

Roof collapse kills three
F.P. Report
MANSEHRA: Hundreds of tourists were trapped due to closure of roads after landslide and floods in different northern areas. Huge losses have been reported due to collapse of mud houses and dilapidated roofs. In Manshehra, three children were killed while a woman and two kids were injured when the roof of their house collapsed.

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D I KHAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inaugurating and laying foundation stone of various infrastructure development projects.

Amendments in Election Act Consensus report prepared: Azam

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar says the parliamentary committee on Electoral Reforms has prepared a consensus report for amendments in the Election Act with aim to ensure transparency in electoral process.

Speaking in the Joint Sitting of the House this afternoon, he said we performed this task in the national interest and nothing has been kept under the carpet. He pointed out that the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms, headed by Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, had representation from all the political parties.

Sharing some points of the report, the Law

Minister said it has been proposed that the presiding officer on the Election Day will transmit a snapshot of Form-45 to the Returning Officer and the Election Commission of Pakistan. He said it has been compulsory for the Presiding Officer to transmit election results by 2 a.m. and in case of any delay the Presiding Officer concerned will have to explain the reasons. He said aspiring candidates can use their bank accounts for their election related expenditure.

The Law Minister further said the report also proposes that the Election Observers will be accredited by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Responding to points raised

by different members, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said the sanctity of legislation warrants that due procedure is followed. He, however, said the elements should not give us lectures, who used to bulldoze bills when they were in power. He recalled that 54 bills were passed in just one minute during the previous regime.

The Joint Sitting of the Parliament today passed "The Qanun-e-Shahadat (Amendment) Bill, 2023", "The Control of Narcotics Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2023" and "The Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2023." The Joint Sitting of the Parliament has been adjourned to meet again on Thursday at 11 a.m.

Cop martyred in Jamrud suicide blast

Amjad Ali Afridi

JAMRUD: Additional Station House Officer (SHO) embraced Shahadat when a suicide bomber blew himself up inside the Mosque in the jurisdiction of police station, Ali Masjid on Tuesday evening.

On the information of locals of presence of two suspected persons, additional SHO, Adnan Afridi along with few colleagues arrived at the site and cautioned the suspected ones, locals and police official said.

One was arrested while another took refuge in the nearby newly constructed Mosque who was chased by the police officer. During confrontation, the suicide detonated himself. Resultedly Additional SHO Adnan Afridi was Martyred.

Soon after the event, reinforcements of police force reached the site and cordoned off the whole area. Rescue 1122 shifted the body to the nearest health center for medico-legal formalities, the official said. The Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) was recalled to clear the site, police said.

According to the police official one suspected person was apprehended from the spot and was shifted to an unknown destination for interrogation. It is to be worth mentioning here that last Thursday four police officials embraced Shahadat in suicide attack in teshil compound building in Bara.

Ali Muhammad arrested for 7th consecutive time

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Session Court Mardan granted bail to Former Federal Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan and ordered to release him on Tuesday, after few moments, DC Mardan circulated order to arrest him again under 3MPO and sent him to jail for 7th time consecutively, on Tuesday.

According to details, District and Sessions Judge Mardan Inam Ullah Wazir granted bail to Ali Muhammad Khan. Sources said that it is hoped that he will be released from Mardan Jail on Tuesday. Few days ago, The Peshawar High Court has already issued orders not to arrest Ali Muhammad Khan in any other case till next order of the respected Peshawar High Court.

Advocate Riaz Paindakhel said that the Mardan Sessions Court granted bail to Ali Muhammad Khan in the anti-corruption case and the court also issued an order to release Ali Muhammad Khan immediately. The court approved Ali Muhammad Khan's bail on two lakhs fine and two guarantors. Riyaz Paindakhel Advocate, Islam Khan Wardag Advocate, Jawad Khan Advocate Asad Khan Advocate appeared in the court on behalf of Ali Muhammad Khan. After sometime, Former Minister of State Ali Muhammad Khan has been arrested again under 3MPO on the orders of DC Mardan.

The Frontier Post

Iran deports 39 Pakistanis

QUESTTA (PPI): Iranian border authorities have deported another 39 Pakistani nationals who had illegally entered in the country. Pakistan's border authorities said Tuesday that citizens deported from Iran have been handed over to the Federal Investigation Agency's anti-human trafficking cell for investigation. "The deportees were intending to illegally emigrate to Greece via Iran," border officials said.

PM vows to rid country of loans

- Says despite challenges, coalition govt steered country out of economic crisis

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD / D I KHAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the government had established a robust mechanism in form of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) to attract investments with a view to do away with the "addiction" of borrowings and put the country on the course towards self-sustainability.

The prime minister, addressing the participants of the third meeting of the International Partners Support Group (IPSG), said the government had chalked out an economic revival plan. Its implementation would require foreign investment and technical support from friendly countries to enhance per acre yield of wheat, sugarcane and other commodities and focus on other areas of action.

He thanked the member countries and organizations for supporting Pakistan amidst the difficult time of unprecedented floods and told them the people still awaited return to their homes as they lacked funding to rebuild the destroyed houses. This shows the severity of the challenge which required untiring efforts by the government, friendly countries and international partners to help Pakistan build climate-resilient infrastructure.

The prime minister thanked and appreciated the federal ministers for planning, climate change, finance, economic affairs and foreign affairs and their teams for reaching out to the international community and organising Geneva Conference where international commitments were made. He told the participants that the country had been facing economic challenges like international inflation in terms of crude oil and commodities prices.

He said as the government had

reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), it would strictly abide by it without any deviation. He said his government's term was about to end by the next month, the upcoming interim government would also surely be adhering to the IMF deal as the first tranche had already been received. He thanked the friendly countries and IMF Managing Director for helping Pakistan to reach the \$ 3 billion agreement for a nine-month period.

He said the SIFC would focus on the promotion of agriculture sector and introduction of value-added products which would obviously require an infrastructure to be built from the investment from Gulf nations, America, North America or any other country desiring to invest. Besides, the Council would also help promote the IT and mining sectors as the country was rich with immense potential in both sectors.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assured the meeting that every penny coming from the donors for the rehabilitation of the flood victims would be spent transparently. He directed the relevant authorities that transparency should be given key importance in the rehabilitation and reconstruction projects of flood-affected areas. Third-party validation should be ensured in every project, he directed.

In the meeting, progress on flood recovery in Pakistan was reviewed. The prime minister appreciated the important role of IPSG in increasing cooperation as well as in climate resilience projects. It was told that \$657.5 million were estimated to be received by June 30, 2023, under the pledges made for various projects during the Climate Resilient Pakistan Conference, while \$715 million have

been received from donors and friendly countries for these projects. During the current year 2023-24, around \$913.5 million will be spent on construction and rehabilitation projects in flood-affected areas under the donors' support.

The meeting was further informed that 19 projects have been designed for flood prevention and rehabilitation of victims, including eight for Sindh, seven for Balochistan, three for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one for the whole of Pakistan. The meeting was told that 64 percent of the money received for relief work was being spent in Sindh. It was told that \$16.2 billion was estimated for reconstruction under the 4-RF (4RF), of which \$8.15 billion are being funded by the federal and provincial governments through PSDP and ADP, while the matching amount will be provided by friendly countries and international organizations.

On this occasion, UNDP Resident Coordinator Samuel Rizk said that one year had passed since the disastrous floods in Pakistan and the presence of all partners to review the progress of the rehabilitation works was welcoming. He said the rehabilitation of flood-affected areas was possible only with the cooperation of all partners and UNDP would continue to play its full role in this regard as the Secretariat of the International Partner Support Group.

Federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Sherry Rehman, Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar, Special assistants Tariq Fatemi and Tariq Bajwa, representatives of UNDP, World Bank, European Union, ADB, IMF, USAID, and diplomats from America, Saudi

(Continued on Back Page)

Imran to be indicted in ECP contempt case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday postponed till August 2 the indictment of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in a contempt case filed against him.

Yesterday, the ECP ordered the federal capital police to arrest Khan and pre-sent him before the commission in the contempt case, wherein he allegedly used "intemperate" language for the electoral body and the chief election commissioner (CEC). The PTI chairman today appeared before the election commission, resulting in the suspension of his arrest warrants.

A four-member bench, headed by Nisar Durrani, heard the case today. A member of the election commission said that on August 2, the commission would frame the charge on the PTI chairman and directed him to appear in the next hearing in person. The ECP initiated the proceedings against the PTI chairman, Asad Umar and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry last year.

But the three raised the issue in various high courts, arguing that Section 10 of the Elections Act 2017 was "unconstitutional". However, the Supreme Court earlier this year had greenlit the ECP's proceedings, and last month the ECP framed charges.

When the trio failed to appear before the commission despite repeated summons, it issued arrest warrants for Khan and ex-party leader Chaudhary, accepting Umar's plea to be exempted from the hearing. During today's hearing, Khan's legal counsel Shoaib Shaheen requested that the hearing be adjourned until September. "We have only one month of vacation, and since you asked for a personal appearance, we have appeared, Shaheen said.

However, he added we have not received a copy of the order. At this, a bench member responded that instructions had been given for the document. He directed the PTI lawyer to contact the law wing. Shaheen then claimed he needed more time to gather the facts of the case since he was a new lawyer on the case and did not have the complete record yet. "Earlier, there were other lawyers on this case; now, I am the lawyer. This is my first appearance." After this, the hearing was postponed till August 2.

Court summons PTI chief to record statement in Toshakhana case: A lower court on Tuesday summoned the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) chairman for recording his statement under section-342 as the cross-examination of two prosecution witness was completed in the Toshakhana criminal case. Additional District and

Sessions Judge Hamayun Dilawar heard the Toshakhana case. The PTI leader's lawyer Khawaja Haris resumed cross-examination of prosecution witness District Election Commissioner Waqas Malik. To a lawyer's query, the witness said the ECP had served notices to PTI chief and sought details about the purchaser and receipts of Toshakhana gifts.

Amjad Pervaiz, counsel for the Election Commission of Pakistan, said the witness had never been part of the proceedings in the ECP regarding the matter, and the defence lawyer was asking the questions to mislead the court. He said the PTI chairman had never told the details of the purchaser of the gifts to the ECP. The ECP's proceedings were never challenged before any court, he added.

Amjad Pervaiz said the witness had not prepared the documents, rather he just received the same from the ECP. The judge remarked that neither the facts about the Toshakhana gifts were being heard by the court nor the ECP's decision was challenged here. The witness had repeatedly told that he was not part of the ECP's proceedings, he noted and said if something was not written in the attached documents then the witness was not responsible for it.

KP CM reviews Sehat Card Plus scheme

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting regarding Sehat Card Plus scheme was held here on Tuesday with the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair which discussed and reviewed in detail various matters related to the scheme.

The meeting also discussed the various aspects of the scheme with the purpose to further streamline the operational matters and to make it more effective and

useful for the general public. Advisor to Chief Minister for Health Dr. Riaz Anwar, Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, CEO Sehat Card Dr. Riaz Tanoli and other relevant officials attended the meeting. While briefing the participants on Sehat Card Plus, it was informed that cent percent population of the province is being provided with free treatment facilities under the scheme adding that a total of 9.87 million households of the province had been regis-

tered in Sehat Card Plus till June 2023. It was told that during the financial year 2022-23, over 1.3 million patients have been treated under Sehat card at a total cost of Rs 33.39 billion.

Briefing about the top 10 hospitals which have extended free treatment facilities to patients from July 2022 to June 2023, it was informed that Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar, Peshawar Institute of Cardiology, and Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar stood top of the list respectively.

'I should hold a sign saying this allegation not true'

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: US State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller while replying to a question by *The Frontier Post* about the alleged role of the US officials in overthrowing former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan; said that "I should hold a sign saying this allegation is not true and that the US has no favorite political candidate in Pakistan."

When asked if the Centcom Chief, General Michael Kurilla went to Pakistan to soothe relations after the alleged Donald Lu Cypher, Miller said that the said question should be put to Pentagon. Miller did acknowledge that the State Department was aware of Michaels's visit to Pakistan and that he has no information about any defence funding provided to Pakistan since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.



The Frontier Post also asked that Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, former Foreign Minister of Pakistan have acknowledge the reality of Cypher and after Pakistan's National Security Committee meeting, US officials was given demarche in Pakistan and the US, so somebody in the US whether the President,

Joe Biden or Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken has to take responsibility for all this. It was in response to this question that Miller said that he has been asked this same question so many times that he needs to hold a sign saying that US had no role in overthrowing Imran Khan democratically elected government.

Sana acquitted in threatening case

GUIJRANWALA (Agencies): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Tuesday was acquitted by an anti-terrorism court in a case involving threats to the Punjab chief secretary, his family, and other officers. The court issued the decision after the case's plaintiff altered their statement.

The case was originally filed against the senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) politician at the Industrial Police Station in Gujranwala on August 25, 2022, after a complaint was lodged by Sheikh Shekz Aslam, a leader from the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), citing threats made by Sanaullah. After the court hearing, the minister spoke to journalists about fearlessly appearing before the judges, without resorting to any form of concealment such as using "buckets" over one's head.

"All our leaders, including me, appeared in the courts," he said, adding that

he hadn't informed anyone before coming to the court. The interior minister said neither he nor any of his party's members broke down doors of the court or stop judges from doing their work.

"We faced the law as a common man. We did not put buckets on our heads, nor did such dramas," he added. Earlier in February, the ATC had also issued an arrest warrant to apprehend Sanaullah and asked the police to present him on March 7. In March, the minister requested an exemption from appearing at the court due to official engagements, but his request was turned down. The court then issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against him.

The warrants were later suspended and instead directed him to submit surety bonds worth Rs100,000. The case against the senior PML-N politician was registered under Section 7 of the Anti-

Terrorism Act (punishment for acts of terrorism), and Sections 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 189 (threat of injury to public servant) and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Pakistan Penal Code. It stated that the interior minister made threatening remarks on a TV show.

The purpose of Sanaullah's statements was to terrorise the judiciary, chief secretary, commissioner and people of the country," the FIR added. "His aim was to stop the officials from working and prevent them from fulfilling their lawful responsibilities." The complainant alleged that the minister's speeches had created fear in the judiciary, bureaucracy, police, administration and the nation. He demanded an investigation against the PML-N leader.

Zardari, FM expresses concern over heavy rainfall

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari has expressed deep concern over the heavy rains in the entire country including Sindh. President Zardari has directed all ministers belonging to the Party to reach their constituencies. He further expressed the need for the local bodies' chairmen, deputy chairmen, mayors, deputy mayors and councillors to play their role in such a dire time.

Asif Ali Zardari extended condolences to the bereaved families of the victims in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan who have lost their lives due to the devastating situation. Due to the recent rains, there has been a huge loss of crops in Sindh. President Zardari said that due to the rains, date, palm and mango crops have been destroyed.

Meanwhile, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed concern over the damage caused by rain and floods in the country. In a statement, Chairman PPP expressed sorrow and grief over the loss of human lives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan due to floods caused by recent rain. He issued instructions to ministers and elected representatives to reach their constituencies to help the victims. He asked the Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Chairmen, Deputy Chairmen and Councillors of Local Bodies to play their role in helping victims with the coordination of Party officials and workers.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed concern over the damage caused to agriculture in Sindh due to this rainfall. He said that the Prime Minister should help the governments of Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan and Sindh in dealing with floods and damage caused due to rain. He said that like the last year, this year too there is fear of loss to the crops by excessive rainfall.



Thar Coal Energy Board approves coal tariff of Block-I, II

KARACHI: (APP): The Thar Coal Energy Board in its 25th meeting held under the chairmanship of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah approved a leveled tariff of \$37.36 per ton for the financial close stage petition for 7.8 million tons per annum of Block-I and a leveled tariff of \$30.40 per ton for Contract stage petition for 11.2 million tons per annum of Block-II.

The meeting was held at CM House and was attended by Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal (through video link), Sindh Energy Minister Intiaz Sheikh, Sindh Minister for Mines & Mineral Shabbir Bijarani, Sindh Minister for Education Sardar Shah, Advisor Law Murtaza Wahab, Secretary Energy Abubakr Madani, MD Thar Coal Energy Board Khadim Hussain Channa and other officers concerned.

The Minister Energy Intiaz Shaikh while briefing the Chief Minister regarding the progress of SECMC and SSRL mines operating in Thar Coalfields, said that the mines were currently producing 15.4 million tons of coal per annum and were being primed to scale up to

19 million tons per annum over the next eighteen months if the board approved the proposal. The board approved the proposal.

The coal being produced from the mines is powering 2640 MW of electricity, energizing more than seven million households from Thar Coalfields. Moreover, power generated from the Thar Coalfields also has one of the lowest costs of power generation in the country.

It may also be noted here that power generated from Thar Coalfields is considerably cheaper than imported coal, whereas also providing greater energy security, and saving precious foreign exchange reserves for the country.

During the meeting, the management of Thar Coal Energy Board also briefed the Board regarding the Financial Close stage petition for extraction of 7.8 million tons per annum for Block-I of Thar Coalfields, as well as the Contract stage petition for extraction of 11.2 million tons per annum for Block-II of Thar Coalfields. During the presentation, it was highlighted that as the mines continue to scale up, the

overall cost of production continues to decline largely due to the mines attaining economies of scale. As mines extract greater economies of scale, the coal tariff is expected to reduce further, which will also result in a reduction in electricity generation tariff from mine-mouth power plants located on Thar Coalfields.

The Board approved a leveled tariff of US\$ 37.36 per ton for the Financial Close stage petition for 7.8 million tons per annum of Block-I of Thar Coalfields which is operated by Shanghai Electric, and a leveled tariff of \$ 30.40 per ton for Contract stage petition for 11.2 million tons per annum of Block-II of Thar Coal Fields, which is operated by Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company.

It is to be noted that as the mines continue to increase production, the tariff will continue to reduce further. For the sake of comparison, when the first COD tariff was approved for Block-II of Thar Coalfields, the leveled tariff was US\$ 47.92 per ton, which has considerably reduced at this stage as the mine continues to expand.



KARACHI: A large number of mourners attending Majlis addressing by Famous Religious Scholar, Ayatullah Syed Aqeel Ul Gharavi at Shuhda-e-Karbala Imambargah Ancholi Society.

‘Desecrators not the representative of any religion’

LAHORE (APP): Prominent leaders of various religions and schools of thought on Tuesday strongly condemned the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark, saying that those who desecrated the Holy Quran and sacred things are not the representative of any religion.

The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and President of Church of Pakistan Bishop Azad Marshall stated this while talking to media men after a joint meeting of leaders of different religions organized by PUC and Church of Pakistan here. Pastor Aminul Khokhar, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Maulana Zubair Abid, Maulana Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui, Qari Abdul Hakeem Athar and other religious leaders were also present.

Continuing with the mission of peace in Pakistan and abroad, they vowed, the Church of Pakistan and Pakistan Ulema Council would strive till the end of sacrilege, and for promotion of interfaith tolerance and harmony. All the divine books, prophets and holy messengers are respected, and sacrilege of holy things is not permissible under any circumstances. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and United Nations Organization (UNO) should make effective efforts and put in order comprehensive measures in this regard, they demanded.

Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi said that leaders of all religions and sects living in Pakistan strongly condemn the burning of Holy Quran as well as the permission to burn the Gospel in Sweden and Denmark. It is not justified to insult any divine religion or book in the name of freedom of

expression, he added.

Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi mentioned that Church of Pakistan and the PUC supported the standpoint of the OIC under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, Pope Francis, the Bishop of Canterbury, Rabita Aalam Islami and the Government of Pakistan. “The sacrilege of divine books and sacred things must stop. We demand that the path of dialogue must be adopted, and violence, extremism and hatred must be eliminated,” he maintained. The PUC Chairman announced that there would be a meeting of leaders of different religions and sects in Islamabad on August 2, after which, a joint submission would be sent to foreign ambassadors, the ruler of Saudi Arabia, Pope Francis, the Bishop of Canterbury and the Rabita Aalam Islami’s Secretary General Sheikh Al-Azhar.

Political parties urged to protect religious minorities’ rights


ISLAMABAD (APP): Human rights defenders at a consultation organized by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on Tuesday urged all political parties to commit to protecting and promoting the rights of religious minorities and sects in their manifestos and policies. The academic and HRCP member Dr. A. H. Nayyar pointed out that education remained “a battleground for ideologies,” with most students never made aware of the need for

and nature of religious diversity. Dr. Shoaib Suddle, chair of the One-Man Commission for Minorities constituted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, explained that a proposal separating minorities’ affairs from religious affairs had been forwarded to the Cabinet.

Although steps had been taken to recruit more police officers from religious minorities, he said, the special police forces envisaged under the 2014 Supreme Court

judgment to protect religious minorities’ sites of worship did not exist across all provinces.

Police officer Abdullah said that the only way of protecting sites of worship effectively was to sensitize police officers at the constable level to the rights of all religious communities. Lawyer Sarwan Kumar Bheel, a representative of the Scheduled Caste Hindu community, expressed his concern over the lack of implementation of a child marriage act in Sindh.

**GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN**
PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
CRBC Chuk,Dial Road D I KHAN

No. CCD/DIK/AB/Tender/2023Date:-24/07/2023

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tenders are invited as per PPRA procedure “Single Stage Single envelope” for the following development works on percentage basis on Pak PWD Schedule of rate 2022 from Pakistan Engineering Council Registered contractors/firms should also be registered with income tax Department and available on Active Taxpayers list of Federal Board of Revenue. The applications for tenders with the documents as per terms and conditions below well be received in the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day up to **08-08-2023** and tender documents will be issued on same date after verification of documents. The individual applicants for each work should be submitted on written request at company's letterhead accompanied with attested copies of **CNIC, PEC, Firm Documents, NTN & Bid Security**. The tenders should reach in the office of undersigned on **09-08-2023 up to 1:00 PM** and will be opened on the same day at **01:30 PM** in the presence participants or their authorized representatives.

Terms and Condition:

- Bid Security as mentioned below in the shape of CDR/Pay Order in favor of the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division, D.I.Khan issued by any scheduled bank must be submitted at the time of purchase of bidding documents.
- The applicant firm should have completed similar nature projects of the same quantum, within last three years. Documentary evidence to this effect in the shape of work order and completion certificate duly attested by the concerned Project Incharge with the application.
- An affidavit on original judicial paper worth Rs. 100/- to the effect that the contractor/firm is not in any dispute/litigation with any Government Department is a mandatory requirement for issuance of tenders.
- The Contractor/Firm have to provide documentary evidence of Account Maintenance Certificate by the Scheduled Bank.
- The tenders would be issued only to the owner of the firm or his authorized representatives having legal Authority Letter/Power of Attorney.
- No applications for issuance of tenders through e-mail,fax, Telex will be entertained.
- No tender will be sold on the specific opening date.
- Any information/clarification regarding details of work, specifications etc., can be seen in the office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours.
- The submission of bid implies that the bidder is fully conversant with the nature of work, scope, site conditions applicable rules, Federal, Provincial and Local Taxes etc.
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rules 2004, the Competent Authority reserves the right to accept or reject all bids/tenders at any time prior to of bid/tender acceptance.
- Tender notice can also be downloaded from PPRA Website (www.ppra.org.pk)

Sr. No.	Name of Schemes	Estimated Cost Rs.(M)	Bid Security Rs. (M)	Cost of Tender	Completion Period (months)
1	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Spin,Tannai and Dottani	37.9	0.8	5000	11
2	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Wacha Khura Alyum and Mughal khel	37.9	0.8	5000	11
3	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Doag Dob kot and Zari Noor	37.9	0.8	5000	11
4	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Kari Kot Shahkot and Sarki kot	37.9	0.8	5000	11
5	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Ghwa Khwa Shin Warsak Laman and Daza Guanday	37.9	0.8	5000	11
6	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Kalotai Lanndi Doag and Kaloshah	47.2	0.9	5000	11
7	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Wacha Dana Warai Noor Daza Gundai	47.2	0.9	5000	11
8	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Azam Warsak Kaza Panga And Zalai	78.9	1.6	5000	11
9	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Sholam Raghzai Zamchan and Angoor adda	31.3	0.6	5000	11
10	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Shakai Malik Shai and Landi Noor	47.2	0.9	5000	11
11	Construction of PCC Road in Union Councils Khaisoor ,Nanookhel ,ossPASS and Barwand	63.1	1.3	5000	11
12	Construction of PCC Road in Union CouncilsToi Khula Gull kach and Zarmilana	63.1	1.3	5000	11
13	Construction of Irrigation Channel in NA-50 Sheen warsak Lower south waziristan(2.5X2.5)	18.6	0.4	5000	11
14	Construction of Irrigation Channel in NA-50Birmal Lower south waziristan(1.5X1.5)	58.4	1.2	5000	11
15	Construction of Irrigation Channel in NA-50 Wana Lower south waziristan(1X1)	50.3	1.0	5000	11
16	Costruction of Flood Protection Wall in Tehsil Birmal	168.88	3.4	5000	11
17	Construction of Black Top Road in Santoi Phase 2, Tehsil Shakaki	132.21	2.60	5000	11
18	Construction of Black Top Road in Wachubai Tehsil Birmal	105.78	2.1	5000	11
19	Construction of Black Top Road in Kaza Panga Tehsil Birmal	187.81	3.8	5000	11
20	Establishment of 2nos Rest House /Jirga Hall in Malik Shayi Tehsil Shakayai and angor adda SWTD at Wana	22.67	0.46	5000	11
21	Construction of civil veiternary Dispensaries (CVD) 10Nos SWTD Wana	103.59	2.10	5000	11
22	Construction of Black Top Road in Azam Warsak Area tehsil Birmal	132.21	2.60	5000	11
23	Construction of Black Top Road in Wacha Khura Tehsil Wana	105.78	2.1	5000	11

Executive Engineer,
Central Civil Division, Pak PWD D.I.Khan
PID(P) 273/23

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT
NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING
(Single Stage Two Envelop E-Bidding System)

1. C&W Department (Building Division, Bannu), Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic Bids from eligible firms /bidder in accordance with KPPRA Procurement rules 2014 on single stage Two envelop procedure for the following works.

S. #	Name of Work	Required category of PEC	Tender Form Entry Fee	Bid Security +S/Duty	Period of completion	Last Date of Submission of bid and time	Last Date of Opening Technical Bid	Date of Opening of Financial Bid
1.	Establishment of Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres at Central Prisons Haripur & Bannu. ADP No.813/220740 (2023-24). SH:- Establishment of Juvenile Rehabilitation Centres at Central Prisons Bannu.	C-5	0.03%	2% on E C + S/D	As per WI Order	17/08/2023 At 12:00 PM	17/08/2023 At 12:30 PM.	Date of opening of Financial bid will be announced after the approval of Tech: bids from the competent authority

1. Bid documents and instruction to bidders can be downloaded from C & W website (www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the Submission date/time

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS
(KPPRA SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOP BIDDING PROCEDURE)

- Technical bid/proposal should accompany the following:
 - Certificate that Bid Security in the shape of **Call deposit (original)** has been enclosed in financial bid.
 - Enlistment Order of C&W, Department (**Photocopy**)
 - Renewal of registration for **CFY 2023-24 (Photocopy)**
 - National Identity Card (CNIC Photocopy)**
 - Pakistan Engineering Council registration copy for calendar year **2023-24**
 - Form H of the Company / Firm.
 - Documents showing general capabilities, financial soundness, general and relevant experience record, personnel capabilities, equipment capabilities and Income Tax / NTN Certificates,
 - Any other document to support the technical/Financial bid.
- Technical evaluation will be carried out on marks threshold in passing all the field including PEC Registration, Enlistment with C & W Deptt. Tax payer proof, Relevant experience in past 05 Years, Performance, Technical Personal, Required Equipment, Financial Status, Auditors reports, Managerial capabilities, litigation Status etc
- Incomplete/ Conditional // Electronic bids and bids received after closing time shall not be entertained. Bids shall be signed by authorized persons.
- Bid security 2% in shape if call deposit (in original) and 0.03% Tender firm Entry fee of the esteemed cost in cash (non-Refundable) should be enclosed along with bidding documents
- The contractors quoting their bids up to the limit of 10% below Engineering Estimate shall submit bid security to the extent of @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate.
- The Contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security, then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive, all the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.
- The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.
- After commencement of work by the successful bidder, the procurement entity may replace the additional security with a bank guarantee of the same amount from the schedule bank, if the already deposit security is not in the from bank guarantee.
- The additional Security shall be released to the contractor in four installments that is 25% to be release upon completion of 25% of the project, 50% to be released upon completion of 50% of the project, 75% to be released upon completion of 75% of the project and the remaining amount to be released after completion of the project.
- Any bidder who provides incorrect information, fake documents should be disqualified.
- Time allowed for completion of the work is as specified in the NIT which will start from the issuance of work order.
- Bids will be valid for Ninety (90) days.
- Successful Bidder should sign the agreement with the department within stipulated time after acceptance of bid.
- Call Deposit of Scheduled Banks shall be acceptable.
- If the evaluated bid costs of two or more than two bidders are same then the successful bid will be declared through draw.
- A copy of the technical proposal in the required format in mandatory and to be uploaded as a part of E-Bidding before submitting Financial Bids.
- Scanned copy of bid security i/c Tender fees shall be submitted electronically along with technical bid on E- Bidding System.
- Bid security of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest electronic bidder for the specific work will be retained by the Department till the approval of bids.
- The bidder must be enlisted with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority as per KPPRA Rules.
- Pay Order is not acceptable as per Notification No. of KPPRA vide No. KPPRA/M&E/Estt/1-12/2017-18, dated: 05/04/2018.
- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act XXVII of 2019 2nd Schedule under S.No.14, in case of projects funded under the Government's ADP Budget, Tax shall be charged at the rate of Two Percent (2%).
- Venue of bids opening is **office of the Executive Engineer, Building Division Bannu.**

Note:-

- Differential amount, if a contractor quote e.g. 25% below Engineer Estimate bid than he has to deposit along with his bid 2% bid security and 25% Additional Security of Engineer Estimate.
- It is mandatory to all contractors, who are participating in the bidding should sign every page of their brochure with page numbering and mentioning here total No. of Pages i.e. 1 of 200 before submitting in the office of the undersigned, unsigned brochure will not be considered in the bidding process.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Building Division Bannu
INF(P)1746/2023



FIRs in wake of 9th& 10th May vandalism:

PHC dispose-of writ petition following submission of record

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Shahid Khan has dispose-off writ petition on submission of cases record registered against former Advisor to Chief Minister Shakeel Ahmad while stopped harassment of the petitioner, on Tuesday.

Assistant Attorney General Hazart Syed, Assistant Advocate General Barrister Yasin Raza and Malak Muhammad Ajmal Khan advocate appeared before court.

The counsel Malak Muhammad Ajmal Khan advocate informed that

petitioner served Khyber Pakhtunkhwa twice as Advisor to Chief Minister while argued Shakeel Ahmad is booked in two Anti-terrorism Act cases, two Anti-corruption and arrested under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) twice as per Deputy Commissioner Malakand orders.

The counsel argued that petitioner is re-arresting following his release on bails while concerned authorities didn't providing copy of First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against him which isn't fair. He added that if federal or provincial government has evidence against Shakeel Ahmad then tried him before court of law.

In the meantime, Barrister Yasin Raza informed that total four FIRs are registered against Shakeel Ahmad and added that petitioner had obtained bail in three cases but put behind bar in Anti-corruption case. He added that one warrant under MPO is declared void by court while other one is suspended and argued for disposal of the petition.

However, Malak Ajmal Khan advocate requested for relief like Ali Muhammad Khan to stop arrest of Shakeel Ahmad another case but Barrister Yasin Raza opposed it by stating that in future criminal will obtain benefit from the court's order following

commencement of offense.

Moreover, Malak Ajmal advocate requested PHC to intervene in the current situation because PTI workers facing victimization over their political affiliation, while Justice Shakeel Ahmad observed that court neither see the face of petitioner but granting decision as per law.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Shahid Khan dispose-off writ petition after submission of cases record registered against Shakeel Ahmad while stopped harassment of PTI's activist and ordered for provision of record of new cases in future.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan presiding over a meeting regarding Sehat Card Plus Scheme.

ANP calls for investigation into financial woes of KP

PESHAWAR (APP): ANP's Senior Vice President, Ameer Haider Khan Hoti has said that those who had plunged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into severe financial crises would have to be made accountable in any circumstances.

Talking to media here in ANP's headquarters Bacha Khan Markaz on Tuesday, he said that those who had plunged the province to the present situation are answerable for it. He called for independent investigation into 9 years of affairs of the PTI government to dig out causes to the financial crises in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Ameer Haider Khan Hoti said that allegations leveled against ANP were never made against any other political party. He said that investigation into

BRT, Malam Jabba and Billion Tree Tsunami scams were halted in the beginning and demanded taking investigation into these scams of the PTI government to a logical end. "There should be investigations to know who looted the province, how much to identify those responsible," added Mr. Hoti.

Regarding the current wave of terrorism, he said that they have repeatedly stated that lawlessness is spreading, but no attention was paid to our views and today the general public and law-enforcement agencies are being targeted on a daily basis.

About the political situation, he said the only solution to the current instability is holding timely, fair and transparent polls in the country. After elections the

ruling party should have to bring all stakeholders on board for the Charter of Democracy.

He expressed the fear that if stability was not returned in the next nine months, then the overhauling of the economy will become impossible. He said that the managing of the political parties will never bring political stability. However, he held the personal ego, stubbornness and wrong decisions of Imran Khan responsible for whatever is going on with the PTI.

Dispelling the impression of differences in the party, he attributed the difference of opinion in the party to the beauty of democracy, saying if anyone is leaving the party has the right to do so. Parting ways with the party is not

the matter of happiness, but leaving the party after failure in getting an electoral ticket is inappropriate.

He said that Zahid Khan, the central spokesman of ANP is part of the party and will remain so in future too and he refuted all news in this regard.

To another question, he said that ANP has never remained in favour of the imposition of ban on any political party.

He said that politics is the right of every Pakistani. However, he said that if the PTI wants general elections like 2018, then it will not happen.

To a question, he said that ANP has not been consulted regarding caretaker setup, saying ANP wants timely, fair and transparent polls, which is the panacea to all problems.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair being briefed during his visit to Supreme Command Post.

PRCS and KP Health Department inks MoU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has taken a commendable initiative by pledging its support in the prevention, community mobilization, and capacity building of staff for dengue prevention in Peshawar and Nowshera. A significant step in this direction was marked by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the PRCS and the Health Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The MOU outlines a col-

laborative effort between the two parties to tackle the challenges posed by dengue. The mutual cooperation will encompass various aspects, including community mobilization, staff training, and Dengue outbreak response in Districts Peshawar and Nowshera. Under this agreement, the PRCS will extend its support by providing essential resources such as insecticides, larvicides for Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), and fogging, as well as Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) for Dengue testing.

Additionally, the PRCS will play a crucial role in surveillance activities, encompassing larva surveillance, vector surveillance, and case surveillance through their field staff.

The organization will also facilitate monitoring activities by providing POL (Petrol, Oil, and Lubricants).

The MoU is valid for the current Dengue transmission season and will span a period of six months. There is also a provision for its extension to address potential needs in the following year. With this partnership, both the Pakistan Red Crescent Society and the Health Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa aim to bolster their efforts in combating Dengue and safeguarding the health and well-being of the communities in the region. Such collaborative endeavors play a vital role in creating a safer and healthier environment for the people of Peshawar and Nowshera.

Minister condemns Jamrud blast

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister Information, Auqaf, Hajj, Religious and Minority Affairs Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel on Tuesday strongly condemned the blast in the mosque at Jamrud Tehsil of Khyber District.

The caretaker provincial minister expressed heartfelt sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of Additional SHO Adnan Afridi in the blast.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel condoled with Adnan Afridi's family and said that the provincial government stands with the bereaved family in this hour of grief.

He said that the sacrifices of the police will not go in vain while the anti-state elements and those sabotaging peace of the province will be dealt with iron hands.

ANP condemns Khyber blast

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP), Aimal Wali Khan has condemned Khyber blast expressing his concern over increasing incidents of terrorism in the province.

In a statement issued from Bacha Khan Markaz here Tuesday, he termed the blast matter of grave concern for people living in KP and said that situation is growing worst day by day.

He said that these incidents must be stopped to save lives and property of people. He demanded strict actions against perpetrators of the terror incident and said that those which are playing role of abettors also be brought to court of law.

Condemning the Khyber blast, he said that ANP fully share the grief of bereaved family of martyred Additional Station House Officer, Adnan Afridi.

RTS imposes fine on Patwari

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Public Services Commission (KPRTSPC/RTS) has imposed Rs10 thousand fine Patwari Dak Ismail named Sajid Shaukat due to delay in delivery of services, on Tuesday.

A complainant named Mian Noor Zeb approached RTS that he has facing hurdle in delivery of his land documents (Fards) while the commission ordered Deputy Commissioner Nowshera to address the grievances of applicant.

Following RTS's orders DC Nowshera has imposed Rs10 thousand fine on Dak Ismail's Patwari named Sajid Shaukat for didn't obeying orders of senior and provision of public services to complainant. DC has directed District Accounts Officer to deduct Rs10 thousand from Sajid Shaukat Patwari salary.

Shining stars five-day leadership camp organized in Naran

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A five-day Alkhidmat Leadership Camp was held in Naran-Battakundi in collaboration with the Directorate of Youth Affairs and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture Tourism Authority.

The camp was attended by 120 orphan students sponsored by Alkhidmat Foundation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The aim of the camp was to highlight

the talents of Alkhidmat Shining Stars.

The camp included group discussions, exercises, exploring Naran, Qira'at competition, bonfire, quizzes and games competitions, and storytelling.

On the occasion, trainers Wajahat Ali Shah and Mohammad Rizwan gave training to the children regarding leadership management and discipline. The children were also engaged in various activities to strengthen

the Clean and Green Pakistan campaign.

On the last day of the camp, a special function was organized in which Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Captain Retired Mushtaq Ahmed attended the function as the chief guest and paid tribute to Alkhidmat for its welfare services and ongoing efforts for the bright future of orphans.

On the occasion, Senior

Manager Orphan Care Muhammad Nauman said that Alkhidmat Foundation is sponsoring more than 27 thousand orphans across the country and is supporting their brave mothers.

Director Youth Affairs Irfan Ali Khan, President Alkhidmat Foundation Mansehra Kamran Riaz, organizers, and orphan children participated in the event. Prizes and shields were given to Shining Stars on this occasion.

Sheen Pakistan program starting soon

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary Agriculture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mohammad Javed Marwat along with General Manager of Pakistan Television Peshawar Centre Aurangzeb Afridi, Deputy Controller Marketing Rumana Asad Khan and PRO Arshad Khan meeting regarding PTV National's program Sheen Pakistan.

Sheen Pakistan is an agriculture-based information program starting soon on PTV National, in which experts will educate farmers living in remote areas of the province about modern technology, climate change and how to overcome obstacles to agricultural



development.

In the meeting, the expansion of regional broadcasting of PTV National was dis-

cussed. Now 95% of the people of the province will be able to watch the broadcasting of PTV National through

both antenna and satellite. Secretary appreciated the initiative of PTV National on this occasion.

Prof. Arif expresses grave concern over increase in prices of medicines

PESHAWAR (APP): Patron in Chief of Leprosy, TB, Blindness Relief Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Prof Surgeon Muhammad Arif Khan has expressed his grave concern over the more than four hundred per cent increase in prices of medicines used by patients of blood pressure, asthma, TB, Leprosy and cancer.

In a press statement issued here on Tuesday, Surgeon Arif also criti-

cized those who are responsible for selling medicines at exorbitant rates.

He said due to the non-availability of fully pure and hygienic eatable items in markets, people are fast developing such diseases and the availability of medicine at high prices is increasing their difficulties, especially in poor strata.

The concerned government departments, he con-

tinued, are also showing hesitancy in taking action against these persons involved in illegal activity and playing with the lives of people.

Those who are found involved in the production of spurious medicine or supply of medicine at abnormally high prices, deserve severe punishment and in this connection strict legislation is need, Dr. Arif went on to say.

He said that Rescue staff rescued more than 5211 people during the search operations.

The Rescue 1122 diving service is equipped with all the latest equipment including rubber boats, fiber boats and jalar (local boats) boats for hilly areas.



PESHAWAR: Female doctor examining a patient during free medical camp organized by PDF at Haryana Bala area. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



In brief

Nursing students hold protest F.P. Report

LARKANA: The students of Nursing Female College in Larkana boycotted the classes against the lack of facilities in the college and the deduction of the stipend received and raised slogans against the college administration. While addressing them, the workers of the Students Rights Unit of the college, Ayesha Junejo, Ramla Baby, Shamshad Zulikhan and others accused them and said that they are connected to the poor family while the college administration Hawar is deducting 5000 from the stipend received unjustifiably and no facilities have been provided for studies in the college, for which the administration is being threatened to cancel the admission and not to give the stipend, while in the college, clean drinking water including nickel lab, anatomy lab, library scientific lab and multimedia is not provided. He demanded PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Faryal Talpur to take notice of corruption from the College of Nursing Larkana and arrest the accused and file a case against them and fill the lack of facilities in the college. Meanwhile, in Larkana to improve the security arrangements in the city during Muharram, under the leadership of Rangers Corps Commander Muhammad Baig, a flag march was conducted in the urban and outer areas of the district. To improve the security arrangements during Muharram, more than 3000 personnel have been deployed while the Rangers are also performing their duties along with them.

Tribesmen hold peace rally F.P. Report

TIRAH: A peace march from Bara to Bagh was held here in Tirah Valley on Tuesday aimed to restore durable peace in the area. A mammoth of tribesmen from every walk of life from Khyber participated in the rally which started from Bara Bazaar via Sheen Kamar to Bagh, Tirah, where a huge public gathering was organized under the banner of Sayasi Ittehad (Political Alliance), Khyber. Addressing on the occasion speakers including Chief Sayasi Ittehad Shah Faisal Afridi, Naseer Koki Khel, Sadeeq Charagh, Bhyalai, Zahid Ullah, Hameed Ullah Jan, Imran Afridi, Abdul Ghani and others said the purpose of "Aman March" was halt resurgence of terrorism in the area as the tribesmen had suffered a lot in the last two decades against war on terror. We have sacrificed in the form of life and property for the sake of the country; however, for the last few months some anti-state elements deliberately disturb the peaceful environment of the Tirah Valley, which is injustice to them, they remarked. They demanded the government to allow Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) of Tirah Valley to return to their villages as they had been serving their lives under the poverty line or they would themselves return to their homes. Sayasi Ittehad, Khyber combined all the peace-loving forces at one platform and would leave no stone unturned to work for constant calm in the district and said they would oppose the imposition of unwanted war in the area. It was obligatory on the State to restore peace and it was binding on the government to make Tirah Valley free of terrorists, they added. The speakers threatened that they would march to Islamabad for re-establishment of peace in Khyber.



HYDERABAD: A view of the flooded roads and streets after rain.

Malaria claims 0.5m lives in a year

F.P. Report

QUETTA: 'The vector-borne disease malaria is considered to be the deadliest and costliest disease in human history. It is estimated that the disease kills around half million people every year globally, predominantly children under the age of five, despite the fact that, it's a treatable and preventable disease,' these mind-blowing figures were shared by Dr Aimal Mandokhail, the provincial coordinator Indus Hospital and Health Network, at a health reporting training organized for the media persons across Balochistan, on Tuesday.

Around twenty journalists covering health beat from different parts of Balochistan associated with print and online media participated in the two-day training – organized by the Indus Hospital and Health Network (IHNN) at a local hotel in the provincial capital Quetta. The participating journalists have been

tasked to intensify their efforts in the fight against the fatal-disease malaria by disseminating accurate, reliable and timely information in their area of coverage.

Trainer and senior journalist Muhammad Irtaza and Manager Training and Communication, Balochistan Rural Support Programme Abdullah Badini highlighted the responsibility of journalists covering health issues and journalism ethics. The paramount role of journalists in the fight against malaria was also discussed during the two-day session.

'Indus Hospital & Health Network is working for the eradication of malaria in two dozen endemic districts of Balochistan. Hundreds of government-run health centers and private diagnostic laboratories have been provided with diagnostic facilities, where patients are being screened, diagnosed and treated free of cost. The health facilities have been

provided with anti-malarial medicines and RDT kits,' they said.

IHNN official Dr. Aimal Mandokhail revealed that with more than half the world's population at risk of infection as malaria has now become an alarming threat to global health. This year, the theme as designated by the World Health Organization is 'Time to deliver zero malaria: invest, innovate, implement'. Adding that tremendous progress has been made in the fight against life-threatening disease malaria. The bite of a mosquito carrying plasmodium parasite causes malaria.

'Following the catastrophic floods across Balochistan, thousands of malaria cases have been reported in the province. In different districts of Balochistan, falciparum and vivax malaria is common. According to last year's statistics, 110,000 people were screened in which 16,000 positive cases of malaria were reported,' he added.

IG FC held Jirga with tribesmen F.P. Report

KHAR: Frontier Corps North organized a jirga in Bajaur district while Inspector General Frontier Corps North Major General Noor Wali Khan attended Jirga as the Chief Guest keeping in view the local traditions, on Tuesday.

District administration and Frontier Corps North officers, local elders, Ulema and youth also attended the Jirga. During Jirga, according to tribal traditions, IGFC was presented a local turban. IGFC North Major General Noor Wali Khan focused on the geographical importance of Bajaur.

Paying tribute to the elders and people of Bajaur, he said that they always made sacrifices for peace in the area alongside the security forces. Major General Noor Wali Khan said that Bajaur is on the path of development and the people, especially youth are hope for the area.

Their role is very important for peace and development. During the jirga, elders, Ulema and youth vowed to protect peace alongside the district administration and security forces and presented various suggestions regarding development, peace and stability in Bajaur.

DEO cancel rescuers vacations F.P. Report

MULTAN: District Emergency Officer (DEO) Rescue 1122 Multan Dr. Kaleem Ullah held a meeting regarding the arrangements to be made regarding Muharram, in which he issued instructions to ensure first aid to the mourners at the majlis and mourning processions held in the big Imambargahs in Multan district including Shujaabad and Jalal Purpirwala, on Tuesday.

In this regard, District Emergency Officer Dr. Kaleem Ullah issued an order to impose Code Red for 09 and 10 Muharram and canceled the vacations of all rescuers. More than 600 rescuers of district Multan are deployed on duty with ambulances and fire vehicles equipped with modern equipment and will remain alert in case of any emergency in Muharram. Ambulances will accompany the mourning processions.

Previous govt halted development process in KP: Asad

F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Federal Minister for Communication and Postal Services, Maulana Asad Mahmood here Tuesday accused the previous government of Pakistan Tahrir e Insaf for halting development process in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including DI Khan district.

Addressing a function after inauguration and laying of foundation stones of eight mega development projects by the prime minister here today, Maulana Asad Mahmood said work on all halted development projects have been restarted during present coalition government's tenure and record number of projects was inaugurated by the prime minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during his four visits in DI Khan. He said these development communication projects on completion would make DI Khan an international trade

and business hub.

He said the Govt has restored confidence on investors and expedited work on CPEC projects. He said work on three grid stations in DI Khan were started out of which one completed, another was near completion and work on other expedited. The Federal Minister said that Hakla-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway was the landmark project that had expedited pace of economic development in the entire area.

He said after 2013 general election, the conspirators started agitation against the elected government of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif after he started CPEC projects, development of Gawadar Port, network of motorways and energy projects for stabilization of economy and generation of jobs for youth. He said that Nawaz Sharif Govt was removed in a bid to destabi-

lize the country and deprived people of Pakistan of development.

The opposition leaderships including three times elected prime minister Nawaz Sharif was jailed and were victimized in a bid to impose an unjustified government that destroyed the national economy and social values during 2018-22. Asad Mahmood said that PDM launched peaceful struggle against the unjustified government and overthrow Imran Niazi during a successful no confidence motion at the parliament due to successful movement of PDM.

He said JUIF would accept free and transparent election in the country. He said that engineered elections would not be accepted. He thanked the prime minister for visiting DI Khan for fourth time despite his busy schedule and inauguration of mega development projects today.

Bread-maker demands to determine bread rates

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: All Swat Nanbai Association has demanded to determine the price of bread on the quantity of flour, the official price of bread has not been fixed for the last thirteen years, while the quantity of flour has been increased ten times.

Addressing a crowded press conference at Swat Press Club, All Swat Nanbai Association President Sabz Ali Khan, and General Secretary Muhammad Naem Khan and others said that the price of flour in the country is continuously increasing while there is no increase in the price of bread. They demanded that the price of 140 grams of bread should be fixed at Rs 30.

They further said that there are more than 4,000 bakers across the district in which 16,000 people are directly employed, but for the last several years, Nanbai has been doing business in continuous losses and has become indebted to millions of rupees. They said that nine

government departments are working to check the nanbais, which are continuously fining the nanbais and sometimes even arresting them.

Which is not acceptable to us at all, he said, adding that the government should fix a fixed rate for bakers, If the government wants to provide relief to the people, then subsidized flour should be provided. After the press conference, the Nanbais also protested and raised slogans in support of their demands.

Blood Donation camp held at PTS Swat: Hamza Welfare foundation and Thalassemia Hospital arranged blood donation camp in connection with Yuma-e-Shuhada Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Police Training School (PTS) Swat, on Tuesday.

The camp was arranged on special permission of Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Gandapur while Director PTS Swat. Mehmood Khan, RI Inspector Shamsheer Ali Bacha and Inspector Akhtar Ali Admin PTS Swat coop-

erated with the foundation during blood donation. Resource Mobilization officer of Hamza Foundation Ateeq ur Rehman gave detail motivational lectures to the trainees regarding welfare services of Hamza Foundation, awareness and prevention of Thalassemia disease and also about importance of Blood donation. As many as 102 healthy volunteer donors donated their blood for saving precious lives of 1467 registered poor patients of Thalassemia and Hemophilia patients.

Founder Chairman Hamza Foundation Ijaz Khan highly appreciated the spirit and devotion of the blood donors and also thanked IG Police KP honorable Akhtar Ali Khan Gandapur and entire management of Police Training School Swat for extending help and support for organizing such a successful blood donation camp. On this occasion Ateeq ur Rehman RMO HF has presented Shield of Hamza Foundation to Ayaz Mehmood, Director PTS Swat.

PM urged to provide opportunity to ideological activist

F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) workers argued party leadership to provide opportunity to ideological activist named Amin Ullah Khan to serve the nation in an open letter to provincial and central leadership, on Tuesday.

The letter stated that Amin Ullah Khan has served the party as provincial vice president during Musharraf dictatorial regime despite severe pressure to part away from PML-N but he stands for ideology. He also faced imprisonment for his ideology and rule of law as well as supremacy of constitution.

The activists claimed that Amin Ullah Khan has rejected wealth and power for his political ideology as well as he has sacrificed his property and youth for supremacy of constitution, the open letter added.

PML-N's activists ignored by party leadership

during government despite Awami National Party, Jammat Islami, Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf and Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam Fazal facilitated their workers in Buner, the letter argued. The argued party leadership to provide opportunity to local activists from Buner to overcome their grievance.

The activists argued provincial president Amir Muqam and central leadership including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to incorporate Amin Ullah Khan in caretaker Federal Cabinet which will be beneficial for party's workers in Buner.

Loya Jirga commits for resolution of land dispute: The Buner Loya Jirga headed by Mian Syed Laiq Bacha and Salarzai Qaumi Jirga headed by Malik Said Rouf Khan was convened in which they discussed the issue of land ownership between the Salarzai Tribe and the Chor Banda resi-

dents continued for the last 20 years.

However, the Salarzai Qaumi Jirga elders in response held last consultation sessions which attended almost all of Salarzai tribe heads and finally responded the Buner Loya Jirga elders that some more time be given to let the 12 sub tribes to choose its head for taking final decision. Moreover, the Salarzai Qaumi Jirga elders suggested that the Buner Loya Jirga elders to ask the Chor Banda residents to hand over powers of attorney first because the Chor Banda residents were illegally occupying the lawful land own by the Salarzai tribe.

The Buner Loya Jirga head Mian Syed Laiq Bacha announced end of the day held grand Jirga with a joint prayer hoping both sides may show flexibility and the Chor Banda long standing issue would be resolved peacefully.

Muharram procession routes inspected

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The officials of police and district administration Mardan inspected the route of mourning procession of Muharram and also reviewed security arrangements in different parts of the district.

The officials were included Regional Police Officer, Muhammad Suleman, DPO, Najib-ur-Rehman, and

Deputy Commissioner Mardan, Abdul Rehman who inspected the route of mourning procession of the 5th Muharram in Mardan, where they reviewed the security arrangements.

Speaking on the occasion, Regional Police Officer Mardan, Muhammad Suleman, stated that comprehensive security arrangements have

been made for Muharram processions and Majalis. All available resources are being utilized to ensure peace and order during Muharram. He disclosed that the security measures included the use of CCTV cameras, walk-through gates, metal detectors, and other modern devices for the protection of processions and gatherings.

'Echo Chamber' and its impact on society and communication

Zar Ali Khan

IN an increasingly interconnected world, social media has emerged as one of the most effective mediums of communication, making social interactions over digital media channels easy and accessible. Its roots can be traced back to 1844 when the telegraph was invented, marking the beginning of a journey that has seen numerous experiments and transitions. From its rudimentary beginnings as a social interactive site, social media has evolved into a massive, algorithm-based social giant.

Today's social media platforms are powered by artificial intelligence, which diligently records our daily searching habits and the content we find interesting to optimize our browsing experience. Amidst the

immense growth of social media, the echo chamber phenomenon has become more pronounced. Social media platforms are quite genius now and present users with information that matches their preferences and previous engagements. Despite the convenience it provides users with filtered and sorted content, it also contributes to the formation of echo chambers.

An echo chamber occurs when individuals or groups are exposed to information, ideas, or opinions that only reinforce their existing beliefs or perspectives, leading to a lack of exposure to diverse viewpoints. This phenomenon can have significant impacts on society and communication.

One major impact of echo chambers on society is the deepening of divisions and polariza-

tion. By isolating individuals from different viewpoints, echo chambers can create hostility between groups with contrasting opinions. Additionally, exposure to only one side of an issue can lead to a narrow understanding of complex topics, inhibiting critical thinking and decision-making.

Furthermore, echo chambers discourage empathy, as users become less exposed to diverse perspectives and experiences. This can create a fragmented society, lacking understanding and compassion for others' struggles and viewpoints. The personalized nature of social media content also encourages confirmation bias, where users are more likely to engage with information that reinforces their preexisting beliefs. This can lead to closed-mindedness and resistance to con-

sidering alternative viewpoints.

The phenomenon of filter bubbles, another aspect of echo chambers, creates an imaginary personalized bubble filled with users' preferred and filtered information. As Social Media algorithms tailor content to individual interests and beliefs, users may miss out on important news and insights that challenge their viewpoints and perspectives.

The lack of exposure to differing opinions in echo chambers can promote an "us vs. them" mentality, discouraging civil discourse and healthy debates. This mindset can lead to a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to one's own group while fostering a hostile attitude towards those outside the group.

While echo chambers generally have negative implications

for society and communication, there can be some potential benefits for specific professional groups, like tech experts, teachers, doctors, engineers, chefs, and DIY content creators. For these professionals, obtaining the most relevant information without wasting time filtering through massive streams of online data can be advantageous.

Breaking the echo chamber requires careful and thoughtful consideration during online social media browsing. Being aware of the information consumed and its sources is crucial. Actively seeking out diverse viewpoints and engaging with content that challenges one's beliefs can help broaden understanding.

Engaging in respectful conversations with others on social media, considering different per-

spectives and learning from each other, can also aid in breaking the echo chamber. Following individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds and ideologies can provide a more reasonable and well-rounded view of the world.

Promoting fact-checking and critical thinking among social media connections is vital to encourage the dissemination of accurate information and discourage the spread of false content. By taking these steps, individuals can contribute to a more inclusive, informed, and empathetic digital landscape, utilizing the power of social media for constructive and meaningful interactions.

The Author is working as Deputy Director-IT in Directorate General Information & PRs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



China removes foreign minister

BEIJING (AP): China removed its sometimes outspoken foreign minister on Tuesday and replaced him with his predecessor at an unusually scheduled meeting, a move that has fueled rumors about what might be going on with the nation's Communist Party elite.

The step to remove Qin Gang after less than a year and replace him with Wang Yi doesn't appear to signal any significant change in the hard-edged foreign policy adopted in recent years by leader Xi Jinping, who oversees the world's second-largest economy — and a nation that is the primary US rival for international influence. US officials said as much about Qin's departure after learning of the move.

In its announcement on the national evening news, state broadcaster CCTV gave no reason for Qin's removal. Within minutes, all mentions and photos of him had been removed from the Foreign Ministry's website. However, he was still referred to on the central government's main site as a Cabinet-level state councilor, a possible sign that his political career wasn't entirely over. He had disappeared from public view almost a month ago, and the Foreign Ministry has provided no information about his status. That is in keeping with the ruling Communist Party's standard approach to personnel matters within a highly opaque political system where the media and free speech are severely restricted. The party rarely reveals its process or its way of thinking when it makes a move such as this. The ministry made no comment at its daily briefing on Tuesday.

The move comes amid a foreign backlash against China's increasingly aggressive foreign policy, of which

Qin was a chief proponent. That now includes Chinese political and economic support for Russia in its war on Ukraine, the signing of a secretive security pact with the Solomon Islands that could give it a military foothold in the South Pacific and the rejection of demands for more information about the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in China in late 2019. Adding to the mystery around Qin's removal: It was approved at an unusually scheduled meeting of the Standing Committee of China's rubber-stamp legislature, the National People's Congress, which normally gathers at the end of the month. That produced speculation about what might be going on behind the scenes — and whether it was related to Qin directly and rumors that have swirled on Chinese websites about his personal life, to policy overall or to both.

Qin, who comes from a powerful family of party luminaries, last appeared on camera at a meeting with Sri Lanka's foreign minister in Beijing on June 25. The Foreign Ministry at one point briefly chalked his absence up to bad health, but — in another tactic sometimes used by the party and government — scrubbed the reference from its official news conference transcript and has since said only that it had no information to report. Wang, Qin's predecessor and now replacement, had previously served as China's top diplomat in his capacity as head of the party's office of foreign affairs. Without other strong contenders, it appeared likely he would retain that position at least for the short term.

The shakeup in China's diplomatic lineup does not necessarily indicate a change in foreign policy, including



continued support for Russia's war against Ukraine. However, it follows US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's trip to Beijing — as well as trips by other top serving and retired officials — in a bid to revive a relationship deeply riven over trade, human rights, technology, Taiwan and China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. Earlier in his career, Qin had served as ministry spokesperson. During that time, he gained a reputation for criticism of the West and rejection of all accusations against China. That came to be known as "wolf warrior" diplomacy, after the name of a nationalistic movie franchise.

He later headed the ministry's protocol department, during which he

reportedly came to the attention of Xi, the head of state and Communist Party chief. Qin was next appointed ambassador to Washington from July 2021 to January of this year, a relatively short term that presaged his rise to the head of the Chinese diplomatic service. "Qin Gang's fall from grace was as unexpected and abrupt as his elevation over the heads of many experienced diplomats," said Danny Russel, who was the top US diplomat for Asia during the Obama administration and is currently vice resident of the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York. "Since both moves are attributed to China's leader, this episode will surely be seen as an embarrassing lapse in judgment at the top."

The US has launched a flurry of diplomacy with China over recent weeks in hopes of reviving relations that have sunk to a historic low. In Washington on Tuesday, two US officials said they do not believe Qin's ouster will have a significant impact. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the Biden administration's internal thinking, said the move would not affect any US desire or intent to promote high-level dialogue with the Chinese.

That has most recently been reflected in visits to Beijing by Blinken, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and climate envoy John Kerry. Blinken was the last US official to meet Qin in his role as foreign minister, but all three officials met with Wang, who is a relatively known quantity in Washington. Kerry met with officials, including Premier Li Qiang last week, following up on visits by Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen. Centenarian former top diplomat Henry Kissinger, revered in China for helping break the ice in relations in the early 1970s, also made trip and was granted a sit-down with Xi.

"We are working to put some stability into the relationship," Blinken said in an interview with CNN broadcast on Sunday. China has an opaque political system abetted by strict controls over the media and civil society, making it difficult to gauge how Chinese leaders see the relationship at this point. Xi is the most authoritarian and nationalistic party head in decades and has taken a hard line on claims to sovereignty over the South China Sea and threatened to attack the self-governing island democracy of Taiwan. He rejects foreign criticism of China's crackdown on politi-

cal and cultural expression against Muslim and Buddhist minorities and in the former British colony of Hong Kong.

During his time as spokesperson and minister, Qin defended those positions in terms that sometimes verged on the strident, saying in March that, "If the United States does not hit the brake, but continues to speed down the wrong path, no amount of guardrails can prevent derailing and there surely will be conflict and confrontation." "Such competition is a reckless gamble, with the stakes being the fundamental interests of the two peoples and even the future of humanity," Qin said.

However, a window of opportunity remains open, particularly if Xi makes a state visit to the US later this year, when he is expected to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit in San Francisco, said Wang Yiwei, director of the Institute of International Affairs at Beijing's Renmin University. "If the window of opportunity could be grasped to pull China-US relations back on track, the relations might not spin out of control next year," when the US will mainly focused on the election season, Wang said.

Conflicts have sometimes overshadowed the massive economic and trade relationship, but the sides can still work together on relatively politically neutral issues such as climate change, Wang said. Both countries are seeking for a way to manage ""the most important and complicated bilateral relations in the world," said Zhu Feng, dean of the School of International Studies at prestigious Nanjing University in eastern China.

Greece faces heat-wave as wildfires rage

ATHENS (Agencies): Greece braced for a new wave of soaring temperatures on Tuesday, as wildfires raged on several popular tourist islands, forcing mass evacuations. In the capital city of Athens the mercury is expected to soar to 41 degrees Celsius, and reach up to 44C in central Greece, according to the national weather forecaster EMY.

Many regions of the country were on "red alert", meaning there is an extreme risk of dangerous forest fires exacerbated by strong winds. The very hot weather comes after a weekend of intense heat as thousands of locals and tourists fled forest fires on the Greek islands of Rhodes and Corfu, with the prime minister warning the heat-battered nation is "at war" with the flames. Authorities evacuated nearly 2,500 people from the Greek island of Corfu on Monday, after tens of thousands of people had already fled blazes on the island of Rhodes, with many frightened tourists scrambling to get home on evacuation flights.

More than 260 firefighters were still battling flames for an eighth consecutive day on Rhodes, supported by two helicopters and two planes. Fires were also raging on Greece's second largest island of Evia, where Greek

civil protection authorities issued an overnight evacuation order in one northern locality. The mercury hit 46.4C in Gythio, in the southern Peloponnese peninsula on Sunday, though failed to reach the hottest temperature nationally on record of 48C.

"We are at war and are exclusively geared towards the fire front," Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told parliament on Monday. He warned that the country faced "another three difficult days ahead" before high temperatures are forecast to ease. The severe heatwave in Greece has also been reflected across much of southern Europe and Northern Africa.

In Algeria at least 34 people have died as wildfires raged through residential areas, forcing mass evacuations. In southeastern France, officials on Monday issued a fire warning at the highest level in the Bouches-du-Rhone region, warning that the weather conditions make the risk of flames "very high compared to normal summers". The exceptional temperatures in Greece have forced key tourist sites such as the Acropolis in Athens to close at the hottest times of the day.

Vassilis Kikilias, Greece's civil protection minister, said crews had battled over 500 fires

around the country for 12 straight days. The fires are particularly devastating on very touristic islands such as Rhodes and Corfu where the season is in full swing and hotels are often full. Volunteers had come to the aid of foreign tourists in the north of the island where nearly 200 people are still camped out at a school after being evacuated from the fires on Saturday.

School director Kyriakos Kyriakoulis told that dozens of local volunteers and school staff had come forward to help those stranded. "I can't believe they are so nice, they gave so much in every way," said 69-year-old British tourist Christine Moody, who was spending her first vacation in Greece when the fires hit. "I am very moved," she said.

In the village of Vati, in the southeast of the island, local mayor Vassilis Kalabodakis said that the impact on the region was "tragic". "The village has been ordered to evacuate but we can't abandon it," he said. "We are leading the fight to protect our home". Scientists from the World Weather Attribution group said on Tuesday that the heatwaves that have hit parts of Europe and North America this month would have been almost impossible without human-caused climate change.

Climate change leaves fingerprints on July heat waves

BRUSSELS (AP): The fingerprints of climate change are all over the intense heat waves gripping the globe this month, a new study finds. Researchers say the deadly hot spells in the American Southwest and Southern Europe could not have happened without the continuing buildup of warming gases in the air.

Thanks to years of research and more powerful computers, scientists can now determine almost in real-time whether climate change is contributing to the intensity of heat, storms, floods and drought — and by how much. A generation ago, calculating such connections took up to a year, but researchers at World Weather Attribution made their conclusions about this summer's heat wave in less than a week. Their study is the first to look at three simultaneous heat waves on three different continents.

These unusually strong heat waves are becoming more common, Tuesday's study said. The same research found the increase in heat-trapping gases, largely from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas has made another heat wave — the one in China — 50 times more likely. A stagnant atmosphere, warmed by carbon dioxide and other gases, made the European heat wave 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit (2.5 degrees Celsius) hotter, the one in the United States and Mexico 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) warmer and the one in China 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius) toasty, the study found.

"Had there been no climate change, such an event would almost never have occurred," said Mariam Zachariah, a climate scientist at Imperial College of London and the lead author of the study. She called heat waves in Europe and North America "virtually impossible" without the increase in heat-trapping gases since the mid 1800s. Statistically, the one in China could have happened without global warming. Relying on data gleaned from tree rings and other stand-ins for temperature records, several climate scientists say this month's heat is likely the hottest Earth has been in about 120,000 years, which would make it easily the hottest of human civilization.

The global average temperature has been hotter in 22 of the first 24 days of July than on any other single day recorded, according to calculations by the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer. Since the advent of industrial-scale burning, the world has warmed 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit (1.2 degrees Celsius), so "the role of climate change is absolutely overwhelming," said Imperial College climate scientist Friederike Otto, who leads the team of volunteer international scientists at World Weather Attribution.

Britain warns Russia may attack ships, EU to boost Ukraine exports

UNITED NATIONS/BRUSSELS (Reuters): Britain warned on Tuesday that it has information indicating Russia's military may start to target civilian shipping in the Black Sea, while the European Union pledged to help Ukraine export almost all its farm produce via rail and road.

Global wheat prices have spiked 15% in the past week after Russia quit a deal that allowed the safe Black Sea export of Ukraine grain for a year and began targeting Ukrainian ports and grain infrastructure on the Black Sea and Danube River. "Our information indicates that the Russian military may expand their targeting of Ukrainian grain facilities further, to include attacks against civilian shipping in the Black Sea," Britain's UN Ambassador Barbara Woodward said on Tuesday.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak shared the information with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a phone call on Tuesday, Woodward told reporters. Britain also had information that "Russia has laid additional sea mines in the approaches to Ukrainian ports", she said. "We agree with the US assessment that this is a coordinated effort to justify and lay blame on Ukraine for any attacks against civilian ships in the Black Sea," Woodward said. Russia's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The White House gave similar warnings last week about possible Russian attacks on civilian ships and sea mines. The Black Sea grain deal was brokered by the UN and Turkey

a year ago to combat a global food crisis worsened by Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia are both leading grain exporters. Russia withdrew last week, saying that demands to improve its own food and fertilizer exports had not been met and complaining that not enough Ukrainian grain had reached poor countries under the deal. The UN has argued that the pact benefited poorer countries by lowering global prices 23% since March 2022.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is due to host African leaders in St. Petersburg on Thursday and Friday and has promised free Russian grain "to replace Ukrainian grain." The UN said the most vulnerable will pay the highest price for Moscow's decision to terminate the Black Sea agreement. Kremlin foreign policy adviser Yury Ushakov told Russian media on Tuesday that 17 African leaders would speak.

The European Union said on Tuesday it is ready to export almost all of Ukraine's farm produce via road and rail "solidarity lanes" through neighbouring EU countries and help cover transportation costs. "We are ready to export almost everything. This is about four million tonnes per month of oilseeds and grains and we achieved this volume in November last year," EU agriculture commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski said.

Wojciechowski said that the EU was looking to come up with a joint plan to cover the additional transport costs. Expanding grain transit through the EU is sensitive for Poland and some countries bordering

Ukraine, where farmers have come under pressure from increased Ukrainian imports. In May, the EU allowed five countries close to Ukraine - Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia - to ban domestic sales of Ukrainian wheat, maize and oilseeds until Sept. 15, while allowing transit through them for onward export.

The EU will review the ban after several countries pushed for an extension beyond Sept. 15. Polish Agriculture minister Robert Telus told reporters on Tuesday that he wanted a flexible ban, explaining as an example that Poland wanted to prohibit raspberries, but would allow sunflower seeds. "There is no way that after Sept. 15 Ukraine grain will enter Poland," Telus said. "We have quite a lot of grain, prices of grain already today are low ... it would completely destabilise our market."

EU member Lithuania has asked the European Commission to develop a route for Ukrainian grain through five ports in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, according to a letter seen by Reuters. The five ports have a combined grain export capacity of 25 million tonnes, the letter said. Ukraine and the Baltic States railways are built on Russian-type gauge, which is incompatible with the railway gauge used in Poland, the only practical route between the countries. USAID chief Samantha Power said on Tuesday that Washington would look to invest in additional grain storage for Ukraine so that harvests that could have been shipped via the Black Sea do not rot while waiting to be exported to global markets.

Travis King crossing puts North Korea border tours under scrutiny

SEOUL (Reuters): Tourists should expect far stricter supervision if visits to the border between North and South Korea resume, analysts said, after US soldier Travis King used an organised tour to get close enough to dash across to North Korea last week.

The US Army private joined a tour party visiting the so-called truce village of Panmunjom on July 18, a day after he was supposed to have returned to the US to face disciplinary action over charges brought while serving in South Korea. Dressed in civvies, King broke off from a group of 40 tourists being guided around the Joint Security Area (JSA) inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and sprinted across the border, landing Washington in more diplomatic botheration with the nuclear-armed North. The US-led United Nations Command (UNC), which oversees the area, has indefinitely suspended all JSA tours after King's unauthorised crossing. On Monday, Lieutenant General Andrew Harrison, the command's deputy commander, said when or how the tours would resume was yet to be decided. "I've never been involved in a military inquiry that hasn't come up with a series of recommendations at the end, which may or may not change the processes that were in place beforehand," he told reporters in Seoul.

Going to the DMZ separating the two Koreas, which remain technically at war, is a popular trip for tourists looking to get a glimpse of the reclusive authoritarian state. Not all DMZ tours stop at the JSA, which is the only spot where visitors can step up to and even briefly over the border into the North. For tour agencies, the JSA tour is one of the packages that sell with the highest margin in South Korea with "absolutely no cost involved to the tour companies, except for the bus and the driver," said

Russia attacks Ukraine ports

KYIV (Agencies): Russia destroyed Ukrainian grain warehouses on the Danube River in a drone attack , targeting a vital export route for Kyiv in an expanding air campaign that Moscow began last week after pulling out of the Black Sea grain deal. Last week's attacks mostly struck the sea ports of Odesa but Monday's pre-dawn strikes hit infrastructure along the Danube, an export route whose importance has grown since the demise of the deal allowing Ukrainian grain transit via the Black Sea.

"The Russian terrorists have again attacked the Odesa region overnight. Port infrastructure on the Danube river is the target this time," regional governor Oleh Kiper wrote on the Telegram messaging app. Global wheat and corn futures rose sharply on fears that Russian attacks and more fighting, including an overnight drone strike on Moscow, could threaten grain exports and shipping. News website Reni-Odesa cited a local official as saying three grain warehouses had been destroyed in the Danube port city of Reni during a drone attack. Video footage obtained and verified by Reuters showed a man cursing in disbelief at several damaged grain warehouses at Reni, an important transport hub across the Danube to Nato and European Union member Romania. "This recent escalation poses serious risks to the security in the Black Sea," Romanian President Klaus Iohannis said on Twitter, drawing attention to the proximity of the attack to Romania's border. Since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine has expanded grain exports overland via the EU to about 1 million tons a month, with large volumes being exported from Romanian ports and along the Danuber.

Jacco Zwetsloot, a former JSA tour guide and now host of the NK News Podcast about North Korea.

Visiting JSA is free of charge for South Korean nationals, but the tour King was on started at \$180, according to a Tripadvisor listing. For the UNC, the tours are about educating people and raising awareness of the "frozen conflict" after the Korean War ended in a truce, not a peace treaty, Zwetsloot said. Zwetsloot predicted changes could include making the tours even smaller, to as few as 10 people per group, or keeping groups behind glass or back away from the border where troops from both sides stand almost face to face. "I expect that within a year, we'll see a redesigned orientation visit become possible once again, but it probably won't be

as free and easy as they have been for the last 40 or so years," he said, noting that security should be the main consideration. Lim Eul-chul, a professor of North Korean studies at Kyungnam University, said authorities should focus on how to better control tour groups while keeping the area open to the public. "Banning access would only result in people losing sight of this grave reality that the Korean peninsula is facing," Lim said. Despite its name, the DMZ, established after the 1950-53 war, is highly fortified with razor wire and minefields on either side of a 4-kilometer (2.5 miles) wide buffer. "It can never simply be a tourist destination, primarily because of the huge amounts of ordnance that still exist across the demilitarized zone since the end of the war," Harrison said.

Wagner in Mali: US curbs top junta officials

MALI (BBC): The US has imposed sanctions on three top officials of Mali's junta for their alleged involvement with the Wagner Group of Russian mercenaries. Wagner fighters have been accused of committing atrocities alongside the Malian army fighting jihadists. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said civilian casualties had more than tripled since Wagner forces were deployed to Mali in late 2021.

Mali's government has never officially acknowledged Wagner's presence. But the shadowy mercenary group is believed to have about 1,000 soldiers in Mali, one of several African states in which it operates. Their deployment had followed a breakdown in diplomatic relations between Mali's military regime and France, prompting the former colonial power to withdraw its counter-terror troops.

The three officials sanctioned are Defence Minister Col Sadio Camara, head of the air force Col Alou Boi Diarra and air force deputy head Lt Col Adama Bagayoko. In a US statement, they are accused of being "instrumental in facilitating the Wagner Group's entrenchment in Mali over the past two years". Col Camara and Col Diarra are

accused of planning and organising Wagner's deployment to Mali, while Col Bagayoko is also alleged to be working to secure Wagner's deployment to neighbouring Burkina Faso and reportedly trying to help it get access to gold mines in Mali.

Since Wagner began working in Mali, in December 2021, civilian casualties have increased by more than 270%, the US says. "Many of those deaths were the result of operations conducted by the Malian armed forces alongside members of the Wagner group," Mr Blinken said. UN researchers and human rights groups have detailed a number of alleged abuses. A UN report released in May described how Malian soldiers, overseen by Wagner fighters, killed around 500 mostly unarmed civilians in a village in the Mopti region over five days in March 2022.

The Malian government denied wrongdoing and said it would investigate. It later told the UN to withdraw its 12,000-strong peacekeeping force. This week, rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) said civilians continued to be summarily executed and forcibly disappeared in central Mali. Responding to that, Mali's foreign min-

istry said it "regretted" the allegations and accused HRW of conducting "biased investigations", which ignore the asymmetric nature of the jihadist threat facing the country.

"In this regard the government strongly refutes allegations which suggest that anti-terrorism operations lead to ethnic targeting and that these operations supposedly indiscriminately impact civilians," the statement said. While Malian officials have said in the past that there are Russian military instructors in the country, they have never admitted the presence of Wagner. But Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said in a media interview that Wagner "provides security services" to the Malian government - and in the wake of Wagner's failed mutiny last month he said the mercenaries were working as instructors in Mali.

According to a large batch of US military documents leaked earlier this year, Mali has been used as a proxy to acquire weapons from Turkey on Wagner's behalf, with one Pentagon dispatch saying the junta leader had confirmed it would do so. Mali has been fighting Islamist militants for more than a decade.

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Countering Islamophobia and need for religious harmony

PAKISTAN Ulema Council (PUC) and the Church of Pakistan convened a joint meeting in the National Capital on Tuesday, to discuss the recent incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran in some Western nations, their impact on the overall relationship between Muslim Ummah and the Christian Communities in the world and domestic inter-faith harmony in the country. Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi led the delegation of Muslim scholars, Ulema and Mashaykhs while the President Church of Pakistan Bishop Azad Marshal headed the prominent Christian leaders from all sects of Christianity. According to the reports, the session held an in-depth discussion on the causes and grave impact of such deplorable incidents and the role of political and religious leadership in those countries. The meeting stressed the need for maintaining inter-faith harmony and close liaison between the religious clerics at the council level and increased cooperation with the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to handle any unforeseen situation in the country. Meanwhile, both sides emphasized a strategy to combat rising Islamophobia through joint efforts, coordinated action, awareness campaigns, and liaison with relevant quarters at the global level.

The rise of Nationalism and white Suprematism has rebirthed the West's medieval era's chauvinism and anti-Muslim prejudice, that the people of color, the immigrants, particularly Muslims, and their religious heritage are not safe in those nations who claim high morality, enlighten moderation, and pluralism. The current-day Western neo-conservatives and so-called nationalists had crossed all limits of narcism and religious bigotry, using civic freedoms for attacking other faiths and bulldozing interfaith harmony in the world. Recurrent and pre-planned incidents of blasphemy in Sweden and Denmark had caused grave concerns among Muslims across the globe while the rising trend of Islamophobia cast serious reservations among Muslim nations regarding Western leaders and Christain religious clerics who failed to fulfill their moral, and religious responsibility that had been also conferred by the global law and UN Charter on Human Rights and Religious Freedom. The gap between Islam and Christianity, the two biggest faiths in the world, has undoubtedly widened in recent years, while no concrete effort to repair broken hearts and bridge this gap had ever been undertaken by Western leaders in the past. Rather western politicians defended those heinous acts in the garb of freedom of expression and civil rights, which contradicts the UN Charter and the global law of the nations.

Awfully, after conquering Mars and the moon, the West resorted to the legacy of pre-historic times, which flourishes through hate, racism, and imaginary self-assumed superiority that posed serious risks to world peace and interfaith consonance. Although, the UN Secretary-General, the Biden administration, and other Western nations decried the recent Islamophobic incidents while the Vatican also issued a statement lamenting on sacrilege of the Holy Quran and advocated the need for interfaith dialogue and tranquility. However, those formal appeals are insufficient to produce any positive results and bring a pivotal change in the policies of certain Western governments, politicians, and religious leaders who use hate speech, division, and interfaith rivalry to their advantage.

Historically, Muslims around the globe have respect for all messengers of Allah and believe in all divine books including Turah, Zaboor, and Injil, which is an integral part of their religious belief. Muslim Ummah had always advocated for interfaith harmony, dialogue, and negotiations to overcome differences and forge greater consensus among various religions, nation-states, and ethnic groups, however, such a unilateral quest could not achieve its desired objectives until and unless it gets the same reciprocity from the other side. Currently, the Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) and the Church of Pakistan have taken the lead, and both inter-religion forums have decided to preserve the ongoing interfaith harmony in the country and also agreed to engage with Western leaders and prominent religious scholars to create awareness and forge unity in the fight against Islamophobia. Currently, the unceasing events of anti-Muslim hate, the sacrilege of the Holy Quran, and poise personalities are creating the utmost frustration in Muslim communities around the globe. These incidents even shook interstate relations and the OIC is continuously engaged at the global level, which clearly illustrates the emotions and priorities of the Muslim Ummah. It is high time that Pope Francis and other important religious personalities of Christianity educate and motivate Western leaders to respect Islam, poise personalities, and Islamic religious books and avoid spoiling interfaith consonance in the world. So, peace and interfaith harmony could be preserved in this Universe.

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Listen up, critics: first let Labour win power. Then scrutinise its real record

Polly Toynbee

AS they fail on every front, the Tories play the best card they have in their hand: managing expectations. Take this week's three byelections: every Tory MP you meet says, with a glum face, it's a wipeout, game over. So if Labour wins Selby and Ainsty, that's priced in, move on. But if Labour fails to overturn a 20,000 Tory majority, watch the narrative turn to "Starmer's weakness".

Time for some perspective. Even the prospect of winning a rock-solid Tory seat should remind doubters of what has been an epic climb by Labour from the despair of its 2019 near-death experience. Labour's leader had a strategy mapped out from day one, and nothing has distracted him from it: two years to fix the party, ruthlessly expunging any who damage it; a set of five cast-iron missions; and fiscal discipline, avoiding all spending traps ahead of the manifesto. And the result is an astounding 20-point lead. Are Labour people satisfied? Of course not. We see glum faces among the left-leaning commentators, who say Labour will only win as the result of the Boris Johnson and Liz Truss catastrophes. They want to know a Labour government will be transformational, exhilarating, brave, inspired: instead they complain of extreme caution and affronts to Labour values. But this is the time to remember May 1997, and how euphoric that Labour victory felt. Understand that the closer Labour gets to the winning post, the greater its fear of one false step, one fatal slip. It won't matter how excellent Labour's policies were for the poorest people in Britain if it returns to the miserable opposition benches. Keir Starmer has said from the outset that winning is his purpose.

Public mistrust of Labour's management of the nation's money is why

Labour lost and lost again in our lifetimes: fiscal indiscipline is the danger, so we wince as Starmer and Rachel Reeves tighten the bolts on the Treasury chest. But wince we must: the more painful the spending thumbscrew, the more convincing to undecided voters. Though Labour is ahead in polls on every issue and Starmer leads Sunak on every quality, it's on the economy where the gap is narrowest: Labour analysts fear trust in Labour on tax and spend is softest. That is why virtually no spending promises are being made, and why every question on funding or paying public servants is dead-batted with an apparent pledge to keep within Tory spending plans. It hurts, but there is a point to it. Starmer's comments about the two-child benefit cap on Sunday sent shock waves through Labour ranks: the party had attacked it time and again for affecting 1.5 million children, 1.1 million of whom are in poverty, yet now Starmer tells Laura Kuenssberg bluntly: "We are not changing that policy." YouGov last week found 60% of British adults it surveyed support the cap, including, alas, a majority of Labour voters. Is Labour selling its soul for votes when it should be persuading people towards more generosity of spirit?

All this reprises the runup to the 1997 election, when the particularly nasty social security secretary Peter Lilley sang his "little list" of hates, including "young ladies who get pregnant just to jump the housing queue". He laid a trap for Labour, which had pledged to follow all Tory spending plans: his cut to single parent benefits was to be implemented (like many of Rishi Sunak's cuts), after the election for Labour to inherit. Unlucky Harriet Harman arrived as the new secretary of state for social security obliged to implement it. Though

she softened the cut to apply only to new claimants, Labour felt it had to pass this first test of its honesty. That vote was an early bleeding for many new MPs, and some wept on their way into the aye lobby, while 47 rebelled and many more abstained. (Tony Blair rewarded Harman by sacking her a year later.) But, she told me this week, it was a political and economic necessity. Though the sum was small, "The international markets were watching our every move to see if we'd renege on our spending promises." Was it really necessary for New Labour to tie itself so tightly to every Tory plan? In retrospect, I'd say probably not, but hindsight is a fine thing. Ken Clarke, the previous chancellor, laughed and said he had no intention of sticking to his plans. But Tories always escape much scrutiny - with a mighty media claque to hide behind.

Let's remember what happened to single parents under Labour after that. Harman's new deal for lone parents transformed millions of lives and opportunities, with new jobcentres offering support, not castigation; before long, all family benefits rose, as they always do under Labour, with working tax credits and child credits. There were the first ever credits to pay for childcare, enabling many more to take jobs: the support of 3,500 Sure Start centres followed. What will happen to three-child families under Labour? You can bet they and all others on benefits will end up far better off, because that's what Labour does. But only when it wins. Now here we are again with hyper-cautious Labour taking no risks and offending its own people. This time, when there's so much less money than in 1997, voters know promises are not credible unless backed with hard cash. Of course we Labour people

yearn for a promise to return to the single market, for wealth taxes and the revival of every moribund public service. But only winning matters, so every obstacle has to be swerved, as the Tories try to turn attention away from their failures on the cost of living, the NHS, the economy and the climate.

Labour will refuse to talk Brexit, electoral reform, benefits, trans rights, renationalisation or anything else distracting, and yes, in our corrupted politics, Labour does have to meet Rupert Murdoch. Rightly, Labour is constantly goaded and provoked to be better, but it's perverse that complacency over Starmer's strong lead has become a reason to criticise him for lack of boldness. Critics are too dismissive of his five missions: clean energy, growth through housing and green jobs investment, the NHS, safer streets and opportunity to break the class ceiling. These are at the heart of Labour's for ever purposes. Fair pay agreements and unions in every workplace are radical. Expect any failing utility or rail company to fall into common ownership, without costing the public billions. I too yearn for more, always more. But to the glums complaining Labour will be Tory-lite, lacking vision and ambition, remember this: we have just lived through 13 appalling years of austerity vandalism. Remember that every Labour government improves the lives of those with least, raises benefits, raises taxes on well-off people, leaves schools, hospitals and public life better, while every Conservative government trashes those things. Will it be enough? No. It never is. But my bet is that Reeves and Starmer will be bolder than anyone now expects. Without doubt they will do, as New Labour did, far more than they dare promise while tip-toeing towards the finishing line.

Arab Americans finally give themselves a chance of empowerment

Ray Hanania

THE American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee last week launched the Arab American Business Advisory Council, which will focus on providing an important new service to the community. The council is not "just another Arab organization" with a board and a lot of bosses with titles, which hosts dinners and parties. It has an important purpose that should not be taken for granted: It will certify businesses that are Arab-owned to help them qualify for their share of government contracts.

Each year, federal, state and local governments set aside a significant portion of the hundreds of billions of dollars of contracts needed to provide services to the American people to businesses that are recognized as minority-owned. But because Arabs are not recognized as a minority in government programs such as the US Census or the Minority Business Enterprise process, they are left out and have to compete for government business with companies with far greater resources, finances and political connections. We keep hearing about how the federal government and some state governments are recognizing MENA - the Middle East and North Africa - as a new minority category. But all of the bills that have so far been proposed on this topic do not even mention the word "Arab."

The Arab-American Business Advisory Council aims to fill that void. It also combines the minority designation of Arab - which is the proper way to address and identify the Arab American community - with the broader new category of MENA, in which Arabs are grouped with non-Arabs such as Persians, Israelis and Turks. Arab Americans have been pushing for recognition as an official minority entity for decades. So, why have American governments at all levels not recognized them as such?

In America, when you are recognized as a minority, you get special privileges and considerations. One of the biggest is the requirement that you receive a portion of government contracts. These must be divided among the many recognized minorities, such as Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans and others. Additionally, being recognized as a minority group, which the new council will help foster, means that your community must also receive financial support in the form of grants to fund things like the creation of community centers, advertising for your newspapers and community media, and social services outreach to address health and social problems. Most importantly, being officially recognized as a minority mandates the US government to take actions that strengthen the political and voter voice of that community. This means that, when minorities live near each other, they must be included in one political district in order to help them elect their own representatives to federal, state and local

office. Without that recognition, minorities can be politically eviscerated, as they were recently in Illinois, when the federal and state governments came together to divide the old 3rd Congressional District, partly because it had the eighth-largest concentration of Arab American voters and the potential to vote Arab Americans into Congress and the state legislature. The 3rd Congressional District was divided into five new districts under federal redistricting laws and now, what was once a powerful Arab voter voice, which had elected one of the most outspoken pro-Arab members of Congress, Marie Newman, has become diluted and weak. In US politics, this is called "divide and conquer." Anti-Arab forces in the US Congress and in the state legislatures are determined to silence Arab voices, as well as those non-Arabs who stand up for Arab rights.

What the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and its new business venture are doing is taking the first steps in a formal process to fight those that aim to divide and conquer the Arab American community. The council can also help bring together Arab American businesses on a national level to focus on the community's needs, not international politics. There are about six Arab chambers in cities around the country. There should be more and they should be working together. At the moment, they are not. This council can help change that. One of the problems in this process is that Arab Americans have never taken this issue seriously enough and fought for it. They have been consumed by bigger issues, such as fighting for the rights of Palestinians in Palestine. And they have a proud resistance to the idea of being called a minority. In the eyes of some Arabs, being called a minority is derogatory and suggests they are weak, which challenges Arab hubris and their ability to achieve. Arab Americans are achievers in almost every sphere, but not in politics or in being accepted by American society. Politics and Palestine are more important in their eyes than issues like recognizing the needs of Arab American businesses.

What needs to happen is that, in order to more effectively fight for Palestine, the Arab American community needs to refocus its efforts on challenges that exist in America. If Arab Americans are strong and united in the US, their efforts to lobby on Middle Eastern issues will be far more effective. If they are strong, cohesive and together, their voices can be far more powerful and effective in addressing both foreign affairs and Arab American empowerment.

That is why the launch of the Arab American Business Advisory Council is probably one of the most important announcements that has been made in the community since Arabs first said they wanted to be counted in the US Census 50 years ago.

Forget sky-high debt - the real economic danger is a lack of growth

Roger Bootle

THIS is going to be one of those weeks when the economic statistics could cause a rumble in the financial markets and beyond. On Wednesday we get the latest inflation figures. Simply because of the drop in petrol prices, the headline rate should fall from 8.7pc to about 8.2pc. (Famous last words!) But more important will be the core rate, which excludes energy and food prices. This may edge lower from 7.1pc to 7pc. Not only would this not be much to write home about but even this tiny reduction is far from being in the bag.

If the core rate were to rise, this would be very bad news for interest rate prospects and hence for the finances of both households and the Government. Many readers have written to me recently, worried at the state of the public finances and outraged about the way that the policy of Quantitative Easing (QE), under which the Bank of England bought

government debt, appears to have made our predicament worse. They ask me to unravel what is going on. I will try. But these are deep waters: you will need a supply of hot towels at the ready. For a start, the term "National Debt" is a misnomer. This debt isn't "national" at all. It is the debt of the state to all creditors. And most of these creditors are themselves UK residents - mainly investing institutions. The indebtedness of the country as a whole - encompassing firms, households and government - to outsiders is a very different thing. (Mind you, that isn't a pretty story either. A subject for another day.)

On Friday we get the latest figures for the public deficit. They will not be pretty. Borrowing may come in at about £22bn for the month of June, putting us on course for something like £140bn for the financial year, amounting to over 5pc of GDP. This would be well down from the peak of 15pc in 2020/21 but it needs

to come comfortably below 3pc to be consistent with a falling debt ratio. This may be achieved in 3 or 4 years' time. Has QE made the public finances worse? It is too early to give a definitive answer to that question.

But we do know that its effects have followed a distinct pattern. In QE's early days during the Global Financial Crisis, the Bank was buying gilts in the market yielding 3.5pc, financed with deposits held by the banks which paid interest at Bank Rate. At the low point then, that rate was only 0.5pc, giving the Bank a tidy running profit. (Subsequently, Bank Rate fell to 0.1pc but gilt yields then were also much lower.) The profits made by the Bank on these purchases were transmitted to the Treasury. In effect the Government was able to borrow at rates not much above zero. This was extremely useful given that it had boatloads of gilts to sell each year. Indeed, the

period of very low interest rates flattered the underlying state of the public finances. But this was always only a short-term fix.

As interest rates rose, then the amount that the Bank had to pay out to banks on their deposits with it would rise and at some point, this cost would match or even exceed the income being received by the Bank on the gilts that it had bought. This point has been reached. The Bank is now making a running loss on most of the gilts that it holds. What's more, the Bank is also making a capital loss on the gilts it bought at higher prices than those ruling in the market today. Mind you, I wouldn't get too excited about this since the Bank is not obliged to crystallise this loss. If it just holds onto the gilts then, provided it bought them below par, when the gilts mature it will make a profit. Of course, the objective behind the policy of QE was not to make a profit but

rather to boost aggregate demand. As it turns out, after the pandemic it rather over delivered in that regard.

Nevertheless, I don't subscribe to the view that the current inflation is wholly due to the policy of QE. I place more emphasis on the effects of ultra-low interest rates, interacting with the surge in global cost pressures, particularly energy. But whatever the correct balance between the various factors that have contributed to the inflation surge, the inflation itself has had a major effect on the public finances. Allowing higher inflation is the time-honoured way of reducing the debt ratio. And that factor has been at work recently. But it no longer works so well these days because of the amount of index-linked debt, whose redemption value and interest payments rise as inflation proceeds, and the need to refinance the continuing deficit and maturing debt at higher interest rates.

The markets have got

wise to the workings of inflation and they demand compensation in the form of higher yields. Is everything clear now? Or are you just as confused as before but at a higher level? The bottom line is that the dynamics of public debt can be scary. There is an acute danger of a vicious circle as fears about debt sustainability prompt higher interest rates in the markets and that worsens the public finances - and so on and so forth. So the Government has been right to work towards getting the debt ratio lower. Yet we are not at panic stations. Indeed, public debt and deficits should not be the main focus of concern about the UK economy. As I like to remind people, for much of the UK's ascendancy in the early 19th century, the debt ratio was higher than it is now. The really worrying thing about the current situation is the absence of economic growth. Solve that and the debt problem would be much more manageable.

The China Daily

Regional detente should be based on philosophy of Ostpolitik

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

PRESIDENT Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the Gulf this week, marking a new chapter in Turkiye's relations with the region. Turkiye's rapprochement with the Gulf is part of an overall trend of de-escalation. In April, Iran and Saudi Arabia signed a Chinese-brokered agreement to restore diplomatic ties. However, the key question is how can this rapprochement lead to stability?

In addition to the spoilers mentioned in my previous article that have an interest in shattering this rapprochement - Israel, radical forces in Iran and a potential Donald Trump return to the White House in 2024 - our experience in the region shows that periods of de-escalation tend to be short-lived. Following the defeat of Saddam Hussein, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran was acceptable, as Iraq was the new common enemy. Iran had been contained by Martin Indyk's "dual containment" policy. However, the situation was reversed with the US invasion of Iraq, as Iran became emancipated and returned to posing an existential threat to Saudi Arabia, as it did following the eruption of the 1979 revolution.

My question is how come this de-escalation was reversed overnight? The answer is simple: Because the de-escalation was based on one party being suppressed (in this case Iran), which relieved the other party. It was not based on mutual security guarantees. Hence, Iran immediately adopted an offensive attitude once it had the opportunity to break the isolation imposed by the Americans. If, during the decade that followed the first Gulf War, the Gulf had worked with Iran on

establishing mutual trust and put in place mutual security guarantees, the situation would have been different after the fall of Saddam and definitely following the Arab uprisings.

We have to remember that the various countries all face existential threats. Gulf countries face the threat of Iran, but also some see in the Muslim Brotherhood movement a domestic threat. Similarly, Turkiye sees a threat. The 2016 attempted coup heightened Ankara's sense of insecurity, as its modern history had already witnessed four coups. The most recent, in 1997, took place against the government of Necmettin Erbakan, who was removed by the military amid international complacency. Similarly, Iran is constantly facing an existential threat. Regime change in Tehran has been brought up several times since 1979 in the American political discourse. The Iranians also perceive the Gulf's support of Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War as an attempt to break their country. Therefore, there is mutual distrust and mutual threat, and the first step is a change of mentality.

We need an "Ostpolitik" (politics of the east) mentality. This was the policy adopted by German Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1969. It was a break from the previous policy that called for German self-determination and reunification. It accepted and recognized the German Democratic Republic (known as East Germany) and the Oder-Neisse line. This policy brought with it a new thinking, which accepted the status quo and abandoned the regime change mentality. If everyone in the Middle East was to buy into such thinking today,

then it would lead to de-escalation. Saudi Arabia would accept Turkiye and Iran just as they are and vice versa. Ostpolitik led to several treaties that broke the ice between the Eastern and Western blocs; agreements that facilitated the lives of people who were displaced during the Second World War. The first agreement was the 1970 Treaty of Moscow, which recognized the prevailing European borders. Hence, the key is to come up with general principles that can bind the different states and then migrate toward operational agreements. An Ostpolitik mentality is needed for Turkiye, Iran and Saudi Arabia to streamline their differences.

Instead of using their influence in the different countries to compete with each other, they should use their influence to devise solutions that bring stability, which everyone can benefit from. These agreements should be based on good governance, the rule of law and economic development. Any platform that gathers the three regional powers - Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Iran - should adopt values that can enforce mutual trust, hence promoting cooperation and multilateralism. The worst possible outcome from this rapprochement would be to adopt the trade-off approach.

Not long ago, in the course of the debate over the Lebanese presidency, the general discourse was circulating the idea that Iran would pressure the Houthis to stop attacking Saudi Arabia in return for the Kingdom allowing Iran to have a free hand in Lebanon. This idea was being disseminated to explain a potential Saudi acceptance of Suleiman

Frangieh, Hezbollah's candidate for the presidency. Fortunately, this trade-off did not happen. The trade-off approach will not lead to stabilization, nor will it lead to the building of trust. Similar to the Ostpolitik of Brandt, which aimed to improve people's day-to-day lives in the post-Second World War era, the new rapprochement should not be about delineating areas of influence, but about coming up with operational agreements that will lead to stability and allow development. So, in the case of Lebanon and Yemen, the solution is not to allow Iran to do whatever it wants in Lebanon in return for quiet on the southern Saudi border, but to work with Iran to convene a government in Beirut that will implement reforms.

In such a context, Iran would ask its Lebanese partner Hezbollah to allow for a government of technocrats, as only such a government can conduct the necessary reforms and prevent the country from falling apart. In return, Saudi Arabia would give Iran and its partner the necessary security guarantees. It is important to note that the pro-Iran group looks at political power within the Lebanese system as a security guarantee in a dangerous environment. Similarly, Saudi Arabia and Iran should work together on a solution for Yemen that is inclusive of the different factions and that allows for state-building. And Riyadh should engage with Turkiye to find a solution for Syria and Libya. In a nutshell, the Middle Eastern rapprochement should be governed by the guiding principle of non-interference and be followed by operational agreements that will stabilize the region.

Arab News

Is Prigozhin's mutiny the nail in the coffin for Putin's golden boy, Dyumin?

Andrey Pertsev

ALEXEI Dyumin, a former bodyguard of Russian President Vladimir Putin and now governor of the Tula region, has been the subject of much discussion since the short-lived mutiny led by the Wagner mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin last month. Although Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko got the official credit for persuading Prigozhin to stand down, many social media channels and anonymous sources claimed it was in fact Dyumin who had played the decisive role in the negotiations and, as a result, strengthened his already special place in the president's inner circle.

Some observers once again began to predict a glittering political future for Dyumin, up to and including the role of Putin's successor. In reality, however, it will be very difficult for Dyumin to advance his career. It was widely reported that the Tula governor, who has known Prigozhin for years, got him to the negotiating table by urging him to "bring his men to heel." Dyumin's authority to lead the subsequent talks was interpreted as him having the trust of the president, while Prigozhin's ultimate defeat was seen as evidence of Dyumin's success and imminent promotion. The Kremlin has declined to comment on Dyumin's role, and the governor himself has remained silent. All his spokesperson has said is that being a mediator in this way would "not be within his remit" as the head of a Russian region.

The most popular theory regarding Dyumin is that he is destined for the post of defense minister. It's true that this is an appointment that has long been lobbied for by Dyumin's former Federal Protective Service (FSO) boss Viktor Zolotov, now the head of Russia's National Guard. It's no coincidence that figures close to Zolotov like Prigozhin and Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov have been attacking Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu for over a

year. Securing Shoigu's resignation is no mean feat, however, and it was also important to make sure it didn't happen before the outcome of the Ukrainian counteroffensive was clear. That way, if Russia's Armed Forces had suffered a serious defeat, it could be blamed on Shoigu, not the new minister. If, on the other hand, they managed to resist the Ukrainian attack, then thanks could be expressed to Shoigu at the same time as a demand for fresh blood to lead new military advances.

By demanding Shoigu's resignation, the Wagner rebels have actually halted the campaign to install Dyumin as defense minister. It's well known that Putin doesn't like taking decisions under pressure, so Shoigu is now effectively immune from removal as a result of the uprising. He is even doubly immune, since Putin said publicly that he has no complaints about the performance of the Russian military. Prigozhin's insurrection was therefore yet another blow for Dyumin, who is eternally tipped for a position in the federal government, yet is still waiting. When he was made governor of the Tula region seven years ago, several of his FSO colleagues received similar positions: Dmitry Mironov was sent to head the Yaroslavl region, and Yevgeny Zinichev was made governor of the Kaliningrad region. Back then, the assumption was that Putin was testing these trusted men as governors before handing them top jobs in the government or security agencies.

None of these ex-bodyguards had the experience of single-handedly running a major organization. Before their transfer to the regions, they had only been deputies: Dyumin was a deputy defense minister, while Mironov served as a deputy interior minister. And in those deputy positions, they were the president's eyes and ears in their respective ministries, charged with watching over influential groups and influential people. This

did not require publicity, serious professionalism, or a full command of the brief. Perhaps inevitably, both Dyumin and Mironov had complicated relationships with the ministers they served under (Shoigu and Vladimir Kolokoltshev). There is considerable evidence to suggest that Shoigu and Kolokoltshev asked Putin to rid them of these irritating deputies, and that in 2016, the president agreed and sent Dyumin and Mironov to the regions.

Once they were governors, rumors regularly circulated that they would soon be leaving for top jobs in Moscow. Yet that only came true for Zinichev, who left his governorship within a matter of months: first to be deputy head of the Federal Security Service (FSB), and then to head the Emergencies Ministry. Mironov served out his governorship, but was not made a minister, and is currently a presidential aide. Dyumin got closest to a federal position in 2021, when his first term as governor came to an end. It was predicted he could be appointed FSB head or minister of trade and industry. His replacement - a former State Duma deputy from the ruling United Russia party, Nadezhda Shkolkina - had already arrived in Tula to prepare for the handover when the plan changed at the last moment and Dyumin was obliged to stand for another term as governor.

The career dead end in which Dyumin now finds himself can be explained by the logic of Russia's power vertical. It's much harder to become a minister after a governorship than it is to be promoted from the position of deputy minister. Following their appointment to the regions, former security service insiders like Mironov and Dyumin became outsiders to the ministries they aspired to lead. It's much easier to obstruct someone from outside than it is to block them from within.

In addition, for the FSB,

Dyumin represents the interests of a competing security agency: the FSO. Denis Manturov remained trade and industry minister (a position he combines with that of deputy prime minister) in 2021 because he is loyal to Sergei Chemezov, head of the state defense conglomerate Rostec, and the influence wielded by Chemezov and the FSB was sufficient to block Dyumin's advancement. Putin's unwillingness to put pressure on powerful groups in his circle reduces Dyumin's chances of landing a federal-level position. And since new names emerge regularly, he has likely also dropped down the ranking of the president's most trusted individuals during his years as Tula region governor.

Formal indicators suggest that Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin is now highly trusted by Putin. Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin is also up there. Khusnullin has always been willing to take on challenging tasks that are important to the president, such as rebuilding infrastructure in Russian-held areas of Ukraine. Kremlin deputy chief of staff Sergei Kiriyenko, who is responsible for overseeing social issues in Russia-controlled eastern Ukraine, is another favorite. Kiriyenko has made education - an area that matters greatly to Putin-another pet project, and he and his team are currently supervising the development of a higher education course in ideology called the "Foundations of Russian Statehood."

Right now, Putin seems particularly drawn to projects developed by managers without any obvious political ambition. These are people like Khusnullin and Kiriyenko who, in turn, are not shy about leveraging their contact with the president. But Dyumin has been a different sort of politician for many years now, and time is against Putin's former golden boy. His governorship has gone from a temporary stepping stone to a career glass ceiling.

The Moscow Times

With the climate in peril, winning slowly is the same as losing

Caroline Lucas

SOME would argue that the speech by Tony Blair at Labour's 1994 party conference in Blackpool was era-defining. "It is time to break out of the past and break through with a clear, radical and modern vision for Britain," he said. One may disagree with that vision - but he committed to it years before his election, and delivered much of it in the years after. Huge investment in public services; a minimum wage; a Freedom of Information Act; devolution for Scotland and Wales, and commitment to peace in Northern Ireland.

No one is likely to mistake me for a Blairite - and I won't glorify the record of a man who took us to an illegal and immoral war on a false prospectus. But he offers a telling comparison with the current flip-flopping, pledge-breaking, utterly undaring Labour leader, Keir Starmer. A lot has changed in the past three years, let alone the past 30. Brexit, Covid, Ukraine and Liz Truss's omnishambolic mini-budget have changed our nation's economic course. But one change frequently omitted from that list is the climate. The Earth has heated up more in the past 30 years than it did in the previous 110 - and that will only accelerate further over the next 30. On climate, as the US campaigner Bill McKibben famously observed, winning slowly is the same as losing.

Inexplicably, Starmer seems intent on losing. In 2021, Labour laid out an ambitious climate investment plan of £28bn a year until 2030. That commitment has now been postponed in favour of a promise to "ramp up" towards £28bn in the second half of its parliamentary term.

A zero-carbon economy fit for the future won't come about by chance - nor by sole reliance on the private sector. Public investment is essential, and urgent. Upscaling storage technologies, developing wave energy and floating offshore wind, restoring sewage-filled rivers and upskilling millions of workers to fill the green jobs we need for this transformation: these are no mean feats. But that's no reason to delay investment - it's a reason to accelerate

it. And after the government's new climate adaptation programme, released this week, amounted to nothing more than recycled pledges to do more research - rather than to actually deliver the adaptation measures we desperately need - this investment simply couldn't be more urgent.

Public investment must be bolstered by public ownership, too - yet another Labour broken promise. Starmer's 2020 commitment to "support common ownership of rail, mail, energy and water" has been obliterated to the extent that only rail could see a potential return to public hands - hardly a bold move considering the Tories have already nationalised chunks of it. Even after the scandal of Thames Water's crippling debt, Starmer won't commit to running public services for the public good, and protecting our natural environment rather than private profit. It would be easy enough to criticise Labour's self-imposed fiscal straitjacket, and just suggest that it borrows more to fund these promises - which it certainly should. Not least because that investment will not only pay for itself over time, but pay literal dividends - globally, switching from fossil fuels to clean energy could save as much as £10.2tn by 2050. But what's so infuriating is that it refuses to consider a whole host of other options to fund our economic transformation.

A wealth tax - of 1% on the richest 1% - could, according to University of Greenwich estimates, bring in as much as £70bn. Instead, the Treasury currently supports the fossil fuel industry through tax breaks and subsidies to the tune of £10bn a year - a figure that any climate-friendly Labour government should surely slash. Conversely, the cost of failing to do so should focus attention. David Cameron's decision a decade ago to "cut the green crap", which ended up adding £150 annually to every household's energy bill, should be seared on the minds of climate ditherers.

But it would be short-sighted to suggest Labour's current absence of vision is purely down to economics.

Its commitment to issue no new oil and gas licences is indeed welcome - but the revelation that a Labour government would not revoke the Rosebank oilfield licence (if approved by the Tories as expected in the coming days) is a tacit endorsement of this climate crime. This isn't just any oilfield, but the largest undeveloped field in the North Sea, set to produce 200m tonnes of CO2, totalling more than the combined annual CO2 emissions of the 28 lowest-income countries. First oil is not expected until between 2026 and 2028, and investors are still assessing whether to press ahead - so why is Labour not making it crystal clear to them that they should not? By stubbornly refusing to revoke, Starmer has effectively given this project the green light himself. From abolishing tuition fees, to adopting rent controls, to offering free school meals for primary children, Starmer has been hamstringed by his own arbitrary fiscal rules, fear of rightwing press backlash, and a tribal determination to take control from rival party factions. The clear, radical and modern vision for Britain is nowhere to be seen. Meanwhile, people are shifting from desperation to - as the Guardian's John Harris put it recently - "a widespread sense of fatalistic hopelessness". The conditions are now ripe for the extreme right to continue apace with efforts to seize the narrative and control the political agenda.

So technocratic tinkering and over-cautious managerialism won't deliver urgently needed change, or the hope that comes from inspirational leadership. But a radically transformative vision will. That means ditching fossil fuels for good to deliver abundant, affordable energy; creating millions of skilled and stable green jobs, paying a fair and decent wage; a zero-carbon economy that redistributes wealth to those on the lowest incomes; and investing in public - not private - services to protect our health, power cheap and clean transport, restore our natural environment and enrich our lives. The moment to set out that vision and deliver it is now.

There's no point

Owen Jones

Do children deserve to be driven into poverty? While a Conservative politician is unlikely to answer such a question with an affirmative, their deeds say otherwise. When George Osborne limited child tax credit and universal credit to two children, he was punishing young people with hardship because of something entirely outside their control: being the third or fourth child instead of the first or second.

For Labour, the answer should be obvious: scrap the policy, because no child should be punished with poverty. Whatever New Labour's failings, it succeeded in scooping a million children out of poverty. Since then, the two-child benefit cap has driven 250,000 children into poverty, and another 850,000 deeper below the breadline. Crucially, it has failed on its own stated terms of encouraging parents to take up more hours or find work. It hammers working households - the children of care workers, checkout assistants, cleaners - and those out of work alike. An exemption exists in theory for cases of rape or coercion, but the process of informing the government is onerous and potentially traumatic: most of those eligible, therefore, do not do so. As a new report by academics at York University underlines, people's circumstances change, whether due to job losses or relationship breakdown. Many families aren't even aware of the cap until after their third child arrives, and they want to claim benefits.

Labour's leading lights know this policy is an abomination: the shadow work and pensions secretary, Jonathan Ashworth, described it recently as "heinous", and back in

2020, the deputy party leader, Angela Rayner, declared that "the obscene and inhumane two-child cap must go". When standing for the Labour leadership, Keir Starmer, too, said it had to go. And yet, as leader, he has now declared that this Tory policy - one his party regards as heinous, obscene and inhumane - will stay. What is Labour's purpose when shadow cabinet ministers anonymously brief that the party won't have the money to tackle child poverty in its first term in office?

Those who value money over human life point to the supposed burden on the taxpayer, even though abolishing the cap would cost £1.3bn, a relative pittance at about a tenth of one per cent of government annual spending. Yet Britain's falling birthrate will exact its own growing cost on the state, as an expanding ageing population is supported by a shrinking workforce. This is causing panic among Tory MPs such as Miriam Cates, who describes it as the country's most pressing issue but blames "cultural Marxism": she would do better to consider how her party penalises children rather than resorting to sinister dogwhistles. Condemning children to poverty exacts other costs, too: they are more likely to suffer ill health, burdening the NHS, and they are less likely to realise their educational potential, which holds the country back.

If this isn't an existential question for Labour, then what is? The shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, is sending personal letters to rich Tory donors inviting them to one-on-one breakfasts: it takes little imagination to understand what assurances they will seek, not

least promises that their taxes won't be hiked. So, on the one hand, Labour woos rightwising tycoons who want reassurances the party will leave their wealth untouched, and on the other, it endorses "heinous" Tory policies that condemn children to hardship and misery.

This is a basic abdication of the party's founding mission. Labour was founded to improve the lot of the working class, on the basis that the two existing parties - the Liberals and the Tories - were there to champion the business class. The party's justification for not eradicating child poverty was the same argument used by Osborne: that there is no money to do so.

Labour could raise revenue by asking the well-to-do to pay more in tax but chooses not to do so. Instead, the party claims its demands will be met with more economic growth - an argument no different to that of the Tories. Growth without redistribution merely shovels more wealth into the bank accounts of the already well off: that is what our economic model - which Labour plans to leave untouched - achieves in spades. Little wonder that Osborne himself declares "it wouldn't be terrible for the country" if Starmer and Reeves were in government. Gordon Brown may have failed to deliver an alternative economic model to Thatcherism, but he clearly had a passion for lifting children out of poverty. There seems to be no similar influential figure who would drive such an agenda in the next Labour government. The cost of that will be hundreds of thousands of children condemned to poverty, in a betrayal not just of their future, but the country's too.

Debating the boundaries of free speech in the UK

Osama Al Sharif

FEW weeks ago Dutch King Willem-Alexander made a formal apology for the Netherlands' 250-year-long involvement in the slave trade of his country's dark colonial history. "On this day that we remember the Dutch history of slavery, I ask forgiveness for this crime against humanity," the king said.

According to a study commissioned by the Dutch government last month, the House of Orange, the reigning house of the Netherlands, would owe the equivalent of \$600 million to the colonies it governed between 1675 and 1770. The same study also shows that the House of Orange was directly involved in the slave trade in the Atlantic.

The Netherlands was not the only European country to have a controversial colonial past and many historians would argue that other countries in the old continent had an even more sinister record in Africa, South America, the Middle East and Asia. To make an apology

for past crimes is a symbolic but important gesture. It opens the way for reconciling the colonial country's people with their past. But more importantly it sends a message to those who were oppressed that, by the end of the day, a mea culpa, if not a mea maxima culpa, which is the least to be expected, had finally been made. It will not change history, but may somehow contribute to making final peace with the past for both the coloniser and the colonised. While the Dutch monarch was taking this historic step, the UK parliament passed a law, a few days ago, that outlaws BDS, that calls for the boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel for failing to comply with international law, in universities and councils.

The bill, which was opposed by lawmakers from both the ruling Conservatives and opposition Labor parties, prevents Britain's public bodies from "adopting their

own foreign policy" by boycotting Israel or companies that trade with it. The bill passed by 268 to 70 votes.

Proposed by Michael Gove, the minister in charge of local government, he said that it seeks to combat the BDS anti-Israel movement, arguing that such initiatives are commonly accompanied by anti-Semitic discourse. Gove added that the bill "affirms the important principle that UK foreign policy is a matter for the UK government. It ensures local authorities focus their efforts on serving residents, not directing their resources inefficiently. And critically it protects minorities, especially Jewish communities, against campaigns that harm community cohesion and fuel anti-Semitism." It is important to note that not even the US, at the Federal level, had passed such a law and neither did Canada or any other European country.



ICCI to play role for tapping investment potential in GB

ISLAMABAD (APP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday said that the importance of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has increased due to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as this mega development project will usher in a new era of development and prosperity in the province.

Ahsan Zafar said that the province should consider providing more attractive incentives to investors, especially in the tourism sector, so that high-quality hotels, roads and other infrastructures in the area could be developed on modern lines that will attract tourists from all over the world to the region, said a press release issued here.

He said this while talk-

ing to Chief of Staff to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan SSP Zahoor Ahmed, during his visit to ICCI.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that ICCI had recently organized a successful tourism summit in Skardu with the aim of highlighting the tourism potential of the region for the business community and foreign diplomats.

He assured that ICCI would cooperate with the GB government in promoting investment in tourism and other sectors in the province.

“By introducing minerals, dry fruits and other products of GB in the international market, Pakistan’s exports can be increased substantially.

ICCI will consider taking a delegation to Gilgit-Baltistan to meet with the

Chief Minister and other high officials of GB and see first-hand the business and investment opportunities in the province”, he added.

Meanwhile, SSP Zahoor Ahmed briefed the business community about business and investment opportunities in the province.

“Gilgit-Baltistan has a great potential to generate 40,000 megawatts of hydropower. Apart from this, the province also has attractive business and investment opportunities in tourism, minerals, agriculture and dry fruit sectors, so ICCI members should try to take full advantage of such opportunities, he added.

He said that modern technology and capital are needed to explore minerals and precious stones in GB, so the private sector should bring technology and capi-

tal, while the provincial government will give them all possible support in this regard.

He said that ICCI should bring a delegation to GB to explore the business and investment possibilities in the province.

He assured that he will help the delegation to meet with the Chief Minister and other high officials.

He congratulated Ahsan Bakhtawari and his team for organizing a successful tourism summit in Skardu and said that this effort of ICCI would further promote tourism in the region.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Khalid Chaudhry, Zulqarnain Abbasi, Babar Chaudhry, Zarif Khan, Nasir Chaudhry and others were also present on the occasion.

SBP announces bank holidays for Ashura

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan, on Tuesday, announced public holidays on July 28 and 29 on the account of 9th and 10th Muharram-ul-Haram.

According to a statement issued here, the State Bank of Pakistan and all the commercial banks, Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) and Micro Finance Banks (MFB) will remain closed from 28th to 29th July, 2023 (Friday to Saturday) being public holidays on the occasion of Ashura (9th and 10th Muharram 1445 A.H).

The public holidays would be followed by Sunday when banks remain closed and the banks will remain closed for three consecutive days.

The federal government had already declared July 28 and 29 as public holidays on account of Muharram 9th and 10th.

Gold output, consumption rise in H1

BEIJING (Xinhua/APP): China’s gold output and consumption both saw stable growth in the first half of this year, industry data showed on Tuesday.

The country produced nearly 178.6 tonnes of gold during the period, an increase of 2.24 percent year on year, data from the China Gold Association revealed.

In the January-June period, gold consumption in China reached 554.88 tonnes, surging 16.37 percent year on year, according to the association.

In breakdown, the consumption of gold jewelry in China stood at 368.26 tonnes, up 14.82 percent from a year earlier, while that of gold coins and bars soared by 30.12 percent year on year to 146.31 tonnes in the first six months.

During the same period, gold consumption for industrial and other uses shrank by 7.65 percent from a year earlier to 40.31 tonnes, according to the CGA.

Tuesday’s data also showed that in the first half of 2023, investors had reduced their holdings of gold-backed exchange-traded funds (ETFs) by 1.26 tonnes from the end of 2022. By the end of June 2023, total holdings of gold ETFs in the Chinese market were about 50.16 tonnes.

Rice growers train farmers to promote innovation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The rice grower and exporters, Rice Partners (Pvt) Ltd (RPL) has trained around 35,000 farmers to introduce innovation and modern techniques in rice production for increasing water productivity and crop management.

A series of seminars were organized on “Methane Emission from Paddy fields and Sustainable Rice Production” by Rice Partners (Pvt) Ltd (RPL) in collaboration with Mars food for rice growers of Sialkot, Narowal, Multan and DG Khan, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Director Agriculture Multan Department, Government of the Punjab, talking to rice growers, he said that rice is the major staple food for more than half of the world population and a source of employment for millions of farmers.

He said that Pakistan is at number 7 among the most water scarce countries, we have to develop an action plan and implement it in true spirit so that the

farmers would produce the rice with minimum use of water without any yield or quality penalty and contribute to reduce the carbon footprints from paddy fields.

In all the seminars about 2,000 rice growers and officials from public and private sector including agriculture, NGOs, academia and media participated and shared their experiences with each other, the principles of Sustainable rice production were highlighted by the speakers.

The head of Sustainability RPL Mr. Zafar Iqbal said, they are promoting sustainable rice production to reduce greenhouse gases from the paddy fields and water productivity in the rice value chain. RPL has trained more than 35,000 farmers in sustainable agriculture, water productivity and crop management.

The RPL contract farming program helps the farmers a lot in terms of low cost on crop production, water efficiency in the rice cultivation and livelihoods of the farmers have been

improved.

Dr. Tahir Awan, Senior Scientist Rice Research Institute Kala Shah Kaku, has said that this is time to support poor rice farmers to reduce their cost of production and increase yield of rice by adopting conservation Agri. Techniques.

Dr. Tasswar Hussain Malik, Director Agricultural Research headquarter, has said that there is dire need to start a dialogue between all the rice stakeholders to design a pragmatic action plan for ensuring national rice food security and sustainability.

Dr. Muhammad Sabir Director, Rice Research Institute Kala Shah Kaku, highlighted the impact of climate change and adaptation, mitigation strategies in sustainable rice farming.

He also described the modern mechanical harvesting of basmati rice varieties at the premature stage as common, leading to increased post-harvest losses and infestation of microbial organisms in the paddy due to improper drying and storage facilities.

Solus Labs with NIC to empower youth IT



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Solus Labs, a tech incubator specializing in web3 project incubation, fundraising, and development. We are excited to propose a collaboration opportunity with National Incubation Center, Karachi as a Strategic Partner for the Southeast Asia region.

NIC Karachi is an initiative of the Ministry of IT, funded by Ignite, and operated by LMKT dedicated to empowering innovative entrepreneurs through mentorship, training, and access to funding. With over 2994

startups incubated, 99,000+ jobs created, and Rs. 8.1 Billion raised in investment, NIC Karachi is at the forefront of Pakistan’s entrepreneurship scene.

Solus Labs in collaboration with NIC Karachi has organized the launch of a nationwide “Ideas to Prototype” HackFest which is scheduled to launch on 24th July 2023 at NIC Karachi.

Winners of the HackFest will be awarded with cash prizes and an opportunity to incubate in Solus Labs global fellowship program with a guaranteed funding of \$100,000 after graduation.

We will provide global exposure and resources to all graduated startups from Pakistan to have their successful startup launches.

Event will be attended by academia, government and corporate senior management professionals. While the Chief Guest is Khalid Jamil Shamsi, CEO Computer Research and President at e-Creatorz Pvt Ltd.

We feel this is a great opportunity for Pakistani startups to explore vast possibilities of the web3 world. We look forward to hosting you at the event and creating a greater impact together.



FAISALABAD: People purchasing fresh dates from a roadside setup.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, MSC Levina, Hafnia, Ellora and Nord Agano carrying Container, Palm oil, Mogas and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal, FOTCO Oil Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile ten more ships, MSC Elaine, Lana, Maersk Kensington, Asia Inspire, GC Sapphire, Flagship Privet, Oriole, Prabhu Parvati, Southern Quokka and Al-Jassasiya also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of 05 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a ‘MSC Levina’ sailed out to sea on Tuesday morning.

Cargo throughput of 77,139 tonnes, comprising 74,861 tones imports Cargo and 2,278 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,180 Containers (1,046 TEUs imports and 134 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are twelve ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them six ships, Oriole, Prabhu Parvati, Al-Jassasiya, Lana, Maersk Kensington and MSC Elaine & another ship, MSC Denise carrying Coal, Chemicals, LNG and Containers are expected to take berths at Bulk Terminal, Engro Terminal, Gas Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on 25th July, 2023.

Gold rates decline by Rs800 to Rs224,500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs800 and was sold at Rs.224,500 on Tuesday compared to its prices on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.685 to Rs.192,473 from Rs. 193,158 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 176,433 from Rs. 177,062, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2750 and Rs2357.68 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$5 to \$1,960 from \$1965, the association reported.

PSX continues with bullish trend as index gains 362 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 362.53 points, a positive change of 0.79 percent, closing at 46,417.34 points against 46,054.81 points the previous trading day.

A total of 319,893,485 shares were traded during the day as compared to 299,076,070 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 10.259 billion against Rs 8.139 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 350 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 197 of them recorded gains and 128 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 41,974,254

shares at Rs1.41 per share; Fauji Foods Ltd with 26,058,761 shares at Rs7.07 per share and K-Electric Ltd with 15,647,570 shares at Rs2.14 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs350.00 per share price, closing at Rs22,800.00, whereas the runner-up was Al-Abbas Sugar with an Rs 35.40 rise in its per share price to Rs 516.00.

Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 71.00 per share closing at Rs 1,224.00, followed by Siemens Pak with Rs 29.00 decline to close at Rs 379.00.

Rupee sheds 60 paisa against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed 60 paisa devaluation against the US Dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 288.52 against the previous day’s

closing of Rs 287.92.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 292 and Rs 294.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 03 paisa to close at Rs318.98 against the last day’s closing of Rs 319.01, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen gained 01 paisa to close at Rs2.04, whereas an increase of 68 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs370.70 as compared to its last day’s closing of Rs370.02.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 17 paisa and 15 paisa to close at Rs78.55 and Rs76.91 respectively.

Dealers agree to Rs1.64 per litre increase in margin

KARACHI (PPI): Petroleum dealers reached a deal with the federal government under which their margin is increased by Rs1.64 per litre after they had postponed the decision to go for a countrywide, according to a report on Tuesday.

Last week, the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) had given strike call starting from Saturday but the government convinced them to hold talks – a process led by Minister of State Musadik Malik.

The move means the

dealers’ margin on petrol and diesel would increase to Rs7.64 per litre against the present level of Rs6. However, it is far less than their original demand of an Rs5 increase which would have raised their margin to Rs11 per litre.

And on Monday, the petroleum dealers accepted the increase offered by the government albeit hesitantly as the two sides held an hours-long meeting.

According to the agreed formula, their margin would be increased by 41 paisa per litre in each of the next four fortnights instead

of a one-time raise.

PPDA Chairman Abdul Sami Khan said after the meeting that they were not satisfied with the solution but had agreed not to go on strike. Earlier, it was learnt that the government had also decided to collect petroleum dealers’ sales figures to ascertain their actual profit margin.

Last week, the PPDA in a statement had said that interest rates and inflation had hit their businesses hard coupled with a 30 per cent slump in sales due to the Iranian fuel being smuggled into the country.

Exports increase by 21.22% to Rs6.862 trillion

ISLAMABAD (APP): provisional data released by PBS.

On year-on-year basis, exports from the country during June 2023 amounted to Rs. 675,280 million as against Rs. 594,985 million during June 2022, showing growth of 13.50 percent.

On month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 7.52 percent when compared to the exports of Rs628,037 million in May 2023.

The main commodities of exports during June,

2023 were knitwear (Rs. 112,348 million), ready-made garments (Rs. 91,582 million), bed wear (Rs. 68,891 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 46,601 million), cotton yarn (Rs.30,692 million), towels (Rs.24,999 million), rice others (Rs.24,487 million), rice basmati (Rs.17,728 million), madeup articles, excluding towels and bedwear (Rs.16,370 million) and surgical goods & medical instruments (Rs.11,581 million).

China stimulus hopes help boost Asian markets, Fed in focus

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Hong Kong led a surge across Asian markets Tuesday after China’s leaders pledged fresh measures to boost the nation’s stuttering economy, building on optimism that central banks were nearing the end of their rate-hiking cycle.

With data in recent months showing growth stuttering and business activity slowing, Beijing has come under pressure to provide much-needed support, particularly for the vast property sector.

Despite a series of announcements and minor interest rate cuts, investors have been largely disappointed by the policy

response from authorities, with very few concrete measures being unveiled.

However, top leaders on Monday signalled a fresh push to get the post-Covid recovery back on track, particularly the troubled property sector, which accounts for a major part of the world’s number-two economy.

After a meeting, the 24-person Politburo recognised “the current economic operation is facing new difficulties and challenges” and agreed they must “implement precise and effective macroeconomic regulation, strengthen countercyclical regulation and policy reserves”.

The meeting, headed by

President Xi Jinping, also called for efforts to expand domestic consumption and “adjust and optimise real estate policies in a timely manner”, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

“The overall stance remains in a pro-growth mindset, but the focus is more forward-looking with an increased emphasis on addressing structural challenges (i.e. local government debt) to facilitate longer-term sustainable growth,” said Erin Xin at HSBC.

The announcement “keeps a supportive tone, which can help provide some support for the recovery and it may provide some boost to market senti-

ment”, she added.

While it was nowhere near the blockbuster spending plans seen in the past, the news gave investors a boost, with Hong Kong jumping nearly four percent thanks to a rally in real estate companies and tech giants.

Among the standout performers were developers Country Garden and Sunac, which piled on at least 17 percent each. The two firms are among several struggling under the weight of massive debts that have sent shivers through the industry.

“Investors now believe the Politburo meeting sets an encouraging tone for

more substantial and comprehensive policy easing down the road,” said SPI Asset Management’s Stephen Innes.

“Why is it different this time? Because the lawmakers acknowledged the problem. And to fix any problem, you must acknowledge there is a problem.”

And Jizhou Dong, at Nomura Holdings, noted that confidence was lifted by the fact there was no use of the often-repeated message that “housing is for living in but not for speculation”, which had been a key part of policy-making since 2016, Bloomberg News said.

Shanghai climbed more

than two percent, while Mumbai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Manila and Jakarta also rose, though Tokyo and Wellington dipped. London was flat, while Paris and Frankfurt were in the red.

The prospect of a boost to demand from China’s measures also lifted oil prices on Monday, with both main contracts jumping more than two percent, though they inched slightly lower in afternoon Asian trade on Tuesday.

However, Kiyong Seong at Societe Generale added: “Overall, the Politburo fell short of so-called ‘bazooka stimulus’.

“I don’t expect a sus-

tained impact on the market unless there is a series of strong concrete steps.”

The advances followed a positive performance on Wall Street, where the Dow chalked up an eleventh-straight gain, its best run since 2017.

US markets are enjoying a strong 2023 so far as investors grow increasingly confident the Federal Reserve will make this week’s expected rate hike its last, after more than a year of tightening.

Falling inflation and figures suggesting the country’s economy remained in rude health have fanned hopes that officials can bring prices under control

without causing a recession. A broadly positive earnings season so far has also lifted spirits on trading floors, while investors will be keeping a close eye on releases this week from Google owner Alphabet, Facebook parent Meta and Microsoft.

The European Central Bank’s policy decision is also on hand, with some observers predicting it is close to bringing the curtain down on its own tightening campaign.

Its gathering comes after news that eurozone economic activity shrank at its fastest rate for eight months in July owing to cuts in manufacturing.



In brief

Hammad wins diamond category

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Hammad Hadi Khan has stunned the world with his masterful command on words and won the Diamonds category of the World Scrabble Championship (WES-PAC 2023) which entered the final stages at Las Vegas, USA. After the conclusion of Diamonds and Open categories, Hammad Hadi Khan won 21 games out of 24 with a spread of 1854, said a press release. Hammad's dominance was so pronounced that he was declared a winner with three games to go. Jeremy Khoo of Singapore was the runner-up with 16 wins while Stefan Kac of USA finished 3rd with 15 wins. This was the third international title for Hammad Hadi. He has previously won the Princess Cup in Thailand 2017 and the open division of World Scrabble Championship in England 2018. The open division was won by Charles Osadolor of Nigeria while his compatriot Emmanuel Egebele was the runner-up. Pakistan's M. Inayatullah finished 3rd with 15 wins out of 24 and a spread of 973. Another Pakistani Tariq Pervez finished 7th. The championship would conclude with the end of the premier division on Wednesday. More than 200 Top World's players including several former world champions were participating in the championship.

Street Child Football squad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan street child football squad has been named for the World Youth Football Cup 'Norway Cup' to be held in Norway from Thursday (July 27). According to Pakistan Street Child, the training camp of the National Street Child Football Team in preparations for the mega event would continue till Wednesday here at Pakistan Sports Complex. The squad includes Forwards: Tofail Shinwari, Faisal, Shamir Ali, Saud; Midfielders: Abdul Wahab, Muhammad Ali, Ali Asif, Ahmed Razi; Defenders: Muhammad Adeel, Abid Ali, Obaidullah, Asad Nasir; Goalkeeper: Abdullah, Sahil. Pakistan would face Norwegian club Frog Oslo in the first match on July 30. The management of Pakistan Street Child Football Team organized trials for Norway Cup last month across the country in which thousands of youngsters participated. It should be mentioned that Pakistan Street Child Football Team has been the runner-up in the Street Child Football World Cup held in Qatar and has secured the second position in Norway Cup 2015 and third position in Norway Cup 2016.

James' eldest son stable

NEW YORK (Agencies): Bronny James, the eldest son of basketball great LeBron James, is in a stable condition after suffering a cardiac arrest, a spokesperson for the family said. A statement to ESPN said the 18-year-old was training with the University of Southern California (USC) basketball team when the incident happened. "Medical staff was able to treat Bronny and take him to the hospital," it read. "He is now in stable condition and no longer in ICU (intensive care unit)." It added: "We ask for respect and privacy for the James family and we will update media when there is more information.

Pakistan takes 12-run lead over Sri Lanka at stumps in rain-hit 2nd test

COLOMBO (AP): Pakistan took a 12-run lead over Sri Lanka in the second test on Tuesday with eight first-innings wickets left after only 10 overs were bowled on the rain-hit second day. Pakistan was 178-2 at stumps at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

All the play was in the morning session with an early lunch taken because of heavy rain. The rain had stopped by the afternoon but the outfield was wet and, after tea, the umpires

decided to call off play for the day and resume 15 minutes early on Wednesday.

Resuming on the overnight score of 145-2, Pakistan moved past Sri Lanka's first-innings total of 166 before a downpour forced the players off the field.

Pakistan scored 33 runs during the 43 minutes of play. Opener Abdullah Shaffique has reached 87 while captain Babar Azam is 28 not out in a 57-run

unbroken partnership for the third wicket.

Pakistan needed only 48.4 overs to dismiss Sri Lanka on Monday's opening day after the visitors opted to bat first having won the toss. Leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed claimed four wickets while Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi shared four wickets between them. Pakistan won the first test in Galle by four wickets and needs only a draw to clinch the two-match series.

Peshawar, Mardan record victories in PM Youth Talent Hunt Women Football League

PESHAWAR (APP): Super-fit Peshawar and strong Mardan recorded victories against their respective rivals Hazara and Bannu in the ongoing Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Women Football League being played at Abdul Wali Khan sports Complex Charsadda on Tuesday.

So far Peshawar and Mardan are leading the points table and have confirmed their place to play the final. Peshawar played four matches and secured victory in all while Mardan struggled at the second position behind Peshawar which played four matches with two wins, one draw against Hazara and a loss against Peshawar.

Overall Peshawar is heading unbeaten in the League. The final and prize distribution ceremony will be played

on Wednesday afternoon.

In the matches, Peshawar defeated Hazara by 5-1 in a thrilling battle as till the end of the first session both Peshawar and Hazara were locked in a goalless draw and it was the second session in which Peshawar scored five goals against Hazara while Hazara reduced the margin once.

Peshawar took the lead through a spectacular move made by right winger Maria Khan along with skipper Kalsoom and succeeded in netting a fine goal on the field attempt.

Soon after Peshawar Region led, Hazara tied the tally through Irsa Khan on the field attempt. For Peshawar Aysha, Humaira Sher and Maria scored one goal each on the penalty kick awarded to them in the second session due to foul

play by the Hazara players.

It was in the last moment when skipper Peshawar Kalsoom netted a fine goal to make the tally 5-1. Four penalty kicks were awarded to Peshawar in the second session but one was nicely intercepted by Hazara goalkeeper Salma.

In the second match, Mardan defeated Bannu by 4-0 in another one-sided match. Mardan fully dominated the proceedings and did not allow Bannu to play with free hands. For Mardan Adeena, Nayab, Aysha, Sapna scored one goal each. Sana, Huma, Reema also played well.

Now Swat will face Bannu and Mardan will face Hazara in the last league matches on Wednesday morning for position matches while the final will be played in the afternoon.

India women's cricket captain slammed for 'deplorable' behaviour



MIRPUR (Agencies): India women's cricket captain Harmanpreet Kaur is being criticised for being a bad example after she smashed the stumps and took a verbal swipe at umpires in a match against Bangladesh.

Media reports said Kaur could be fined 75 percent of her match fee and is also in danger of a two-game ban for her behaviour in the One-Day International (ODI), which ended in a rare tie on Saturday.

After umpire Tanvir Ahmed declared her caught at slip during the match, Kaur smashed the stumps with her bat and appeared to remonstrate with him before making a gesture towards the crowd, ESPNcricinfo reported.

Kaur hit the stumps after being given out on 14 and later said the umpiring was "pathetic". She was then heard telling her opposite number Nigar Sultana to invite the umpires on stage after the post-match presentation, forcing the Bangladesh play-

ers to opt out of a joint photo session.

"I have been watching cricket for a long time, but have never seen anyone behave that way India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur did after the game," former women's captain Diana Edulji wrote in her column in the Indian Express on Tuesday.

"She has set a bad example for her teammates. I say that because juniors look up to seniors, and this, over a period of time, can impact the team culture," Edulji said. "It was deplorable to see Harmanpreet call the umpires to pose with the Bangladesh team, suggesting that they were part of the team and playing for them." Indian men's World Cup winner Madan Lal also blasted Kaur.

"Harmanpreet's behaviour against the Bangladesh women's team was pathetic," Lal tweeted. "She is not bigger than the game. She got a very bad name for Indian cricket. BCCI [Board of Control for Cricket in India] should take very strict disciplinary action."

Kaur is in danger of becoming the first woman cricketer to be found guilty of a Level 2 breach of the International Cricket Council (ICC) code of conduct, which deals with player behaviour, ESPNcricinfo said. Cricket analyst Anis Sajjan told Indian broadcaster NDTV that Kaur's behaviour was "disgraceful".

"The BCCI and also the ICC should act against her," he said. "I think she should be banned for a couple of matches."

Pakistan's Ushna, Sarah beat Guam in Billie Jean King Cup

KUALA LUMPUR (Agencies): Ushna Sohail and Sarah Ibrahim guided Pakistan women's tennis team to a thrilling 2-1 victory over Guam in the Billie Jean King Cup on Monday.

Pakistan's pair of Ushna and Sarah recovered from a set down to claim a sensational 4-6,6-0,7-6(2) victory in the opening round of the Billie Jean King Cup.

Losing the first set by 4-6, the national pair hit back in style by winning the second without dropping a point. The third and decider frame went right down to the wire but Ushna and Sarah displayed nerves of steel to claim a narrow victory.

Ushna Sohail was equally impressive in the single's competition as she outclassed Guam's Sydney Packbier with a straight-set victory. Meanwhile, Sarah Ibrahim failed to produce an alike result in her singles clash with Fremont Gibson, losing 3-6,4-6.

Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) president Senator Salim Saifullah Khan lauded the national team for their initial success in the tournament while also expressing hope for a much better for the rest of the tournament. "The President of PTF, Senator Salim Saifullah Khan and the Executive Committee of PTF extend-



ed their felicitation for their initial success, with the hope that the team would display much better results with full zeal and enthusiasm in the next upcoming matches," said PTF in a statement.

"Moreover, the President wishes them all the very best for the rest of the tournament," it added. It is worth mentioning here that the Pakistan women's Tennis team reached here on Sunday to participate in the ongoing Billie Jean King Cup, being held from 22nd July to 28th July 2023. The national team features non-playing captain Sara Mansoor, Sara Ibrahim Khan, Ushna Sohail, Amna Ali Qayum and Meheq Khokhar.



LONDON: Pat Cummins of Australia bowls during the Australia Nets Session at The Kia Oval.

Cycling training camp at Korea

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two Pakistani cyclists Syed Aqib Shah and Mohsin Khan were featured in the cycling training camp in Korea.

According to Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) President Syed Azhar Ali Shah, the training camp which began on Tuesday (July 25) would run till August 21.

He said cyclists Syed Aqib Shah and Mohsin Khan, along with coach Sarmad were participating in the camp. The camp will help in the promotion of cycling in Pakistan. All expenses of the camp will be borne by the Korea Cycling Federation.

Shah said Pakistan Cycling Federation was the national governing body of cycling in Pakistan. Founded with an aim for promoting and developing cycling at all levels, the Federation is dedicated to creating opportunities for cyclists to excel at national and international levels, he said. By organizing events, providing coaching, and supporting athletes, the Pakistan Cycling Federation strives to nurture talent and take the sport to new heights in the country, he said.

PCB announces Pakistan women's squad

LAHORE (Web Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board on Tuesday announced the women's squad for the Asian Games, which will be held in China's Hangzhou.

Left-arm spinner Anoosha Nasir and right-handed batter Shawaal Zulfiqar have been rewarded for their strong performances in the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup and Emerging Women's Teams Asia Cup with maiden call-ups in Pakistan's senior women's squad for the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China. The 15-player squad also features Diana Baig who makes a return to international cricket after recovering from a finger injury that she sustained in the third and final One-Day International against Australia in January this year.

Pakistan women's team that have won gold medals in the last two editions, held in Guangzhou, China in 2010 and Incheon, South Korea 2014, and will be aiming for a hat-trick when they feature in this year's event scheduled to take place from 19 to 26 September. The event will be played in T20 format.

Pakistan women's team as per the ICC T20I rankings and tournament's rule will feature in the event from the quarter-finals scheduled to take place from 22 to 24 September. The semi-finals will be played on 25 September, while the final will take place on 26 September. The match for Bronze medal will also take place on Tuesday, 26 September.

The 15-member squad was finalised after deliberations amongst the women's selection committee led by Saleem Jaffar, head coach Mark Coles and captain Nida Dar.

Squad: Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Anoosha Nasir, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Muneeba Ali, Najiha Alvi, Nashra Sundhu, Nataliya Parvaiz, Omaisma Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah and Umm-e-Hani

Amir: Derbyshire sign former Pakistan bowler for 2024 season

LONDON (Agencies): Derbyshire have signed former Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir as an overseas player for the first half of next season.

Amir will play in the first half of the County Championship campaign in 2024 and the T20 Blast group stages. The 31-year-old will reunite with Derbyshire head of cricket and former Pakistan national coach Mickey Arthur.

"Mohammad is a world-renowned fast bowler and someone who I am delighted to bring to Derbyshire," said Arthur. "I know all about his qual-

ity - he has been a big-game player throughout his career and that's something I've seen first-hand."

Amir took 259 international wickets in 147 matches for Pakistan across all formats, including 119 Test dismissals, and was a key member of the side which won the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy under Arthur.

The paceman has County Championship experience with Essex as well as a shorter stay with Gloucestershire, and has also played in The Hundred for London Spirit.

Overall, Amir has claimed 266 first-class

wickets at an average of just 22.63, and 287 T20 scalps across the globe at 22.28.

"I've enjoyed my experiences of county cricket in the past and joining up with Mickey, who I've had so much success with internationally, is something I'm looking forward to," he said.

"The County Championship is so special and I've always enjoyed playing first-class cricket in England. I've spoken to Mickey about the quality in the squad and I want to put in the performances to help Derbyshire challenge in red and white-ball cricket next summer."

Tanveer back from World Archery Para C'ship, secures 7th position

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's visually impaired archer Tanveer Ahmed has returned home after competing in the World Archery Para Championship 2023 at Pilsen Czech Republic.

Tanveer, who was ranked World No 7 in the mega event started the Championship with a thumping win against John D Hill of USA and reached the quarterfinals where he gave a tough fight but was unable to beat No 1 ranked Steve Prowse of UK.

Tanveer hopes to perform best in the upcoming events including IBSA World Games 2023 and British Nationals next month. The World Archery Para Championships 2023, was held in Pilsen, Czech Republic from July 17 to 23.

It may be mentioned here that the 39-year-old Tanveer claimed the first-ever silver medal for the country in the last edition of the



Championships that was held in Dubai, last year.

"That was my first appearance in the event and I returned home with a silver medal. Now I'm targeting another medal; hopefully, gold this time," added Tanveer, who has low vision and shoots blindfolded.

Tanveer has won several medals in national and international competitions since taking on archery in 2017. Prior to that, he was a blind cricketer and he showcased his talent for 16 years. "I've been a cricketer. But it is archery that gave me real recognition."

The 2022 has been a year of success for him as he earned five international medals, including the first-ever mix team gold medal in Andorra International Open for VI Archery, a silver medal in the 30-metre individual event of VI Archery and a bronze medal in 18-metre individual event of VI Archery in Andorra International Open for VI Archery, a bronze medal in World Ranking Event & European Cup and a silver medal in World Archery Para Championships.

"I'm the only archer from Pakistan, who has won five medals in a calendar year," he said. The 2023 World Games was the largest high-level international event for athletes with visual impairment, with more than 1250 competitors from 70 nations. The games staged every four years are the pinnacle of the international sporting calendar outside the Paralympic Games.

Mbappe spectre looms over PSG draw with Ronaldo's Al Nassr

OSAKA (Agencies): The spectre of superstar striker Kylian Mbappe loomed over Paris Saint-Germain on Tuesday as they played out a 0-0 draw with Cristiano Ronaldo's Al Nassr in Osaka.

Mbappe was sensationally left out of the squad on the eve of PSG's departure for their Asian tour, casting doubt on his future at the French champions.

The club has received a world record bid of 300 million euros (\$333 million) from Saudi Arabian side Al Hilal, a source close to the negotiations told AFP on Monday.

Such a transfer could only be made with the agreement of Mbappe, who has never expressed an interest in moving to the fast-growing Saudi league.

Among other clubs to have expressed an interest in the most potent forward in world football are Real Madrid, the source said.

Former PSG and Cameroon striker Patrick M'Boma, who now works

with PSG's academies in Japan, expressed his disappointment at the ongoing impasse and said he hoped "a solution will be found quickly because he's a player we want to watch".

Japanese fans had flocked to stadiums to see Lionel Messi, Mbappe and Neymar strut their stuff in a series of friendlies for PSG last year, but with none of that trio on show this time, interest has waned.

Messi has departed for Major League Soccer side Inter Miami and Neymar has been out with a knee injury since February and only just returned to full training. The impact of that change in circumstances was evident in the relatively modest crowd of 25,432 in Osaka, and they didn't have much to cheer as PSG and Al Nassr played out a goalless 90 minutes.

"Kylian Mbappe is a great player and he's not here," PSG defender Danilo Pereira said after the game.

"That's a decision of the club, I can't comment."

The closest either side came to scoring was in just the second minute as Carlos Soler tried an ambitious free-kick from distance, but Al Nassr goalkeeper Nawaf Alaqidi was equal to the attempt. Ronaldo also drew cries from the spectators on a couple of occasions.

First he was denied from six yards by Gianluigi Donnarumma, before an acrobatic overhead kick went wide of the target -- although it wouldn't have counted because he was offside. Ultimately, Mbappe's absence was again the major talking point though.

There have been suggestions that he would not be selected for an entire year if he fails to find a solution with PSG. The 24-year-old has one year left on his contract with the club, who want him to leave now rather than for nothing next summer.

PSG will next play Cerezo Osaka on Friday, before travelling to Tokyo to take on Inter Milan.



In brief

IRSA releases 499,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 499,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 595,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1530.00 feet and was 132.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 335,600 cusecs and 301,300 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1218.70 feet, which was 168.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 71,500 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 360,100, 395,200, 228,800 and 181,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 83,900 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 86,600 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Six street criminals held

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Tuesday arrested six street criminals and recovered Rs 100,000 cash, three motorcycles, weapons, and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Gujjar Khan police arrested six members of the Samri gang including Shehzad, Tayyab, Qamar, Kashif, Muhammad Ali, and Usman. He informed that police recovered cash, motorcycles, weapons, and other items from the possession of the arrested accused after the identification parade. Ringleaders of the gang namely Samar Abbas alias Samri, Naveed and Faiz ul Rehman were arrested earlier and sent to jail. He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Gujjar Khan Police Station on the directives of the Superintendent of Police Sadder Muhammad Nabeel Khokhar conducted a raid and managed to net the accused. As per the preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he said.

AIOU reviews exam strategies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Tuesday said that we need to take pre-emptive measures to improve the admission and examination systems. He was presiding over an online meeting of regional directors. The vice chancellor said regional directors should continuously visit examination centres to ensure transparency in the examination system. He further said regional directors of AIOU need to be more active to convey the message of the university to the backward areas of the country so that a maximum number of people can be included in the educational network. Vice-Chancellor directed the regional heads to appoint examination staff, especially Distribution Inspectors, Mobile Inspectors, Superintendents, and Invigilators purely based on merit. Dr. Nasir Mahmood also allowed that results awaiting students can apply for admission and directed regional heads to especially focus on continuing students and take necessary steps to retain the students until they complete the program. The vice chancellor has set the target of admissions of at least 6 lakh students for the autumn semester 2023 and directed the regional directors to play their role in achieving the target.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi planting a sapling as part of monsoon plantation season at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

HEC launches new policy for MS, PhD Programmes from Fall 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has unveiled its highly anticipated Graduate Education Policy 2023 (GEP-2023).

According to HEC, the policy that marks a crucial milestone for higher education institutions in Pakistan can be viewed at www.hec.gov.pk/site/GEP. It is effective and applicable from the Fall 2023 semester onwards.

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

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

and suggests mechanisms to strengthen the implementation of these principles at the institutional level, ensuring consistency and transparency. GEP-2023 recognises the significance of a rigorous and comprehensive degree-obtaining process. It introduces detailed guidelines for conducting comprehensive examinations, writing doctoral dissertations, and interpreting similarity reports.

These guidelines are designed to enhance academic standards, foster originality, and maintain the integrity and ethics of research and study within higher education institutions. A key aspect of the new policy is its emphasis on doctoral research governance. It delineates the roles and responsibilities of supervisors, supervisees, and the departments overseeing advanced studies and research.

Member Governance, Innovation & Reforms at the Planning Commission, Dr Adnan Rafiq outlined the essential components of STAR Governance system. He said Pakistan Governance Forum-2023 was a testament to the government's commitment to strengthening democratic principles and fostering a better Pakistan for all its citizens. Dr Rafique emphasized the need for harmony and teamwork within the constitutional framework and necessity of anticipating and adapting to emerging global challenges. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Pakistan Samuel Rizk in his address acknowledged the importance of the forum's discussions in shaping a governance roadmap that supported Pakistan's inclusive growth and development.

Alfred North "The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order." Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the importance of the five-E framework for Pakistan's progress, focusing on Exports, E-Pakistan (digital revolution), Environment, Energy, and Equity & Empowerment.

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He stressed the need for a balanced approach that embraced change while preserving the stability and order in society.

The minister said the 20th century saw two models of rapid transformation; one was Glasnost and Perestroika undertaken by Mikhail Gorbachev that 'model of change' brought the collapse of the Soviet Union. The other was undertaken by Deng Xiaoping in China which brought about a mega transformation in China by wiping out poverty and the journey towards prosperity continued.

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under different themes in which experts shared their expertise, giving solutions to the confronted challenges in diverse fields. In the inaugural session, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal highlighted the critical role of good governance in the country to effectively confront challenges amid the rapid global transformation. He acknowledged the challenges posed by rapid technological advancements, social transformation, and the growing demand for active citizen participation in governance.

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Woman booked for torturing maid

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad police have registered a case against a woman on the charges of torturing a teenaged maid.

The police, in a post on their official Twitter account late Monday night, confirmed that they had initiated legal proceedings against the accused on the complaint of the victim's father.

"The police are actively pursuing the arrest of the accused, and a thorough investigation will be conducted with adherence to legal protocols. The authorities have emphasized that the law will be upheld impartially for all individuals involved," it added.

According to the First Information Report (FIR) registered the Humak Police Station, the victim's father, Manga Khan, reported that he had sent his daughter, aged between 13 to 14 years, to work at the civil judge's residence in Islamabad at the monthly salary of Rs 10,000. She was tortured by the wife of the civil judge, he alleged.

He found his daughter in a traumatized state with visible injuries, he added.

The police said they were taking the allegations seriously and would investigate the matter diligently.

Air pollution low in Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The repeated monsoon rainfalls in the country plummeted the scorching heat across the country in general but also help improve federal capital's air quality in particular on Tuesday.

The air pollution in the metropolis remained low since the onset of the recent monsoon spell as prolonged rainy weather helped in containing air pollutants ration in the atmosphere.

The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) daily air quality report indicated a reduced ratio of air pollutants, recorded below permissible limits, and the air quality was healthy. The Agency is responsible to ensure the protection of the environment under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997. The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was a hazardous atmospheric contaminant, remained 14.01 micro grammes per cubic meter on average which was higher than the NEQS of 35 micro-grammes per cubic meter and denoted the air quality unhealthy.

Rana Tanveer launches Learning Center for Transgenders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday inaugurated the Inclusive Learning Center for Khawajasara (Transgenders). Addressing the inaugural ceremony here at Wasif Ali Shaheed Model School for Boys, G11/2, Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain expressed his pleasure and gratitude to witness the inauguration of this centre, highlighting the nobility of the initiative.

He said the country today witnessed a historic moment of progress and inclusivity as they (transgenders) will also get an education. "It is their right to receive education, just like any other member of this state," he asserted.

Emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, the Minister stated, "Education should be given to every individual, regardless of their gender, race, and religion." He firmly believed that by providing opportunities to the transgender community, they can play a vital role in the development of Pakistan.

He stated that the Inclusive Learning Center for Khawajasara (Transgender) represents a bold step towards building a more inclusive and equal society, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the nation's progress. As we embark on this transformative journey, we invite the support and collaboration of all stakeholders, including government institutions, private sector entities, and civil society organizations, to ensure the success and sustainability of this noble endeavor. The Minister extended his gratitude to all stakeholders, including the Managing Director of the National Education Foundation (NEF), for their role in making this project a reality.

He also expressed his commitment to establishing a complete formal educational institute in the future, specifically tailored to enroll transgender learners for comprehensive education. Additionally, Minister Hussain stressed the importance of vocational skills to ensure economic stability for the transgender community. Mr. Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary, Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, who was also there highlighted the government's responsibility to educate children aged 5-16 years and explained how this project was initiated under the direction of the Minister.

The accelerated learning plan will provide transgender individuals with basic education, and subsequently, they will be linked with vocational training institutes to acquire essential skills. Mr. Chaudhary announced a Rs. 500 honorarium per day for learners on showing 75% attendance, to mitigate their economic challenges and to encourage them to get education. Managing Director of the National Education Foundation, Tahira S. Shaikh, welcomed the distinguished guests and expressed her heartfelt thanks to Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain and Mr. Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary, Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, for their vision and unwavering support. Transgender rights activists Ms. Nayyab Ali and Miss Saba Gul also expressed their heartfelt gratitude to all stakeholders and the government for this groundbreaking initiative.

The Mangla Dam Management Authority briefed that the facility is nearly 76 per cent filled of its full capacity and experiencing low-level flood conditions. It was informed that detailed mock exercises were planned with relevant authorities to handle monsoon contingencies. The FFD reported that there is less chance of rainfalls over catchment areas of major rivers till July 26. However, heavy rain spells are expected from July 27th to 30 over catchment areas of rivers Indus & Kabul which may trigger flash flooding and high flows in the tributaries of these rivers. The SUPARCO provided updates on the current situation of Badswat Glacial lake and shared satellite images of hazard-prone GLOF sites in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkwa.

The PCIW briefed about the current situation of Indian Dams including Bakhra, Pong and Thein and informed that releases from these reservoirs are still within limits. The Acting Chairman NDMA also emphasized undertaking public awareness campaigns to maximise the general public's knowledge on risk associated with monsoon season and enhance vigilant monitoring of rivers and reservoirs during monsoon season.

The Acting Chairman NDMA reviewed the situation of major Dams and the regulation of river flows during ongoing monsoon spells.

The Tarbela Dam Management briefed that 80 percent has been filled of its full capacity, howsoever there is no flood-like situation expected and impacts on downstream population as of now.

Experts stress investment in research, development

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The 12th meeting of Steering Committee of Federal Government Artists Welfare Fund was held here at National Heritage and Culture Division under the chairmanship of Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political, Public Affairs, National Heritage and Culture Engr Amir Muqam.

The meeting discussed various proposals to help out the extremely deserving and needy artists of the country.

The meeting was attended by Secretary National Heritage and Culture Division Fareena Mazhar, Joint Secretary Muzafar Ali Burki and other senior officials of the Division. The meeting was also attended by members of the Steering Committee Asghar Nadeem Syed, Shahid Mahmood Nadeem, Sohail Ahmed, Mukhtiar Anjum Muradabadi, Dr. Arfa Syeda Zehra, Muhammad

Ahmed Shah, Noor ul Huda Shah, Laila Khan, Afsarul Mulk, Karan Khan, Afzal Murad, Allah Dino Baloch, Sardar Ishtiaq Ahmed Atish and Zafar Waqar Taj.

Adviser to Prime Minister Engr Amir Muqam welcomed the members of the steering committee in the meeting.

He stressed on prompt disbursement of artists welfare fund to provide timely financial support to artists in dire need of financial assistance.

The Steering Committee approved the implementation status of the 11th meeting.

The committee granted principal approval of disbursement of fund to the applicant artists duly scrutinized and recommended by provincial and regional sub-committees. The committee also recommended that the regional members of the committee may be asked to scrutinize the applicant names before recommendation of financial assistance in future.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain addressing a launching ceremony of Inclusive Learning Center at IMS for boys G-11/2.

ANF seizes 265 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 265 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 60 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Qatar-bound passenger, resident of Azad Kashmir who was going on flight no QR-633 from Islamabad International Airport.

On the pointation of the accused, a facilitator was also arrested along with a vehicle near Bahria Town Rawalpindi. 624 grams heroin was recovered from the accused resident of Azad Kashmir.

In another operation at Islamabad International Airport, narcotics was recovered from the possession of a Riyadh-bound passenger, resident of Upper Dir, going on flight no PK-753.

In third operation, 91.2 kg hashish and 73.2 kg opium were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Kot Abdul Malik Motorway Toll Plaza Sheikhupura.

During the operation, the accused resident of Islamabad was also arrested.

In fourth operation, 78 kg heroin was recovered from secret cavities of a vehicle near Pabi-Nowshera Road.

An accused resident of Sialkot who was trying to smuggle heroin from Peshawar to Punjab was arrested.

In fifth operation, 15 kg hashish was recovered from a deserted area of Khyber.

In sixth operation, 700 grams weed was recovered from the possession of an accused, resident of Sargodha arrested from Mykolachi Bypass, Karachi area.

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

36 releases from prison

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) ministry of foreign affairs said early Tuesday that 36 Afghans being held in neighbor country's jail have been released. According to a statement issued by the ministry, the freed detainees were returned to Afghanistan at the expense of the IEA government. So far, 2,472 Afghan detainees have been freed from neighbor country's prisoners since the IEA embarked on talks to secure their release.

The Frontier Post

Muharram 07, 1445 — Wednesday, July 26, 2023

New market inaugurated

BADAKHSHAN (Agencies): A new market for local products and handicrafts was inaugurated by the Pamir Handicrafts Association in Faizabad City, the provincial capital of Badakhshan, local officials said. The market has 25 shops and two halls, where traders can sell items such as clothes, rugs, carpets, vests, shawls, felt, and leather, all made by hand in Badakhshan. The market was funded by Japan and built on land bought by 25 traders, five of whom are women.

Mutual respect basis for IEA's positive relations with all countries: Kabir

KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, in a meeting with the Afghan ambassador to China, said that the Islamic Emirate wants good interaction with all countries including China, in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

According to a statement from the office of Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Afghan ambassador to China, Sayed Mohiuddin Sadat has shared information about the activities and

achievements of the Afghan embassy in the neighboring country with the Deputy Prime Minister during the meeting.

Businessmen, students, and Afghans living in China are pleased with the services offered by the Afghan embassy, he said, adding that the diplomatic mission has always attempted to respond to any challenges Afghan people have in the country in a timely manner.

"Our efforts continue to strengthen relations between the two countries and

attract Chinese investors to Afghanistan..."", he concluded.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, for his part, praised the performance of the Afghan embassy in China and stated that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan wants positive interactions with all countries, including China, in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

To strengthen the power supply system, a procurement package worth 1.7 billion Afghanis has been drafted said Da Afghan Breshna Sherkat officials.

OCHA mobilizing humanitarian response for flood victims

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies): The United Nations says the organization's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) is dealing with the victims of the recent floods in the central and eastern regions of Afghanistan in order to address their needs.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, UN's Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General Farhan Haq said that OCHA employees have met with local officials and partners to coordinate and assess the areas affected by the floods in order to take care of the victims.

"The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs responding to massive flash flooding at the central and eastern regions of the country. During a field mission to the affected area today [Monday], OCHA staff met with authorities and partners to coordinate assessments and mobilize the humanitarian response," said Farhan Haq.

"The floods have reportedly killed at least 37 people in Kabul and Maidan Wardak provinces. Provincial authorities say dozens of homes are damaged and some 500 acres of agricultural land have been washed away in Nangarhar and Kunar provinces, he added.

In addition, the government's State Ministry for Disaster Management said that based on the instruction of IEA's Prime Minister, 100,000 AFN have been distributed to the families of those who lost their lives and 50,000 AFN to the injured.

By Tuesday, officials said the devastating floods have killed 41 people and injured 57 in ten provinces of the country over the past few days.

The State Ministry for Disaster Management said that 920 residential houses and 7,000 acres of agricultural land have been damaged as a result of these floods.

According to the ministry, hundreds of livestock have also died.

Afghanistan's meteorological department meanwhile has warned of heavy rain and flash floods across 22 central and eastern provinces on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The affected provinces are Nuristan, Kunar, Laghman, Kapisa, Parwan, Panjshir, Nangarhar, Kabul, Logar, Paktia, Khost, Ghazni, Maidan Wardak, Bamiyan, Ghor, Paktika, Zabul, Daikundi, Uruzgan, Helmand, Kandahar and Farah provinces. The amount of rainfall is between 10 - 40 mm in different areas.

Fatal floods claim lives of 5 members of family

PAGHMAN (TOLONews): A fatal flood hit several areas of Paghman district, leaving five members of a family dead.

TOLONews interviewed relatives of the victims of floods in the Arghandi area of Paghman district.

"The floods took five people, who were martyred. They were missing and we were searching for them and we were finally able to find a woman in the evening and bury her," said Haikal, a relative of the victim. Haikal's family was living alongside three other families in a house consisting of 12 rooms.

According to the residents, the flood occurred on Saturday around 2:00 AM. People affected by the floods called on the humanitarian organization to provide them with assistance.

"The flood came at 2:00AM and we were all here and there were 30 people. The flood destroyed these rooms," said Barialai, a local resident.

"Our house with 12 rooms collapsed from the flood. We don't have anywhere else. We should be assisted," said Zazai, a flood affected person.

Foreign Minister asks AKF to step up help to preserve historical sites



KABUL (Agencies): Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met with the Aga Khan Foundation's CEO on Tuesday and asked for further cooperation over the restoration and preservation of historical monuments and sites in the country.

Muttaqi met with the new Aga Khan Foundation chief for Afghanistan Najmuddin Najm, and his accompanying delegation and said the organization could do more to help safeguard the sites.

Najm in turn shared

information about the organization's mission in Afghanistan and its activities in the health, educational, agricultural, and cultural sectors as well as economic development projects, the response to natural disasters, and reconstruction

of 140 cultural, heritage and historical sites in Afghanistan.

Muttaqi mentioned the IEA's appreciation for the Aga Khan Foundation's assistance and said it was crucial for the development of Afghanistan.

Thousands of beauty parlours to close under new Taliban order

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

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

"We used to come here to spend time talking about our future together. Now even this right has been taken away from us," said Bahara, a customer at a Kabul salon.

"Women are not allowed to enter entertainment places, so what can we do? Where can we go to enjoy ourselves? Where can we gather to meet each other?"

Last week, security officials shot into the air and used firehoses in Kabul to disperse dozens of women protesting against the order.

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

It said it made the order because extravagant sums spent on makeovers caused hardship for poor families and that some treatments at the salons were un-Islamic. Too much make-up pre-

vented women from proper ablutions for prayer, the ministry said, while eyelash extensions and hair weaving were also forbidden.

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

Beauty parlours mushroomed across Kabul and other Afghan cities in the 20 years that United States-led forces occupied the country. They were seen as a safe place to gather and socialise away from men and provided vital business opportunities for women.

Thousands of female government workers either lost their jobs when the Taliban took over or are being paid to stay at home.

But the beauty parlour ban will see another 60,000 women lose their income from work at some 12,000 salons, according to the Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A report to the UN's Human Rights Council last month by Richard Bennett, the special rapporteur for Afghanistan, said the plight of women and girls in the country "was among the worst in the world".

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

Flood victims in Wardak call for assistance

WARDAK (TOLONews): The residents of Wardak, who have been affected by the recent floods, called on the Islamic Emirate and aid organizations to provide them with assistance.

The residents said that the floods have destroyed their shelters and lands.

On Saturday night, floods hit Jalriz, Chak, Narkh and Jaghato districts in the province.

"We call on the international community and the interim government to provide urgent assistance with these people" said Mohib-ullah, a resident of Wardak.

"Their condition is severe. There is no street, no bridge, no land, no livestock, and everything has been damaged," said a flood affected person in Wardak.

Meanwhile, provincial officials in a joint conference with the representatives of humanitarian NGOs, urged the domestic and international organizations to provide essential



assistance to the vulnerable people.

"I hope you help in the reconstruction of the houses, providing food. Those organizations who mentioned giving cash-aid, I thank them," said Bakhtiar Maaz, governor of Wardak

province.

However, officials of some aid organizations said that assistance has been provided to people affected by flooding in the province.

"The families which are being surveyed will receive food assistance and tents,"

said Mohammad Omar Hashimi, a UN official for the central zone.

Earlier, provincial department of Disaster Management told TOLONews that at least 30 people have been killed and 25 others injured by the floods.

Domestic product exports increased

HERAT (TOLONews): With the export of a shipment of non-alcoholic beverages from Herat's Industrial City area to the United States, the factory owners hope that the export of the country's domestic products will increase.

Industrial owners considered the problems in the country's banking system and the challenge of transferring cash a big obstacle to their exports.

Forty-five tons of non-alcoholic beverages are supposed to be exported to California in the United States through the port of Karachi, and most of these

beverages are pomegranate juice.

"Afghanistan is a small country and today has exports to the big economic country, the US, and it's a big achievement for industry owners and Afghanistan," said Alladdin Bahadur, head of the company.

Non-alcoholic beverages were exported after the approval of the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan and the government of the United States of America.

"Our product has been approved by the World Health Organization

(WHO) and after this approval, we were honored to export our product abroad," said Khir Ahmad Tahiri, head of the laboratory.

More than 600 people work in this non-alcoholic beverage factory in Herat Industrial City.

"If there are large factories in Afghanistan and people work, it is better than going to foreign countries and drowning in the waters or immigrating to Iran and other neighboring countries," said Abdul Qadeer, an employee.

According to the statistics of the Chamber of

Commerce and Investment in Herat, currently, 15 products of Herat Industrial City have been exported to various countries.

"In the industrial city of Herat province, which is currently being exported, we have more than 15 items of domestic products that are exported abroad," said Mohammad Yosef Amin, Executive Director of the Herat Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

This year, the amount of exports from Herat has increased by eleven percent compared to last year, and the value of these exported goods is \$110 million.

Shakh Qand irrigation canal inaugurated



LOGAR (Agencies): The Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) says the Shakh Qand irrigation canal construction project in Afghanistan's Logar province worth more than \$46,000 was inaugurated.

According to MoEW, the Shakh Qand canal project was inaugurated in Safid

Sang Nawabad village of Logar's Mohammad Agha district.

Dozens of local officials attended the opening ceremony, including Mohammad Ismail Akhundzadah, head of Logar sub-river basin department.

The 1,200-meter-long project is being implement-

ed with the financial support of Peace Root Institute, under the supervision of Logar sub-river assessment office and the department of agriculture and livestock. Once completed, 465 acres of agricultural land will be irrigated and water waste will be avoided.

Ban on thread export hampers local business

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Some thread producers in western Herat province have complained against the ban on thread export and said if the situation persisted they will have to shut down their factories.

They said that the ban on thread export caused decline in the price of thread in Herat as well.

Syed Hassan Hussaini, in-charge of a thread factory in Herat, said around 2,600 people were employed in their factory who arranged their expenses from this way.

He said half of thread export outside the country hampered their business and if the export did not resumed they are forced to shut their factories.

"The thread we sold for 600 afs, nobody purchased it now from us for 350 afs, we have two 2,600 workers, when our product is not sold than we face stagna-

tion and we have to close the gates of our factories," he said.

Jamaluddin Tahiri, head of the Jalaban Union said from the past one year the process of thread export had been stopped.

He said the thread is required for the local carpet production therefore its export had been stopped.

Mohammad Yousf Amin, the executive director of the provincial Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said that the Carpet Union had requested the use of local thread in carpeting making and there was no need for its export.

Due to this reason the export of thread without the permission of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is not allowed.

Mah Bibi, one of the thread factory workers, said the government should take necessary steps for the sup-

port of thread production industry.

She said with the continued stagnation of the market and the tightening of business conditions, more than thousands of families' breadwinners will lose their jobs, and this will have a direct negative impact on their lives.

Nisar Ahmad Elyas, the governor spokesperson, said after the takeover of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, export to the foreign countries had surged.

He said its living example was the export of pomegranate juice from Herat to the US.

He added the issue of halt to the thread export would be investigated by the local administration.

Support for the export of domestic products and productions in all fields will continue until more opportunities are provided for its export to foreign countries.

Blind students call for educational opportunities



KABUL (TOLONews): Blind students in the capital want to create more educational opportunities for them in the country.

They said that educational opportunities must be provided for them in every province of the country.

Bushra is a student in the third class at Roshan Dilan Technical Institute in Kabul and she hopes to be a teacher in the future.

"They took me twice and I was operated on. When I was operated on, they took me to the doctor again and told me to take an exam at the school to see if I could see or not. When they put up the board and I was not able to see, they brought me to this school," said Bushra.

"My special interest is in the science of Tajweed and Quran, which unfortunately

is lacking in Afghanistan. If the teaching of this subject is provided in Afghanistan, experienced teachers should be brought," said Mohammad Khalid, a student.

Meanwhile, Noor Mohammad Faizi, the director of Roshan Dilan Technical Institute in Kabul, asked the supporting institutions to cooperate with this institution in the field of education.

Mohammad Faizi added that the education of the blind is going on in the field of Islamic education, general education, and vocational departments.

"My request to the donors is to come here and cooperate with us in the Braille section," said Mohammad Faizi.

Officials at Roshan Dilan Technical Institute add that currently 340 blind people, including women, are being trained in this institute.



KARACHI: Sindh Information and Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon addressing a press conference.

President dismisses false harassment complaint

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday dismissed a false workplace harassment complaint against the Director General of the National Assembly Secretariat (NAS) by a female employee, saying that no one was allowed to abuse the process of law.

He observed that the female employee could not prove the charges of harassment at the workplace against the accused, that she failed to appear in the proceedings of the case despite several notices and that she had been found to be a non-punctual employee by the Internal Harassment Committee of the NAS. The President gave this decision while deciding upon a representation filed by a female Assistant Director at the National Assembly Secretariat (NAS) who had filed a workplace harassment complaint against a Director General of the NAS (the accused) before the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPAH).

The Ombudsman had referred her complaint to the Internal Harassment Committee of the National Assembly Secretariat vide its order dated 04.12.2019 to conduct an inquiry and submit a report. The complainant assailed the order by filing a repre-

sentation with the President contending that an employee had the option to prefer a complaint either to the Ombudsman or the inquiry committee and the complainant had exercised the option of preferring the complaint to the Ombudsman who had not been vested with any power to refer the complaint to the inquiry committee of the National Assembly once the option had been exercised by the complainant. The representation was rejected by the President on 30.06.2020 with the observation that the complainant would have a fair and unhindered opportunity of proving allegations before the Inquiry Committee and the Committee would ensure a just, fair and impartial inquiry into the allegations and, the accused officer would also have equal opportunity to defend himself.

The complainant then filed a petition before the Islamabad High Court against the decision of the President, which was also rejected. The Internal Harassment Committee of the National Assembly Secretariat conducted the inquiry and submitted its report to the Ombudsman and stated that the complainant had failed to prove her charge against the accused. It further said that the complainant had been held non-punctual person towards her duties.

FOSPAH noted that this report had

been lying on the file since September 2020, but had not been objected to by the complainant so far despite having knowledge of the same. FOSPAH, therefore, dismissed the complaint of the female employee, after which, she filed a representation with the President against the decision of the Ombudsman.

After conducting a hearing of the case, the President gave his decision and observed that the complaint filed before FOSPAH in 2019 pertained to alleged workplace harassment which took place in 2014 and the complainant failed to appear before the Ombudsman after submission of an inquiry report despite repeated notices and a belated review petition was filed that had rightly been rejected by the Ombudsman. He noted that repeated notices were served to the complainant for appearance but she failed to appear.

He said that the Workplace Harassment Act, 2010 had been promulgated to make provisions for the protection of women from harassment at the workplace and to recognize the fundamental right of citizens especially women for their dignity. He stated that no one was allowed to abuse the process of law. The President, therefore, rejected the representation filed by the complainant and upheld the orders of FOSPAH.

Victim's mother refuses to accept peace offer

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The mother of the 14-year-old victim, who was subjected to violence and brutally beaten by the wife of Civil Judge Asim Hafeez, said that the judge has offered to make peace over the matter but she refused it.

Earlier on Tuesday, a case was registered by the Islamabad police against Civil Judge Asim Hafeez's wife earlier today for allegedly subjecting a teenager, employed as a domestic help at their house, to severe torture. The harrowing case of the girl being brutally beaten up regularly came to light when the victim was shifted to a hospital in Lahore with serious injuries, with the family accusing Judge Hafeez's wife, Somalia, of torturing the child.

Following the case, the mother of the teenage girl claimed that the civil judge had contacted her and offered to make peace. "The judge also offered to pay the entire cost of her daughter's treatment and give extra money. However, I told him that I want justice," she said. "I told him that he should do justice in this case just like he does in the courts," said the mother, adding that they don't want to make peace as their daughter's condition is very critical.

The case has been registered at Police Station Humak on behalf of the girl's father, Manga Khan. The complainant in the first information report (FIR) said he sent his daughter to work as a domestic help on Rs10,000 monthly salary, with the reference of an acquaintance named Chaudhry Mukhtar, seven months ago. The girl's parents came to know about her being subjected to torture at the judge's house on July 23 when they went to meet her.

It may be noted that the victim's parents have said that they hadn't met her during these seven months but talked to her on the phone sometimes. "When we [complainant, his wife and her brother] entered the gate, we heard my daughter crying. Hearing that made me concerned so we went towards the room and found my daughter in wounded condition [...].", the complainant stated in the FIR. He alleged that his daughter was subjected to severe torture by the judge's wife, and there were torture marks all over the child's body.

Upon examining her condition, the parents found several injuries on the girl's entire body, with serious wounds on the head, which were "infested with maggots". The major injuries described by the complainant include swelling on lips and eyes, broken teeth, and ribs and strangling marks on the neck.

As per the FIR, the complainant has accused Somalia of torturing and keeping his daughter in illegal custody since the day she started working at the judge's house and sought action on the matter. Meanwhile, the Islamabad police said that action is being taken for the arrest of the suspect. They said that the case investigation would be done on merit and that all requirements of justice would be fulfilled.

Speaking to media, the judge had brushed aside the accusations, saying that the wounds on the girl's body were a result of eating soil from the planters kept in his house. "The girl was a house help at our home. She ate soil from the planters a month ago, which damaged her skin," the judge had said. He had said that he had got the diagnosis of the "skin condition" and treatment done from a doctor in Gujranwala, but the girl would pick and scratch her wounds after her skin started healing.

On the wound on her head, Hafeez had claimed that when they told the girl they would be dropping off the child back to her home, she banged her head on a wall. He had also said that he didn't know about the condition of the wounds on the girl's head as she kept her head covered with a scarf. "The girl used to tell us that if she went back, her mother would beat her so she did not want to go home but we left her there," Hafeez added.

"I am against physical abuse and torture incidents never happened in front of me," claimed the judge. Hafeez had said Somalia had told him the girl didn't work, so they left her with her parents in their house in Sargodha. "My wife along with the driver dropped off the girl at her home in Sargodha," said Hafeez claiming that the mother started beating the child in front of his wife as she dropped her off.

Opp leader opposes Dar as interim PM

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Raja Riaz said on Tuesday the appointment of Finance Minister Ishaq Dar as caretaker prime minister could rule out the possibility of elections in the country at least for two years. Expressing his views, Riaz said: "Instead of holding immediate elections, there is an urgent need to get the country out of crisis."

"As the Leader of the Opposition, I will recommend three names to the government for the appointment of the interim prime minister. I am consulting with the friends in the opposition to finalise the names for the caretaker prime minister," Riaz said. "I will make a final decision regarding the name of the caretaker prime minister in the first week of August with the prime minister. The names will be finalised in the first phase for the caretaker setup," he maintained.

On Monday, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif reacted to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's nomination as the caretaker prime minister. Speaking to media, Asif said: "Ishaq Dar is my brother and a friend. Dar and I share a relationship that I very much own. During Pervez Musharraf's era, we both faced jail. The possibility of Dar becoming prime minister is something I also hope for". "However, my knowledge is that there are objections to Ishaq Dar's appointment as the interim prime minister. The people will raise objections if the caretaker prime minister will be from the ruling party," he said.

15 die of rain-related incidents in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The death toll from recent rain-related incidents in KP rose to 15 on Tuesday.

According to the PDMA report, 83 houses were partially damaged and 12 houses were completely damaged due to floods and rains across the province in past 4 days. The KP Relief Department, District Administration, PDMA, Rescue 1122, Civil Defense, and related institutions were on alert, a spokesman Relief Department said. Relief materials were provided to the affected families of Chitral Upper and a detailed assessment of the damage will be started as soon as the flood waters recede in Lower Chitral, spokesman of the Relief Department added.

Indian lady Anju converts to Islam and marry her lover

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: The Indian lady Ms Anju Arvind Kumar and her lover Nasrullah from Upper Dir on Tuesday solemnised a court marriage after which the lady was renamed as Fatima, official sources told this reporter. The lady who reached the Upper Dir district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to meet her facebook friend Nasrullah, on Tuesday converted to Islam and married Nasrullah.

The couple was brought to the district courts amid strict security measures wherein the judge recorded her statement and solemnized their marriage (Nikah), a copy of which is available with Dawn. Qari Shamroz Khan tied the knot between the couple in the presence of two witnesses including Faridullah Khan and Muhammad Rahim.

Recording her statement before the court, Anju said that she had visited her friend on her free well and she was pleased to marry Nasrullah 29, his facebook friend from the area.

According to local residents the couple was brought to

the district court amid strict security measures for solemnizing the 'Nikah' and they hurriedly left the court on completion of the process. Media was not allowed to meet them. The couple left the court to enjoy the scenic spots in Lowari Top. However when the news of their marriage went viral in the media, the man denied his marriage with the Indian lady.

Ms Anju (Fathima) last night had requested all the media organizations not to disturb and harass her relatives and children as her return was in process and she will be back in two or three days.

Earlier, on Tuesday the lady told a journalist that she would be back to India soon. She said that she had visited her friend like other tourists who came to the area. The lady had denied that she was marrying her lover Nasrullah but later her statement was proven as wrong as the couple married in the court.

Meanwhile social activists from the area urged the media to avoid sensational cases in the case of Ms Anju for keeping her privacy intact. Ebrash Pasha, a

social activist working for women rights in Lower Dir told Dawn that the Indian woman Anju was a guest in Dir and should be treated like a guest and tourist. Mr Pasha said that he had legal documents of her visit and the media had to take extra care of her privacy and let her spend a good time here.

The activist said a week ago many foreign tourists had visited the Shandur festival via Dir but there was no such sensation. "India is our neighbour and people to people contact must remain and promoted", Ebrash Pasha said. He said that people of both the countries loved to visit the other side of the border as they shared history of thousands of years. The activist was of the view that there was a lot of potential for trade, tourism including echo, cultural and religious tourism on both sides of the border and both the governments must relax the policies to facilitate the citizens in people to people contact.

Ms Anju is a married woman and she has a 15-year old girl and a six-year old son from her ex-husband Arvind Kumar, whom she married in 2007.



KARACHI: A view of accumulated rainwater after heavy showers.

'I enjoyed brother-like relationship with Nawaz'

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Tuesday said he enjoyed a brother-like relationship with PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and highlighted his party's role by saying that they continued with their protest and removed the PTI government with their persistent efforts.

Fazl, who was addressing a ceremony before Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of different projects, said the sons of the soil had first right over the local mineral resources. He said Pakistan wasn't a fiefdom of anyone and added that they had

neither accepted the bogus government in the past nor would so do in the future.

The JUI-F chief promised to restore and further strengthen ties with the friendly nations. They wanted friendly relations with all big and small countries but rejected the relationship of master and slave, he made it clear. According to Fazl, who was explaining his point, everyone knows what is happening in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and China, Both the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia want to invest in Pakistan but ask what would be the next system [setup] in the country – a clear reference to the political and economic stability.

Without naming the PTI chairman, Fazl said they had sabotaged CPEC to prove their loyalty with the masters and reminded the audiences that the forefathers of JUI leadership and workers had fought against the British rulers, forcing them to leave the Subcontinent. The nation would understand that those who jammed the process of development had no right to be in power again, he remarked and noted that only the ruling alliance would ensure progress and prosperity. Work has again started mega projects in the country, the JUI-F chief said and thanked the prime minister for visiting the region again and again.

PM vows to rid country of loans

(Continued from Page 1)

Arabia, Turkey, China, Canada, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Japan, South Korea, Germany, Azerbaijan, Italy and Norway, and other relevant high officials participated in the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehabaz Sharif also said despite the history's most difficult period, the coalition government had steered the country out of economic crisis.

During the last 16 months years, the incumbent government faced the most difficult challenges like the devastating flood hit the country soon after it took charge of the office, he added. The prime minister was speaking as the chief guest at an inaugural and ground breaking ceremony of eight development projects in energy and communication sectors.

"We faced the devastating flood on one side, and inflation, the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) pressure, and political crisis on the other. Such challenging problems have never been faced by me in my whole life," he said. He said all the coalition government parties had unanimously decided to ensure economic stability at all costs, including their politics. Such a resolve on their part helped the government to bring the country out of crisis. There was record wheat production in a decade, which saved billions of dollars.

However, PTI Chairman Imran

Niazi exploited his own created situation which he used for political gains at the country's cost, he added. The prime minister said political opponents had wished for the country's default, which by the blessings of the Almighty reverted due to the efforts of incumbent government.

He said had the former regimes fully utilized the country's rich resources such as hydro power the country might have affordable and clean energy, and stressed to overhaul the faulty power transmission system causing over Rs 400 billion annual losses to the national exchequer. PM Shehbaz vowed to break the begging bowl by curtailing the government expenses. A comprehensive plan of the Pakistan Green Initiative had been undertaken to take the country to new heights of development and prosperity.

Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman thanked the prime minister for his personal interest in ensuring development of the area. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had laid the foundation of many mega projects, which the PTI government seized hampering economic development, he added.

Fazl said industrial estates being established in Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan would change the fate of the people of the area. Minister for Energy Khuram Dastgir said the development

projects, which remained suspended during 2018 to 2022, were being completed on priority. He said due to the PM's personal intervention, 5000 MW of electricity was added to the national grid in just 16 months.

The transmission line in Thar was completed in a few months, while work on three new grid stations of Rs 2 billion in Dera Ismail Khan was initiated by the current government, he added. Minister for Communications Asad Mehmood said the coalition government was committed to create a road link between the Gwadar Port and the Central Asian countries under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He said the projects inaugurated by Nawaz Sharif were being restored and completed in various areas, especially in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik said on the prime minister's direction, sufficient supply of energy to the people at affordable price was being ensured. During the last one year, he said, around 270 mmcf gas worth over \$1 billion had been discovered from various areas of the country, and of which 138 mmcf had already been injected to the system while the rest would be included soon. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, National Assembly Deputy Speaker, provincial

ministers and government officials were present on the occasion.

PM for owning IT talent through maximum financial, professional support: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that maximum financial and professional support to the youth was inevitable to exploit their immense potential in information technology which could also guarantee the county's prosperity.

The prime minister, addressing the launching ceremony of PM's Freelancer and Venture Capital Initiative, and National Innovation Award Investor Connect, said the network of incubation centers needed to be spread across the country by carrying out maximum funding keeping in view the country's future.

He said considering the talent and importance of the IT, Rs 2 billion allocated for the venture capital was just "peanuts", though it was scraped by the government despite financial constraints. The prime minister was "taken aback" as he visited the stalls and was briefed about the innovative projects prepared by the youngsters, including drones for agriculture purposes, IT-led medical systems, and usage of banana peels for different products.

"I really salute all of you," he remarked and particularly lauded Sahar Munir, a girl from Naushki for

her vision and ideas to promote the IT sector. He said the network of incubation centres should have been spread countrywide some 10 years ago and recalled the establishment of such a center at the Arfa Karim Tower in 2009 by him while being the Punjab chief minister.

"This is the untapped talent across Pakistan which we have to own. This is our responsibility to arrange trainings and provide maximum funding," he said and called for holding similar innovation award ceremonies in other parts of the country. He said the funding for the IT endowment fund should be increased by billions annually to capacitate the youngsters, and support their research and development.

Prime Minister Shehbaz, who earlier launched the initiatives and gave away awards among top 10 winners of the second round National Innovation Award, also instructed the formulation of a coordinated mechanism and a policy framework for the IT sector for onward cabinet approval so that the interim government could carry the projects forward without any impediment. He said the whatsoever party forms the next government, they should facilitate the IT sector, which, if supported for next five years, could bring in billions of dollars to the country.

In his address, Minister for IT and

Telecommunications Syed Aminul Haq said his ministry was coordinating and cooperating to execute the prime

minister's vision of a 'Digital Pakistan'. He said the ministry was facilitating around 20 incubation centres in various parts of the country. He told the gathering that efforts were underway to enhance women participation in the IT start-ups as during the last five years, out of 1387 start-ups, 37% were of women.

He said the IT Ministry was endeavouring to increase connectivity as a prerequisite for the IT growth. He said during his ministerial term, the cellphone users grew from 160 million to 195 million and broadband users from 70 million to 122 million. Special Assistant to the PM on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that the ceremony marked the second round of National Innovation Award with 50 winners and connect them with the investors to capitalise their ideas. She said the government had allocated Rs 5 billion for the IT sector, including Rs 2 billion for venture capital and Rs 1 billion each for IT training and IT endowment fund. Besides, Rs 200 million had also been specified for the women-led business ventures, she added. The event also marked the playing of a short documentary on two rounds of PM National Innovation Awards as well as the testimonials by two award winners who appraised the audience about their projects and vision.

PHC stops NAB arresting BRT contractor Hamayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of the Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday stopped the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) from arresting the contractor of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in an inquiry of a corruption case.

The bench comprising Justice Waqar Ahmed and Justice Faheem Wali sought a detailed response from NAB on the next hearing on September 25. The bench allowed NAB to continue the inquiry but should not arrest the contractor.

The counsel of the petitioner Shamail Ahmed Butt Advocate told the court that NAB had started the BRT inquiry despite the fact that a writ was filed against the BRT in 2017 and the court declared the contract transparent. He said that another bench ordered an inquiry but the Supreme Court declared the inquiry null and void. He contended that the BRT contract was done according to law and now the petitioner was being harassed. The court ordered NAB to submit a detailed response on the next hearing and asked the contractor to cooperate with the investigation. The court also directed the contractor to appear before the NAB investigation team on the next hearing.

Ban on Posting and Transfers: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Shahid Khan ordered Secretary Local Council Board (LCB) and Local Governments to submit reply in Contempt of Court (COC) petition, on Tuesday.

COC filed by Naseer Ahmad against transferred made by Deputy Secretary Local Council Board of different officers despite court's orders in this regard.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai advocate argued applicant Naseer Ahmad serving as Deputy Secretary Admin but on 14th April petition was removed from the position.