prevailed in the area.

Heavy contingents of police and other security forces cordoned off the area and collected while a bomb dis-

posal squad also rushed to the site of the incident and cleared the area of any further danger.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned a blast in Bara Bazar.

He expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of a policeman in the blast incident. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

The prime minister directed the relevant authorities to provide the best medical facilities to the injured. He said the police personnel halted the suspects by risking their lives and foiled the nefarious intentions of the terrorists. "The personnel of the law enforcing agencies ensure the safety of the people by risking their lives," he added. He said he, along with the whole nation pay tributes to the brave troops of the Police.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali also condemned explosion at tehsil Bara of Khyber district and expressed profound grief and sorrow over martyrdom of a policeman and sympathies with the bereaved families.

He prayed for early recovery of the injured. The Governor also attended funeral prayers of policemen martyred in terrorists attack at Regi Lalma and laid floral wreath on their bodies and offered Fateha besides prayed for patience to the victims families.

**Funeral prayer of two martyred cops offered:** The funeral prayer of the two police officials who embraced martyrdom in a fierce attack by terrorists on a police check post in the Regi area on Wednesday night was offered here at the police line in Peshawar on Thursday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali visited Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) where he inquired after the health of Bara tehsil attack. Accompanied by Provincial Ministers and advisers, the government prayed for early recovery of the injured including policemen and held

their sacrifices for the country in high esteem. He also appreciated doctors and paramedics for providing best treatment to the injured.

Meanwhile, the funeral prayers of martyred police cops Muhammad Tayyab, Anwar Khan, and Bahadur Sher, who were killed in a suicide attack on Tehsil Compound Police Station Bara, were offered at Shahkas Police Lines on Thursday.

IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, CCPO Peshawar Syed Ashfaq Anwar, Provincial Minister for Transport, Sector Commander Khyber, DPO Khyber, DC Khyber, a large number of police officers and Jawans and family members of the martyred police cops attend the funeral prayers.

A contingent of police presented guard of honor to the martyred personnel on this occasion. High-ups of the police force laid flowers wreaths on the coffins of the martyred police personnel. IG police condoled with the children and other relatives of the martyrs and paid tribute to the professional services of the martyrs in strong words. He said that due to the coordinated strategy of the police, the loss of life was reduced and the attempt of the terrorists to enter the police station failed. The elements involved will be exposed and brought to justice soon, he added.

President Dr. Arif Alvi condemned the suicide blast that took place in Bara Bazar of Khyber district. He expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in the blast, according to a President House statement. The president prayed for high ranks of the martyrs in paradise and patience to the bereaved families as well as for speedy recovery of the injured.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali, police chief Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, Chief Secretary, police officers and a large number of people attended the funeral prayer. Later, a police squad presented a salute to the martyred cops and their coffins were sent to their native towns for burial with official protocol.



BARA: Police officials inspecting the Tehsil office compound after attack.

# Revised PEMRA law aims to empower journalists

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Maryam Aurangzaib on Thursday announced the formulation of a new Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) law after extensive consultation of the incumbent government with all stakeholders during last one year having prime objective to benefit journalists and foster a free and responsible media environment in the country.

Addressing at the National Assembly after the introduction of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023, the minister emphasized the current government's unwavering commitment to a media landscape that is unbiased and accountable.

She expressed her appreciation to the august house and extended thanks to Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Cabinet for taking the matter of journalist-related legislation seriously since assuming power last year. This legislation marks a significant step towards empowering journalists and ensuring a media that operates with responsibility and integrity.

She said that amendments in the Pakistan Electronic

Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002 will play a crucial role in reshaping the media landscape in Pakistan, ensuring accuracy, fairness, and accountability in media reporting and safeguarding the rights of media professionals and citizens alike. She said that the government has proposed amendments to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) law, introducing modifications in 9 sections and adding 5 new sections.

In the amended version, significant changes have been made to Sections 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 24, 26, 27, and 29 of the PEMRA law. Additionally, 5 new sections, including Section 20, 20-A, 29-A, 30-B, and 39-A, have been included. The amendments in the bill she said, aimed at widening the scope of news coverage, allowing the inclusion of verified news, tolerance, economic progress, and child-related content in electronic media publications.

She said that according to the modified law, electronic media will be required to promote tolerance and inclusivity through authentic news reporting. She said, the news content related to general development, energy, and economic progress are also included in the media publications.

She said, section 5 has been amended to ensure

timely payment of salaries to employees in the electronic media sector. It required electronic media employers to make the required payments within two months. Furthermore, Section 20-A enforces timely payment of salaries to employees in the electronic media and provides protection to the employees from non-payment by any broadcast media outlet.

Earlier ITNE covers only employees of newspaper, but now, in the new Section 20-B, electronic media has been mandated to promptly comply with all decisions and directives related to the timely payment of salaries for PEMRA and the Council of Complaints. The minister said now the employees of electronic channels can challenge non payment of their dues/salaries. This measure will ensure the enforcement of these financial obligations to protect the rights of media employees.

In case of non-payment, she said, both the federal and provincial governments are prohibited from providing government advertisements to the relevant electronic media. Maryam said under the new amendment, representation is being given to Pakistan Broadcasting Association (PBA), Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) in PEMRA and Council of Complaints.



### WASA gives online payment facility

LAHORE (APP): The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), adopting modern lines, has given an online bill payment facility to its customers through digital banking.

In this regard, a delegation of JazzCash Pakistan visited WASA head office here on Thursday and have a meeting with WASA officers, chaired by Managing Director Ghufuran Ahmed.

The meeting was briefed that WASA customers would be able to deposit their bills instantly with the help of JazzCash application and real time bill collection had been made live. From June 5 to July 20, more than 92,000 WASA users deposited more than Rs 110 million with the help of JazzCash. Very soon, customers would also be able to pay their bill installments through JazzCash. WASA MD Ghufuran Ahmed said that real-time transactions would save customers' time, and further increase the revenue collection of WASA Lahore.

### 10 dead, 958 injured in road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least ten people were killed while 958 injured in 905 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Of whom, 514 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals while 444 people with minor injuries were treated on the spot by Rescue Medical Teams.

Analysis showed that 488 drivers, 26 underage drivers, 126 pedestrians, and 354 passengers were among the victims of road accidents. Statistics show that 211 road accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 215 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 68 in Faisalabad with 77 victims and at third Multan with 63 road accidents and 61 victims. According to the data, 796 motorbikes, 59 auto-rickshaws, 76 motorcars, 17 vans, 9 buses, 20 trucks and 85 other types of auto vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in road accidents.

### Commissioner approves Rs2.59b budget for MCS

LAHORE (APP): Sahiwal Commissioner Shoaib Iqbal Syed has approved the Municipal Corporation Sahiwal (MCS) budget for financial year 2023-24 with a total outlay of Rs 2.59 billion. Chairing a meeting of the budget committee at his office here on Thursday, he said during the current fiscal year, the estimated revenue of the department would be Rs 1.30 billion, while Rs 1.29 billion was allocated for expenditures.

Similarly, an amount of Rs 612.5 million are reserved for provision of municipal services to people, while Rs 151.9 million allocated for annual development programme.

The commissioner appreciated the chief corporation officer and other officers for preparing a balanced budget, saying that officers should use their abilities for betterment of society.

### CCPO inspects routes of mourning procession

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana inspected the routes of mourning processions and visited various Imambargahs to ensure robust security measures.

SP (City) Hamza Amanullah, ASP (Naulakha) Salman Zafar and other policemen were present along with administrators, custodians, and license holders of the Imambargahs.

The CCPO visited significant locations such as Imambargah Karbala Gamay Shah, the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman, Imambargah Attiya Abutalib, and Imambargah Mai Eidan. He emphasized the importance of implementing foolproof security arrangements, which encompassed thorough cleaning and appropriate lighting at the Imambargahs and other locations where Muharram congregations would take place.

## CM Punjab visits Kattarian area to inspect water flow in Nullah Lai

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi here on Thursday visited Kattarian area and inspected water flow in Nullah Lai.

The CM also inspected the area around Nullah Lai and gave necessary instructions to the authorities concerned.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta briefed the chief minister about the arrangements finalized for Monsoon and water situation in Nullah Lai. Mohsin Naqvi said that more rains were predicted till July 23 and all the departments concerned should remain alert. The de-watering pumps and heavy machinery should be made fully operational and all relevant staff should also be on duty, he directed.

The chief minister instructed that evacuation of the residents from low-lying areas near Nullah Lai should be the first priority in any emergency situation.

The Commissioner briefed the CM that 205 mm rainfall was recorded in Rawalpindi on Wednesday but, the water did not come out from the banks of Nullah Lai. The maximum water level at Kattarian Point was 19 feet while at Gawalmandi, it was 16 feet, he said adding that high alert was issued at both places when the water level reached at 20 feet.

while talking to the media, the CM said

in spite of the unusual rain, the Rawalpindi administration had done a good job. "I have come to encourage them," he added.

The CM said that the situation was under control now. About Rs 120 million were spent to clean the drains before the start of Monsoon rains, he added.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the operation against encroachments around the drains was going on and would continue. He informed that solid steps were being taken to improve medical treatment facilities across the province including Rawalpindi. Funds have been released for some hospitals while others will also be provided funds within one week, he informed and added that all necessary resources would be provided for other projects of Rawalpindi. Provincial Minister Dr. Jamal Nasir, Regional Police Officer, Rawalpindi, City Police Officer, Deputy Commissioner and other officers were present on the occasion.

**CM condemns terrorist attack in Khyber:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the terrorist attack at tehsil compound in Bara Bazaar of district Khyber.

In a statement issued here, he expressed deep admiration for the bravery displayed by the martyred policemen who fearlessly thwarted the attack.

## Enhancing education standards primary aim of EPC: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani here on Thursday said that the primary aim of the Education Parliamentarians Caucus established in the Senate was to foster collaboration among provinces, federation and educational institutions to enhance education standards in the country.

Addressing a seminar on education jointly organized by the Education Parliamentarians Caucus (EPC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS), he said, "The purpose of setting up the education caucus in the Senate is to foster dialogue and cooperation, creating a collaborative approach towards enhancing education standards in Pakistan."

The event brought together representatives and experts in the field of education.

The Chairman Senate expressed the hope that friendly countries and organizations, including Japan, would extend technical support to bolster the education sector in Pakistan. He acknowledged the significance of learning from Japan's devel-

opment experiences and encouraged sending teachers abroad for training and exposure to enrich their knowledge.

"Knowledge is the real jewel, and education goes beyond mere degrees and certificates. We must invest in skill development for our children, and identify the reasons behind our lag in the education domain," he added.

He stressed the importance of investing in teacher recruitment, training, professional development and curriculum reforms to promote digital literacy.

The Chairman also highlighted the need to explore alternative and innovative educational models to further advance the education landscape in the country. Sanjrani urged all participants to actively identify current challenges and obstacles facing the education system and work collaboratively to overcome them. He expressed gratitude to all stakeholders, particularly the Education Parliamentarians Caucus, JICA, PIPS, and other contributing organizations for their efforts in organizing the seminar and promoting educational development in Pakistan.

## 87 Muharram processions most sensitive

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Javed Alam Odho on Thursday said 1049 different processions are taken out in first 10 days of Muharram-ul-Haram in megalopolis which would be given security by Karachi Police. Out of total 1049 processions 87 have been declared most sensitive, the city police chief said while addressing a news conference at the Karachi Police Office.

He said about 1700 Majalis would be held in the megalopolis out of which 665 have been declared as most sensitive. Over 50,000 Majalis would be held in the city during the first 10 days of Muharram-ul-Haram. Javed Alam Odho said the Muharram contingency plan had been chalked out. There

were no such specific threats regarding Muharram and the contingency plan was formulated keeping general threat in view. More than 15000 cops would perform security duties in the megalopolis during Muharram.

7500 in district East, 5940 in West and 2297 cops would perform security duties during Muharram. 448 officers and personnel at Imam Bargahs and 2306 in Majalis would performing security duties in the District East, in district West 506 policemen at Imam Bargahs and 906 in Majalis while in Imam Bargahs of district South.

### CLOSURE OF BRANCH OFFICE

It is hereby informed to all concerned that the Branch Office of M/s BMA Capital Management Limited, TRE Certificate Holder of Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (TREC 022) situated at Gohar Son's Arcade, 1st Floor, Office # 4, Supply Bazar Sikandarabad, Abbottabad, KPK, will be closed permanently w.e.f. Monday, 4 September 2023.

All related clients and PSX has already been informed; our services will be continued from Head Office situated at Unitower, Level 8, I.I. Chundrigar Road, Karachi to the concerned clients.

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The pre-qualification notice of contractors / firms for Civil works i.e. Construction, Re-Construction of Post Office Buildings, Boundary Walls and Petty / Annual Repair & Maintenance Works of Departmental Buildings under jurisdiction of Postmaster General KP Circle Peshawar for the Financial Year 2023-24 is required to submit their profiles for Pre-qualification purpose up to 07-08-2023, 12:00 PM. The profiles will be opened on the same day on 12:30 PM in the presence of contractors and their representatives. The applications received after due time will not be entertained.

1. Firm Registration Certificate (Attested Copy). 2. Application should be on the letter pad of the firm, Full address of Registered Office with Phone & Fax Numbers / Address for correspondence and CNIC attested Copy, NTN Number printed on pad 3. Memorandum and article of Firm Association (Attested Copy). 4. Certificate of Pakistan Engineering Council for the Year 2023-24 (Attested Copy). 5. Evidence of registration of Government, Semi Government and Autonomous bodies especially Central Government, if any in which registration year is mentioned. 6. Detail of employees and technical experts. 7. Detail of related works done in previous three years along with documentary proof. 8. Detail of present ongoing works along with estimates in which name of the department and detail of work mentioned. 9. Evidence of Financial stability from scheduled Bank (Copy of bank transactions). 10. Affidavit for non-involvement in litigation and Certificate for non-blacklisting of the firm from any Government Department. 11. Detail of Machinery and Equipment's in the name of firms: 12. Income tax deduction certificate for last three years and Income Tax / GST No./KPRA & FBR certificate 13. Evidence of KPRA and FER Active Taxpayer List. 14. It is informed that statement/ documents of the firm proved false later, will liable to be black listed and all the security / claim will be confiscated.

To participate in tendering process all the profiles of the contractors / firms will be thoroughly will be checked by the tender committee. The Firms with completed profiles according to PPRA Rules in all respect as well as non-complete profiles will be informed accordingly regarding qualification / disqualification. Any information / clarification can be collected from the Assistant Engineer (Civil) contact No.091-9213389-80 of this office during office hours.

**DY. POSTMASTER GENERAL (ADMN)**  
**KP Circle Peshawar**

**PID(P) 256/23**



KARACHI: Security personnel conducting flag march regarding maintain law and order during Muharram.

## ‘PPP-led govt giving permanent solution to city’s problems’

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that the government of Pakistan People's Party is giving a permanent solution to the city's long-standing problems. Korangi Causeway used to get flooded during rains, so it was decided to construct a six-lane 2.30 km long overhead bridge here at a cost of over Rs 4.5 billion, which will solve a long-standing problem in Karachi, he expressed these views on Thursday while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the construction of the bridge on the Korangi Causeway.

The Mayor Karachi said that we thank PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for that he encouraged us to work even in difficult situations and giving hope to the people.

The city will see a marked change within the next four years as, the People's Party is doing work in every area of the city and, by ending the politics of criticism and discrimination, they are only talking about progress and development, he said.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Town Chairman of the People's Party and other leaders, Farazur Rehman, Chairman of the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry and other industrialists were also present on the occasion.

The Mayor Karachi said that during the rains in the past, the Korangi causeway was not usable for several days due to which especially industrialists, workers and students had to face severe problems. It always happened that the road was rebuilt temporarily but we decided that this is not a sustainable solution to the problem and an overhead bridge is the real solution so we have started work on it and will complete it within a year.

He said that those who say that the Pakistan People's Party does not spend money on Karachi should see that the Sindh government has approved four and a half billion rupees for this project. This is the answer to those who ask how the People's Party made its mayor, deputy mayor and chairman in 13 towns in Karachi, he said.

He said that every worker of people's Party is working for city and people are seeing all this due to which the people's trust is increasing on the leadership of the People's Party. We want to work together with other parties in all 25 towns of Karachi, because if this city runs, then the whole country runs, we all have a responsibility to serve Karachi and improve its image, he said.

The Mayor of Karachi said that the

government is aware of the hardships of the people and wants to provide relief to them as soon as possible.

He said that the sanitation situation in Korangi has already improved and efforts are underway to improve it further. We want to serve the people and connect hearts, our one-point agenda is to serve Karachi as much as possible, he said. He said that the development process in the city is going on, work is being done on the flyover and underpass at Johar Chowrangi. He said that the flyover has been opened for traffic, while the underpass will also be completed in a few months, work on Pahlwan Goth Nala has been completed, and the construction of the road from Fish Chowk to Kenapp in Kemari district has been completed.

He said that development work is going on in other places too, and action has been taken against illegal hydrants in the city. We want the media to support us to control different types of mafias active in the city, he said. He said that the official lifting operation was done on Eid-ul-Azha satisfactorily and now the challenge of rains is coming. All the preparations are complete for this, he said and added that he appeals to the citizens not to throw garbage in sewerage and rainwater drains.

## CS reviews Muharram arrangements, price control measures

LAHORE (APP): Directing the deputy commissioners to ensure tight security, Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman has said that all possible steps would be taken to maintain the atmosphere of national unity, religious harmony and brotherhood during Muharram-ul-Haram.

He was presiding over a video-link meeting of all the divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners at the Civil Secretariat here on Thursday. The meeting reviewed security arrangements for Muharram and price control measures.

The chief secretary said that the

routes and timings fixed for Majalis and processions must be ensured and the administration should provide full support to the police for security arrangements. He added a contingency plan should be in place to deal with any emergency situation.

The chief secretary issued orders to tighten the security of foreigners, especially the Chinese, and asked the deputy commissioners to submit a report after holding meetings of the district intelligence committees.

The chief secretary said that supply of food items at fixed rates was the responsibility of administrative offi-

cers. He ordered the authorities to mobilize all the price control magistrates in the field to check profiteering. He mentioned that hoarding and profiteering was not acceptable in any case, adding that hoarded wheat should be seized and sold in the market. The CS also issued instructions regarding improving hospitals and municipal services in the districts. Additional Chief Secretary Home, secretaries of industries, food, livestock and other departments and officers concerned attended the meeting. All the divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

**Government of Pakistan**  
**Pakistan Public Work Department**  
**No.CCC/Tender Notice/3407**  
**Dated: 20/07/2023**

**TENDER NOTICE THROUGH NEWS PAPER AND PPRA**

Sealed bids are invited on item rate basis under single stage, single envelope procedure from well reputed firms, registered with PEC for the year 2022-23 in the relevant category having relevant codes, active sale tax and income tax payer. The tender documents can be purchased from the Office of the undersigned upto 07-08-2023 during Office hours on the payment of tender fee (in cash) as mentioned below. The tenders should reach in the office of undersigned on 08-08-2023 up to 11.00 A.M and will be opened on the same day at 11.30 A.M. in presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who care to attend. Tender documents will be sold on production of fixed bid security 03% in shape of CDR (Call deposit receipt) issued from any scheduled bank of Pakistan with application. (Pay order will not be entertained). Name of bidder and A/C No, Branch name/Bank should be clearly given at the face of CDR in favour of the Executive Engineer Central E/M Division Pak PWD Peshawar.

- Any disfiguring/over writing, manipulation in the Tender / BOQ shall be liable to rejection.
- Incomplete and conditional bids shall not be acceptable.
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rule 2004, the undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal.
- Joint venture is not allowed.
- If for any reason or due to unavoidable circumstances the tenders could not be received and opened on the above given dates the next date of receiving and opening of tenders will be 09-08-2023 at 11:00 Am and 11:30 AM respectively.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Tender cost	Time of completion
1	Solarization of Masajid/Homes/Government Schools/MCH/BHU and Dispensaries in various villages of Tribal District North Waziristan Package-I	Item rate Basis	3% of bid Amount	3000	As per work order
2	Solarization of Masajid/Homes/Government Schools/MCH/BHU and Dispensaries in various villages of Tribal District North Waziristan Package-II	Item rate Basis	3% of bid Amount	3000	As per work order
3	Solarization of Masajid/Homes/Government Schools/MCH/BHU and Dispensaries in various villages of Tribal District North Waziristan Package-III	Item rate Basis	3% of bid Amount	3000	As per work order
4	Solarization of Masajid/Homes/Government Schools/MCH/BHU and Dispensaries in various villages of Tribal District North Waziristan Package-IV	Item rate Basis	3% of bid Amount	3000	As per work order

**Executive Engineer (QS) Central Civil Circle**  
**Pak PWD, Peshawar, Ph. No. 0919212924**  
**PID(P) 263/23**





## Muqam: ECNEC approves Rs80b Shangla Expressway

PESHAWAR (APP): Adviser to Prime Minister, Engr Amir Muqam on Thursday said that Shangla Expressway was approved by ECNEC that would usher a new era of progress and prosperity in the area after its completion.

In a statement here, the adviser said that a high level meeting of the ECNEC with Finance

Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar in chair was held today in which the Malaysia Commission and National Highway Authority presented the Shangla Expressway project.

After a long discussion, Shangla Expressway was approved. The cost of the mega project is Rs80 billion having 48th kilometer length including 14 bridges

and five tunnels.

Besides promoting tourism, economy and industrialization, the project would serve as an alternative route for CPEC.

Amir Muqam thanked the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and his

team besides chairman National Highway Authority for taking special interest in the project.

He said it was another gift of Pakistan Muslim League N for people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially for Malakand Division and Shangla.

Amir Muqam said that practical work on the mega project would soon start.

## High Court turndowns writ against UOP

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali has turndown writ of student against Islamia Law College, University of Peshawar, on Thursday.

During hearing Legal Officer UOP Riaz Ali Khan and varsity lawyer Jahan Zeb Muhammadzai advocate appeared before PHC.

The writ by student of Islamia Law College named Usama Zia stated

that he has passed 1st semester of LL.B at the said institute but didn't appeared before in 2nd semester examination due to illness.

The petition stated that petitioner had applied for 3rd semester exams but it is withdrawn by university administration despite the varsity has jurisdiction to arrange make-up exam for the student to clear previous papers.

UOP lawyer argued that student should must clear 50% papers to eligible for exam of next semester but

the petitioner didn't appeared in the 2nd semester examination at all.

However, PHC declared that it is administrative jurisdiction of university and court may not interfere in the matter because Supreme Court of Pakistan has granted several judgments in this regard.

The two member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali turndown writ petition of Usama Zia of Islamia Law College.

## KP Governor condemns Bara blast

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Thursday condemned explosion at tehsil Bara of Khyber district and expressed profound grief and sorrow over martyrdom of a policeman and sympathies with the bereaved families.

He prayed for early recovery of the injured.

The Governor also attended funeral prayers of policemen martyred in terrorists attack at Regi Lalma and laid floral wreath on their bodies and offered Fateha besides prayed for patience to the victims families.

## Petroleum dealers warns to shut down petrol pumps

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakhtunkhwa Petroleum Dealers and Carriage Association on Thursday warned to shut down petrol pumps across the country, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on July 22.

In a statement issued here, the association said that if their demands were not fulfilled then they would go to any extent including strike and protest.

They demanded that their margin should be increased in proportion to the current inflation, adding that despite an increase in the interest rate their margin rate at the petrol pump kept frozen.

They warned that as per the decision of the central leadership, the petrol pumps would remain closed for an indefinite period.

## Dr Salam, Mujahiduddin in assume charges

PESHAWAR (APP): Dr. Abdul Salam and Mujahiduddin assumed charge as Treasurer and Director Internal Audit of Agricultural University Peshawar respectively here on Thursday.

According to the notifications issued by the Registrar's Office, Director Internal Audit Dr. Abdul Salam has been assigned the duties of Treasurer and Treasurer Mujahiduddin has been assigned the duties of Director Internal Audit.

Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Peshawar, Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht gave them the charge in a simple but impressive ceremony.

On this occasion, Registrar Dr. Rizwan Ahmed, Director Vice-Chancellor Secretariat Prof. Dr. Muhammad Zulfiqar, Director Aamir Muhammad Khan Sub Campus Mardan Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Israr and administrative officers were also present.

Treasurer Dr. Abdul Salam has previously served on various positions including Agricultural Officer Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Planning Officer Civil Secretariat Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Additional Director Planning and Development Agricultural University Peshawar, Director Internal Audit Agricultural University Peshawar and as expert with various donor organizations such as FAO, UNDP, USAID and IAO.

Similarly, Mujahiduddin has also been appointed to various administrative positions in the university. He has extensive experience in university finances, including budget and audit, and has also served as Director Works.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan talking to media at Hayatabad Medical Complex.

## Feroze condemn blast at Tehsil Compound Bara

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Auqaf, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel has strongly condemned the explosion in Tehsil Compound Bara. He said that no religion allows to play with the blood of innocent people.

The caretaker provincial minister expressed his condolences to the family members of martyred police officer Tayyab and said that the bravery and sacrifice of Tayyab will always be remembered. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police have made immense sacrifices in

establishing peace in the province.

The sacrifices of security forces will be written in golden words in history.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel said that the policemen showed great bravery and stopped the attackers outside the police station and killed them. If the attackers entered the police station, there would be a huge damage.

He said that the investigation of the incident and the identification of the two dead suicide attackers is in process and after getting the investigation report, strict action will be initiated against the anti-state elements and will be dealt

with iron hands and in any case they will be brought into justice.

Caretaker Provincial Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel prayed for the martyr and the speedy recovery of the injured.

Later, the caretaker provincial minister along with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan went to Hayatabad Medical Complex to visit the injured in Tehsil Compound Bara blast and met the injured individually and inquired about their health, also directed the hospitals administration and doctors for better care of the injured.

## Matiullah visits Pakistan Girls Guides House

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Caretaker Advisor for Sports and Youth Affairs Matiullah Marwat visited Pakistan Girls Guides Association House Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where President PGGA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faiza Babar, Regional Commissioner Farah Tariq and Girls Guides welcomed him.

The purpose of the visit was to strengthen the activities of the Girl's Guides in the province and to upgrade the Guide House.

Expressing his views during the visit, the caretaker advisor said that Girl's Guide House plays an important role in empowering young girls by providing them with a safe space so that young women can actively participate in activities for a better future with confidence.

The Advisor said that the Peshawar Guide House will be upgraded for the activities of young women so that they develop leadership skills and participate in

voluntary activities in a better way.

He said that the provision of resources in accordance with the contemporary requirements will give young women the opportunity to learn and improve their leadership skills, which will enable them to make a place at the national and international level.

During the visit, the Provincial Advisor reviewed the building and facilities of Girls Guide House.

## ANP concern over recent wave of terrorism

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party Provincial President Aimal Wali Khan on Thursday expressed concerns over three consecutive terrorists' attacks on police and FC in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last three days.

In a statement issued here he said that the suicide attack on FC vehicle in Hayatabad, target killing of two police officials in Regi area of Peshawar and suicide attack on Tehsil Compound in Bara district were strongly condemnable and matter of grave concern.

He said that the terrorists were targeting police and the general public in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with full force while the business community were also receiving calls for ransom due to which the residents of the province were feeling insecure.

He said that strict action should be taken against those who were calling the terrorists fighters and brought them back under secret agreement, adding that exemplary punishment should be given to the perpetrators of the recent attacks.

The ANP leader expressed grief over the losses of precious lives in the terrorist attack and sympathized with the bereaved families.

## Dual process of transit goods clearance creating issues

PESHAWAR (APP): Central leader of All Pakistan Custom Agents Association, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has said that implementation of dual operations including One Customs system and Web Based One Customs (WeBOC) for clearance of goods for Afghanistan and reverse cargo to Karachi has created a lot of problems for business community besides inflicting huge financial losses due to payment of detention charges.

In a press statement issued here on Thursday, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi said vehicles or containers remain blocked at Karachi port in the clearance system after unloading of goods as a result of which vehicle owners have to pay holding charges and for containers demurrage.

Afghan Reverse cargo after getting loaded from Torkhem, Ghulam Khan and Chaman cargo reaches Karachi port it faces problem in de-sealing of containers due to the non-functioning of WeBOC system, he added.

Due to incomplete module of WeBOC when down transit goods are unloaded at Karachi port, than concerned custom agent have to prepare CRF form from the Directorate of Transit Trade and clearance of goods under both the WeBOC and One Customs take a lot of days, creating problems for the business community who have to suffer in the shape of extra payment for detention or demurrages heads.

"If WeBOC module is incomplete and needs a lot of work for completion then why it has been implemented," Zia asked.

All Pakistan Customs Agents Association leader made a request to the concerned department to allow clearance of transit trade goods, especially down transit through One Custom System until the WeBOC is fully completed and made operation in the whole country.



PESHAWAR: Representatives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Petroleum Dealers Association addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

## ‘Establishing peace, harmony first priority’

PESHAWAR (APP): Establishing peace and harmony is the first priority of the government on which no compromise will be made, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali said during his visit to Supreme Command Post and reviewed the arrangements made for foolproof security during Muharram-ul-Haram on Thursday.

The Commissioner Peshawar Division Muhammad Zubair, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shah Fahd, Director General Syed Waqas Ali Shah, Director East Zone Rehman Khattak and Capital Metropolitan were also present.

Appointed Focal Person Engineer Muhammad Riaz

Khan along with others visited the Supreme Command Post established for Muharram Al Haram.

He inspected the control room in the Supreme Command Post, on which he was given a detailed briefing.

Peshawar Mayor Haji Zubair Ali visited Kohati Gate and other areas inside the city and reviewed the measures taken for Muharram.

On this occasion, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali expressed his determination that fool-proof security will be ensured during Muharram.

He said that the establishment of law and order in any area is the first priority of the government and it

is the responsibility of the relevant institutions to ensure the safety of the people's property.

He said that our forces have always fought against criminal elements and their lives and the public should also cooperate with the forces.

He said that all the law enforcement agencies should keep in touch with each other and use all the resources to ensure the peaceful conduct of Muharram.

Issued orders for uniform security and safety arrangements for meetings, processions and other programs of all schools of thought, including the Shiites.

## Radio FM92.2 conducts talent hunt program

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM92.2 Peshawar in collaboration with IM Sciences conducted a successful talent hunt program to identify innate talent in students.

About eighty students participated in the auditions that were taken in six

languages including Urdu, English, Pashto, Hindko, Khowar (Chitrali) and Darri (Afghan Farsi). Students exhibited their talent in six different categories of including voice over artists, Radio Journalists, Newscasters, Digital Creators, Singing and Script writing.

The Director General (DG) Information Baseer Ali Rehman was Chief Guest while the program was supervised by Station Director Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar Ghulam Hussain Ghazi with his team of producers, engineers and audio editors.



PESHAWAR: Security beefed up at Khyber Bazar Chowk in connection with Muharram.





## In brief

## Man stabs wife to death

MURIDKE (INP): A man stabbed his wife to death over domestic disputes in Narang Mandi area of Muridke district Sheikhpura on Thursday, police said. According to details, after exchange of hot words, accused stabbed his wife with sharp edged weapon and fled the scene. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case against the accused started raids for his arrest.

## Train kills two near Gujrat

GUJRAT (PPI): Two youngsters lost their lives after being struck by a passenger train in Goral area of Gujrat on Thursday, witnesses and police said. Samiullah, 15, and Afnan, 18, were reportedly using their cell phones while walking on the railway track at the time of the incident. Rescue 1122 officials pronounced the victims bodies and handed over the bodies to the police. The local police further handed over the bodies to the heirs after legal formalities. A mourning atmosphere prevailed in the victims houses.

## Four killed in Chiniot incidents

CHINIOT (INP): Four including two women were killed in separate incidents in different localities of Chiniot on Thursday, police said. According to details, the first incident took place in Chak No 125 GB where armed men of rival group barged into 'dera' of opponent, shot dead Ghulam Murtaza and fled the scene. Police registered a case into the incident and started raids to arrest the culprits. An elderly pedestrian woman died in hit and run accident in Chiniot city. Two 'love birds' committed suicide by jumping into river after failure in choice marriage. Search for bodies was underway.

## Two cops suspended

FAISALABAD (INP): Two police constables of Kotwali police station were suspended over charges of torturing two youth. The video of torture on youngsters went viral after which high officials of police took the action. The suspended police constables included Wajid and Khalid. A high level inquiry committee has also been constituted to investigate into the incident.

## E-verification system opened

MULTAN: Secretary Higher Education Department (HED) South Punjab Muhammad Altaf Baloch Thursday formally made the e-verification system at Multan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (MBISE) functional which would enable students to get their documents verified online without having to wait in queues for hours. Speaking on the occasion, the secretary said that all boards of south Punjab were being equipped with the e-verification facility developed under a modern information technology system to provide ease of doing education to hundreds of thousands of south Punjab students. The governments were meant to facilitate the people and that was what HED and MBISE had done just today. He said that IT team and all employees of MBISE deserve commendations on this achievement. Chairman Board Hafiz Qasim said that e-verified letter would have a QR code through which the letter could be scanned adding that institutions in both public and private sectors can get their employees' certificates verified through the online facility.

# Mayor demands fund for resolution of public problems

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Mayor Mardan Himayat-Ullah Mayar has said that the problems of the people can be reduced only by strengthening the local governments financially and administratively. In a year and a half, the city local council has not been given a development budget of even one rupee due to which public problems are not being solved in a better way. Installation of 24 inch gas pipeline in Mardan city will permanently solve the problem of low gas pressure.

He expressed these views while expressing his thoughts in the "Chapar Chal" program of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Mardan FM 92.6 Mardan On Thursday. The program was hosted by Junaid Yousafzai while Station Manager Aftab Ahmed was also present on the occasion.

Mayor Mardan also heard the problems of the citizens through telephone calls and issued instructions to the concerned authorities to solve them. Himayat Ullah Mayar said that the agricultural land is decreasing day by day due to the formation of townships in Mardan. Influential people have built townships on agricultural lands without facilities for electricity, gas, water supply and drainage while township owners have obtained NOCs through collusion with institutions.

He requested the Environmental Protection Agency and other concerned authorities to take action against the builders of townships built on agricultural lands and save the fertile land of Mardan. Himayat Ullah Mayar said that problems like traffic jams in the city will end with the construction of the General Bus Stand near Chamtar.

He said that planning has been done to end encroachment from Mardan city and in this regard, the market from Kachhari Chowk to Pakistan Chowk will be completely cleared of encroachments, the market will be completely cleared of encroachments. And it will be made a model market. He appealed to the traders and said that the traders community should cooperate with us in removing the encroachments so that the pedestrians do not face difficulties. He said that it is the responsibility of the government as well as the people to fulfill their responsibilities and bring them to the notice of the concerned authorities wherever they face problems.

**Police officials visit Imambargah:** Police officials visited the central

Imambargah of Mardan late at night in view of the current situation and regarding the peaceful conduct of Muharramul-Haram. Police sources told here on Thursday that a team of police personnel led by SP operation Rokhazib Khan inspected and reviewed the security arrangements of different parts of the Imambargah and the route of mourning procession.

The SP operation also patrolled the streets and markets around the Imambargah on foot. A special mobile patrol has been deployed in the city to maintain peace and order on the occasion of Muharram. "We are committed to maintain law and order situation in the district during the holy month of Muharram," he added.

He issued instructions to all policemen and officers on duty to further improve security and implement safety measures in view of the current situation. The SP operation also visited the under-construction Baghdad police post and reviewed the construction work and security situation.

**Food Safety Authority discards nearly 80 liters of adulterated milk:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (FS & HFA) while responding to a complaint discarded upto 80 liters of water adulterated milk in Mohammad Abad bazaar of Mardan district.

The operation was conducted under the supervision of Assistant Director Alif Khan and Food Safety Officer Madiha with the help of latest state-of-the-art mobile lab. According to details, milk samples from 14 shops in Mohammad Abad and adjacent areas were tested among which upto 80 liters of water added milk was discarded from two shops. The water adulteration was found to be 55% and 42% respectively.

While talking to media persons, Deputy Director FS & HFA Mardan Division, Kamran Khan said no traces of harmful chemicals were detected in the milk as was conveyed in the complaint. However, he said upto 80 liters of milk was discarded to due addition of huge percentage of water.

In another activity, milk samples from a tanker carrying upto 1000 liters of milk was tested in mobile lab. The milk tanker supplying milk from Nowsehra to Mardan was highly appreciated by the FS & HFA team when no chemical or water adulteration was detected in it. Due to rigorous and continuous activities of FS & HFA team, food quality has been improved considerably in Mardan.



QUETTA: Chairman of Pakistan Coal Association Haji Ismail Domer addressing a press conference.

## Motorcycles impounded, arms shops sealed in Dera

## F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The district police on Thursday impounded dozens of motorcycles in various police stations of the city for violating Section 144 Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc) imposed for ensuring peace during Muharram.

According to the Police spokesman, the district police and the traffic police have started checking of motorcycles at checking points established at various places on the directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Abdul Babar Qaisrani to ensure implementation of the Section 144.

During the checking, several motorcycleists were found violating the law and cases were being registered against them. Quoting the DPO, the spokesman said that no one would be allowed to take law into their own hands and compliance would be ensured. He said that violators were anti-peace and they would be dealt with sternly. He also appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the police to ensure peace and harmony during Muharram.

The police also sealed arms shops in the city after enforcement of Section 144. SDPO City Circle Hafiz Muhammad Adnan along

with SHOs including Gul Sher Khan and Sardar Azeem visited the bazars within the city circle and sealed weapon shops. The weapon shops would remain sealed until 10th Muharram.

**Rescue 1122 devises Muharram plan:** The district emergency service 1122 has made comprehensive arrangements to facilitate citizens and provide prompt services in case of emergency during Muharram. In this regard, according to Rescue 1122 spokesman District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 Dera Awais Babar called on Deputy Commissioner Mansoor Arshad and discussed various matters pertaining to the Muharram 2023 plan by the district's emergency service-Rescue 1122.

The deputy commissioner expressed his satisfaction over the arrangements and said that Rescue 1122 was providing quality services to the people at their doorsteps in every difficult hour. Deputy Commissioner Dera assured the Rescue 1122 service of all possible support from the district administration.

Assistant Commissioner Dera Farhan Ahmed and Emergency Officer Naumanullah Marwat were also present on the occasion. Meanwhile, District

Emergency Officer Awais Babar visited the main procession routes of 10th of Muharram, including Kotli Imam Hussain and Imamia Gate.

During the visit Emergency Officer Naumanullah Marwat gave a detailed briefing about the deployment of Rescue 1122 on the route of the procession. On the occasion, the District Emergency Officer said that the Rescue Dera team with the support of Director General Rescue 1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Khateer Ahmed and the district administration was alert to deal with all kinds of emergency situations.

## Two killed

MULTAN (APP): A man allegedly shot at and killed his father-in-law and teenage brother-in-law over a domestic dispute here Thursday morning, police said.

Accused Suhail had a dispute with his wife who had shifted to her parents' house and was living there for the last one year. On Thursday, accused entered the home of his in-laws at Railways Quarters and opened fire at his father-in-law Muhammad Younis, 50 and brother-in-law Muhammad Adeel (18). Both died on the spot.



QUETTA: Activists of Sunni Ulema Council holding a rally on the martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Umer Farooq (RA).

## Political parties hold protest

## F.P. Report

SHAHADKOT : Due to severe shortage of agricultural water in Qamber Shahdadkot district of Sindh, thousands of farmers in different tehsils of Warh, Qamber and Naseerabad staged a sit-in on the Indus Highway carrying dry sown seeds. Due to this, the traffic in different cities of Sindh, Karachi, Islamabad, Balochistan and other parts of the country has been completely stopped.

Ghulam Mustafa Khudabakhsh Sanghru and others said that the elected assembly members here are artificially creating water shortage due to which thousands of acres of our agricultural land is becoming barren while the sown seeds are drying up due to water shortage. They have demanded that if the water shortage is not resolved, they will announce a hunger strike.

**Accused gets sentence:** Last day, the court of District and Sessions Judge Sharafuddin Shah of Larkana sentenced the accused Shahid Hussain Sheikh, who was arrested at Pir Sher and Aqil police station on the charge of drug possession, to 14 years imprisonment and 4 years imprisonment. The accused was sentenced to 5 months imprisonment for not paying the fine amount of 1 lakh. The accused was transferred to the Central Jail under police security. The decision was pronounced by the honorable court.

## One killed in two road accidents

FAISALABAD (INP): One person was killed and eight others were injured in two separate road accidents near here on Thursday.

Rescue 1122 sources said a speeding bus hit a motorcycle near Khalidi stop on Samundri road. Consequently, Sabah-uddin Ahmed (46) s/o Alham Din, resident of Chenab Nagar was killed on the spot. The dead body was shifted to police station Samundri. In another collision, a tractor trolley collided with a carry van while taking a u-turn near Al-Aziz hotel on Samundri road.

As a result, eight persons including two women suffered injuries. They included Shaukat Ali, Muhammad Ali, Zainab Bibi, Naziran Bibi, Binyamin, Abdul Ghaffar, Attaullah and Irshad. They were rushed to civil hospital by rescue teams.

## Police conduct flag march

SARGODHA (APP): In connection with Muharram security arrangements, the Sargodha police Thursday conducted a flag march in the city to create a sense of security among people.

SP Operations, SP Headquarters, divisional SPs, SDPOs, District Police Officer, SHOs, along with District Police, Elite Force and Traffic Police participated in the flag march.

The purpose of the flag march was to maintain law and order and promote harmony and unity. The flag march started from Sargodha Police Lines and passed through various routes of the city and ended at the same point. Implementation of law and order and code of conduct would

## FIA blockade illegal entry of Afghan nationals

## F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Thirteen Afghan citizens unlawfully entering into Pakistan via Torkham Border were restricted by the officials of Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) last day.

Assistant Director (AD) FIA, Torkham Yasir Arafat said that 13 Afghan nationals including men and women were apprehended by the on duty FIA officials at pedestrian capsule who had crossed the Border on fake and expired visas. After a legal process, they were sent back to their home country, Afghanistan,

AD said.

Those who attempted illegally to cross the crossing were including Kulsoom Rashedi Passport (PP) no. PO 5565752, Bahirullah PP no. PO 2253861, Lina Zaheer, PP no. 0061959, Hamida Mashal PO 02028269, Muhammad Ayab PO 5550450, Mursaleen Gulzad PO 1267211 (expire visa), Sabir Bandy Safi PO 5556082, Tahir Shinwari PO 3810107, Khalid Shinwari PO 06932254, Gul Mina Gul PO 5562846, Muhammad Ibrahim PO 0218484, Hamid Hashmi PO 3517440, Laila Bibi PO

4018038, Sakina Balaghi PO 434378 and Muhammad Mehdi Ibrahim PO 3524511. Due to obscurity in availing legal visas, the Afghan citizens utilized all lawful and unlawful channels to cross into Pakistan however the FIA officials under the supervision of AD Yasir Arafat, would black their illegal entry into Pakistan, the official said.

It is to be stated here that because of security measures, the Pakistani government initiated a border management scheme and firstly imposed visa policy for Afghan citizens in June, 2016.

## Call to advertise vacant sport officers' posts

## F.P. Report

QUETTA: Nisar Yadgar Sarangzai, provincial leader Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Balochistan, Thursday called on the authorities to advertise the posts of Assistant Director Sports and District Officer lying vacant in different zones of Balochistan province.

In a statement, he said that Government of Balochistan forwarded requisition to Balochistan Public Service Commission for filling vacant posts of Assistant Director Sports and District Sports Officer one year ago, but despite lapse of considerable period of time, vacant posts of Sports and Youth Affairs Department had not been advertised by BPSC.

adding that it had been learnt that Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Balochistan

and Director General, Balochistan Sports Board, Quetta did not want to get the vacant posts of sports department advertised due to unknown reasons.

He said that poor performance of the teams of Balochistan province during 34th national games, 2023 held in Quetta from May 12, 2023 to May 30, 2023 was due to the dearth of technical staff in Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Balochistan. He said that poor performance of the authorities of Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Balochistan could be judged from the fact that in that era of technology, website of Sports and Youth Affairs Department had not yet been designed.

He called on the authorities to direct the authorities of Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Balochistan to get website designed, so

that citizens of Balochistan could know about the activities of Sports and Youth Affairs, Balochistan. He said that the incumbent Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Balochistan and Director General, Balochistan Sports Board had brought sports department to the verge of ruination.

Demanding the authorities to get the posts of Assistant Director Sports and District Sports Officer lying vacant in different zones of the province advertised, he demanded Chief Minister

Balochistan, Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Governor Balochistan, Malak Abdul Wali Khan Kakar and Secretary, Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili to transfer Secretary, Sports Department and Director General, Balochistan Sports Board, Quetta immediately.

## DC evaluates performance of price control magistrates

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa Thursday chaired a meeting to review the individual performance of price control magistrates.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Farooq Qamar, Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur Sadar Mujahid Abbas, Deputy Director Industries Zubair Abbasi, In-charge Monitoring and Reporting Cell DC Office Dr. Muhammad Safdar Munir Malik, and price control magistrates attended the meeting while assistant commissioners of other tehsils participated through

video link.

DC Zaheer Anwar Jappa directed the officers to ensure the sale of food items at fixed rates, adding price control magistrates should work actively in the field and the auction of fruits and vegetables should be monitored. He said that price lists should be displayed in shops and business centers so that consumers do not face any problems while purchasing.

The performance of price control magistrates from July 1 to 19 July was reviewed. It was informed in the meeting that price control magistrates visited

14603 shops. They inspected the price of food items and a fine of a total of Rs 1,068,000 was imposed. As many as five first information reports were registered, arresting 114 people, and 11 shops were sealed.

Meanwhile, another meeting of the food supply chain management committee also met with the DC in the chair to review the availability of food items. The DC directed that food items should be sold at fixed rates. The supply chain of food items should be monitored effectively while maintaining the balance between supply and demand.

pared by a factory which had reached the MC office, out of which 240 manholes had been covered, while the remaining 300 open manholes would be covered in the next three days.

The commissioner further said that remaining 860 covers had been received from the factory which would be used to cover the manholes. Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti said the process of cleaning the sewer lines across the city was also going on while all the disposals were kept functional to deal with any situation in monsoon. He asked the citizens to report any open manhole to the Municipal Corporation or Commissioner's Office so that it could be covered immediately.





# Despite EU-Tunisia deal, Black refugees pushed out ‘at gunpoint’

TUNIS (Agencies): Tunisia's mass expulsion of Black refugees and migrants to its borders with Libya and Algeria is continuing despite the award of more than 250 million euros (\$280m) in aid from the European Union to support its failing economy and better manage its borders. At least three videos provided by NGOs and Libyan border agencies have appeared since Sunday, appearing to show Tunisian security services expelling Black men, women and children from the territory to the border with Libya, where they were forced at gunpoint to walk into the desert without food and water.

The EU has given 100 million euros (\$112m) to improve Tunisia's border security, while 150 million euros (\$168m) was earmarked for the North African country's stuttering economy as part of an agreement with the bloc. But the benefits to the EU, beyond Tunisia ramping up its border security and surveillance, were not immediately clear. Signing a memorandum of understanding on Sunday, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who was accompanied by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Dutch PM Mark Rutte, welcomed the agreement as an opportunity to "invest in shared prosperity".

Echoing von der Leyen's comments, Meloni spoke warmly of "an important new step in dealing with the migration crisis in an integrated way", before inviting Tunisia's President Kais Saied to a migration summit in Rome next Sunday. However, throughout the negotiations over the EU aid package, the mass expulsions - deemed illegal in a statement issued by United Nations experts - have continued, with a number of videos emerging appearing to show hundreds of refugees and

migrants either being rescued by Libyan border security or wandering freely in the desert. Videos provided by NGOs and Libyan security agencies show dozens wandering in the desert, with neither food nor water. Hundreds continue to be expelled from across Tunisia after violence took hold in the port city of Sfax, a destination point for many Black sub-Saharan Africans fleeing war and poverty. The unrest began after a February speech by Saied, warning of demographic change in Tunisia that was denounced as "racist".

It has dogged the lives of many, culminating in street battles between local residents, the police and Black sub-Saharan Africans after the death of a local man in Sfax in early July. Since then, Tunisia's security services have been active in seizing Black men, women and children who lack proper documents from migration hotspots and bussing them to the remote reaches of the border. In a video shared by the NGO Alarm Phone, a man spoke of "losing strength" and claimed to have been beaten by Tunisian security forces. The video shows several others stranded, including a pregnant woman who the man said, like others, had been without food, water or medication for seven days. Another group, the NGO said, was abandoned near Ras Ajdir, on the Tunisian border with Libya, where three of them had been bitten by scorpions. None was reported to have received medical attention. Across the border, Libyan security agencies have been quick to publicise efforts to help Black refugees and migrants who have been abandoned by Tunisia.

However, within Libya itself, the picture is not so straightforward. A UN investigation last year showed refugees and migrants detained in

Libya had been murdered, tortured and raped by their captors. Many of those currently in Tunisia told Al Jazeera of routine attacks by Libyan militias, with rape a common method of control. For many European countries, the priority is ultimately to find a way to heavily clamp down on illegal migration into the continent. But some of the gains the European Commission hopes to make from the deal signed with Tunisia on Sunday have also come into question.

British newspaper The Guardian reported that Tunisia has held firm to its position that it will not welcome migrants and refugees returned from Europe, unless they are originally from Tunisia, despite hopes from some European leaders that they would be able to. Therefore, it is not clear how the migration aspect of the deal marks any significant improvement upon the longstanding arrangement between Italy and Tunisia that allows for Tunisian returnees from Italy to be fast-tracked in exchange for Italy partly funding the Tunisian coast-guard and border police. Reaction to the aid deal from aid agencies and from within the European Parliament has been quick to come. French Member of the European Parliament Mounir Satouri is one of a group of MEPs from across the political spectrum who have opposed the strengthening of ties with Tunisia. "It is EU money on a silver platter for a president [Saied] who has shifted Tunisia's nascent democracy to an autocracy," Satouri told Al Jazeera. "For what purpose? To externalise migration management to him [Saied], even though Tunisian authorities are not respecting migrants' rights. The signalling could not be worse."

"Tunisia is going through an economic crisis and we need to help Tunisians in this moment. But budget



support to an autocrat is not the right way," Satouri continued. "Today, the Commission and Council are going through with what they can award without the consent of the European Parliament." Amnesty has also been highly critical of the aid package in light of the ongoing abuses committed in Tunisia. Accusing the EU of complicity in the attacks against Black refugees and migrants in the country, Olivia Sundberg Diez, the NGO's EU advocate on migration and asylum, told Al Jazeera that no lessons had been learned from past agreements with Libya and Turkey. "The signing of this agreement without human rights conditions and safeguards, without democratic scrutiny or involvement of civil society, at the

same time as evidence of abuses in Tunisia was mounting, and with no public condemnation of these abuses during leaders' visit to Tunisia, shows an appalling disregard for human rights," Sundberg Diez said.

Contacted by Al Jazeera, a spokesperson for the European Commission said concern for human rights was paramount. "Our clear position is that migration management needs to respect human rights and international law. This is reflected in the MoU signed with Tunisia," the spokesperson said. "Under the MoU, we agreed that we will cooperate on border management, anti-smuggling, return and on addressing root causes, in full respect of the international law, and the dignity and

rights of migrants." "The EU is already supporting the International Organization for Migration, UNHCR and international NGOs to cater for the needs of stranded migrants in Tunisia and ensure dignified returns for those who want to go back home," the spokesperson added. "We are addressing human rights issues ... with Tunisia." The aid package for Tunisia will now go to the EU member states for approval, who may exact some concessions from both parties before signing off on the deal. However, an EU source told the magazine Politico that the deal with Tunisia marked a blueprint for future relations between the bloc and North Africa, with Egypt and Morocco expected to follow.

## Egypt president pardons rights activist and lawyer

CAIRO (BBC): Egypt's president has pardoned jailed rights activist Patrick Zaki and lawyer Mohammed al-Baqer, state media report. The news comes a day after an emergency court found Mr Zaki guilty of "spreading false news" and sentenced him to three years in prison. The judgement, based on an article he wrote about his life as a Coptic Christian, was widely condemned.

Mr Baqer represented pro-democracy activist Alaa Abdel Fattah before they were jailed on the same charge in 2021. Egypt's government has carried out what rights groups have described as a relentless crackdown on any form of dissent since President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi led the military's overthrow of his democratically elected predecessor in 2013. They say tens of thousands of critics have been detained arbitrarily. The pardons were welcomed by the board of the government's "national dialogue" process and Hossam Bahgat of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), for which Mr Zaki worked while also studying in Italy. "Baqer and Patrick should not have spent one day in jail for their human rights work," he tweeted. "We welcome the news of their pardon and call for the immediate release of thousands still detained in Egypt on political grounds."

Italy's Prime Minister

Giorgia Meloni said in a video message that Mr Zaki would return there on Thursday. She also wished him "a life of serenity and success" and thanked President Sisi "for this very important act". Her Foreign Minister, Antonio Tajani, declared that Italy's foreign policy had "contributed significantly to the release of this young student". Mr Zaki's case received widespread public attention in the European country, where he had been pursuing a master's degree in gender and women's studies when he decided to return to Egypt for a short family visit in February 2020.

The 32-year-old was arrested at Cairo's airport before being transferred to his home city of Mansoura. His lawyers allege that he was subjected to torture, including electric shocks, while being interrogated. Prosecutors eventually charged him with "spreading false news inside and outside of the country", based on an opinion piece published on the Daraj news website in July 2019. The EIPR said the article described his experiences as a Coptic Egyptian and his views on events affecting the religious minority. In September 2021, after 19 months in detention, Mr Zaki went on trial at the Emergency State Security Court in Mansoura and pleaded not guilty. Three months later, the court ordered his release on bail.

Mr Bahgat said the court

had found him guilty and ordered his immediate imprisonment, describing it as a "travesty of justice". Fellow rights activists walked out of the national dialogue in response to the conviction, prompting its board to appeal for a pardon. The US and UN also expressed concern and called for Mr Zaki's immediate release. Mr Baqer has been detained since September 2019, when he was arrested while attending the interrogation of Alaa Abdel Fattah, a British-Egyptian pro-democracy activist considered the country's best-known political prisoner. The two men were subsequently charged with "spreading false news undermining national security" along with the blogger Mohammed "Oxygen" Ibrahim. The case was related to their social media posts. Human rights groups had called the charges spurious and their trial before an emergency state security court in Cairo a sham.

In September 2021, the court found all three men guilty. Alaa Abdel Fattah, a British-Egyptian dual national, was sentenced to five years in prison, while Mr Baqer and Mohammed Ibrahim were handed four-year terms. After learning of his pardon, Mr Baqer's wife expressed hope that he would be freed in time to celebrate his birthday on Thursday. "Gratitude to everyone who tried, worked, prayed for Baqer and for us," Neama Hisham said.

## ‘Join hands with us’

LONDON (Agencies): The head of Britain's MI6 intelligence service has asked Russians angry with the invasion of Ukraine to "join hands" with the United Kingdom to help end the bloodshed, an invitation that is sure to stir fury at the Kremlin. "I invite them to do what others have done this past 18 months and join hands with us. Our door is always open ... Their secrets will be safe with us and together we will work to bring the bloodshed to an end," Richard Moore told Politico, at the British embassy in Prague.

A similar invitation was made two months ago by Washington, when the CIA released a video urging Russians to get in touch. "Contact us. Perhaps the people around you don't want to hear the truth. We want to," the agency said in the clip. Offers to spy hold huge risks. President Vladimir Putin has previously warned Russians against spying, a crime that carries a 20-year sentence. During the Politico interview in front of an audience at the embassy, he also said British spies are using artificial intelligence (AI) to curb the supply of weapons to Russia during its war with Ukraine. His staff are "combining their skills with AI and bulk data to identify and disrupt the flow of weapons to Russia", said Moore, who has previously warned the West of falling behind its rivals in the AI race. "Together with our allies, [we intend] to win the race to master the ethical and safe use of AI," he said.

He warned that there was "absolutely no doubt" adversaries would try to develop artificial intelligence in a way which was reckless and dangerous, and that it would be his agency's job to deal with that. "It will be a significant part of our role going forward into the future, to try and ... detect, uncover, and then disrupt people who would like to develop AI in directions which are dangerous." In his second speech since becoming chief of the Secret Intelligence Service in 2020, Moore said Ukraine's counteroffensive was proving "a hard grind" but was optimistic since there appeared to be little prospect of Russia regaining momentum in Ukraine.

Moore said Putin's administration was consumed by "venality, infighting and callous incompetence", and that the Russian leader was "clearly under pressure". The Wagner Group mutiny has only "exposed the inexorable decay of the unstable autocracy over which Putin presides," he added.

## Trump handed dual court defeats amid ongoing legal woes

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Former United States President Donald Trump has been handed dual court defeats, as he continues to face an array of legal woes since leaving the White House. The first ruling, made by a federal judge, rejected Trump's bid to have his criminal trial in New York state court moved to a federal court. Trump's legal team has long argued that the former president will not receive a fair trial in ultra-liberal Manhattan, where he faces 34 felony charges connected to falsifying documents in a hush-money case involving an adult film star.

But his lawyers' latest bid alleged that, since the case was related to Trump's time as president, it should be heard in federal court. However, US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein rejected that argument, saying the hush money allegations pertained to Trump's personal life, not his presidential duties. They therefore did not merit a move to federal court. "The evidence overwhelmingly sug-

gests that the matter was a purely a personal item of the President - a cover-up of an embarrassing event," Hellerstein wrote in a 25-page ruling. "Hush money paid to an adult film star is not related to a president's official acts. It does not reflect in any way the colour of the president's official duties."

Hellerstein's decision means Trump could stand trial in a state court in Manhattan as early as next spring. That would overlap with the 2024 presidential primary season. Public opinion polls show the former president is currently leading a crowded Republican field, a federal judge in an unrelated case also rejected Trump's request for a new trial, following the conclusion of a civil lawsuit brought by the writer E Jean Carroll in May. A jury in that case found Trump liable for sexually abusing and defaming Carroll and awarded her \$5m. She had accused the former president of raping her in a Manhattan department store dressing room in

the mid-1990s and later defaming later her in an October 2022 social media post when he branded the incident a "hoax and a lie". In ruling, US District Judge Lewis Kaplan said May's unanimous verdict was "almost entirely in favour of Ms Carroll", and there was no indication it was a "seriously erroneous result" nor a "miscarriage of justice".

Kaplan further rejected Trump's request to have the penalty sum in the civil case lowered to \$1m. Carroll is pursuing a second defamation suit against the former president, seeking \$10m for comments made in June 2019. She recently amended that suit to include more recent statements, including comments Trump made at a CNN town hall in May, calling her a "whack job". That trial is scheduled for January 15, 2024. Trump has faced a barrage of legal troubles since leaving office. The state charges in New York made Trump the first president, current or former, to face criminal

charges - but in June, he made history again, when he was indicted separately on 37 federal felony counts related to allegedly hiding and hoarding classified documents he took from the White House. Trump is the first US president in history to face either state or federal criminal charges. The former president said he had received a letter identifying him as the target of a separate Department of Justice investigation into efforts to subvert the 2020 presidential election. The scope of that investigation includes his actions before and during the attack on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. Trump is also the subject of a criminal probe in Georgia looking into alleged efforts to pressure an election official into altering the results of the state's 2020 vote. The state's Supreme Court blocked Trump's petition to block the case. The New York attorney general has also sued Trump and his family business for fraud, with a trial in the civil case set for the end of the year.

## Prigozhin in video tells Wagner troops to prepare ‘for Africa’

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies): A new video appears to show the head of Russia's mercenary Wagner Group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, welcoming his fighters to Belarus, telling them they would take no further part in the Ukraine war for now but to prepare for "a new journey to Africa". The footage, published by Prigozhin's press service on Telegram, is the first video evidence of his whereabouts since Wagner's failed mutiny last month against Russia's top military brass.

"Welcome lads ... Welcome to Belarusian soil," Prigozhin said. "We fought honourably," he added. "You have done a great deal for Russia. What is going on at the front is a disgrace that we do not need to get involved in." On June 23-24, Prigozhin's

heavily armed troops took control of the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don and its military command centre steering Russia's campaign in Ukraine. They then drove an armed convoy within 200km (125 miles) of the capital, Moscow, on what Prigozhin said was a "march for justice" aimed at removing corrupt and incompetent Russian commanders. Russian President Vladimir Putin initially pledged to crush the mutiny, but hours later a deal struck by his ally Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko averted an armed confrontation. Under the deal, Prigozhin and his fighters were expected to move operations to Belarus. But earlier this month, Lukashenko said Prigozhin had visited the country then

returned to Russia. After it was confirmed last week that Prigozhin had met Putin days after the failed mutiny, Belarus announced that Wagner fighters would be training its soldiers at a military range southeast of the capital, Minsk. In the video, the authenticity of which was not immediately verified, Prigozhin told his men to behave well towards the Belarusian locals and collect their strength for Africa, where the mercenary group has played an increasingly central role in several long-running internal conflicts. "And perhaps we will return to the SMO [special military operation in Ukraine] at some point when we are sure that we will not be forced to shame ourselves," Prigozhin said.

Since 2018, Wagner has been operating in a number of African countries,

including the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya and Mali. The CAR's presidency said dozens of Wagner fighters had arrived to help secure a constitutional referendum on July 30. The video, which was shot after night had fallen, also showed Prigozhin receiving a Wagner black flag, decorated with the motto "Blood, Honour, Motherland, Courage", from their camp in southern Russia. Dmitry Utkin - a former special forces officer in Russia's GRU military intelligence, who helped found the Wagner Group - also spoke to the men. "This is not the end. This is just the beginning of the biggest work in the world that will be carried out very soon," Utkin said before switching to English. "And welcome to hell!"

## Syrian pound sinks to historic low on the parallel market

DAMASCUS (Agencies): Syria's currency has hit its lowest level on the parallel market, according to online applications used to track its value. The Syrian pound was trading at more than 11,000 to the United States dollar on the parallel, or black, market. The Central Bank of Syria devalued the official rate at which foreign currency money transfers could be withdrawn to 9,900 Syrian pounds to the dollar.

It marks a significant collapse since the beginning of the year, when the parallel market rate hovered around 6,500 and the transfer rate was 4,522. The pound had

traded at 47 to the dollar before protests against President Bashar al-Assad erupted in March 2011. Since then, a bloody conflict, now its 12th year, has killed nearly half a million people and displaced half of the country's prewar population of 23 million. This, combined with Western sanctions, a currency squeeze linked to neighbouring Lebanon's economic free fall, and the government's loss of its northeastern oil-producing territories, has triggered a financial meltdown. The World Bank had projected a 3.2 percent contraction in Syria's 2023 economic output, due to continu-

ing conflict, high grain and energy prices and shortages, and water scarcity that is limiting crop output. And in February, parts of Syria and Turkey were hit hard by devastating earthquakes, further stressing Syria's population, millions of whom were already displaced and battling hunger.

In the wake of the earthquakes, the World Bank in February revised its prediction down by another 2.3 percentage points to 5.5 percent for the year. Following the disaster, an unprecedented funding crisis in Syria forced the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to

cut assistance to 2.5 million of the 5.5 million people who rely on the agency for their basic food needs. Aid deliveries and humanitarian convoys to affected areas have been at the mercy of international political tensions. The devaluation was being fuelled by the onset of stagflation, a term referring to the combination of high inflation and economic stagnation, economic analyst Nisrine Zreik told Reuters. "The rise is a result of a weakness in the Syrian economy in general and the production sector in particular, in addition to the increase in imports," Zreik said.



## The Frontier Post

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# Cypher saga and need of the nation

**I**NTERIOR Minister Rana Sanaullah has recently said that the reported confession of ex-principal secretary Azam Khan was a charge sheet against the former Prime Minister and PTI Chief Imran Khan. During a media interaction in Islamabad on Wednesday, the Interior Minister claimed that the narrative behind the cipher which the PTI chief has for long presented as evidence of a foreign conspiracy to oust him from the top office was fabricated. According to him, the former Principal Secretary's statement has clearly revealed who conspired against this country and damaged foreign policy interests, and played a game for his personal/ political interests on the one hand and pushed the national economy into a crisis on the other. The Interior Minister demanded stern punishment for the individuals who bartered national interests and confessed their crimes afterward. He said that making a classified document public and retaining sensitive documents in one's possession unauthorizedly is a grave crime that has been previously committed by former US President Donald Trump who faced court proceedings and conviction afterward.

The saga of the cipher conspiracy has rebirthed after the close associate and then principal Secretary of the former Prime Minister Imran Khan appeared before the court and offered his statement in front of a magistrate. Allegedly, the former Prime Minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan and then Foreign Minister and PTI Senior Vice President Shah Mahmood Qureshi hatched the cipher scam to use it to their advantage against their political opponents as well as against the military establishment in the aftermath of a no-confidence motion against the former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Previously, the issue of foreign conspiracy had been covered up by both the PTI and PML-N-led coalition governments by mere deliberation in the National Security Council Meetings and condemnation of foreign interference in the domestic affairs of the country. Both times, vague and politically motivated statements had been issued by the top National forum that deals with sensitive matters pertaining to the national security and sovereignty of the country. Meanwhile, no serious efforts had ever been made by both regimes to unearth facts behind the cipher scam and conspiracy theory rather both contesting parties used this issue for politics and point-scoring. Currently, the ruling PDM regime intends to charge sheet former Prime Minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan for tempering/ misusing an official sensitive document and illegally retaining classified documents in his personal custody after relinquishing his office about a year ago. Interestingly, it is the same case under which former Nationalist American President Donald J Trump had been convicted by the court in the recent months.

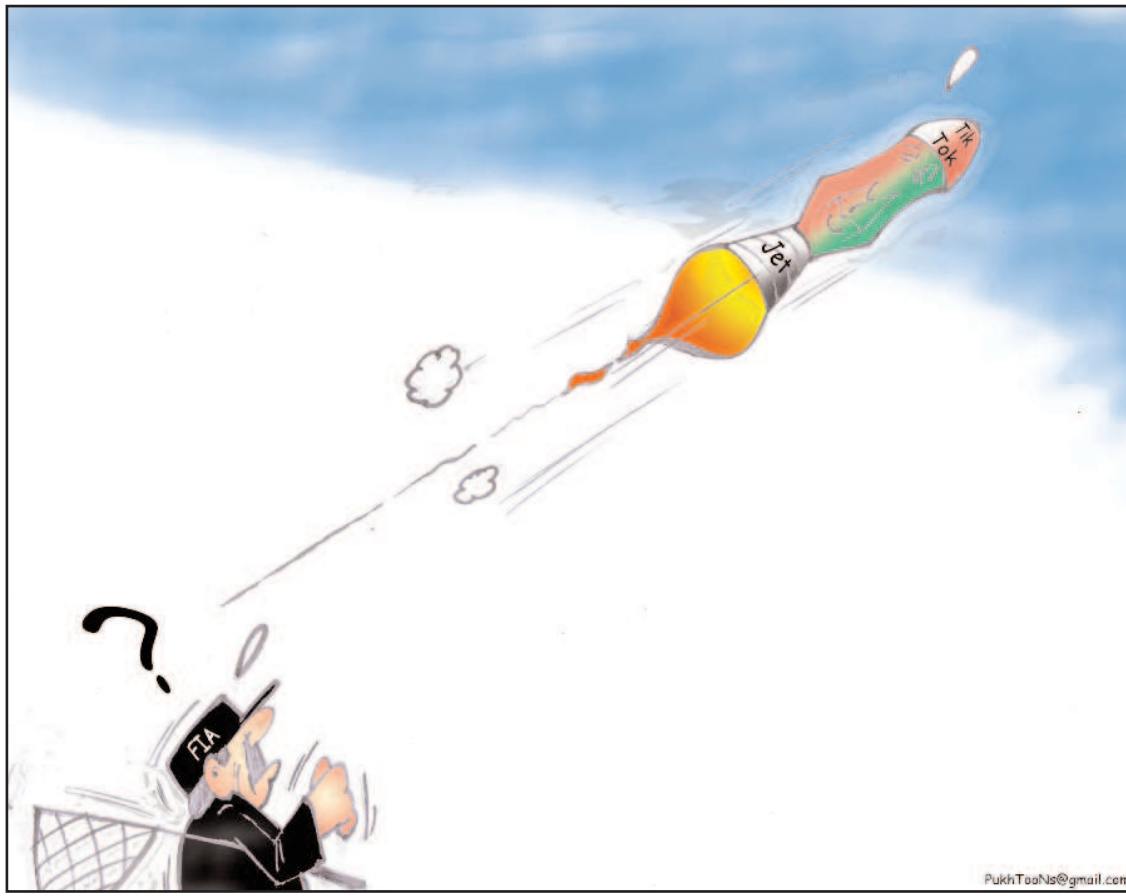
The state and the people of Pakistan have endured dreadful political chaos in the past year after the PDM coalition moved a no-confidence motion against former Prime Minister Imran Khan in early 2022, which gave birth to the so-called cipher conspiracy that not only further polluted the domestic political environment but also undermined Pakistan's foreign relations with the United States. The persistent political dogfight pushed the country into severe economic challenges, while both warring factions used those conditions and economic turmoil for political purposes and defamation/propaganda campaigns against each other. In fact, the past year's political battle was primarily about the election controversy as the PTI and its allies demanded early elections while the PDM coalition had been pushing for the completion of the parliamentary term to announce all-out polls in the country. Currently, the election season has arrived and the caretaker setup is due the next month. The public is hopeful about the positive outcome of a fresh polls while major political parties have launched their election campaign ahead of decisive competition in the coming months.

As a reminder to the combative politicians, the Pakistani nation has faced utmost economic, monetary, social and moral depletion during the irresponsible and selfish wrangling between the ruling PDM coalition and the opposition over the past year. The political groups have left nothing undisputed in this country, every national institution ranging from Pak Military to Election Commission and the Judiciary to Parliament had been made controversial by the politicians. Even, the flames of hatred and hostility did not spare the memorials of our brave national heroes and martyrs that have trashed the public belief in politics and politicians. Historically, politicians and bureaucrats had always worked for their vested political and monetary interests and never upheld the constitution and the rule of the law, that ultimately harmed the state and spoiled the democracy. Apparently, rejuvenating the cipher saga will not benefit the coalition government at this stage because it will destroy the political atmosphere and disputed the forthcoming general election.

It is high time that the ruling coalition government and the opposition move forward to bring forth a comprehensive electoral reforms which must include the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), online voting by overseas Pakistanis, and a consensus electoral strategy that essentially has support from all political parties in the country so no one point finger on the electoral process after losing the poll. The ruling coalition government, and contesting political groups must exercise patience and avoid pushing the nation into a fresh political rigmarole and uncertainty. Meanwhile, the ECP must work proactively to ensure a free, fair, smooth and transparent election in the country, so the nation moves toward political stability, and socio-economic revival in the days to come.

### Important Notice

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## Israel President Herzog's 'honest' speech to the Congress

Marwan Bishara

**I**am honoured to speak to you today at the 75th anniversary of my country's independence. It is an honour that neither I nor my country deserves. Throughout our history, your steadfast and generous support has made Israel what it is today.

President Woodrow Wilson supported the 1917 Balfour Declaration at the behest of the British Empire, committing to our future Jewish state - a commitment made by those who did not own the land to those who did not live on the land, against the will of those who did live on it.

And it was President Harry Truman who first supported the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan to carve that land into a Jewish and Palestinian state, and the first to recognise Israel only 11 minutes after its establishment in 1948. Since then, we have been telling each other how our nations were founded by persecuted migrant communities on the basis of European Enlightenment; how they created strong, vibrant modern states, civilising the savage, and how we have dominated global and Middle East affairs. We tell each other a tale of how they founded two righteous, God-fearing models to emulate, like "shining beacon of hope" and "light unto the nations"; of sharing common liberal, democratic principles, and of our persistent pursuit of peace. But if we are honest with ourselves, we should admit that we have also copied the worst of imperial Europe. We share a dark past of settler colonialism, war, ethnic cleansing of Indigenous inhabitants and a persistent history of racism and discrimination including slavery in the Americas, and apartheid in Palestine.

Our success was made possible through the blood and tears of countless victims. We've treated our enemies as warmongers, our critics as enemies, and our enemies as modern-day Hitlers, but no other states have waged as many wars, or embarked on as many military interventions in the past eight decades as we have. These similarities between our two nations

continue to cast a long shadow over our bonds and behaviour. Since our birth, Israel has had no better ally than the United States. Period. Even though, we have not always been gracious or reciprocated - while generally following in your footsteps, befriend your friends and denouncing your foes. Whenever the world ganged up on our "Jewish state", America came to the rescue. When Soviet bloc nations joined Muslim and other developing nations to condemn us for our bellicosity, it was the US that defended us and placated our foes with vigour and zeal. And when Europe

***It befalls upon you, once again, to save us from ourselves. To free us and the Palestinians from an entrenching system of apartheid that is bound to lock us in hatred and violence for decades to come. There is little I can do, as a ceremonial president, other than to speak out.***

joined the international outrage, the US was the only major power ready and able to stand by Israel and block international censures by vetoing consequential UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israel. Indeed, with the exception of that one "mistake" under Jimmy Carter, when Washington voted against Israeli settlement expansion, the US has routinely vetoed efforts to condemn Israel at the United Nations Security Council, blocking more than 40 such resolutions.

And this week, when a US Congresswoman - one of your own - called Israel racist, you, dear members of Congress, quickly shut her down by proclaiming in a resolution that Israel is not racist. Though I might have put it differently, she was essentially right, you are wrong. Thanks to you, we have become more confident and assertive. With your military and economic aid, that reached some \$200bn, we have built a formidable military machine, that allowed us to double down on the repres-

sion of the Palestinians, and humiliation of the stubborn Arabs, who refuse to accept our pretence that our culture is superior to theirs, and that our settlement of their land is ours by right of a brief sojourn here a few thousand years ago. When my late beloved father Chaim spoke to you as president of Israel in 1987, he boasted of our peace accords with Sadat of Egypt. And I am inclined to walk in his shoes and do the same; to boast of our Abraham accords with several Arab autocrats. But unlike him, I can no longer keep silent as our military and civilian occupation mutates into an apartheid

than to speak out. So, I urge you to condemn racism and apartheid today, as you condemned apartheid in South Africa, albeit belatedly in the past. And I urge you to push us to come to terms with the Palestinians, who soon will become the majority between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Do not believe a word Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says about the Palestinians; he has made a career out of trafficking in fear. Like my two predecessors, I also believe we have a peace partner in President Mahmoud Abbas; perhaps the last peace partner. We must stop undermining him, as we will never be as lucky with a strong yet accommodating leader. My father boasted of our liberal democracy and respect for human rights, albeit for Jews only, considering that in our Jewish state, the right to the land, the right to settle (return), and the right to self-determination is for the Jewish collective. But even this communitarianism has eroded with time, culminating in a government of hyper-nationalists and religious fanatics that is demonstrably bent on destroying our Jewish democracy and squashing our liberal values.

Hundreds of thousands of my fellow Jewish countrymen and women have taken to the streets every week to protest against new illiberal legislation that is bound to chip away at our institutions and freedoms, and destroy any hope of future peace and democracy in the Jewish state. This destruction will happen if you, members of this august symbol of constitutional democracy, continue to outbid yourselves in appealing us as we stumble towards religious autocracy. Your intentions to invite our lying, cheating prime minister to speak here for a record fourth time will only make things worse.

President Biden is right to be concerned and to warn our government of going down this road. So should you. It is a dangerous road that is bound to destroy the fabric of our society. I urge you to be brave and principled, for a change. It is liberating, as I have discovered.

Aljazeera

## Spanish election a barometer of future of tolerance in Europe

Mohamed Chebaro

**A**MID the suffocating heat hitting Europe this summer, the far right in Spain might this weekend be on course to further suffocate the outlook for the future of democracy and liberalism both within the country and across the continent. With a general election taking place on Sunday, a far-right success might add more empty rhetoric, discriminatory discourses, xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia, whose manifestations one hopes will not recall the country's fascist past, which would erode minorities' rights in an increasingly multicultural Spain.

It is widely expected that a right-wing victory in the country's snap election would pave the way for more conservative parties to dominate across the EU. The election was called by socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez after the left was routed in the May 28 local elections (as leftist voters stayed away, it is believed) and the result could see the extreme right take a share of power for the first time since the dictatorship of Gen. Francisco Franco ended in 1975.

Recent polls indicate that PM Sanchez's bet on a snap election might backfire, as the numbers indicate a likely government coalition of the right-wing People's Party and the far-right Vox, with its anti-immigration and anti-feminist agenda. Above all, that will mean the further progress of the far right as a force to be reckoned with on the political stage across Europe, which the traditional right and left have failed to contain. For Sanchez, who has been in power since 2018 at the head of a left-wing coalition, the stakes are high. His position is under threat despite his economic record, with 5.5 percent growth in the country last year and Spain being the first major EU economy where inflation has fallen below 2 percent since the onset of the crisis caused by the Ukraine war, the rising cost of living and the effects of the pandemic years.

The problem of most Western societies and their lurch to the right is due to a series of misconceptions and the malicious weaponization of various factors. These include fears for the fatherland, the over-magnified talk of change in countries' demographic fabric due to the continuous waves of migrants reaching their shores, talk of poorer economic performance, and a perceived failure among many older people that the central government has lost control due to the somewhat weaker rule of law. Look around Europe nowadays and you see far-right parties on the rise everywhere, led by so-called patriotic nationalists, religious ultraconservatives, populists and nationalists bordering on white supremacists. They tend to reminisce about the old isolationist, pre-globalized world, in which societies were largely homogenous (for most European countries, this meant white Christian), and are imbued with neo-fascist roots of different flavors.

Something has happened

to cause the breaking of old taboos that date back to the fall of Nazism and fascism in Europe, as increasingly mainstream parties have been showing a readiness to bring those once-marginal forces back into national politics. Since the turn of the century, things have started to change. In 2000, the center-right in Austria agreed to jump into a coalition government with the far-right Freedom Party. Today, Italy, the EU's third-largest economy, is run by a prime minister with neo-fascist roots. Far-right nationalists are also part of the coalition government in Finland. The Sweden Democrats, an anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism party, is the second-largest party in parliament and is propping up the coalition government. And the matter is no different in Greece, where three far-right parties have entered parliament in recent elections. Then there is the UK's Brexit, conceived by a far-right-leaning tribe of the ruling Conservative Party that campaigned to "take back control" and stem the immigration flow from Europe and beyond.

Many have been wondering if this lurch to the right in Europe is a mere vote of no-confidence in the political system and the political establishment - as you often hear far-right politicians calling it - or the result of conservatives complaining that liberalism has strayed too far, as echoed by ultraconservative Republicans in the US. All that is maybe part of why a larger number of people are voting for the right, but it is also because people nowadays are increasingly attracted by the outspoken members of far-right parties - who often sell empty rhetoric that is difficult to implement once in government. This is in addition to most electorates being at the mercy of often malicious digital campaigns, which mislead them to consider black and white options, when the real answers to the problems of our increasingly volatile societies and world lie in a gray area. Politicians are often not able to allay all fears about the future or remedy the fears resulting from the open borders in Europe, which have sparked questions of identity. This is especially the case as a result of the surge in migration witnessed over the past two decades, accompanied by poor government integration policies that have exposed schisms in the social fabrics of societies, particularly in urban centers, such as seen in France recently. Not to forget, of course, the economic issues and the wrongly conceived belief that globalization has jeopardized the livelihoods of many and has destroyed their pensions and future.

In Spain, Sanchez is still hoping to be able to form a new leftist coalition by mobilizing the undecided. The timing of the election, however, at the height of summer and in the middle of a heat wave, does not bode well for the prime minister and his wishes to keep the far right out of government. Millions are already on holiday and Sanchez must hope that they remembered to vote by post prior to their departure.

## Toward a new golden age

Garth Shelton

**P**RESIDENT Xi Jinping has expressed China's willingness to further strengthen China-South Africa relations ahead of the BRICS Summit in Johannesburg from Aug 22 to 24. This has been widely welcomed in South Africa and has opened the way for enhancing political solidarity and strategic cooperation.

This year marks 25 years since the establishment of China-South Africa diplomatic relations, which, over time, have been characterized by an ever closer and a more mutually beneficial partnership. China is now South Africa's biggest trade partner, a key strategic investor and a close collaborator in the struggle to transform the global structure toward a more balanced, peaceful and equitable system.

High-quality economic development in China offers South Africa a significant opportunity for expanded commercial engagement and mutual prosperity. A better under-

standing of China's economy could give South African traders a golden opportunity to share China's economic miracle.

Since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1998, China-South Africa relations have evolved from diplomatic bilateral interaction to a comprehensive strategic partnership. Commercial exchanges have flourished and a high-level political dialogue has evolved, forming a solid foundation for long-term cooperation and exchanges. South Africa joined the Belt and Road Initiative in 2015 and has been an active supporter and participant in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation since its inception in 2000. With China's strong support, South Africa joined the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) mechanism and is now working closely with China to advance multilateralism, along with a common and shared future for all developing countries. South Africa strongly val-

ues the potential for closer relations through the Belt and Road Initiative, which is regarded by many African states as the "fast track to prosperity". Stronger infrastructure links between South Africa and China through the initiative can open the way for continued mutual growth and common prosperity. South Africa thus seeks closer relations to take advantage of a "golden age" for China-Africa trade, high-level strategic cooperation and mutually beneficial exchanges. The Belt and Road Initiative and FOCAC frameworks are comprehensive and clearly offer very significant benefits for South Africa and all African countries. The solid foundation of China-Africa relations confirms a bright future and enormous opportunity for increased cooperation and common prosperity. China's drive for modernization and prosperity has been a great success and serves as a model for

South Africa's own economic reform and future growth. Under President Xi's leadership, China has become an industrialized prosperous society and has overcome the challenge of extreme poverty. China's enormously successful experience in modernization shows all developing countries the way toward economic development and prosperity. China's successful modernization is an inspiration, a guide and a motivation for South Africa to overcome its current challenges. China's unparalleled success gives South Africa a road map toward economic growth, reducing unemployment and poverty. To this end, China and South Africa have concluded a 10-year Strategic Cooperation Program (2020-29). This program offers South Africa enormous opportunity for the expansion of economic interaction. A safe and fair business environment in South Africa can open the way for significant new

Chinese investment and trade.

The next BRICS summit is expected to further strengthen China-South Africa exchanges and cooperation. Working shoulder to shoulder, China and South Africa can advance the BRICS agenda toward a more peaceful, harmonious and fair international system. BRICS is the ideal forum to advance a closer community of shared interests and a shared future. South Africa will work closely with China at the coming BRICS summit to advance shared interests along with strengthened unity and cooperation. BRICS is also expected to support the basic norms of international cooperation and oppose hegemony and power politics. BRICS is expected to focus on expanding membership, increasing multilateralism, reducing the dominance of the US dollar and advancing intra-BRICS trade and investment. China and South Africa will work closely to support each other in advancing common

interests and economic objectives. A common history grounded in the struggle against imperialism and colonization forms the foundation for China-South Africa solidarity and friendship. Diplomatic relations have brought China and South Africa closer through high-level exchanges, trade, investment and international mechanisms for cooperation such as the Belt and Road Initiative, FOCAC and BRICS. The solid friendship and depth of interaction suggest a future based on a new "golden age" for China-South Africa cooperation for the next 25 years. Closer interaction will immensely help South Africa overcome its current challenges with electricity generation, job creation and poverty reduction. The China-Africa comprehensive strategic partnership and deep friendship have only just begun, the next 25 years will be more rewarding, more significant and more mutually beneficial.

The China Daily



# Why the net-zero transition may endanger the ‘Asian century’

Masyita Crystallin & Marthe M. Hinojales

ASIAN countries' ability to thrive in the world economy over the next few decades hinges on their capacity to sustain their competitive advantages through continuous innovation. But to meet their commitments under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, the region's economies must overhaul their production, consumption and resource-allocation strategies, potentially postponing the long-anticipated "Asian century."

With the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report showing that global warming is on track to rise 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels within the next decade, the urgent need to accelerate efforts to mitigate climate change has moved to the forefront of the international policy debate. In March, shortly after the UN warned that the "climate time bomb is ticking," a gathering of central bank governors from member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations underscored the importance of aligning national policies to support the green transition. Two weeks later, the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund focused on the need to reform global institutions to address the climate threat.

And at the end of April, more than 100 central bankers and regulators convened in Singapore to explore ways to reach the annual target of \$9.2 trillion in green investments required to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Amid conflicting domestic and global priorities, varying levels of climate risk awareness and a dearth of comprehensive climate data, the policy debate has been shaped by

countries that are better equipped to manage the effects of climate change. Consequently, while the scientific and policy consensus is that cutting greenhouse gas emissions is the only way to avert climate catastrophe, the impact of emission cuts on Asia's economies remains uncertain.

There are two main approaches to cutting emissions: reducing economic activity to lower energy demand and implementing industry-specific measures to mitigate emissions. It is easy to see why the first option, which means accepting slower economic growth, is a nonstarter for many emerging and developing economies. But with fossil fuels accounting for more than 80 percent of energy use in China, Japan, South Korea and the ASEAN countries - collectively known as ASEAN+3 - the second path would have profound economic implications as well.

The most likely shock would be an increase in the cost of living. To discourage the use of fossil fuels, governments must make them more expensive, starting with the elimination of the energy subsidies that played a crucial role in supporting consumer spending across the region during the energy price shocks of early 2022. But even if ASEAN+3 policymakers resist domestic calls to impose a carbon tax, they may be compelled to act, owing to rapidly shifting climate policies elsewhere, such as the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, which imposes tariffs on carbon-intensive imports. Either way, Asian exporters will face higher production costs and could be at risk of losing their long-established positions in global trade and supply chains.

Moreover, reducing greenhouse gas emissions would require the retirement of many of the region's coal-fired power plants well before they reach even half of their projected lifespan. On average, coal power plants have an operating life of roughly 55 years. While early retirement may not present significant challenges in Europe and the US, where the average age of a coal-fired plant is about 34 and 41 years, respectively, the average coal plant in ASEAN+3 countries is just 11 years old. In addition to its significant costs, retiring coal-fired power plants could disrupt livelihoods and communities across the region.

To mitigate the adverse socioeconomic effects of this shift, Asian policymakers must ensure a just transition that considers the impact on affected communities. But given the potential impact of the net-zero transition on ASEAN+3 countries' finances, energy prices and exports, the region will most likely face a period of challenging economic conditions before experiencing any improvements. Still, the net-zero transition is an unavoidable necessity. By taking proactive measures and facilitating the allocation of public and private funding to where it is needed most, ASEAN+3 policymakers could allay the potential impact and sustain the region's economic prosperity without undermining global climate mitigation efforts.

To be sure, in recent years, ASEAN+3 governments have made significant progress in promoting sustainable and green finance. But the lack of adequate transparency, incentives and data impedes policymakers' ability to

establish a "greenium" that investors would be willing to pay for the perceived advantages of investing in environmentally friendly instruments. The lack of a unified global approach to transition financing, which aims to help "brown" (carbon-intensive) sectors become greener, poses another challenge for policymakers. For example, an emissions-reduction project that meets the criteria for a bank loan in ASEAN+3 countries might not qualify for a similar loan in Europe.

In the absence of a global transition taxonomy, many foreign investors are understandably reluctant to bear the risk of policy uncertainty and reputational harm associated with funding the region's brown sectors, despite their economic significance. With the window for decisive climate action rapidly closing, some may question whether the Asian century is already passe. But while the shift away from fossil fuels may impede ASEAN+3 countries' progress toward achieving long-term economic prosperity, the net-zero transition is also a unique opportunity for Asian economies to boost growth and job creation. Countries such as China, with its flourishing electric vehicle industry, and Vietnam, with its expanding solar capacity, are already capitalizing on growing demand for green energy.

Mobilizing capital is crucial to achieving net-zero emissions. As William Shakespeare reminds us, "If money go before, all ways do lie open." To create a greener and more resilient region, we must reimagine climate finance in a way that aligns with the unique characteristics of ASEAN+3 economies and unlocks their tremendous potential.

# To beat Trump in 2024, Biden needs to become Angry Joe fast

Andrew Mitrovica

LIKE most columnists, I have no experience in helping to run a presidential campaign in any way. Zilch. Nada. Zippo. My only brush with campaign politics occurred almost 40 years ago when I was an executive assistant to a retiring member of parliament who enlisted her small staff in Ottawa to get her successor elected. That's it. Yet, as the 2024 United States presidential election approaches, this gaping gap in my resume is not dissuading me from offering advice on what President Joe Biden should do to beat Donald Trump once more.

Such is the arrogance, I suppose, of writers who, like me, are paid to share opinions on all manner of subjects that, truth be told, we are sometimes obliged to feign expertise about. I was prompted to get a head start on my prescription for how to win a presidential campaign after reading a spate of recent polls pitting Biden in a head-to-head match-up with Trump and a story that revealed that sweet Uncle Joe is prone, in private, to turn, on a hair trigger, into sour Angry Joe. First, the troubling polls. It pains me to write the following sentence as much, I suspect, as it will pain enlightened Americans to read it. Despite having already been indicted twice and facing the prospect of more indictments to come, a succession of polls suggests that Trump can prevail in 2024. In some national polls, Trump is leading Biden by between two to four percentage points; while others show the race at even or Biden holding a one to two percentage points advantage. Those slim margins are, to put it charitably, more than a little disconcerting. If reason, tolerance and decency mattered, Trump ought to be trailing Biden by a wide and reassuring margin. But it is apparent that, like their infuriating leader, millions of Americans abandoned reason, tolerance, and decency long ago.

Combined with his seething anger, Trump has channelled ignorance, intolerance and indecency into a stubborn and potent political force. Attempts to mollify or cajole Trump's supporters out of their evangelical stupor - through appeals to reason and decency - have failed. They are beyond reach, consumed by conspiracy theories, wedded to fanaticism, fuelled by grievances, married to bigotry and convinced of their absolute righteousness. The idea that Biden's route to victory is through attracting enough independent voters and disenchanted Republicans put off by the "soap-opera" shenanigans of a "wild-

card" Trump is foolhardy. Biden must do a lot more than rely on the comforting illusion that reasonable Americans will opt for stability over volatility in 2024. The 2016 presidential election was proof that promoting the status quo can blind complacent candidates to a brewing zealot among voters hankering for change - even if it meant electing a profane, "insurgent" huckster like

ongoing "battle for the soul of the nation". "I have come [to] this place where it all began to speak as plainly as I can to the nation about the threats we face," Biden said. "We must be honest with each other and with ourselves. Too much of what's happening in our country today is not normal. Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans represent an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic." Biden needs to talk to vot-

***Biden needs to go back to Independence Hall in Philadelphia where, on September 6, 2022, he spoke poignantly about the ongoing "battle for the soul of the nation". "I have come [to] this place where it all began to speak as plainly as I can to the nation about the threats we face," Biden said. "We must be honest with each other and with ourselves.***

Trump. Trump understands that there is no "high road" to the White House - and I'm not referring to the cocaine found earlier this month near the Oval Office. Trump is on the attack - perpetually. The searing, often juvenile, assaults on his Democrat and Republican foes are designed to emasculate his opponents, discredit their motives, and energise his supporters. However crass and cynical, Trump's obscene modus operandi works and has him, once again, within conceivable reach of returning as commander-in-chief. Biden needs to respond in kind. He needs to ditch the obsolete attitude that, as president, decorum and restraint require him to remain "above the fray" until his re-election campaign begins in earnest several months from today. Biden needs to tap publicly into the anger that is, reportedly, an authentic part of his character, rather than put a leash on it.

Biden needs to skewer Trump with the same blunt, coarse language he uses to curse ill-prepared or smug aides behind closed doors. Biden needs to be fitted with brass knuckles on both hands to confirm that the 80-year-old president has some ugly fight in him yet. Biden needs to renew describing Trump as a dangerous demagogue who - as he famously and accurately said in a blistering speech marking the first anniversary of the January 6 insurrection on the Capitol - held a "dagger to the throat of democracy".

Biden needs to go back to Independence Hall in Philadelphia where, on September 6, 2022, he spoke poignantly about the

ers plainly and honestly. He needs to do it now. He needs to repeat, again and again, that "MAGA Republicans do not respect the constitution. They do not believe in the rule of law. They do not recognise the will of the people." He needs to repeat, again and again, that "MAGA forces are determined to take this country backwards - backwards to an America where there is no right to choose, no right to privacy, no right to contraception, no right to marry who you love." Since that address last fall, the "MAGA forces" inside and outside Congress have taken America even further backwards to a place where laws to achieve diversity in college admissions were killed, where a policy to forgive onerous student debt was voided, where bigots who refused to serve same-sex couples were emboldened. And, for the first time, a former president has been charged with a slew of felonies in connection with his hoarding of top-secret documents and a hush-money scheme to keep a mistress silent. Rather than pounce using plain, honest and blunt language, Biden has demurred, preferring instead to "act presidential". Biden's stupefying reluctance to punch back - quickly and hard - has translated into a sluggish response among the army of small-dollar donors who helped smash fundraising records during his 2020 presidential campaign. Money is the oxygen of politics. If Biden hopes to turn that spigot back on, he and his dainty handlers better begin to let Angry Joe come out, come out from wherever you are. Otherwise, it may be too late.

# Growth of Chinese e-commerce platforms

Jose Nava

IN the ever-evolving landscape of e-commerce, Chinese platforms have emerged as true titans, challenging the dominance of their American counterparts. Market leaders such as Temu and Shein have swiftly risen to the forefront, revolutionizing the way consumers shop and leaving their mark on the global retail industry. With their innovative strategies and customer-centric approach, these Chinese e-commerce giants have become trailblazers in the digital realm, outshining their American rivals.

One of the primary reasons for the phenomenal success of Temu and Shein lies in their adaptability and agility. These platforms have skillfully harnessed the power of technology to create seamless and personalized shopping experiences for consumers. Through robust algorithms and machine learning, they analyze vast amounts of data to offer tailored product recommendations and ensure a high level of customer satisfaction. Their user-friendly interfaces and intuitive designs have made online shopping more accessible and enjoyable for millions of users worldwide.

Moreover, the Chinese e-commerce platforms have achieved remarkable operational efficiency, allowing them to offer competitive prices and fast

delivery. The integration of cutting-edge logistics and supply chain management systems has streamlined their operations, enabling them to reach customers across the globe promptly. By leveraging their vast network of fulfillment centers and employing advanced inventory management techniques, Temu and Shein have set new standards for timely deliveries, often outpacing their American counterparts.

Another key factor in the success of these Chinese e-commerce giants is their deep understanding of the power of social media and influencer marketing. They have effectively utilized social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to build strong brand identities and engage with their target audience.

By collaborating with influencers and leveraging user-generated content, Temu and Shein have created a vibrant and interactive community, fostering brand loyalty and driving their exponential growth. Furthermore, Chinese e-commerce platforms have been quick to recognize and cater to the changing preferences of consumers. By consistently introducing new fashion trends and providing an extensive range of products at affordable prices, Temu and Shein have become go-to destinations for fashion-conscious

shoppers worldwide. Their ability to quickly adapt to evolving fashion trends and leverage data-driven insights has given them a competitive edge, enabling them to surpass their American counterparts in terms of variety and trendiness.

While American e-commerce platforms continue to hold significant market share, the rise of Chinese e-commerce cannot be ignored. The agility, technological prowess, and customer-centric approach of platforms like Temu and Shein have propelled them to the forefront of the global e-commerce stage. As they continue to innovate and refine their strategies, these Chinese giants are likely to pose an even greater challenge to their American rivals. In conclusion, the growth of Chinese e-commerce platforms, such as Temu and Shein, has been nothing short of extraordinary. Through their commitment to technological innovation, operational efficiency, social media engagement, and customer satisfaction, they have redefined the e-commerce landscape. As consumers increasingly embrace the convenience and affordability offered by these platforms, it is evident that the days of American e-commerce dominance are being challenged by the unstoppable rise of their Chinese counterparts.

# What future for journalism in the age of AI?

THE article you are about to read was written by a human. This kind of disclaimer will become an everyday occurrence as chatbots, or large language models, infiltrate deeper into our media space. Doubts about the veracity of such disclaimers will also become commonplace. With the leaps and bounds registered by machine learning and large language models over the past couple of years, it is becoming increasingly difficult to prove that a human is on the other side of a written or spoken communication.

How would I prove to you that these words were the product of human creativity and exertion? Perhaps through the originality of an idea or the novelty of a turn of phrase? Maybe by cracking a joke or employing irony? How about by expressing humane empathy as only a human could supposedly do? Just how fast AI is progressing and how deeply it is infiltrating the media was put on stark display recently when Germany's largest tabloid, Bild, announced that it was laying off a third of its staff and migrating their functions to machines. This follows BuzzFeed's decision in January to use AI to generate quizzes and its quiet experimentation with AI-generated content ever since, especially SEO-primed travel guides. "The functions of editor-in-chief, layout artist, proofreader, publisher and photo editor will no longer exist in the future as we know them today," Bild's editor-in-chief said in an email to staff.

"Artificial intelligence has the potential to make independent journalism better than it ever was - or simply replace it," Mathias Doepfner, the CEO of Axel Springer, the owner of Bild, claimed in an internal letter when the idea was first floated in the spring. This raises the pertinent question of what effect AI will have on the profession I love and how it will shape the future of journalism and the media. First, it is important to acknowledge that artificial intelligence has been causing tectonic shifts in the media landscape for quite some years already. This has occurred both directly and indirectly. One direct and largely positive way in which AI has affected the media is the emergence of Big Data journalism, which covers everything from crunching through the data in big leaks like the Panama Papers to examining the consequences of the climate crisis. Without powerful algorithms, journalists would have likely not been able to successfully comb through and decipher the mountains of data at their disposal to identify the telling statistical patterns and use these to tell compelling and useful stories. Media organisations also use AI for many back-office tasks, such as recommending content, transcribing interviews, subtitling videos, analysing audience interests, preferences and engagement, not to mention finding ways to boost their all-important SEO ranking. This last example hints at a wildly important way in which AI has indirectly influenced the media landscape: the role of search engines and social media channels as gatekeepers and curators of content, and the algorithms they employ to that end, which exercise a profound influence over the flow of revenue - or lack thereof - to media outlets. But now, with the release of sophisticated large language models, we are on the cusp of AI moving out of the peripheries and penetrating the very heart and

soul of journalism: content creation. Just as sophisticated language communication is central to our identity as humans, writing or speaking or storytelling is possibly the defining feature of being a journalist for many of us who took up the gauntlet. I know it was my profound fascination with human stories that drew me to the profession almost a quarter of a century ago, and that keeps me clinging to it, despite having switched careers. For a journalist, few things can beat the joy, nor match the frustration, of crafting a coherent and compelling story or narrative out of a raw jumble of ideas, words and

***Many of these are likely to be unceremoniously given their marching orders and those that are not may stay on under more precarious conditions and at lower pay. Many may be forced to join the bloating ranks of the gig economy in the media, where they will have to increasingly work like machines in order to compete with the machines. If you think this sounds overly pessimistic, this trend has been in full swing since the digitalisation of the media. Although American newspapers employed close to half a million people (458,000) in 1990, by 2016, this figure stood at 183,000, according to the US Bureau of Statistics - a decline of more than 60 percent.***

information. This may explain why, even though I've experimented with querying chatbots, I have not yet fallen to the temptation of using ChatGPT or other large language models to draft or edit text: it gives me too much professional satisfaction and personal pleasure to do it myself. I also don't fully trust these tools to be able to do the job properly. Using a bot would be tantamount to a chef offering guests a microwave meal, a bespoke tailor selling off-the-rack suits or a cabinet maker assembling IKEA furniture.

Writing an article, like producing a video or radio report, may be an arduous and labour-intensive process, but it is also a highly rewarding one which, when done well, pays huge dividends both for the journalist and the audience. Many expect that the advent of machine learning will not dent interest in and demand for high-quality, human-generated journalism. "I'm not sure how any conscientious journalist or writer worth reading would be adversely affected," says columnist and essayist Tracy Quan, who wrote about some of the early experiments with AI in the 1990s. Of course, demand for quality, well-produced content will remain, though how many people will be willing to pay premium rates to access it is open to question. And even though journalists will certainly wish to continue to create content, their bosses may not agree, citing the need to cut costs or to "remain competitive". Although there is little doubt that humans will remain at the heart of the process, how many and what role they will play is the real question. While the arrival of AI in the newsroom is being hyped poetically as a tool for liberating journalists from drudgery so they can focus on the important aspects of their job, the reality is far more prosaic. Just as the rollout of digital technology and the internet did away with

untold jobs in the media, the advent of AI may cull many of those that remain. The day may not be far off when the buzz of newsrooms is a thing of the distant past and they become - almost - worker-less factories.

For routine content, machines will churn out at superhuman speed endless copy which will, hopefully, be thoroughly checked and edited by a handful of human editors. Providing the eyes, ears and legs the machines lack, reporters will rove the outside world conducting investigations and interviews. The raw material they collect will then either be par-

don't know, they often simply invent facts.

To test ChatGPT's accuracy, I asked it to write about a subject I knew intimately: I requested that it write a short biography of me. "Use only verifiable sources. Cite the sources you use," I insisted. This injunction notwithstanding, ChatGPT's flattering biography of me was riddled with errors, ranging from where I was born and studied to where I had worked. More bafflingly still, even though the sources it cited sounded like they could be authentic, none of them existed in the real world. Until these fatal kinks are ironed out, this inaccuracy alone makes the use in journalism of large language models risky and irresponsible, especially as properly fact-checking texts could potentially take as long as researching them in the first place. In addition, using AI both to generate and curate highly personalised content could have the unintended consequence of narrowing people's worldviews. "If news consumption becomes highly personalised and driven by algorithms, there is a risk of narrowing the diversity of perspectives and limiting exposure to contrasting viewpoints, potentially leading to echo chambers," ChatGPT gave as one potential risk. Moreover, growing overly reliant on these AI systems could lead to a situation in which we would not know when it was misleading us or leading us astray. AI could perpetuate biases or even create new ones, and unless we question and analyse everything it does, this could happen without us even being aware of it. Then, there is the power AI grants bad-faith actors. The propaganda and misinformation potential of AI, for everyone from extremists and radicals to authoritarian governments and vested political interests, is terrifying. In fact, the power of deepfake technology has become such that it can undermine and even upend the concept of a common reality. "I'm concerned that with audio and video deepfaking, 'smoking gun' moments in documentary film, TV and radio will lose their effect," admits Adam Grannick, a freelance filmmaker and documentary producer. "That's the best-case scenario. [The] worst case is that video and audio will cease to be used for reliable journalism and documentary, period."

Naturally, it is not all gloom and doom. Like other digital technologies before it, AI will bring along a democratisation of sorts, alongside the greater inequalities it is likely to engender. By lowering the cost barriers, it can empower individuals and small outfits to channel their limited resources towards work that really matters and produce truly remarkable output. For media organisations who see it as a complement rather than a replacement for humans, it can revive the waning areas of investigative and documentary journalism. If staff levels are kept the same or made higher, then AI can truly serve to alleviate human journalists of some of the drudgery of their work, liberating them to go out into the world and report on it in-depth and humanely. But for us to get the most out of AI, in the media and in other domains, the process cannot be guided solely by profit-driven tech companies and dominated by a few billionaires. Every ethical, social and environmental aspect must be considered first and, in the true spirit of democracy, decisions about the future role of artificial intelligence in society need to involve us all because it affects us all.

Khaled Diab





# Mobilink Bank collaborates with TIIES and PAFLA to fuel entrepreneurial success

## E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank signed two separate Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the International Institute of Entrepreneurship (TIIES) and Pakistan Freelancers' Association (PAFLA) respectively. These collaborative partnerships aim to bolster financial literacy, inclusivity, and entrepreneurship.

Under the collaboration, Mobilink Bank, TIIES and PAFLA will organize events and workshops, provide support to freelancers, offer academic assistance and establish incubation centers across Pakistan.

Through this strategic alliance and shared commitment, Mobilink Bank, TIIES and PAFLA strive to empower entrepreneurs and drive economic growth. The parties will also collaboratively conduct roadshows and executive events all across Pakistan.

The MoU was signed by Ghazanfar Azzam, President and CEO of Mobilink Bank, Dua Sukhera, Founder & CEO of TIIES, and Ibrahim Amin, Founder & Chairman of Pakistan Freelancers Association (PAFLA), in the presence of senior officials from respective organizations at Mobilink Bank's Headquarters in Islamabad.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries. As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives, creating opportunities for greater digital inclusion, and driving economic growth across countries that are home to more than 8% of the world's population.

Mobilink Bank will build incubation centers to assist micro and small entrepreneurs in developing their businesses and

solving problems that may arise in the process. Further, the Bank will open Freelancer Accounts for existing and new members of PAFLA and TIIES, besides providing them mentorship, training, learning opportunities and co-working spaces across different cities.

One key aspect of this partnership revolves around highlighting the benefits of Mobilink Bank's DOST App and its associated services.

These educational events will play a crucial role in creating awareness and understanding of the app's features. By educating the public on the app's functionalities, Mobilink Bank is committed to encouraging its adoption and enabling a greater number of individuals to access its inclusive digital and financial services.

Sharing his thoughts on the occasion, Ghazanfar Azzam, President and CEO

of Mobilink Bank said, "These collaborations are a testament to our shared mission of empowering young entrepreneurs and igniting innovation.

These strategic partnerships harness the Bank's financial expertise alongside entrepreneurship programs from TIIES and PAFLA, creating an ecosystem that fosters and accelerates the growth of young entrepreneurs. By synergizing our strengths, we are confident in our ability to create a positive impact. Together, we are dedicated to cultivating a collaborative environment that nurtures creativity, fosters innovation, and drives economic prosperity."

Mobilink Bank remains committed to driving the entrepreneurial landscape forward with its ongoing pursuit of innovative initiatives, ensuring a thriving environment for emerging business owners and fostering their growth.



KARACHI: President and CEO Mobilink Bank Ghazanfar Azzam and Founder & Chairman of Pakistan Freelancers Association Ibrahim Amin signing an MoU.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): 3 ships namely, Maersk Pelepas, Gaschem Warnow and Gas Zeus, carrying Container, Chemicals and LPG berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, CMA CGM Ivanhoe, IVS Okudogo and San Antonio also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of 09 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, Maersk Kinloss, Maersk Pelepas, MSC Greenwich, Gaschem Warnow and Milaha Pelepas sailed out to sea on Thursday morning, while another ship, 'Bum Shin' is expected to sail on same day.

Cargo throughput of 125,596 tonnes, comprising 61,846 tones imports Cargo and 63,750 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 4,527 Containers (777 TEUs Imports and 3,750 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are seven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, CMA CGM Ivanhoe, JBU Opal, and IVS Okudogo carrying Container, Palm oil, and Coal are expected to take berths at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, and Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday.

# Pak Stock Exchange gains 303.20 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday gained 303.20 points, a positive change of 0.67 percent, closing at 45,398.31 points against 45,095.11 points the previous trading day.

A total of 464,226,100 shares were traded during the day as compared to 245,453,654 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs10.104 billion against Rs9.402 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 344 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 227 of them recorded gains and 90 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 185,190,828 shares at Rs1.43 per share; Bank of Punjab with 19,500,000 shares at Rs4.20 per share and K-Electric with 15,889,256 shares at Rs2.01 per share.

Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum increase of Rs61.00 per share price, closing at Rs1295.00,

whereas the runner-up was Al-Abbas Sugar with an Rs29.00 rise in its per share price to Rs150.00.

Colgate Palm witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs112.38 per share closing at Rs1386.05, followed by Rafhan Maize with Rs100.00 decline to close at Rs8400.00.

**Rupee sheds Rs1.34 against US Dollar**

Pakistani Rupee on Thursday witnessed Rs1.34 devaluation against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs285.14 against the previous day's closing of Rs283.80.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs290 and Rs293 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by R1.11 to close at Rs319.66 against the last day's closing of Rs318.55, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paisa to close at Rs2.04, whereas an increase of 79 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound,

which traded at Rs368.41 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs367.62.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 37 paisa each to close at Rs77.63 and Rs76.01 respectively.

**Gold rates decrease Rs5,300 to Rs221,100 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs5,300 and was sold at Rs221,100 on Thursday against its sale at Rs226,400 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs4,544 to Rs189,558 from Rs194,102 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs173,761 from Rs177,926, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver and 10-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs2900 and Rs2485.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$05 to \$1,978 from \$1,973, the Association reported.

# SECP registers 27,746 companies in FY2023

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 27,746 new companies in the FY 2022-23 with an increase of around 5 percent as compared to the previous fiscal year taking the total number of registered companies to 196,805.

Due to end to end digitization of the company incorporation process, about 99.8 percent companies were registered online while 1,256 foreign users were registered from overseas. Total capitalization (paid-up-capital) with regard to newly incorporated companies for the FY 2022-23 stood at PKR 36.6 billion.

Real estate development & construction sector led the number of new incorporations with 4,527 new companies registered, fol-

lowed by information technology with 4,038 new companies and trading with 3,539 new companies.

SECP data shows services sector with 2,928 new incorporations, food & beverages with 1,106, tourism with 1,101, education with 1,048, e-commerce with 910, corporate agricultural farming with 732, marketing & advertisement with 672, textile with 634, engineering with 591, pharmaceutical with 468, mining & quarrying with 462, healthcare with 451, power generation with 447, transport with 423, chemical with 402, cosmetics & toiletries with 274, fuel & energy with 272, auto & allied with 271, communications with 268, lodging with 266, broadcasting & telecasting with 208, paper & board, and cables & electrical goods with 192 each, and 1,324 companies were registered in other sectors.

SECP has made significant reforms to facilitate the registration of companies by fully digitizing the registration process, along with company registration certificate. With this automation, companies can now be registered online from any part of the world, without needing to visit SECP offices.

SECP's e-services have also been integrated with Provincial Revenue Departments to facilitate registration of companies with Provincial Revenue Departments at the time of incorporation. Company tax number is also issued

online.

As a result of integration of SECP with FBR and various provincial departments, 26,125 companies were registered with FBR for registration of NTN, 819 companies with EOBI, 317 companies with PESSI/SESSI and 569 companies with excise and taxation department.

Moreover, an online portal has also been created for banks to facilitate companies in opening corporate accounts after registration. The SECP has also a dedicated WhatsApp facility for instant resolution of the queries pertaining to name availability and incorporation process. During FY2023, around 14,973 queries were responded with 96% satisfaction rate.

During fiscal year 2023, nearly 58 percent companies were registered as private limited companies, while 39 percent were registered as single member companies. Three percent were registered as public unlisted companies, not for profit associations, Trade Organizations, foreign companies and limited liability partnership (LLP).

Foreign investment has been reported in 841 new companies. Major chunk of investment was received from China with 448 companies, the US with 46, the UK with 36, Afghanistan with 35, Germany with 32, Turkey and South Korea with 16 each, UAE with 15, Singapore with 11, Nigeria with 10, and 176 companies from other countries.

# Telenor Pakistan hosts GSMA's workshop addressing mobile gender gap and driving digital inclusion

## E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan, in partnership with the GSMA, organised a capacity-building workshop at its headquarters in Islamabad as part of GSMA's 'Connected Women' initiative. The event was significant in the Connected Women strategy, with a focus on exploring ways to bridge the mobile gender gap and promote digital inclusion.

The workshop revealed key findings from GSMA's recently released 'Mobile Gender Gap Report' followed by a discussion on how different stakeholders can be engaged to bridge this digital divide in the country. Considering various socioeconomic factors, concerns surrounding the narrowing gender gap in mobile ownership and usage between 2023 and 2030 could represent a remarkable four billion USD opportunity for Pakistan's mobile industry. The study also revealed that women are 7% less likely to own a mobile phone than men, and, specifically in Pakistan, women are 38% less likely to use mobile internet. These statistics underscore the need to address the barriers to digital inclusion and technological adoption for women.

The event began by presenting crucial insights

from GSMA's recently released 'Mobile Gender Gap Report,' stimulating a constructive dialogue about engaging various stakeholders to address the digital divide in our country. The discussion highlighted socioeconomic factors impacting the narrowing gender gap in mobile ownership and mobile internet usage, particularly in lower and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs). It underscored the urgency of including women in the digital economy.

During the event, Irfan Wahab Khan, CEO of Telenor Pakistan, reaffirmed the company's social contract and commitment to empowering women and said, "By enabling women's active participation in economic activities through essential tools like mobile phones and internet connec-

tivity, we are not only fostering an inclusive and sustainable financial ecosystem but also unlocking significant economic growth for Pakistan. The GSMA's report findings are a stark reminder of the pressing need to tackle gender inequalities - 31% of women in Pakistan who use mobile internet do not own a mobile phone or possess only a basic device compared to a mere 7% of men, underscores the urgent need to address gender inequalities in affordability, literacy, digital skills, social perceptions, and safety concerns. Through such initiatives and discussions, we aim to drive meaningful change and create a future where every woman can thrive in the digital economy."

The findings from GSMA's Mobile Gender Gap 2023 study make it

evident that without substantial collective efforts, the gender gap would persist and potentially widen, perpetuating existing inequalities. The workshop highlighted the importance of collaboration between multiple stakeholders, including mobile network operators (MNOs), internet companies, policymakers, regulators, and the development community, to join hands in addressing this challenge.

The workshop served as a powerful platform for motivation, driving the cause of empowering women by bridging the mobile gender gap and promoting digital inclusion. It also reinforced Telenor Pakistan's commitment to creating a more equitable and connected society where women are at the forefront of digital transformation.



KARACHI: Health Secretary Ali Jan Khan presided over 24th Procurement Committee Meeting of PHIMC convened at Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department reviewing annual procurement plan. CEO PHIMC Dr. Ali Razzaque provided a comprehensive briefing on annual procurement plan.

# Taliban urged to fulfill commitment for regional peace

ISLAMABAD (APP):The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Thursday urged the Afghan Taliban to fulfill their commitment made in Doha, with the goal of promoting peace in the region, specifically

cally between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and preventing the use of Afghan soil against Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of traders led by Mian Faiz Bukhsh Arain, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Ifitikhar Ali Malik said that

the Doha agreement, signed between the United States and the Taliban in February 2020, outlined various commitments from both sides, said a news release issued here. One key aspect of the agreement was the Taliban's assurance that they would not allow Afghan territory to be used by any group or individual to threaten the security of other countries, including Pakistan, he added.

By urging the Taliban to honor this commitment, octogenarian trade leader of

South Asia is emphasizing the significance of stability and cooperation between Muslim nations.

By preventing Afghan soil from being utilized for activities that could harm Pakistan, he believes that both countries can work towards maintaining peace in the region.

He said promoting peace and stability in the region is crucial for fostering economic growth, facilitating trade, and enhancing the overall well-being of the people in both Afghanistan

and Pakistan. It is in the best interests of both nations to ensure that their territories are not used as safe havens for extremist groups or as launchpads for cross-border attacks, he asserted.

By reminding the Afghan Taliban of their commitment, Ifitikhar Ali Malik emphasised to play a constructive role in maintaining peace and security in the region.

However, the ultimate responsibility lies with the Afghan Taliban to follow through on their commit-

ments and work towards creating an environment of peace and cooperation with their neighbors, including Pakistan. He said Pakistan has raised the issue of cross border terrorism with the Afghan authorities on a number of occasions, but nothing concrete has materialized.

He said under prevailing simmering tension now it's high time for the top leadership of The Afghan Taliban take immediate stringent steps to prevent TTP from launching attacks and dismantle their bases.

# ICCI for focusing on halal industry to boost export

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan has huge potential to enhance exports of halal products.

He urged the government to cooperate with the private sector in capitalizing on this untapped potential to boost exports and strengthen the economy.

He said that the size of the global halal market is around USD\$ trillion, but Pakistan's share in it is negligible.

He urged the government to formulate conducive policies for the halal industry to take exports of this sector up to USD 5-6 billion in a few years.

He said this while addressing a multi-sectoral stakeholders policy dialogue on "Inspiring Change by Export Oriented Halal Trade & Industry" organized by Global Halal Services (Pvt.) Limited.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that strict compliance with

halal standards, quality certifications and government support can help to make a significant increase in the export of halal products.

He said that Halal meat is one of the fastest-growing markets globally, contributing 16 per cent to world trade and Pakistan being a Muslim country should take full advantage of it.

He stressed that China, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and Central Asian

States should be targeted instead of relying on only Arab countries for halal meat exports.

He urged the government to mobilise all institutions working for the promotion of halal food exports to realize the full export potential of this industry.

He urged the government to designate special Halal meat zones and provide them a 10 years tax holiday to attract new investment in this sector.

ICCI President said that Pakistan has the potential to play a significant role in the global halal meat industry and become a market leader since it has all the required ingredients.

He said that there is a massive economic potential for Pakistan to capitalize on its status as a Muslim country and build greater credibility to market its halal products around the globe.

He said that besides beef, Pakistan should also

tap avenues in seafood, ostrich, mutton and poultry farming to enhance its export turnover.

It will not only diversify our economic outreach but also add to the country's overall food security.

Faad Waheed Senior Vice President ICCI and other speakers also highlighted the export potential of halal industry and urged the government to cooperate with the private sector to boost exports of this sector.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 63. Institution 4/3/2023. Date of hearing 6/9/2023. Hidayatullah VS Aziz Husain etc. Notice to No. 1. Aziz Husain. 2. Azizullah. 5. Sakhed Husain. 6. Shamid Husain. 7. Riaz Husain sons of Kareem Husain residents of Elai 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 6/9/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 62/1. Institution 4/2/2023. Date of hearing 6/9/2023. Notice to No. 1. Aziz. 2. Aziz Hasan. 5. Shamed Husain. 6. Riaz Husain. 7. Sakhed Husain sons of Kareem Husain residents of Elai 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 6/9/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.





In brief

Wahab greets Pak cricket team

LAHORE (APP): Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz on Thursday congratulated Pakistan cricket team over winning the first Test match against hosts Sri Lanka by four wickets at Galle. In a greeting message here, he said the Pak cricket team exhibited wonderful teamwork and fighting spirit and chased down the target of 131 runs on the fourth day of first Test match of the series. Wahab Riaz said that the national cricket squad and team management deserved huge appreciation for their magnificent performance. He showered praise on young batter Saud Shakeel for scoring a magnificent double century (208 runs not out). He also appreciated the performance of batter Agha Salman (83 runs), Imamul Haq (50 runs) and bowlers Abrar Ahmed (six wickets) and pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi (five wickets) for their match-winning performances. Wahab Riaz also lauded the performance of Sri Lankan players Dhananjaya de Silva (122 and 82 runs) and bowler Prabath Jayasuriya, who claimed seven wickets in the match. He expressed the hope that the national cricket team will maintain its winning sequence in the second Test match against the same opponents.

Paul beats NCAA singles champ

ACAPULCO (INP): Top-seeded Tommy Paul registered six aces while cruising to a 6-4, 6-2 victory over wild card Ethan Quinn in the second round of the Infosys Hall of Fame Open at Newport, R.I. Paul won 85.2 percent (23 of 27) of his first-serve points while beating Quinn, the reigning NCAA singles champion out of Georgia. Paul will next face John Isner, who posted a 6-3, 6-4 victory over eighth-seeded Corentin Moutet of France. Second-seeded Adrian Mannarino of France recorded a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Australia's Rinky Hijikata, while French No. 3 seed Ugo Humbert beat Steve Johnson 6-4, 6-4. Also prevailing in the second round were No. 4 seed Mackenzie McDonald, No. 7 Jordan Thompson of Australia, Alex Michelsen and South African wild card Kevin Anderson. The latter just ended his retirement to resume his playing career. Serbian qualifier Hamad Medjedovic outplayed former World No. 3 Dominic Thiem and produced a 7-5, 2-6, 6-3 victory in the second round at Gstaad, Switzerland.

Amateur takes shock clubhouse lead

HOYLAKKE (AFP/APP): South African amateur Christo Lamprecht took a surprise clubhouse lead on the first morning of the 151st British Open at Hoylake on Thursday. Lamprecht, who won the Amateur Championship last month to secure his place at Royal Liverpool, carded a five-under-par round of 66 that included seven birdies. Despite the glorious blue skies on the Wirral coastline, some of the more stellar names in the field struggled to keep pace with the 22-year-old. World number one Scottie Scheffler has been a model of consistency on the PGA Tour this season but has so far missed out on adding to his one major win at the 2022 Masters. The American birdied two of his opening four holes, but dropped a shot at the eighth to make the turn at one under. Defending champion Cameron Smith was also one under after an eventful front nine that included three birdies and two bogeys.

# Pakistan beats Sri Lanka by 4-wickets in Galle Test

GALLE (Sri Lanka) (APP): Pakistan defeated host Sri Lanka by four wickets in Galle Test by taking 1-0 lead in the two Test series and securing their first victory in the World Test Championship 2023. Pakistan needed 83 more runs to win with their seven wickets left. The highlight of the match was the brilliant batting of the young batsman Saud Shakeel. The technique and patience of this young player made the fans in the field, as well as the experts, appreciated him. Saud Shakeel scored a wonderful double-century in the first innings and scored 208 runs. The young gun Saud remained not out and scored 30 runs in the second innings wherein Pakistan chased up a meager total. He was also declared as the Man of the Match.

He was given a beautiful trophy as well as a cash prize. It was the first double century by any Pakistani in Sri Lanka.

Earlier, no batsman from Pakistan had a double century, but Younis Khan scored 177 runs in 2014 and Mohammad Hafeez scored 196 runs in 2012. Galle has been a mixed bag for Pakistan and Sri Lanka in terms of results. Out of the 8 Test matches played here, Sri Lanka have won four Tests while this was Pakistan's fourth victory as well. Pakistan won the Test match by an innings and 163 runs in 2000, by ten wickets in 2015 and by four wickets last year.

On the fifth day of the match, Pakistan needed 83 more runs and they had seven wickets left. When the game ended on the fourth day, Pakistan scored 48 runs for the loss of three wickets with Imam-ul-Haq 25 and Babar Azam at the crease on six runs.

On the fifth day, both of them started the game and added 31 runs to the score, then Babar Azam became a victim of Jayasuriya by scoring 24 runs.

At that time, Pakistan's score was 79 runs and still needed 52 more runs. When Saud Shakeel came in to support Imamul Haq, both of them added 43 more runs to the score and when the total score was 122 runs, Saud Shakeel scored 30 runs and was caught out by the wicketkeeper on the ball of Mendes.

Meanwhile, Imamul Haq completed a wonderful half century, Sarfaraz Ahmed also scored just one run. He couldn't stay on for a long time and became the fourth victim of Jayasuriya by scoring only one run. When Salman Agha joined Imamul Haq, he on the very first ball hit a brilliant six, succeeded in giving Pakistan a victory by four wickets.

Imamul Haq 50 and Salman Agha six runs at the wicket. The innings of Imamul Haq, who remained not out, included four fours and a six. On behalf of Sri Lanka, Jayasuriya dismissed four players by giving 56 runs. Sri Lanka had scored 312



runs in the first innings and 279 runs in the second innings, while Pakistan scored 462 runs in the first innings and 133 runs in the second innings. During Sri Lanka's second innings, the Pakistani players fielded brilliantly and took several uncertain catches, which were applauded by the experts sitting on the field.

## Naila submits Broad Peak to become first Pak woman to climb country's all 8,000-meter peaks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Naila Kiani became a trail-blazer for Pakistani women in mountaineering on Thursday as she successfully submitted Broad Peak (8,047-meter), the 12th highest peak in the world. "Naila has successfully ascended Pakistan's fifth and final 8,000-meter peak at 2:03 AM today (Thursday)," Secretary Alpine Club of Pakistan

(ACP), Karrar Haidri said in a statement "She is also the first Pakistani woman to ascend Broad Peak, complete the climb of all five 8,000-meter peaks in Pakistan, and scale eight 8,000-meter peaks worldwide," he added. "The legendary Everest, the difficult K2, the commanding Lhotse, the perilous Annapurna, the elusive G1 and the G2, and the

majestic Nanga Parbat are just a few of the mountains she has climbed before. Numerous mountaineers and adventure fans all over the world are inspired by Naila's unwavering resolve, unmatched abilities, and unwavering attitude." "Naila serves as a bright example of how people can overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles," Haidri said.

## Biggest Women's World Cup kicks off

AUCKLAND (AFP/APP): The first Women's World Cup to feature 32 teams kicks off on Thursday with New Zealand taking on former winners Norway in the opening game in Auckland before co-hosts Australia face the Republic of Ireland in front of 80,000 fans in Sydney.

The month-long tournament has expanded from the 24-team event at the last edition in France four years ago and is being staged in two different countries for the first time, in nine cities across Australia and New

Zealand. While Australia's Matildas are hoping to go all the way to the final in Sydney on August 20, New Zealand's ambitions on home soil are more modest. The Football Ferns are hoping to win a World Cup match for the first time at the 16th attempt when they play Norway at Eden Park at 0700 GMT, following the tournament's opening ceremony. "Our goal is pretty clear. We want to win our first World Cup match. We want to make it out of our

group," captain Ali Riley told reporters on the eve of the Group A game. New Zealand, coached by Jitka Klimkova, are ranked 26th in the world and have won just once in their last 11 matches. Norway, meanwhile, won the World Cup in 1995 when current coach Hege Riise was the star player. They have come to New Zealand seeking to banish the memory of last year's Euro, when they lost 8-0 to hosts England on the way to a group-stage exit.

## Tour de France 2023 Kasper wins stage 18 as Jonas Vingegaard maintains lead

PARIS (BBC): Kasper Asgreen claimed his first Tour de France stage victory as he held on to win stage 18 from an epic breakaway. The Soudal Quick-Step rider, 28, was part of a four-man group which seemed destined to be caught during the closing stages in Bourg-en-Bresse. But the leaders managed to stay clear, with Dane Asgreen outpacing Pascal

Eenkhorn and Jonas Abrahamson. Compatriot Jonas Vingegaard maintained his comfortable overall lead with just three stages left. Stage 18 - as it happened Van Aert withdraws from Tour for birth of child Two-time winner Tadej Pogacar remains seven minutes and 35 seconds behind the defending champion,

with Britain's Adam Yates third. Jasper Philipsen was hoping for his fifth stage win of this year's Tour on the flat 184.9km route from Moutiers. And although the Alpecin-Deceuninck rider managed to pass Victor Campenaerts metres from the finish, the peloton had left it fractionally too late to reel in the rest of the break-away group.



## Bajaur senior cricket team defeats Khyber by 161 runs

PESHAWAR (APP): Bajaur senior cricket team Thursday defeated its opponent Khyber by a big margin of 161 runs in the pool B match of Regional Inter-District Senior (Fata Region) of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) played at Jamrud Sports Complex, District Khyber.

The 3 days match was played at Jamrud Sports Complex district Khyber wherein Bajaur senior posted 310 in its first innings. Muhammad Aizaz played brilliantly and made 92 runs while Zaid Ahmad and Siraj ud Din scored 63 and 37 respectively. Muhammad Shakeel of

Khyber team showed great performance in bowling and got 6 wickets. Khyber all team were bowled out for 216, Sami Ullah Jr scored half century and made 57. Muhammad Irfan and Hayatullah of Bajaur team bowled very well and got 5 and 4 wickets respectively. In the second innings of the match Bajaur all team made 270 runs including a very great innings of 148 not out by Sami Ullah. Bajour posted a 367 runs target to win the match to Khyber. Chasing the target Khyber senior all team out for 213 and Bajaur won by 161 runs and made

history to defeat Khyber team for the first time in cricket history. Muhammad Irfan performed very well in the first innings and also repeated his magical bowling and got 6 wickets in the second innings. Bajour captain Sami Ullah said that credit goes to all the players as every player contributed in winning the historical match. He also eulogized coach of the team Riaz Kail for his valuable coaching tips to the players. He further said that under Riaz Kail coaching Bajaur team won back to back big tournaments organized under the auspices of PCB.

### Hungarian Grand Prix

Daniel says he has 'fallen in love' with F1 again

LONDON (BBC): Daniel Ricciardo says he has "fallen in love" with Formula 1 again as he prepares to return to the grid at this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix.

The Australian, 34, replaces Nyck de Vries at Red Bull's Alpha Tauri team after the Dutchman was fired last week. Ricciardo, dropped by McLaren last year, said he was refreshed after seven months out and is "hungry and ready to go - pretty pumped". He added: "I feel like I've been myself again."

Ricciardo's McLaren contract was severed a year early last season after two years of struggling to get on terms with team-mate Lando Norris.

He has been Red Bull's reserve driver since the start of the year and earned his place back at the team where he drove his first full season in 2012 with a test at Silverstone last week in which he impressed.

"I just got in it and I drove," Ricciardo said. "I didn't really think about anything. I just drove and had fun. The times were good and I was competitive. "There's going to be a lot to learn but I'm not going to solve everything this weekend so it's really just about focusing on using things I do well.

"Everything I felt driving the car last week is how I want to go racing again. I just want to be in the moment, enjoying it, not thinking too far ahead."

Ricciardo confirmed team principal Christian Horner's claim earlier this week that he was targeting a return to Red Bull in the future. He left the team at the end of 2018 feeling they had become too preoccupied with Max Verstappen and went first to Renault and then to McLaren. Although Alpha Tauri are struggling towards the back of the grid this year, he sees a return as a springboard to greater things. "I knew everything that happened the last few years, and taking some time off, it would be very hard to go back in at the top," Ricciardo said.

"Of course that was my wish but I think also you need to be realistic at some point and say: 'OK, if I want to get back to, say, a Red Bull seat, then it's going to take a bit of a process and a path'.

## Fast bowler returns as New Zealand name T20I squads for UAE, England

DUBAI (INP): New Zealand have named strong T20I squads for the tours of UAE and England next month with a couple of maiden call-ups.

Pace bowling star Kyle Jamieson returns to the New Zealand side after a difficult year where he underwent surgery after a stress-fracture which was discovered in his back ahead of the home Test series against England.

There were also a couple of newbies in the mix with all-rounder Dean Foxcroft and 20-year-old leg-spinner Adi Ashok earning maiden call-ups.

The 25-year-old Foxcroft was born in South Africa and recently qualified to play for New Zealand. He was New Zealand Cricket's Domestic Player of the Year earlier this year for a stellar showing in the Super

Smash, where he topped the run charts.

The tour party for UAE, which will be captained by Tim Southee, will have a few changes as they go to England with Finn Allen, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Glenn Phillips, Adam Milne, Daryl Mitchell and Ish Sodhi joining after their stint in The Hundred.

Ashok, Foxcroft, Chad Bowes, Dane Cleaver, Cole McConchie, Henry Shipley and Will Young will be replaced by the incoming players, but the seven players will also travel to England for two warm-up T20 games ahead of the main series.

"Dean's been a really consistent performer domestically and that was acknowledged by the awards he picked up in March," New Zealand men's coach Gary Stead

acknowledged.

"He's a talented and adaptable batter who also bowls useful off-spin - so will add to our spinning stocks which is always valued in white-ball cricket. In Sodhi's absence in UAE, Ashok is expected to play a vital role.

"Adi's only in his second year of professional cricket, but we've been impressed with his consistency and attitude with the Aces and when he's joined New Zealand A and the winter camps," Stead said. "With Ish Sodhi not on the UAE tour it's an opportunity to develop our next leg-spinner." Jamieson's return is great news for the Blackcaps ahead of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in India later this year. The tall seamer last played for the Kiwis in June 2022 while his last T20I dates back to March 2021.

## Cristiano Ronaldo leads revolution in Asian football



RIYADH (BBC): English Premier League teams may be struggling to come to terms with Saudi Arabian clubs moving for some of their biggest names but fans in Riyadh, Jeddah and many other big cities of the Middle East and Asia are also having to adjust to football's new reality.

Since Cristiano Ronaldo signed for Al-Nassr - one of the 'Big Four' clubs along with bitter Riyadh rivals Al-Hilal and Jeddah giants Al-Ittihad and Al-Ahli - in December, the country has been in the international

football spotlight and the club's yellow shirt is an increasingly familiar sight in Europe and beyond.

"Watching 'The Yellow' spreading across the world is so satisfying and pleasing to me but I also feel loyal to the local league," Nassr fan Jana Mohammed tells BBC Sport. "Seeing player after player agreeing to sign with any Saudi team makes me more excited. It's really thrilling to witness such quality in our league."

Talents such as N'Golo Kante, Karim Benzema and Jota have joined champions

Ittihad to work with coach Nuno Espirito Santo.

Hilal, the 18-time title winners, made bids for Lionel Messi and Fulham's Aleksandar Mitrovic and have signed Kalidou Koulibaly, Ruben Neves and Sergej Milinkovic-Savic. Meanwhile, Roberto Firmino and Edouard Mendy left the Premier League to become Al-Ahli players, with Manchester City's Riyad Mahrez set to join them soon. Expectations are building before the new season starts in August.

"It is clear that the new football season will be a strong one with a lot of big football names that will undoubtedly be great additions," adds Al-Hilal fan Ayman Al-Hatami. "As for Al-Hilal, we are satisfied with our new signings as we aspire to be stronger and achieve a better position. As usual, we are the first candidate for every championship." Ronaldo has talked up the potential of the Saudi Pro League to become one of the top-five competitions in the world and, while that is debatable, there is little doubt that in terms of profile it is the biggest in the Middle East and Asia.

## Rohail Nazir to lead Pakistan Shaheens in Darwin series

PESHAWAR (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board Thursday appointed wicketkeeper-batter Rohail Nazir as the Pakistan Shaheens captain for the Top End T20 Series in Darwin, Australia, which is being organized by Northern Territory Cricket (NTC) from July 30-August 6.

"Apart from the NTC side, NT Strike, and Pakistan Shaheens, Australian Capital Territory's ACT Comets, Melbourne Stars, Melbourne Renegades, and Papua New Guinea (PNG) will participate in the six-team tournament in a T20 format with the top-two sides progressing to the final," says a PCB release issued here Thursday. At the backend of the T20 matches, Shaheens will also play two 50-over matches against PNG and NT Strike on August 8-9, respectively. The Darwin tour is part of the PCB's policy to create more opportunities for emerging cricketers to play away cricket in different conditions against different oppositions across

all formats so that they can hone their skills and also expand the pool of players. In this relation, Pakistan Shaheens recently toured Zimbabwe and are presently in Sri Lanka for the ACC Men's Emerging Teams Asia Cup. The squad will also take part in the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022 from Sept. 19-Oct 8.

Rohail Nazir has played 33 first-class matches and has previously captained Pakistan Shaheens. He recently toured Zimbabwe where the Shaheens' squad played two four-dayers and six 50-over matches in May. Aaliyan Mahmood made his first-class debut in the 2022-23 season, while Basit Ali and Shawaiz Irfan featured in the U19 series against Bangladesh in Multan in 2022. Faisal Akram and Mohammad Irfan Khan were on the roster of Karachi Kings for the HBL Pakistan Super League 2023, while Mohammad Imran was part of Karachi Kings in the HBL Pakistan Super League 2022. Right-arm fast Syed Zeeshan Zameer featured for

Islamabad United in the HBL Pakistan Super League 2023.

Moreover, the side also includes seven teenagers who were part of the Pakistan U19 squad that toured Bangladesh for a four-dayer, five 50-over and one T20 match series in May 2023. They are Amir Hassan, Ali Asfand, Arafat Minhas, Azan Awais, Sajjad Ali, Shamyul Hussain and Wahaj Riaz.

**Pakistan Shaheen's squad:** Rohail Nazir (captain), Aaliyan Mahmood, Ali Asfand, Amir Hassan, Arafat Minhas, Azan Awais, Basit Ali, Faisal Akram, Mohammad Imran, Sajjad Ali, Mohammad Irfan Khan, Shamyul Hussain, Shawaiz Irfan, Syed Zeeshan Zameer and Wahaj Riaz

Schedule of Pakistan Shaheens' matches: 30 Jul - vs NT Strike (T20) 31 Jul - vs ACT Comets (T20) 1 Aug - vs Melbourne Renegades (T20)





## In brief

### IRSA releases 431,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 431,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 556,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1520.47 feet and was 122.47 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 260,100 cusecs and 192,100 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1210.20 feet, which was 160.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 66,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 194,400, 182,800, 148,400, and 82,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 49,700 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 159,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a 2-day power suspension programme for Friday and Saturday 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 on Friday from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon. The areas affected include: Jhelum Circle, Fatehpur, Sarai Alamgir, Shukriya, Mandi Bhalwal, Military College, Shamsabad Feeders, On Saturday from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon Islamabad Circle, I-11/1, I-11/3, Metro, Comsat Chhata Bakhtawar, Park Enclave, Lahtar, Tirumuri, ISI, Rahara, PHA, Kuri Road, CM Pak Zong, Isolation Hospital Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Islamabad Feed Mill, Jhata Hatial, Bisali, Pind Jatla, Lab-I & II, Industrial, Reliance Weaving Mill, Bhal, Jarrar Comp, Mohra Nagyal, IST, New Rawat, Zaraj, Dhok Awan Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Azizabad, Nogzi, Bajnyal Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Basharat Feeder, Attock Circle, Taxila-I & II, Sher Shah Suri Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Langarpur, Cantt, CMH Jhelum, F3 Gul Afshan Jhelum, and surrounding areas.

### Police launch massive crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad police conducted an operation within the jurisdiction of the Phulgran police station and arrested 13 accused including five drug peddlers and recovered a huge quantity of drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession. Following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the crackdown on drug peddlers and liquor sellers aims to create a drug-free environment in the city and to safeguard the future of the young generation. During the operation, numerous suspicious vehicles and individuals were thoroughly inspected, leading to the identification of several key individuals involved in drug supply. During the search operation, police teams arrested 13 accused including five drug peddlers, and recovered a huge quantity of drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani addressing the national seminar on education jointly organized by Education Parliamentarians' Caucus (EPC) Senate of Pakistan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) at Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

## Minister inaugurates 400KW solar system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain inaugurated the 400-kilowatt solar system at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU).

He said that the university is among the few institutions of the Federal Ministry of Education which have completed the solarization work on time. He congratulated the Vice-Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood for achieving this milestone. The minister further said that the country is going through an energy crisis. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif encouraged solar energy projects in the country, especially in government institutions to meet this challenge.

Rana Tanveer said that

the solarization of AIOU will be an important source of green energy along with financial savings.

He added that the importance of distance learning has increased after Covid-19 and asked the university administration to strengthen its regional network further to provide educational opportunities to the people at their doorstep. It is pertinent to mention here that AIOU has 54 regional campuses across the country, striving for educational services.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that keeping in mind the shortage of energy resources in the country, AIOU has started solarization of all the regional campuses including the main campus under the energy saving policy of the Prime Minister Muhammad

Shahbaz Sharif.

He said that the solarization of a few buildings has been completed in the first phase, solarization of the entire university will be completed by the middle of next year. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that we had the guidance of Education Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain in every step we took for the improvement of AIOU, including solarization. He further said that Solarization was the only solution that would save energy and the surplus units would be deposited to WAPDA. He said that funds spent on this project will be recovered in the shape of energy-saving in the next three years. Deans, professors, faculty members, and principal officers of the university participated in the ceremony.

## 950 officials to be deployed to regulate traffic

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) have finalised all the arrangements for Muharram under a comprehensive traffic plan formulated to ensure the security of the mourning processions. According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan, there would be a complete ban on parking of any vehicle or pushcart on the route of the procession. As many as 950 traffic officials including DSPs, inspectors, traffic wardens and traffic assistants would perform duties on city roads to control the traffic flow during Muharram, he added. He said, traffic police officers and wardens had also been directed to take action against rules violators.

## Religious scholars commemorate Hazrat Umar's martyrdom day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ulema and Mashaykh from all corners of the country on Thursday gathered to observe the solemn day of the Martyrdom of Hazrat Umar Farooq (Radhi Allah Anho) with unwavering religious fervor.

The commemoration, which took place on the first day of Muharram, saw numerous religious gatherings organized across the country, including in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The purpose of these gatherings was to remember and reflect upon the life and sacrifice of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), the second caliph of Islam, and a revered figure in Islamic history.

Born in the year 584 CE in the city of Makkah, Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), also known as Umar ibn al-Khattab, embraced Islam during the early years of the prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Throughout his life, he played a significant role in the development and propagation of Islam. Following the passing of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA), he assumed the mantle of leadership as the second caliph and exhibited wisdom and fortitude in his responsibilities.

Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and the Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, shed light on the numerous achievements of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA). He stated that his martyrdom had a profound impact on the Muslim Ummah,

however, despite the grief of losing their beloved leader, the Muslims remained united and steadfast in their commitment to the principles of Islam, fostering a sense of community and solidarity among believers. He emphasized Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) as a symbol of justice and fairness, stating that his martyrdom reinforced the importance of upholding these values in the eyes of Islamic law.

During his caliphate, he said the Islamic Empire experienced significant territorial expansion, with his successors continuing his legacy by further spreading Islam to distant lands.

Furthermore, he said Hazrat Umar's (RA) caliphate played a crucial role in the codification of Islamic law and jurisprudence, with his rulings serving as the foundation for the development of the Shariah.

The late caliph's dedication to education was also highlighted by Ashrafi, noting that he established schools and institutions to promote learning and his martyrdom inspired a renewed commitment to knowledge and scholarship within the Muslim community. He said the principles and leadership style of Hazrat Umar (RA) continued to inspire future Muslim leaders, guiding them in their governance and decision-making. As the Muslim Ummah commemorates the martyrdom of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) on the first day of Muharram, he said his life and sacrifice remained a timeless source of strength and guidance for Muslims worldwide.

## CDA auctions 9 plots for 1.82b for 'Capital Street Islamabad'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Street Islamabad' Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Thursday auctioned nine commercial plots for 1.82 billion rupees for the state-of-the-art development project 'Capital

Nizami Street of Baku, said a press release. It added that the plots at Capital Street Islamabad were allocated only for restaurants, food and bistros. The auction will continue till July 21.

## NHMP striving to control accidents on motorways, highways

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

An official of NHMP told APP on Thursday that strict enforcement of the law under National Highways Safety Ordinance 2000 and imposition of fines under section 79 of NHSP, 2000 against violators especially those involved in careless driving, overspeeding, lane violation etc were among the steps taken to control accidents. He said that FIRs under section 279 and other relevant sections of Pakistan Penal Code were also lodged against the violators found in rash or negligent driving.

The official said that extensive use of day and night speed-checking cameras was being done to avoid accidents due to overspeeding. Moreover, he said that checking of tyres with treads and air pressure gauges was also being done at toll plazas to prevent tyre burst accidents.

He said that anti-doing points were established to avoid accidents due to dozing at the wheel.

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

The NHMP official said that seminars, walks/counselling, and

briefing sessions were also conducted for the drivers regarding mechanical fitness of the vehicles.

He said that briefings were given regarding road safety to the road users at toll plazas as well as through Mobile Education Unit.

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

Briefings were given and education imparted at different institutes/school/ colleges as the youngsters were the major users of bikes, he said adding special emphasis was given on enforcement against underage riding and overloading on motor bikes. The official said that strict action was being taken against motorcyclists for not wearing a helmet, dangerous riding, one-wheeling, triple riding, without a black/ side view mirror, one-way violation etc.

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

The road is also monitored by drone cameras, and hidden cameras had been installed in uniforms to check the performance of motorway police personnel so that those traveling on the motorway did not face any problems, he added.

He said entry for PSVs on Motorways without valid Driving License, fitness certificate registration book and en-route permits and in case of overloading of passengers or excessive luggage on roof

had been banned.

The official said as far as Kalar Kahar portion of Islamabad-Lahore Motorway was concerned, the NHMP had established a 10km sub beat in Salt Range to make sure of zero tolerance for any traffic violation. He said extra police force had been deployed along with more speed checking cameras and convoy strategy had been adopted for buses.

Road Safety awareness units were working in all over Pakistan to sensitize the public regarding their safety while driving on Motorways & Highways respectively, he added.

"These units are being directed by our Inspector General to educate every single walk of life and get to their doorsteps for awareness of Road safety so that we can make sure that our community is being sensitized to cope with any situation while traveling," he added.

He said that HTV's carrying hazardous materials were being checked very effectively and some SOPs for strict enforcement had been devised.

The NHMP official urged motorists to drive carefully and reduce their speed in case of rain. He said that more caution was required in driving during rain and it was advisable to avoid unnecessary travel during rain. He said that the speed of vehicles should be kept lower than normal conditions and the distance between the vehicles should be more than usual. He said it should be ensured that wipers are in good condition and compliance with traffic rules should also be ensured.

## Energy sector reforms need of hour: Azhar Kiyani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Energy Economy Bilal Azhar Kayani Thursday said that PML-N-led coalition government over the last year had launched several important development initiatives in diverse sectors including the energy sector for the well-being of the people and stressed comprehensive power reforms.

The government had given clear directions to all power distribution companies to ensure accurate billing and to avoid overcharging the consumers, he said while talking to a Private News channel.

The government had devised a plan and submitted recommendations for reforms in power distribution companies to control the Theft of energy, he added. "The government is focusing to bring reforms along with deregulation of the energy sector in a bid to put the country on a sustainable path leading towards economic sovereignty," he added.

He further mentioned that during the previous PML-N government, efforts were made for the production of cheap hydel electricity, which were long-term measures to generate affordable power

in the country but unfortunately, those projects were delayed by the last government. Replying to a query about the IMF agreement and new Taxes, he said, "There will be no further new taxes as that taxes were fixed in the budget while negotiations were under procedure between the government and IMF."

"The need of the hour is that Pakistan honors its commitments with the IMF," he said.

The credit goes to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as he took a personal interest in the finalization of the deal," he added.

## ANF seizes 25 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover 25 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that two accused resident of Buner and Mardan, who were going to Jeddah on flight no GF-771, were rounded up at Islamabad International Airport on recovery of 1200 grams Ice drug.

In another raid near Burhan Interchange Attock, 4.8 kg hashish concealed in secret cavities of a car was recovered.

An accused resident of Kohistan was arrested during the operation.

In two operations at Motorway Toll Plaza, Sheikhupura, a total of 18 kg of opium was recovered from two vehicles.

Two accused residents of Swabi and Lahore were also arrested.

He informed that in another operation at Multan International Airport, a Qatar-bound passenger, going on flight no QR-617 was arrested on recovery of 999 grams Ice drug concealed in the trolley bag of the accused resident of Gujarat.

Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigation was under process.

## HEC-RWN seminar stresses steps to promote socio-religious harmony

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and Resilient Women Network (RWN) jointly organised a seminar titled Social Cohesion and Inclusivity on promoting socio-religious harmony in educational institutions.

The seminar attended by eminent parliamentarians and academicians stressed the need for taking practical steps to encourage activities that promote family values, the ability to empathise and encourage tolerance in all spheres of life.

On the occasion, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and Member of National Assembly Dr. Nafisa Shah emphasised promoting diversity in society so as to spread the true teachings of Islam in the world.

They were of the view that through diversity and tolerance, the vision of, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah can be turned into a reality.

The roundtable participants reiterated that both parents and teachers must work together in the upbringing of students.

They emphasised the need to make the young generation aware of the gap being created by the rising trend of intolerance and non-acceptance of one another in society. The vice-chancellors assured HEC and RWN of full cooperation on behalf of their institutions in the promotion of inclusivity, harmony, tolerance, and cohesion on their campuses.

Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail and Chairperson RWN Asia Nasir also expressed their views.



RAWALPINDI: Heavy machinery being used at the site of a collapsed bridge near Lahore High Court (Rawalpindi Bench) at Swan in the outskirts of the city.



2 ISIS fighters surrendered

LAGHMAN (Agencies): Two ISIS fighters surrendered to police in Laghman province. These ISIS fighters surrendered with their weapons to Khalid Bin Waleed Corps in that province. The spokesman of the Khalid bin Walid army corps Mawlawi Wahidillah Mohammadi told BNA that the ISIS fighters surrendered to them to start a normal life. Meanwhile, the surrenders promised that they would support the Islamic Emirate and help in providing security.

40 armored tanks repaired

KABUL (Agencies): National Defense Ministry said that their technical teams have repaired 40 armored tanks. The armored tanks are ready for use in the 215 Azam Corps of Helmand. The technical team also working on repairing weapons and military equipment in addition to the repair of vehicles. The Ministry of National Defense is striving to pay serious attention to the repair of vehicles in addition to military equipment and weapons, according to the Ministry.

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

EU announces 7.6m in humanitarian aid for Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The European Union has announced 7.6 million to address the profoundly concerning levels of food insecurity affecting vulnerable communities through support to farmers and their needs, the improvement of food production, and the restoration of unirrigated land to six provinces of the country.

To address food insecurity among vulnerable communities, the EU financial contribution of 7.6 million will allow Afghanaid and its partners to provide a comprehensive support programme to secure the necessities of rural Afghans, provide income generation opportunities, and support communities to apply climate-smart agriculture techniques and restore agricultural land for

food production.

The project will implement in six provinces of the country, including Badakhshan, Dykund, Ghor, Jawzjan, Samangan and Takhar, a statement said.

Food insecurity is widespread in Afghanistan, and women, youth and households with disabled household members are particularly affected. 17.2 million Afghans experienced high levels of acute food insecurity in April 2023. The statement added that Afghanistan is also particularly vulnerable to climate change and ranks among the countries most affected by ecological threats, including droughts, floods, and increasing temperatures.

"We are committed to helping the people of Afghanistan, especially the most vulnerable people in

local communities, such as families headed by women that cannot meet their basic needs. We welcome this partnership with Afghanaid, a long-standing actor engaged in Afghanistan," Raffaella Iodice, EU Chargée d'Affaires, said.

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Afghanaid, Charles Davy, said, "At a time when so many Afghans do not have enough to eat, more must be done to enable vulnerable households to grow more food and strengthen and diversify their incomes."

He continued, "This is especially crucial for people with disabilities, disproportionately affected by the present crisis. Afghanaid is committed to making a real and sustainable change to the lives of the people it is supporting".

Kabul Expo attracts over 600 investors from region

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over 600 investors and businessmen from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkmenistan are participating in the 2nd Imam Abu Hanifa International Expo and Trade Fair being held in Kabul.

Arranged by the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries from July 16-22, the Expo is also being participated by a huge number of women traders and industrialists along with their products.

Being termed a positive step towards the revival of Afghan economy and its access to regional and international markets, the event is being participated by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and over 25 renowned Pakistani industrialists, which is the largest trade delegation in the event.

The Imam Abu Hanifa Expo is a mega event considering the history of Pakistan-Afghanistan trade relations.

The event would not only help promote the local products of Afghan businessmen but also enhance their linkages with the regional partners.

The Expo is part of the efforts of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce aimed at purely promoting bilateral trade relations, regardless of political interests.

The opportunity given to the Pakistani participants to market their products at the Expo would help promote bilateral joint businesses as well as commercial ties.

Pakistan is already the largest trading partner of Afghanistan and is providing all possible support to the positive initiatives of the interim Afghan government.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have common values that transcend borders and unite the people of both sides into brotherhood and love.

If the potential of Pak-Afghan natural cooperation is fully realized for the promotion of bilateral trade, the doors to prosperity will open for both countries.

In his address at the opening ceremony, Chief Executive of TDAP Muhammad Zubair Motiwala said that Pakistan was the largest trading partner of Afghanistan.

He emphasized that traders and businessmen on both sides should benefit from opportunities presented by the Expo. Pakistan always supports such bold steps which could generate a conducive environment for business communities of the region, he added.

Motiwala stated that Pakistan is also playing all possible facilitation for Afghanistan's smooth global trade through the transit facility provided by Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan has granted massive tariff concessions on all Afghan fruits and vegetables exports to Pakistan.

China donated aid distributed

KABUL (Xinhua/APP): Afghan authorities distributed China-donated humanitarian assistance to 420 families in western Afghanistan's Nimroz province on Wednesday, provincial director for refugees and repatriation affairs Abdullah Riaz said.

"The aid recipients include 100 families from returnees, 100 others from the killed and war-disabled families and the remaining 240 families belong to the internally displaced community," Riaz told Xinhua.

Each needy family received 50 kg of rice, the official added.

Authorities in the past had also distributed China-supplied assistance to needy families in Nimroz and Herat provinces.

China has provided humanitarian aid including vaccines, winter clothes, foodstuff and tents to Afghans over the past one more year to help war-torn Afghanistan overcome the challenges.

Afghans will never harm anyone, Muttuqi tells Pakistan's special envoy



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttuqi in a meeting with visiting Pakistan's special envoy in Kabul said that Afghans will never harm anyone and the Islamic Emirate will not allow Afghanistan's soil to be used against any other country.

According to a statement from Foreign Ministry, Muttuqi said that the Islamic Emirate always seeks security and stability

in the region.

He emphasized that with the establishment of security and stability in Afghanistan, good opportunities have been created that will improve the economies of the two countries, start major projects and increase trade.

According to the statement, Pakistan's special envoy, Asif Ali Durrani, congratulated the establishment of security and stability in Afghanistan after

decades of war and added that he seeks to strengthen and expand the relations between the two countries.

Durrani said that Afghanistan and Pakistan have made commendable progress in the trade sector. According to him, security in the region is in the interest of all parties and Afghanistan and Pakistan cooperate in this area.

The diplomat said that Pakistan is willing to create bilateral mechanisms in the

political and economic fields. He added that Pakistan will construct the remaining section of Torkham-Jalalabad road and it will facilitate the issuance of visas to Afghans, especially for patients.

During the meeting, Muttuqi called on Pakistan to solve the issues of Afghan prisoners in Pakistan and delay in the transfer of Afghan commercial goods.

UNHCR program providing trade skills for women, girls

KABUL (TOLOnews): UNHCR has provided 120 displaced women and girls who have returned to Herat with the opportunity to learn carpet weaving, embroidery, painting, making miniatures and bag production.

These women and girls have been included in the project "Making Afghanistan" and earn income by selling their handicrafts.

"Usually, in this project, we provide artists with access to the market and connect them with the market. We also train them based on market demand so that they can produce goods based on market demand," said Hassan Khan Ahmadzai, head of the "Making Afghanistan" project.

The women and girls who are part of the Build Afghanistan project said that they are the only breadwinners and heads of their families.

"This work is useful for us, we can help the family, stand up for ourselves, make a contribution," said Marzia Haidari, a student.

"We are a seven-member family, and I am the head of the family. This institution is good for us," said Hawa Hussini, a student.

After the Islamic Emirate banned women from working in NGOs, now women and girls work from their houses.

"My request to the government is not to close



down work for women and to open it. Women should go to work and carry out their work," said Sakina Merzaye, a student.

"We work in the handicraft carpet sector. The money I get from here is

good for my family and I am a good helper for my parents," said Latifa Ali Zada, a student.

These women and girls have been trained in carpet weaving, embroidery, painting, and making bags.

US would have invaded Afghanistan even without bin Laden: IEA



KABUL (Agencies): The United States would invade Afghanistan even if al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden left the country, Maulavi Abdul Kabir, deputy prime minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said.

"It was the zeal of our Amir-ul-Mominin that he didn't leave something that would taunt us, which would be handing over a Muslim to infidels. But we should understand that even if that Muslim voluntarily left the country, US and

NATO would certainly invade Afghanistan," Abdul Kabir said addressing a gathering of local elders.

He said that the IEA has made great achievements in the past two years and the economy is improving and that the IEA wants good relations with the international community.

"We don't want Afghanistan to be in confrontation with the world. Our policy is that Afghanistan remains peaceful, that we rebuild our country and strengthen

our political system," Abdul Kabir said.

"But we will never forego our Islamic and national values," he added.

The official said that the IEA has official representatives in 16 countries. He said that some major countries will soon expand relations with Afghanistan and export enough oil and gas to significantly reduce prices.

Kabir also said that a certain country which builds aircrafts and tanks has also offered to train Afghan technicians.

Minister meets traders living abroad in Kabul



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Mines and Petroleum Minister, Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar met with several Afghan businessmen living in Holland and Britain who have traveled to Kabul.

In the meeting, Afghanistan businessmen living in these two countries expressed their interest in economic development, job creation, and service to the country and wanted to establish a mineral processing and refining factory in the country, the Ministry said in a statement.

Minister, termed the role of traders and investors important in the economic development of the country,

adding that since the national security is maintained in the country, we welcome all national and international investors to invest in Afghanistan's mines.

He has vowed to cooperate for the establishment of a mineral processing and refining factory in the country.

Language and Literature Department at Balkh University and vowed to share all the suggestions of the Ministry of Higher Education with the relevant officials of his country.

Meanwhile, Turkey offers 300 scholarships for Afghan students annually and invited the Deputy Minister of Higher Education to visit Turkey.

Turkey offers scholarships for Afghan students

KABUL (Agencies): The education attache of the Turkish Embassy in Kabul has said that his country provides 300 scholarships to Afghan students annually.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Lofullah Khairkhan in a meeting with the educational attache of the Embassy of Turkey in Kabul, talked about improving the capac-

ity of educational institutions in the country.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education shared some suggestions for the educational attache of the Turkish Embassy in Kabul in various sectors.

Later, Chengiz I. Dimir, Educational Attaché of the Turkish Embassy, expressed his satisfaction with the establishment of the Turkish

First round of Kankor exam begins Thursday

KABUL (Agencies): The first round of kankor exams begins in 11 provinces on Thursday with the opening of the question box at the Logar Higher Education department.

The head of the National Board of Examinations Sheikh Abdul Baqi Haqqani said that they have provided many facilities to the participants in the 1402 entrance exam, which they should take advantage of to

determine their future.

The new and easy questions have been made in both national languages, this year, Haqqani added.

According to him, the Kankor exam time has been extended to 4 hours so that the youth can take the exam without any stress.

He assured the participants of complete transparency in the examination and requested the lecturers to pay full attention to pre-

vent any disorder or confusion occurs while checking the papers.

In the first round of the 1402 Konkur exam series, Logar, Paktia, Takhar, Baghlan, Jawzjan Sar-e-pul, Faryab, Ghor, Bamyān, Khost, and Daikandi provinces are included.

In this round, 24,437 graduates of the twelfth grade, including graduates of 14 schools and religious schools, participated.

Musical instruments collected torched



KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Vice and Virtue says it officials burned down musical instruments they had collected in Kabul and other provinces during the past few months.

The ministry wrote on its Twitter page that the instruments used to promote

music and 'immorality' were destroyed on Thursday.

"These instruments were collected from immorality programs in Kabul city and some provinces in the past few months,"

The ministry said the items misled the youth and

caused social deterioration and were destroyed according to Sharia.

The Ministry of Vice and Virtue did not provide more details about the musical instruments, but the pictures show drums, cassettes, harmoniums and other items were set afire.

Two men flogged in public in Laghman

LAGHMAN (Khaama Press): Taliban's Supreme Court said on Tuesday that two individuals were flogged publicly in the eastern province of Laghman, Afghanistan.

The two men received 30 lashes each after being accused of "having affairs" and being detained.

In addition, the individuals received a one-year prison sentence, which increased the severity of their penalty.

Earlier, six people allegedly accused of abducting women and raping, publicly flogged in a football stadium in Kandahar province. Taliban's Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada had previously ordered judges to implement "Sharia law and retribution" throughout Afghanistan.

The implementation of lashing was vehemently opposed both in Afghanistan and overseas, and some human rights organizations called it "hateful" and said it went against human values.

The Taliban group has its priorities regarding domestic issues in Afghanistan, despite the intense pressure from the international community to respect human rights, the rights of Afghan women and girls, and religious and ethnic minorities.

According to figures from the UN, the Taliban has publicly flogged close to 300 people since November 2022 on various allegations.



# UN remembers 77 cops, including seven Pakistanis

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies): The United Nations family came together to pay tribute to the 77 members of staff, including seven Pakistanis, who lost their lives serving under the U.N. flag in 2022. “We are here to mourn together, to remember together, and to pay our respects together,” Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said at the solemn ceremony, held in the iconic Trusteeship Council chamber at UN Headquarters in New York.

Relatives of the fallen personnel, members of the diplomatic community and UN staff from around the world attended the event, both in-person and online. Dr. Mariam Aamir, wife of martyred Major Faizan Ali, a Pakistani peacekeeper who lost his life in a helicopter crash in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), attended the solemn ceremony. Pakistan’s UN Ambassador Munir Akram and the Military Advisor to the Pakistan Mission in New York, Col. Umar Shafiq Chughtai, were also present.

At the start of the ceremony, the Secretary-General alongside UN General Assembly President Csaba Karasu and the Security Council President for July, Ambassador Barbara Woodward of the United Kingdom, lit a candle representing an eternal flame. The UN chief called for a minute of silence “for all our dear, dear colleagues that have given their lives for others to be able to live.” The names of the 77 military, police and civilian personnel who died serving the Organization last year were read out during the ceremony.

Guterres said these men and women, who came from 36 countries, were both colleagues and friends. Their service embodied the principle and the promise of the United Nations: The principle of our common humanity and the promise to act on it – to work together to solve shared challenges, and build a world of peace, prosperity and human rights for all, he said. The Secretary-General underscored how UN staff

breathe life into the noble vision each day, and frequently in difficult conditions, such as peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers. Yet whatever their role, and whatever the circumstance, all those we honour today dedicated themselves to others, he said.

Their courage saved lives, their commitment safeguarded those in need, and their expertise helped to build a better world – now and in the future. Guterres noted that in a divided and dangerous world, the vision and values that the UN flag represents are more important than ever.

He upheld commitment to continue the UN’s essential mission, in honour of those who gave their lives in service to the Organization. We pledge to keep supporting families. We commit to continually review and improve the safety, care and wellbeing of our staff. And we vow to keep the memories of our fallen colleagues alive: In our thoughts, in our hearts, and in our work to build a life of dignity and hope for all, he said.

## Witness records statement in Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A witness in the Toshakhana case against former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman on Thursday recorded his statement.

Earlier in the day, Additional District and Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar decided to record the testimonies of witnesses in the case. The Toshakhana case was declared maintainable against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, last week. After being directed by Judge Humayun Dilawar, the Election Commission of Pakistan, presented District Election Commissioner Waqas Malik as a witness in the case.

Waqas Malik in his statement before the court said according to the response of the PTI chairman, the gifts were sold that’s why the value was not registered on Form B in 2019. During the hearing, the PTI chairman failed to produce any receipt or the record of the buyer of the Toshakhana gifts, Malik said. He submitted fake documents before the ECP and lied, Malik alleged.

The election commission had last year in October disqualified the former prime minister in the Toshakhana reference under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution for making “false statements and incorrect declaration”. The former prime minister had challenged the trial court’s decision in the Islamabad High Court, which sent the case back to the trial court for re-examination within seven days. The court declared the case maintainable and rejected the plea for adjournment.

## Fawad apologises in ECP case

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry on Thursday apologised to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the contempt case.

In August 2022, the ECP issued notices to Chaudhry, and others for allegedly using “intemperate” language against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja and the electoral watchdog. ECP contempt case was heard against former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry by a four-member commission headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja. Chaudhry after being instructed by the Islamabad High Court, appeared before the ECP with his lawyer Faisal Chaudhry?

During the hearing, Fawad Chaudhry extended his apology to the ECP and pleaded to withdraw the show cause notice issued against him. The former PTI leader said whatever he said he convened the narrative of the party while being its spokesperson. “It was the party’s position which I described.” I respect the institutions including ECP, Chaudhry added.

Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja asked Chaudhry will he kill anyone on the orders of the party chief. Raja further said his party said a lot against him, his family and ECP in the public gatherings. The former federal minister was asked to submit an apology in writing to the ECP, the commission will review it. Later, the hearing was adjourned until August 1.

## Khadija Shah, Sanam’s remand extended

LAHORE (PPI): Extending the judicial remand of diehard PTI workers, including Khadija Shah and Sanam Javed, in the case of vandalism and burning of Jinnah House by 11 days, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Thursday ordered the police to produce them on July 31.

The court also ordered the investigation officer in the case to present the case’s challan on the next hearing. Earlier, the suspects were produced in the court on the completion of their judicial remand. ATC judge Abbar Gul Khan heard the case registered against them at Sarwar Road police station. On the other hand, an ATC extended the judicial remand of PTI stalwart Mehmoorud Rasheed in the case of violence on May 9 until August 3.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi administering oath of office to Captain (ret'd) Shahid Ashraf as Chairman Federal Public Service Commission.

# FIA taking action against PTI’s chief: Azam Nazeer

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday said that Chairman Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan has damaged national security by recklessly using the cipher. Chairman PTI has never returned the cipher to the relevant departments and now the FIA is handling the matter under the Official Secrets Act, he said.

Addressing a press conference, the law minister said that there was a lot of discussion on the issue of cipher, adding that several months ago the issue of cipher was came under discussion in the federal cabinet. According to old minutes, the then prime minister Imran Khan took custody of the cipher and waved it in front of the public in a rally, after which the cipher was not returned to the concerned department, he said.

He said that these are classified documents and it couldn’t be made public or shared with anyone as this information was about the relations of two countries, so they are sent in coded language and then is decoded and accessed by concerned authorities. Azam Nazeer said that these documents were used indiscriminately while compromising the national security, adding that this matter has been sent to FIA for inquiry as per law.

He said that the interior secretary had been given the authority who sent the matter to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for action. He said that the FIA has summoned the former prime minister who challenged the notice before the Lahore High Court instead of giving his stance. The LHC issued a stay order on this matter and FIA’s action was delayed for 6 months due to a stay, he said, however, adding that the injunction was lifted a few days ago on the request of the government.

He said that former principal secretary received the documents from the concerned department and handed them over to ex-prime minister. He said that Azam Khan told in his statement that for what purposes the then prime minister Imran Khan used these papers. It was waved in the rally and tried to build a narrative to avoid no confidence move, he said. He said that the then Law Minister used this card in the House and the then speaker of the National Assembly did not hold discussion on it. The opposition, brought the no-confidence motion, was given an opportunity to speak in the National Assembly, he said.

He said that it had never happened before in the parliamentary history of Pakistan that the Deputy Speaker had turned down a motion of no confidence in one and a half minute without hearing the position of the members of the assembly. Imran Khan, taking advantage of this illegal ruling, advised President Arif Alvi to dissolve the National Assembly and within a few minutes, the largest House of the country was dissolved, he added.

He said that the movers of the opposition approached the Supreme Court against the violation of the constitution and the court declared the ruling of the Deputy Speaker unconstitutional and restored the National Assembly and the process of no confidence was adopted by the constitutional procedure. The federal law minister said that the government has fulfilled its constitutional, legal and moral responsibility according to the law and the matter has been sent to the FIA which is under investigation.

He said that Imran Khan has been summoned by the FIA investigation team on May 25, adding that Azam Khan is an important witness in it and he has given a statement to the magistrate under Section 164.

He said taking into account this statement and Imran Khan’s answer, the further action will be decided by the FIA under the relevant clauses and provisions of the Secret Act.

Tarar said that the relations with friendly country were damaged and it would take time to restore it at the global level, which had an impact on the economic situation of the country. He said that the government is determined to make the inquiry, investigation and investigation transparent, meritorious and in accordance with the law. This case has to be decided by the courts, he said.

To a question, he said that if the documents are damaged due to negligence, then the punishment can be up to two years. If there evidence is find that these documents were used for personal purposes and the national security is damaged, the punishment for this is 14 years jail or can be more. He said that the issue of military courts is under hearing in the Supreme Court, adding that he was agree with the arguments of the Attorney General, there have been trials of civilians in military courts before.

He said that in 2015, the government of that time introduced legislation related to military courts in the context of APS tragedy and to control the increasing incidents of terrorism, because at that time civilians were the attackers. He said that a 17 member bench of the top court had reviewed this amendment, adding that there is a right of appeal in the Army Act and the Army Chief can also hear the appeal himself.

He said that in the Rawalpindi Bar case, the 17-member bench declared that every deserving person has the right to appeal. The accused have all the rights in the current cases as well given by international laws, he said, adding that this is the internal matter of Pakistan.

# Petrol dealers announce strike from Saturday

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum dealers on Thursday announced a countrywide strike for an indefinite period starting Saturday (July 22), demanding their profit margin to be more than doubled to five per cent from the current level of 2.4pc.

After the strike was announced, Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) Information Secretary Noman Ali Butt told media that “petrol stations will remain closed until our demands are met”.

In a press release, PPDA Chairman Abdul Sami Khan said the consumer price index had increased to 38pc while electricity and other utility rates had also spiked due to the Kibor rate. Citing the aforementioned increase in rates, Khan said the dealer’s commission on petrol had completely evaporated. “Petroleum dealers that are the backbone of the country with a network of 12,000 have been completely ignored by the government.”

He highlighted that his association was the largest in the country with more than 10,000 members. “We had an agreement in 1999 that we will receive a five pc profit margin which was decreased to four pc in 2004.” Khan said the incumbent government then changed the profit margin to Rs6 per litre, which left them with approximately 2.4 pc profit margin, and was not acceptable to the petroleum dealers.

“They told us that the

profit margin will be deliberated upon later but then due to an increase in electricity, utilities, labour and the Kibor rate, the profit of small petrol pumps completely vanished,” the chairman said. “We approached state minister Musadik Malik and published our appeals in all the main newspapers. He promised us to visit in Karachi and that’s why we did not take any major step but he did not visit.”

The PPDA chairman said that their second major problem was smuggled Iranian petrol and diesel being sold freely due to which their sales dropped at least 30 pc. “Unfortunately, we will now be shutting down petrol pumps throughout the country on July 22 around 6am,” Khan said.

# MQM-P demands elections on new census

ISLAMABAD (INP): The leadership of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has demanded to hold general elections 2023 on new census data and delimitations.

Headed by Dr. Farooq Sattar, a delegation of MQM-P on Thursday held a meeting with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) officials. The MQM-P leaders speaking during the meeting urged ECP to organise general elections 2023 on the basis of new census data and delimitations.

The political party also expressed reservations about flaws in electoral lists and census. The MQM-P delegations also presented evidence of flaws in Karachi’s electoral lists to the ECP officials. Talking to the ECP officials, Dr Farooq Sattar said that the upcoming general polls must be held on new census data. He claimed that the flaws in delimitations and voters data can be removed in 15 to 20 days.

“We demanded the prime minister for holding elections on new delimitations. The premier has also assured the MQM-P of fulfilling the demand.” The delegation also expressed serious reservations on the recent census statistics in which Karachi’s population was undercounted. Sattar said that 30% of Karachi voters have been shifted to other constituencies far from their current residences. The delegation urged the election commission to remove irregularities in the voter lists. The ECP assured the MQM-P of addressing the issues. The ECP also assured the MQM-P of shifting the millions of Karachi voters to their own constituencies.

# No escape for PTI chairman: Musadik

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik on Thursday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman was guilty of ‘making public an official secret document’ as he exploited the ‘cipher’ for political point scoring. Addressing a press conference, he said the former prime minister would have no escape, even if his principal secretary Azam Khan retracted from his confessional statement on that count.

The PTI chairman, he added in a sheer violation of the Official Secrets Act, waved the cipher in a public meeting in the Federal Capital and continued the practice across the country. He persistently alleged that

the United States had conspired against his government and later claimed that the cipher had been misplaced, Musadik said. Whether misplacing an official secret document was a trivial matter, he questioned.

In accordance with the law, he said, the punishment for making a secret document public was 17 years imprisonment and for misplacing three years. He said the PTI chief had been claiming that his government was removed due to a US conspiracy, and at the same time was seeking help from Washington. He said the PTI chief had hired a lobbyist in the US who always conspired against the nuclear weapons of Pakistan.

“If the US conspires

against you, then why have you hired an anti-Pakistan lobbyist there?” the minister questioned. He said receiving ciphers from different countries with objectionable words and calling their ambassadors to protest the same, was a routine matter, but the former prime minister used the US cipher for his political gains.

He said it was just a ‘drama’ staged by the PTI chairman as his principal secretary Azam Khan admitted in front of a magistrate that the former prime minister had directed him to exploit the cipher solely for political point scoring. The minister said he had now been proven ‘guilty’, and he could not escape from the clutches of law as even Azam Khan retracted his statement.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Asif handing over Ship's Scroll to Commander Pakistan Fleet during induction ceremony of PNS Shah Jahan and PNS Tippu Sultan.

# Nawaz have keys to resolve country’s crises: Javed

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Javed Latif said that the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was holding the prospect of leading the country out of its crises, provided that obstacles like the mines in his way are cleared.

Talking to media persons here Thursday, he said despite the prevailing despondency, Pakistan possesses a formidable force in the form of Nawaz Sharif, a leader with the potential to navigate the country out of the economic quagmire. Nawaz Sharif will expedite the completion of CPEC within a year, aiming to revitalize and turn around the nation’s economy, he expressed. He said PTI chief, Imran Khan should be arrested and prosecuted for allegedly conspiring against the nation, following the confessions of Azam Khan, former principal secretary of Imran Khan.

Javed Latif acknowledged that there may have been some delay in unmasking Imran Khan’s true nature, but

now approximately, 90 per cent of the people were aware of his character. Only around 10 to 20 per cent of misled youngsters continue to support him. The public has gained insights into the characters involved in plotting against the country since 2017. Mian Javed Latif wondered why none of the individuals implicated in the events of May 9 and 10, presumed to be false and an attack on Pakistan, have been addressed or dealt with accordingly. This raises valid concerns about the handling of the situation and calls for a thorough investigation to move forward, he added.

The minister expressed his belief that delaying justice until September was not acceptable. He emphasized that the welfare of the entire state should not be compromised for the sake of one individual. He also mentioned that conspiracies against Pakistan were losing their potency and if the complete truth was revealed, it would have the potential to resolve all the issues faced by the country.

Mian Javed Latif remarked that the revelations about the cypher were not novel. He pointed out that such actions were carried out under the pretext of serving foreign interests while causing harm to the people’s wellbeing. He further highlighted that those individuals who were brought forth in such situations were later exploited to undermine the state. He also made a distinction, stating that Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, and Imran Khan cannot be compared as they have different approaches and ideologies.

The federal minister mentioned that Bhutto faced execution, Nawaz Sharif was forced into exile and Imran Khan’s leadership allegedly weakened the state. He revealed that during two National Security Council meetings, it was concluded that there was no conspiracy involving the cypher. However, despite this conclusion, Imran Khan continued to support the cypher’s statement and no action was taken against those who facilitated him, he expressed.