

**Four tourists killed**  
HUNZA (PPI): Four tourists, including a woman, were killed and over a dozen were injured in two road accidents in Hunza on Tuesday. The first accident was reported from Nasirabad bridge while the second took place near Dong Das area. All the dead bodies and injured were shifted to Tehsil Headquarter hospital of Ali Abad. The injured were given the first-aid at the Ali Abad hospital.

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**Seven children die**  
THARPARKAR (INP): As many as seven children died of malnutrition and common diseases across Tharparkar on Tuesday. Seven deaths were reported from Mithi civil hospital. Total numbers of deaths due to malnutrition across Tharparkar during ongoing year has climbed to 435. Meanwhile, Cholera spread out in Karachi's Gadap Town claiming life of a woman and several others were hospitalized due to the disease.

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# The Frontier Post

## Countering economic recession, terrorism & climate change

# PM calls for SCO's joint action

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called for a joint action by the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to address the common challenges of economic recession, terrorism, and climate change.

"The SCO represents a promising future only if we seize the opportunity to achieve the shared goals for the region's peace and prosperity," he said in his virtual address to the 23rd Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS). The invitation to Prime Minister Sharif to attend the SCO-CHS, which was held in a video conference format, was extended by the prime minister of India in his capacity as the current Chair of the SCO.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian prime minister Narendra Modi, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon, Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi joined the virtual moot among other leaders of the observer states. PM Sharif said the SCO leaders were meeting at a critical juncture as the world faced socio-economic challenges.

He stressed that the regional organization could play the role of

"beacon of peace, stability, and progress". Terming regional connectivity a defining feature of the modern economy, he emphasized focusing on investment in this area as a "vehicle of peace and prosperity".

He mentioned that China Pakistan Economic Corridor, a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, could become a game-changer of progress in view of Pakistan's location connecting the region. He announced that Pakistan was planning to host a regional connectivity conference in the last quarter of the current year.

On terrorism and extremism, the prime minister said the "monster" must be fought with vigour and determination by all SCO states. He pointed out that diplomatic point-scoring must be avoided by all countries and said that all forms of terrorism, including State terrorism, must be condemned. "There is no justification for killing people. Also, the religious minorities should not be marginalized in the garb of political agenda," he said.

Sharif said the SCO countries must take concerted actions against terrorism, extremism, and separatism both in their national capacities and also under the framework of SCO-RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure). Terming peace and security a common concern, he said stability in Afghanistan was critical to achieving the common objective. He highlighted the impending grave humanitarian crisis and economic meltdown in

Afghanistan, which he said, needed urgent corrective measures by the interim Afghan government and the international community.

On climate-induced disasters, the prime minister said the situation demanded global solidarity as it was the time to act "now and immediately". He mentioned that Pakistan, during the last year's flash floods, faced the "horrors of climate change", leading to 1,700 deaths and economic losses worth \$30 billion.

Sharif said poverty alleviation must be a priority in the wake of economic recession. On Islamophobia, he said peace and communal harmony were the need of the hour. He emphasized adhering to the resolutions of the UN Security Council to settle the issues amicably before it was too late.

The prime minister expressed Pakistan's resolve to play a positive and constructive role in making SCO an effective regional organization. He thanked India for its stewardship of SCO during the past year and congratulated Kazakhstan for assuming the chair for the next year. He congratulated the President of Iran on his country's inclusion in the organization as a full member.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) had undoubtedly the potential to shape a promising future for the peoples living within its borders.

The prime minister, who earlier addressed the virtual summit of the SCO Council of Heads of State, reiterated that Pakistan would continue to work with the member countries to realise the shared dream of prosperity, peace and connectivity. On Twitter, the prime minister shared a gist of his address at CHS saying that he underlined the need for concerted response at the SCO forum to the global geo-political flux by prioritizing shared vision of an economically integrated region.

"I threw light on Pakistan's attractive geographical location as a natural bridge between Asia & Europe within the framework of Belt & Road Initiative," he remarked. He particularly urged the member countries to condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations including state terrorism and cautioned against the dangers of violent ultra-nationalism and demonisation of religious minorities in pursuit of domestic political agendas.

It is by granting fundamental rights and freedoms to all people that sustainable peace can be established, he added. While building a case for enhanced international engagement with the Afghan Interim Government as a necessary condition to unlock the potential of the SCO, he also urged Afghan authorities to deliver on their global commitments.

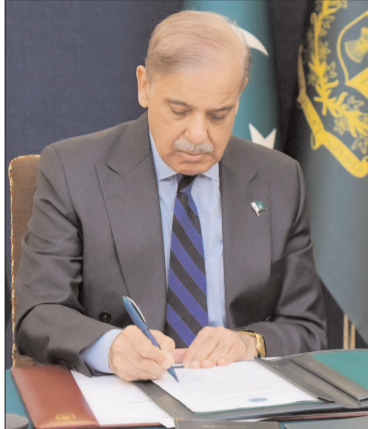
Mentioning the destruction caused by unprecedented floods last year, the prime minister asked the international

community to act upon their assurances by providing support to developing countries in mitigating and adapting to the ill-effects of climate change.

**Shehbaz for priority to completion of public welfare projects:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed on according high priority to the public welfare projects, besides maintaining quality and transparency of the ongoing development projects. He said preference should be given to commencement of those projects which were aimed at development and prosperity of youth and women's empowerment.

The prime minister issued these directives while chairing a high-level meeting on uplift projects under the current fiscal year. The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, PM's Adviser Ahad Khan Cheema, PM's Special Assistants Malik Ahmad Khan and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and other relevant authorities, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was apprised of the progress on the development work during the fiscal year 2023-24 and a detailed briefing was also given about the steps for the progress and prosperity of youth and women, and development of agriculture, industries, infrastructure and other sectors. The prime minister directed for com-



pletion of all the projects within the stipulated period of time and the submission of a comprehensive report over the related mechanism.

He said the PM's Merit Scholarship initiative was being launched across the country, including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. The meeting was further briefed that under the PM's Youth Programme, distribution process of laptops among the talented youth would commence soon. The prime minister observed that for the development of agriculture sector, solarization process of tube wells should be initiated soon, besides directing that pace on the public welfare mega projects should be expedited. He also stressed upon attaching special focus on the uplift of the backward areas during the current fiscal year.

## Quran's desecration in Sweden

# Govt to hold protests on 7th

### — summon joint parliamentary session

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government would observe Yaum-e-Taqaddus-e-Quran on July 7 to hold country-wide protests demonstrations against the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden and convene a joint parliamentary session a day earlier.

The decision was made on a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here to discuss the issue of the desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden. It was decided that protest rallies would be held on Friday across the country to condemn the act.

The prime minister appealed to the nation, including all the political parties, to participate in the protest to convey a united message to the mischievous minds. Besides, the government would also convene a joint session of the parliament on July 6 to formulate a national strategy on the issue and represent the nation's sentiments and feelings through the parliamentary forum.

The joint session would also adopt a resolution to

condemn the desecration of the Holy Quran. The prime minister, also the president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, instructed the party to participate in the Yaum-e-Taqaddus-e-Quran and hold country-wide rallies.

He told the meeting that the sanctity of the Holy Quran was a part of the Muslims' belief for which all of them were united. He said that the astray minds were toeing a nefarious agenda of fanning the negative trend of Islamophobia.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that nations and leadership believing in peace and co-existence should contain the violent forces infested by the Islamophobia and religious biases. He believed that the violent mindset targeting the religion, sacred personalities, beliefs and ideologies were in fact the enemies of the world peace. He said that the forces believing in peace and interfaith harmony should play their role at the international level to get rid of such negative trends.

**Commerce Minister, former MNA call on PM:** Minister for Commerce

Syed Naveed Qamar Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

During the meeting, they discussed the matters related to the ministry and the political situation of the country, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Separately, Raja Javed Ikhlas, a former member of the National Assembly, also called on the prime minister and discussed the political situation.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the Gilgit-Baltistan and Army authorities to immediately rescue mountaineer Asif Bhatti who reportedly got trapped at 7500 meters height while scaling the 8,126-meter Nanga Parbat peak.

The directives came after the mountaineer's son appealed to the prime minister on social media for safe evacuation of his stranded father. Shehbaz Sharif instructed the Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan to contact Asif Bhatti's son and assure him of immediate measures for the stuck up climber's rescue.

## FIA arrests Elahi's confidante

LAHORE (PPI): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Tuesday arrested Muhammad Zaman, a close confidante of former Punjab chief minister and PTI President Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, in Lahore and claimed to have obtained important evidence from his cellphone.

Sources told 24News TV channel that the Agency had sent the audios of telephonic conversations between Pervaiz and Zaman obtained from the latter's cellphone for forensic. In these audios, both could be clearly heard talking to each other about their business transactions. It is worth-reminding here that Islamabad Police, too, in the past had arrested Zaman for allegedly supplying wine to the former chief minister.

## GB CM disqualified

GILGIT (INP): The Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Court on Tuesday disqualified Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid in a fake degree case. Headed by Justice Inayatullah Rahman, a three-member larger bench announced the reserved verdict of the case.

The opposition members had taken decisive action by submitting a motion of no-confidence against Khalid Khurshid. This strategic move aims to prevent any potential plans by the chief minister to dissolve the assembly. The motion of no-confidence was filed by nine opposition members, expressing their dissatisfaction with the current leadership and seeking to maintain stability and integrity within the assembly.

The former CM's lawyer, Asadullah Khan, argued that the articles do not apply to GB, but the complainant's counsel informed the court that they applied to the region based on which the court issued its judgment. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) had in May withdrawn the equivalence letter for the LLB degree issued to the chief minister after learning that it was "fake". Then, the commission also blocked and blacklisted his CNIC and name on its web portal.

"This commission approached the University of London for re-verification of your LLB degree, transcript, and letter of certification provided by you in a sealed envelope to the HEC," HEC wrote in a letter to the ex-CM. "The university has disclosed that the envelope and its contents (a copy of the degree certificate, a letter of certification, and a transcript) were not issued by the University of London."

## Toshakhana case against Imran inadmissible: IHC

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday declared the Toshakhana case against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman inadmissible.

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the verdict on a petition filed by the former premier against the decision of a trial court that had declared the criminal case, filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), admissible. The petition was filed after the PTI chief was indicted in the case on May 10. Two days after the high court had stopped criminal proceedings in the Toshakhana case.

The reference, which alleges that Imran failed to share details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana (during his time as the prime minister) was filed by lawmakers

from the ruling coalition last year. The Toshakhana issue became a major sticking point in national politics after the Election Commission of Pakistan disqualified the PTI chief for making "false statements and incorrect declaration" last month.

The judgement added that the former premier was found to be indulged in corrupt practices under sections 167 and 173 of the constitution. "A criminal proceeding will be initiated against him over filing a false statement." "His disqualification under Article 63, 1(P) has been for his current parliament membership", the ECP said in its 36-page detailed judgment of the reference. "The amount in his bank account was around half of the value of the state gifts. PTI chief was bound to declare the cash and bank details in

his returns but he didn't declare it," ECP decision read.

"Imran Khan being declared disqualified and unseated from his National Assembly seat," the ECP said, adding: "He has been disqualified under Article 63, 1(P), over submitting a false statement and declaration". Following this, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had launched probe against former prime minister Imran Khan in Toshakhana case on March 9.

The NAB action comes after Dubai-based businessman Umar Farooq Zahoor claimed that the PTI government sold an expensive Graff wristwatch — gifted to former premier Imran Khan by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman — for \$2 million, worth approximately Rs280m at the time of sale in 2019.

## Interim bail granted to PTI chief in six cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interim bail was granted to Chairman Pakistan Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in six different cases on Tuesday till July 10.

According to details, the PTI chief secured interim bail in six miscellaneous cases till July 10. Hearings of these cases were conducted at the Judicial Complex Islamabad. The court extended interim bail of chairman PTI in a case registered at the Shehzad Town police station, whereas, he has been directed to join the investigation. The case was heard by Additional Sessions Judge Farrukh Fareed Baloch.

In another case registered at the Margala police station, the judge of the sessions court heard the bail plea. The sessions judge remarked that the hearing would be fixed at July 19 if the PTI chief's counsel has a busy schedule on July 10. The judge added that the district court will be shifted and functional by July 19.

The court extended PTI chief's interim bail till July 19. Additionally, the court also registered the attendance of the PTI central leader Asad Umar and adjourned the hearing. In another development, PTI chief's wife Bushra Bibi got interim bail till July 13 from the accountability court in Toshakhana case.

Moreover, the Supreme Court (SC), while hearing the lawyer murder case today, rejected the interim bail plea of the PTI chief besides a rejecting to issue stay order on the high court's verdict. The top court made the ruling while hearing a miscella-

### Bushra Bibi today summoned

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) has summoned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman's wife Bushra Bibi on Wednesday (today) in development projects corruption case. The ACE spokesperson said that former first lady Bushra Bibi has been summoned over accusations of corruption in development projects in her village. She is accused of awarding contracts to her blue-eyed contractors, it added. Bushra Bibi has been restricted to appear before the ACE inquiry committee to present her stance, the spokesperson said. The ACE also posed the call-up notices at Zaman Park and Bani Gala residences. Moreover, the call-up notice was also received by her lawyers Ali Bhutta and Owais. She has been summoned to the ACE Okara office. In case of her absence, legal action will be taken against the accused.

neous plea for stopping the proceedings of the lawyer's murder case against the PTI chief in Quetta. Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan remarked that the ruling of today's hearing will be issued immediately and adjourned the hearing for an indefinite period.

**SC rejects plea to stay probe against PTI chief in lawyer murder case:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected a plea seeking to stop the prosecution from taking any action against the PTI chairman in the murder of a known lawyer in Quetta.

As the defence objected to nominating their client in the murder case, they had requested the court to issue a stay order. However, a two-member bench comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Ayesha Malik also didn't accept the application against the non-bailable warrants issued for the accused. The bench observed that a two-member high court bench had dismissed the plea; therefore, the two-member Supreme Court

bench couldn't grant stay. Earlier on June 6, the PTI chief was booked in the murder case of Abdur Razzaq Shar, a Supreme Court lawyer, who was assassinated by unidentified persons on Airport Road in the provincial capital. A case under murder and terrorism sections were lodged on the complaint of victim's son as police said the killers shot him with a Kalashnikov. The victim received 16 bullets in different parts of his body.

Shar was one of the petitioners in a treason case against the PTI chairman. Lawyers Amanullah Kanrani and Shar had jointly submitted a petition in the Balochistan High Court (BHC), seeking an action against the former prime minister under the Article 6 of the Constitution. The hearing on the petition was scheduled to be held June 7. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Attaullah Tarar had said the PTI chief was responsible for the targeted killing.

## SC judges get 20% raise in salaries

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: All Supreme Court judges including Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial got a 20 per cent raise in their salaries. The Federal Law Minister issued a notification in this regard on Tuesday after getting approval of the President of Pakistan.

After the enforcement of Salary of Judges of Supreme Court Order 2023, the salary of CJP Umar Ata Bandial has risen to Rs12,29,189 where the salary of a Supreme Court judge will now be Rs11,61,163. Besides their salaries, the apex court judges enjoy other allowances and perks.

## 5th July, a black day, says Zardari

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari in his message on 5 July has said that this day is the darkest in the political history of Pakistan.

President Zardari said that a power-hungry coterie took away the Constitution from the nation on this very day. The undemocratic entities trampled the freedom, sovereignty and independence of the country on 5 July 1977. President Zardari said that Quid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto built a dignified and nuclear Pakistan. Under the leadership of Quid-e-Awam, Pakistan was achieving goals for development at a fast pace. On July 5, 1977, Pakistan was plunged into darkness. He said that Pakistan is still suffering from the consequences of the unconstitutional action of July 5, 1977. The society was destroyed by opening nurseries of linguistic and communal prejudices in the country. Waziristan, a heaven-like piece of land on earth, was inhabited by extremists. Asif Ali Zardari said that the Pakistan Peoples Party firmly believes in its determination to make Pakistan a free, independent and dignified country once again.

Asif Ali Zardari paid rich tributes to those who sacrificed their lives for the restoration of the 1973 Constitution and democracy. "Red salute to those who endured executions, floggings, imprisonment and torture for the restoration of democracy", President Zardari said in his message.



RAWALPINDI: Tajikistan Defence Minister, Sherali Mirzo presenting a souvenir to Defence Minister, Khwaja Muhammad Asif.

## PTI moves application seeking election symbol

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday filed an application seeking an election symbol for the upcoming general polls.

"Bat" should be retained

as its electoral symbol, the PTI said in its submitted application. According to the PTI spokesperson, "It is legally required to request and receive one's preferred electoral symbol prior to the election. Only the bat symbol will be used by PTI

candidates to contest the national and provincial elections."

The ECP had earlier directed political parties to submit their applications for the allotment of election symbols ahead of general election.



# Desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden strongly condemnable: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Minister for Information, Transport, and Mass Transit of Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has expressed the Pakistan People's Party's and the Sindh government's strong condemnation of the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden, this abhorrent act has been widely condemned by people around the world, regardless of their religion or nationality. It is regarded as a reprehensible act, and we join in strongly condemning it as well.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Archives Complex in Clifton, Karachi, Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted that the duration of power outages has been prolonged in Karachi, and rural areas of the province are experiencing even more severe load shedding. Consequently, the people are enduring immense hardship. Memon urged the Prime Minister and federal government to take immediate and strict action, directing relief measures to alleviate the suffering of the people in Sindh.

He stated that Jamaat-e-Islami has been spreading false propaganda against the Sindh government and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in recent days. It is worth noting that Jamaat-e-Islami received significantly fewer votes than our party. Furthermore, even the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did not vote in favor of Jamaat-e-Islami.



Despite this, Jamaat-e-Islami continues to engage in baseless propaganda against us. We urge the Election Commission to investigate the utilization of Jamaat-e-Islami's funds. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that he invite Jamaat-e-Islami to refrain from placing blame and instead collaborate for progress. He encouraged them to come together, discuss the issues at hand, and work collectively to find solutions for the city's problems.

He said that Jamaat-e-Islami should move beyond their previous approaches and work together in a collaborative manner. Jamaat-e-Islami acquired seats as a result of the MQM's boycott, for which they should express gratitude to MQM.

He highlighted that even during the days of Eid, the elected representatives of the Pakistan People's Party actively participated in the cleaning efforts. He stated that Tehreek-e-Insaf expressed no confidence in the Chief Justice yesterday, which is an attempt to exert

pressure on the judiciary. He said that just as PTI resorted to false propaganda against their country's institutions, they are now employing the same tactic against the judiciary in order to seek relief. Imran Khan, a known liar who has caused harm to the public treasury and tarnished Pakistan's reputation, stands accused of looting Toshka Khana, a fact recognized worldwide. However, questioning the eligibility for hearing his actions today is itself a questionable sign.

He said that Imran Khan desires to reinstate Saqib Nisar to his former position, despite the fact that Saqib Nisar had previously legalized Imran Khan's residence. It is noteworthy that Saqib Nisar and his sons were found selling party tickets of PTI. He said that when an individual of such nature is placed in the custody of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the truth will come to light. The sons-in-law and sons of Saqib Nisar should face legal proceed-

ings since both Saqib Nisar and his children obtained unlawful advantages.

He stated that Asad Toor is a respected YouTuber, and there should be a thorough investigation into the allegations surrounding his vlog.

He stated that no individual should be considered above the law, and if there are lingering suspicions against anyone, it is crucial to investigate the reasons behind them. He questioned why the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has not initiated an inquiry against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He emphasized the necessity of tracing the origins and destinations of funds, calling for transparency and accountability. He stressed the importance of upholding the principles outlined in the law and constitution. He stated that the level of protection afforded to the leader of Tehreek-e-Insaf thus far raises concerns. Despite causing significant harm to valuable and important property, no actions have been taken against him. Is it justifiable to label such an individual as "good to see you"? These matters are intolerable and go beyond acceptable limits.

He emphasized that the Pakistan People's Party advocates for the implementation of the rule of law and the constitution in the country, the prosperity and unity of our nation depend on upholding these principles, we all should work together for this country.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori Call on by Delegation of Tanzeem-e-Azadari at Governor House.

## CM Naqvi inspects facilities at Jinnah Hospital

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday visited Jinnah Hospital and inquired about the health of patients in the trauma center. According to the sources, Syed Mohsin Raza inspected facilities in various units including Unit -5 and Mehman Khana (guest house). He inquired about the treatment facilities of patients from their attendants. Patients and their family members piled complaints to the Punjab Chief Minister against poor facilities being provided to them.

A dozen of people said that they are not getting any kind of medicines from the hospitals and they are

forced to buy the drugs from the market. Some people filed complaints that the ACs of the units are dysfunctional.

Chief Minister expressed his displeasure over not getting better facilities for the patients. Syed Mohsin Naqvi assured the patients to address their grievances immediately. The CM said that he is doing his level best to ensure the best health facilities for the patients during his short stint in the office. "No patient has to suffer in the hospital, the Chief Minister directed to the hospital administration. He warned that violators will be dealt with an iron hand.

Chief Minister Punjab also visited Sheikh Ejaz

Trust Dialysis Centre in the company of Board of Management Allama Iqbal Medical College Chairman Gohar Ijaz.

The CM inquired the patients about the facilities being provided to them. Patients expressed their pleasure and said that they never faced any problems during dialysis. The CM appreciated the Board of Management Chairman Gohar Ijaz for the excellent facilities provided to the patients.

"We will provide full support to whoever works for the betterment of the hospital," he added. Gohar Ijaz while briefing the Chief Minister of Punjab, said that they are bringing the world's latest kidney

transplant system. Naqvi also visited the laundry and basement of the hospital.

While seeing the dilapidated condition of the hospital's laundry, he expressed his anger and directed the chairman to call a board meeting tomorrow to improve it immediately. On the accumulation of water in the basement, Lahore Commissioner was instructed to improve the water drainage system immediately.

Chief Minister also visited burn center and OPDs in order to provide better treatment facilities to the patients. The CM also canceled the parking contract owing to overcharging from the patients.

## Punjab faces soaring prices of flour as wheat costs surge

LAHORE (INP): As the prices of essential commodities, including flour and rice, persistently rise, the recent surge in wheat prices has led to a rise in the cost of a 40kg bag of flour across Punjab.

According to the details, the price of wheat in Punjab is steadily increasing and the price of a 40kg bag of flour in the open market has reached Rs 4,700. Flour mill owners have also increased the price of a 20kg bag by Rs 100. In the market across the province, a 20kg bag of flour now costs Rs 2,800, while a 10kg bag – after the hike of Rs 75 – is now priced at Rs 1450.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) recently released figures for the prices of flour a few days ago, indicating that the country has reached a record high flour prices.

## Karachiites will have public holiday on 11th

KARACHI (PPI): Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) has declared a public holiday on July 11, 2023 on the occasion of the annual Urs of Hazrat Abdullah Shah Ghazi (RA). All offices under the jurisdiction of KMC will remain closed on the occasion, according to the notification.

## Governor SBP unveils Rs. 75 Denomination Banknote to mark 75 years of SBP's Founding

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Mr. Jameel Ahmad unveiled a Rs. 75 Commemorative Banknote to mark the 75 years of SBP's Founding in a ceremony held at the SBP Museum, Karachi.

Other notable guests at the ceremony were the Deputy Governors, Executive Directors, Managing Directors of the SBP subsidiaries, Chief Executive Officers/Presidents of commercial banks, officers of the SBP and Mr. Sibtain Naqvi, grand-nephew of the renowned calligrapher Sadequain Naqvi, who attended the occasion on special

invitation of the SBP.

Mr. Jameel Ahmad unveiled the Rs. 75 Commemorative Banknote to the applause of the guests. Following the launch, he spoke about the past achievements of the SBP, specifically focusing on its engagement with commercial banks regarding supervision, and the developments therein over the years. He also highlighted the initiatives of the SBP in recent years, with special mention of micro-payment gateway Raast, Roshan Digital Accounts for overseas Pakistanis, encouragement and facilitation of commercial banks for providing digital banking solutions, and development of

inclusive policies for different segments of the society, including women, youth and agriculturists.

The Governor also spoke about the Strategic Plan SBP Vision 2028, outlining key areas that SBP will focus on during this period. These include bringing inflation to the target level in the medium term, promoting fairness in the banking system, propagating gender inclusive policies, encouraging green financing, providing a conducive environment for Shariah compliant banking in line with the directives of the Federal Shariah Court, and transforming the SBP into a high-tech, people-centric institution.

## Call to cancel KE license over poor service

KARACHI (PPI): Jamaat Islami Karachi chief Hafiz Naqvi on Tuesday demanded cancellation of K-Electric license and forensic audit of the power utility. Talking to media, JI leader said that Karachi is suffering from worst power load shedding despite NTDC has surplus electricity. "Get rid of the KE when you have surplus power," he urged.

"Criminals are plunder-

ing the nation, the state of K-Electric is worst, people have been hired on exorbitant salary packages, and we are paying these salaries from our pockets," Jamaat Islami Karachi chief Hafiz Naqvi on Rehman said.

Hafiz Naqvi said that at the time of the KESC privatization, the company had 1.8 million consumers. "The number of the consumers has increased by 89 percent,

but the company's power generation has decreased by nine percent," JI leader said. "According to the year 2022 record the power utility has generated 8,493 million units." Commenting on recent mayor's election he lamented that those having 3 Lac votes and 160 members won, while the candidate with 9 Lac votes and 193 members support has lost the election.

## Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party leaders discuss future strategy

LAHORE (NNI): Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Secretary General Amir Kiani and Central Additional Secretary General Aun Chaudhry met with the party Chief Jahangir Khan Tareen in Lahore on Tuesday and discussed with him the country's prevailing political situation as well as future strategy of the party.

Both Kiani and Chaudhry took Tareen into confidence on their recent meetings with different political leaders. It was decided at the meeting to increase activities of the IPP so that the people could notice it. Apart from that, the party's registration with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), membership campaign and other matters also came under discussion at the meeting. Tareen, on the occasion, hoped that the IPP would display its political muscles in the next general elections. He also expressed the optimism that the party would become a voice of the people of Pakistan. "Solutions to the issues confronting the country will be suggested in the party's manifesto," he said, adding, "The IPP will play a constructive role in the country's politics." Mr Tareen hoped that the IPP would become the voice of the masses by raising the issues faced by the common citizenry.

## Governor, Tanzeem e Azadari discuss arrangements for Moharam-ul-Haram

KARACHI (APP): A delegation of Tanzeem e Azadari led by its Chairman S.M. Naqvi called on Sindh Governor, Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori here on Tuesday.

They discussed the arrangements for the Moharam-ul-Haram, desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden, economic steps of the government and other issues of mutual interests.

The governor said that the mourners

would be provided with all facilities in the month of Muharam-ul-Haram.

He said that the desecration of Holy Quran could never be tolerated at any cost. The governor said that a letter seeking apology had been sent to Ambassador of Sweden over the incident.

He further said that the condemnation by people belonging to different religions was satisfactory.

## Departments put on alert as Dengue case rise

LAHORE (APP): Fearing an increase in dengue cases due to rains, the Provincial Dengue Monitoring Committee on Tuesday directed relevant departments to remain alert.

The Provincial Dengue Monitoring Committee met at the Civil Secretariat with provincial ministers Jamal Nasir, Mansoor Qadir, Azfar Ali Nasir, and Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman in attendance.

The additional chief secretary, secretaries of various departments and health officials also participated in the meeting that was joined by the divisional commissioners

and deputy commissioners through video link.

The committee expressed concern over the rise in dengue cases in Multan and issued instructions to determine its reasons. The meeting also decided to take

action against the field staff over negligence in the anti-dengue activities.

Caretaker Minister for Primary Health Jamal Nasir said the CBC test facility had been provided in rural health centers for dengue diagnosis.



LAHORE: A vendor is selling mosquito nets as a preventative measure against dengue and malaria fever at roadside setup in Provincial City.

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**Terms of Reference for Prequalification of Low / High-Pressure Houseline Contractors**

With reference to the subject mentioned Prequalification Notice of Low / High-Pressure Houseline Contractors.

The last date for submission of EOI (Expression of interest) for prequalification of Low/High-pressure houseline contractors has been extended till July 20, 2023.

All other terms and conditions shall remain the same. PID (L) NO. 35

**SAVE GAS - SAVE CASH**



# Governor directs transparency, merit in appointments of VCs

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali stressed following policy of merit and transparency in appointments of vice chancellors in public sector universities and said that educational qualifications and administrative capabilities should be considered minutely before giving them responsibilities.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting held to discuss matters of appointing of vice chancellors in universities. The meeting was also attended by caretaker ministers including Barrister Feroz

Jamal Kakakhel, Justice Retired, Irshad Qaisar, Hamid Shah, Chief Secretary, Nadeem Aslam, Secretary Law and Secretary Higher Education.

The meeting discussed educational, administrative and financial problems of universities due to delay in appointing permanent vice chancellors. Participants of the meeting also discussed appointments of vice chancellors in new established universities including Shringal and Taimargara and various problems faced by these varieties.

The meeting was briefed by Chief Secretary, Higher

Education Secretary about appointments of vice chancellors in public sector universities. Meeting concurred to appoint vice chancellors at the earliest following policy of merit and transparency.

Chairing the meeting, Governor directed that appointments should be made abiding by policy of merit and transparency and search committee must be informed about any complaints. He said that universities should be provided all the needed facilities and pay increase of staff should also be considered.

He urged vice chancel-

lors, faculty members to jointly work for further increasing educational standard of these institutions besides introducing research innovations to enhance capacity of students and enable them to meet challenges of contemporary world.

KP Governor said that young generation is our asset and their venturing into new fields of technologies would directly impact progress and development of our country. He that advancement into new education field would not only benefit our youth but would also help strengthening economy of the country.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali chairing a high level meeting regarding appointing of vice chancellors in universities.

**Resources being utilized to promote tourism in KP: Advisor**

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Zafar Hayat on Tuesday said that the caretaker government was utilizing all available resources for the promotion of tourism in the province.

During Eid holidays, he said hundreds of thousands of tourists visited Hazara and Malakand divisions who were provided with the best possible facilities at their destinations.

He said the law banning constructions on the banks and streams was being reconsidered and soon practical steps would be taken in this direction.

Talking to media persons at Abbottabad, he said the boards of directors of development authorities would abolish on completion of their tenure and in new boards including in Kaghan Development Authority, the local people would be given proper representation.

He further said that the caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government will honestly discharge its responsibility till the conduct of general election in the province.

The caretaker government, he said, will make sure that the elections were conducted peacefully on the date fixed by the Election Commission.

He said the Hazara and Malakand divisions were the tourism hubs of the province and the caretaker government will promote these tourists' destinations through the available resources.

## Shandur Polo Festival: CS asks to provide facilities to tourists

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on Tuesday presided over a meeting to discuss problems of Lower and Upper Chitral districts and review preparations for Shandur Polo Festival and asked for providing best facilities to tourists.

Administrative Secretaries of Tourism and Food Department, Director General Culture and Tourism Authority, Director Food, Deputy Commissioners of both districts and others

attended the meeting.

In the meeting, rates and availability of wheat and flour in both districts were discussed.

The forum was given a detailed briefing on precautionary measures to deal with flash floods during monsoon, roads condition, drinking water and irrigation projects.

The Chief Secretary ordered concerned authorities to take concrete steps to resolve issues of the said districts on priority basis.

The meeting also

reviewed arrangements for the historic Shandur Festival to be held at world highest altitude polo ground, commencing from July 7 to 9.

The Chief Secretary asked for provision of best possible facilities to local and international tourists coming to Shandur Festival, saying that successful holding of the signature event will portray a positive image of the country, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to the world.

## MoU inked for bridge financing of Govt Printing Press Peshawar



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Economic Zones Development and Management Company (EZDMC) signed a memorandum of understand-

ing on Tuesday to make financial arrangements for essential repair and rehabilitation of the public sector printing press of the provincial government.

Under the agreement KP-EZDMC will provide a sum of Rs.35 million

markup free loan as bridge financing to Directorate General of Industries and Commerce for the purpose of rehabilitation and maintenance of building and repair work of machinery of Government Printing Press Peshawar. The amount will be repayable to the company in one year time after the date of its release.

In this regard, the DG industries Barakatullah and Chief Executive Officer of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) Javed Iqbal Khattak formally signed the same agreement while the provincial caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Muhammad Adnan Jilani was the chief guest on this occasion.

Secretary Industries Commerce and Technical Education Matiullah and other rele-

vant officials were also present in the ceremony.

It is pertinent to mention that, the amount will be spent for the purpose, as per the fulfillment of all codal formalities and it will make possible to fully operationalize the repairable machinery installed in the press.

Speaking on the occasion, the Provincial Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Adnan Jilani said that the agreement is a major step for revival of the historical public sector printing press in the province.

He added that this initiative will make it possible to fully operationalize the printing machinery of the government press and will bring the same entity as a state of the art printing press for ensuring quality printing of various government departments and other institutions in the province.

## Fifth death anniversary of Haroon Bilour on 9th

PESHAWAR (APP): The fifth death anniversary of former provincial spokesperson of Awami National Party (ANP) Haroon Bilour will be commemorated on July 9 (Sunday).

A central public gathering will be held at Namak Mandi Chowk Peshawar, at 5 PM. Additionally, at 11 AM on July 9th, a Quran recitation ceremony will take place here at Syed Hasan Peer Graveyard.

Senior party leader Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, Central Vice President Ameer Haider Khan Hoti, Provincial Spokesperson Samar Haroon Bilour, other party members, family members, and staff will be in attendance.

Haroon Bilour, a prominent ANP leader, tragically lost his life in a suicide attack during an election rally in 2018.

## Strike observed against desecration of Holy Quran

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) has observed strike from court proceedings against desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden and Kalyas area of Charsadda while legal fraternity held an emergency meeting at Peshawar High Court Bar Room in this regard, on Tuesday.

The legal fraternity condemned burning of Holy Quran in Sweden and desecration at Charsadda while argued government to close down Swedish Embassy and take concrete action to collect leadership of Muslim countries on one-point agenda to such acts and deeds in future.

The lawyers arranged walk to Justice Chowk and burnt Swedish flag in a protest against desecration of Holy Quran and argued government call back Paki-

stani Ambassador from Sweden. The strike was called by vice chairman KPBC Zar Badshah and chairman Executive Committee Syed Mubashir Shah across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The legal fraternity from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa held rallies in their respective jurisdiction and condemned desecration of Holy Quran in Kalyas Charsadda and Sweden. They chanted slogans against Sweden and inscribed the placard with demand of boy-

cotting Swedish products.

The rallies were led by PHCBA president Tariq Afridi, Lajbar Khan, Peshawar Bar Association Ishfaq Khalil along with other officer holders demanded boycott from Sweden on every forum and front.

The desecration of Holy Quran has hurt sentiments of Muslim Ummah across the globe and created agitation among the Muslims while KPBC argued to disseminate a uniform narrative in this regard.

## Two brothers shot dead

PESHAWAR (INP): Two brothers were killed and another person injured in firing of armed men in Kohati Chowk area of Peshawar on Tuesday, police said. According to details, armed men riding a bike, sprayed bullets at a vehicle of rivals. As a result of firing, two real brothers were killed on the spot while another sustained bullet wounds. The assailants fled the scene of crime. The bodies, injured were shifted to hospital for medico-legal formalities. The police registered a case into the incident and started raids to arrest the culprits.

## Hot, humid weather likely in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Tuesday predicted that hot & humid weather is expected over most districts of the province.

However, it said that scattered rain/wind-thundershowers with a few heavy falls and hailstorm is likely to occur in Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Battagram, Torgar, Kohistan, Shangla, Chitral,

Lower & Upper Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Mohmand, Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Charsadda, Peshawar, Khyber, Kohat, Hangu, Karak, Orakzai, Kurram, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, D. I. Khan, North & South Waziristan districts. Dust storms and wind storms are also expected in Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Lakki Marwat & D.I. Khan districts.

During the last 24 hours

hot & humid weather occurred over most districts of the province while very hot in plain areas. However, scattered rain/wind-thundershowers occurred in Abbottabad, Mansehra, Swat and Buner districts.

Rain recorded (in mm): Kakul 58, Balakot 19, Malam Jabba 12 and Buner 03.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of KP were Peshawar

City 40/27, Chitral 39/20, Timergara 38/27, Dir 36/21, Mirkhani 40/19, Kalam 29/12, Drosh 38/24, Saidu Sharif 37/23, Pattan 38/27, Malam Jabba 25/13, Takht Bhai 38/26, Kakul 30/17, Balakot 33/20, Parachinar 31/16, Bannu 42/26, Cherat 33/22, D.I.Khan 42/28.

The highest temperature recorded in the province was 42°C in Dera Ismail Khan Airport and Bannu each.

# 3 energy projects of 52MW ready for inauguration in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Notwithstanding to meet the energy requirements of the evergrowing population, Pakistan was currently confronted to the monster challenge of energy shortfall that negatively impacting humans, agriculture and industrial consumers.

Despite the 60,000 megawatt hydropower potential of Pakistan including 30,000MW of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the past government failed to construct any mega dam project during its nine years rule in the province, which resulted an increase in demand-supply gap of electricity in the energy starved province.

"Currently, KP was receiving about 1, 873MW electricity from the national grid while its demand was about 3,220 MW, facing a shortfall of 1,347," the spokesman of PESCO Power Distribution Company told APP on Tuesday.

To bridge the demand-supply gap and counter power theft cases, the spokesman said the load management was being carried out in high line losses feeders in Peshawar and Nowshera districts.

Besides peripheries of Peshawar and Nowshera, the residents of Bannu, DI Khan, Karak, Lakki Marwat, Khyber, Bajaur, Waziristan and others tribal districts were also facing the brunt of load shedding while the PESCO authorities was attributing it to high line losses feeders.

Tribal Electricity Supply Company (TESCO) official said about 180 MW was being drawn from the express transmission line for merged tribal areas against 1,000 MW demand, adding the 820MW shortfall mainly occurred due to power stealing through direct hooks.

The official said the non-meterization and direct hooks in merged areas overload the power distribution system besides causing fluctuation and tripping of electricity that often caused burning of expansive electrical appliances of consumers.

He said minimum load shedding was being carried out in areas where line losses were minimum and financial recovery high.

"The long hours unscheduled load shedding

has made our life very difficult during hot summer," said Riazul Haq, a former Primary School Teacher (PST) of Nowshera district while talking to APP.

He said that eight to 10 hours load shedding was being carried out at villages Mohib Banda and Dheri Mian Ishaq of tehsil Pabbi Nowshera and it was further increased when temperature soars.

Riaz said that tripping and fluctuations of transformers/power lines were causing burning of electricity appliances and inflicting huge economic losses to poor people.

Owing to long hours power outages in Peshawar and Nowshera districts, he said the sale of generators, solar panels, UPS and swimming pools increased manifolds.

"I have purchased a swimming pool at Rs10,000 and solar panel on Rs50,000 to protect my children from severe heat these days," he said. He said the prices of these items were sky high that needed to be checked by the concerned authorities.

To address the grave

problem of energy shortfall, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Energy Department has accelerated work on 11.80MW Karora Hydropower Project (HPP) at Shangla. As many 96.2 per cent work on the project having a total cost of Rs4620.06 million has been completed and it would be inaugurated soon subject to contentions availability of the engineers at the site.

To provide uninterrupted power supply to domestic and industrial consumers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially of Malakand Division, construction work on 40.8MW Koto HPP at Timergara Lower Dir costing Rs13,998.89 million has almost been completed and electricity would start after clearance of State Bank of Pakistan for the already imported/upcoming E&M equipment.

Asked about 10.2MW Jabori HPP, Mansehra, the official said work on the project had been started at November 2014 with PC-I cost of Rs2331 million. Later, its approved cost was revised to Rs3798.26 million and up till now 99pc work on the project com-

pleted.

He said that agreement would be required to purchase electricity from these projects for which the concerned authorities were approached.

The federal government has earmarked Rs205.38 billion for HPP in the budget 2023-24 include 2,160 MW Dasu HPP (Rs. 58,597 million), 1,410 MW Tarbela IV Extension (Rs. 590 million), 969 MW Neelum Jhelum (Rs. 4,828 million), and 1,530 MW Tarbela V Extension (Rs. 4,449,463 million).

Major transmission projects such as CASA-1000 (Rs. 16,099,255 million), Dasu Evacuation (Rs. 5,667,094 million), Suki Kinari Evacuation (Rs. 13,800 million), and AMI IESCO project in the distribution sector (Rs. 3,000 million) were reflected in budget 2023-24.

Additionally, eight projects for supplying electricity to Special Economic Zones (SEZs) was allocated a total of Rs. 7,267,352 million and by the end of June 2024, the transmission sector is expected to have an additional capacity of 3,750

MVA on the 500kV grid and 6,900 MVA on the 220kV grid. The transmission lines will be extended by 522 km on the 500kV level and 668 km on the 220kV level.

Resultantly, 6,985 villages would be electrified and 1,403,592 consumers for Distribution Companies (DISCOs) would be facilitated besides extending distribution lines of 132 kv by 1,843 km, and the capacity of 132 kv grids would be strengthened by 4,199 MVA.

WAPDA authorities here said that 72 percent work on multipurpose Kurram Tangi (Stage-I) Bannu and North Waziristan has been completed and expected to be inaugurated in November next year.

The design and feasibility studies of its stage-II is under process that would be completed with a loan assistance of the Asian Development Bank.

With the completion of Kurram Tangi dam, the official said 1.2 million acres feet water would be stored and 80.9MW electricity to be generated besides benefiting over

three million people of southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had laid the foundation stone of Kurram Tangi dam on March 3, 2017 that would likely to be inaugurated by end of next year.

Besides completion of 108MW Golen Gok dam in Chitral, the government accelerated work on Mohmand dam of 800MW with 1.293 MAF water storage capacity that after completion to supplement/irrigate 160,000 acres of existing land and about 18,237 acres of new land with annual benefits of Rs2.23 billion.

Likewise, 300 million gallons water per day will also be provided to Peshawar for drinking purpose with benefits of Rs.957 million from Mohmand dam. Mohmand dam would save Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera from floods having annual benefits in terms of flood mitigation was estimated at Rs1.467 billion besides producing 2.86 billion units of environment-friendly electricity to the National Grid every year

with annual revenue of Rs. 45.76 billion. The overall annual benefits of the project stand at Rs. 51 billion.

The construction work on a high voltage direct current (HVDC) converter station was in progress at Azakhel Bala Nowshera district under the CASA-1000 Project for transmission of 1300 MW inexpensive, clean, and environment-friendly electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan.

CASA-1000 Project carried a great example of mutual cooperation between the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan aimed at harnessing clean energy trade and building a shared regional electricity market, fighting climate change, and increasing standard of living for their populations.

HVDC converter station Nowshera would be linked by an HVDC transmission line to efficiently transmit electricity from hydropower-rich Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan via Afghanistan and onward via Torkhum to Afghanistan.



## In brief

### Two brothers killed

BATKHELA (INP): Two brothers were killed and four others including women were killed when armed men stormed a house Gambat Batkhela area of Malakand district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Levies sources said that sprayed bullets at a house over unknown reasons. Two brothers were killed in the firing while women among four people were injured. The bodies and injured were moved to hospital for medico-legal formalities. Reasons of the attack could not be ascertained. A case was registered into the incident and investigations were underway.

### Two drown in Indus River

ATTOCK (PPI): Two people Tuesday lost their lives while bathing in the Indus River in Attock. One of the incidents took place at Attock Khurd where a 12-year-old resident of Wah Cantt named Ahsan drowned in the river. The other incident occurred in Mari where an 18-year-old resident of Muraqba Hall named Ghulam Jaffar drowned in the deep waters of a nearby pond and died. The rescue personnel handed over both the dead bodies to the next of their kin while the District administration imposed a strict ban on bathing and swimming in rivers and lakes. Section 144 was also imposed which prohibits public gatherings in the specific territory.

### Nawaz to return by August: Saud

BAHAWALPUR (INP): A leader of Pakistan Muslim League-N and former senator, Chaudhary Saud Majeed has said that former prime minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif would return back to Pakistan in August. Talking to media persons here, he said that had held a meeting with the PML-N chief and former prime minister, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in London and discussed party affairs with him. "The PML-N has made arrangements to accord a warm welcome to the party chief and ex-premier, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on his return to Pakistan which is likely in next month of August," he said.

### 27 killed in highways mishaps

QUETTA (INP): At least 27 people have died and 1095 were injured in 739 incidents that occurred on the highways of Balochistan during the month of June. According to data released by Medical Emergency Response Center (MERC), most of the accidents occurred on N25 at Winder, Lasbela area on the Karachi-Quetta highway. The MERC responded to 739 road accidents that happened on the main highways of Balochistan in the month of June and provided medical treatment to 1095 injured people while shifting the dead bodies to the nearest hospitals. According to the report, the authority has recorded the highest number of road accidents of 107 at Winder Lasbela, due to which 124 people were injured during the said period. To provide first aid in emergency situations, Medical Officers, and trained paramedical staffs have been appointed at every Medical Emergency and Response Center to save human lives in case of accidents on the national highways. The centers have been connected with district hospitals to deal with emergency situations and for administrative purposes. The government had also been working to expand the main roads to control the accidents in the province.



LANDI KOTAL: Local leader of Jamat-e-Islami addressing during a protest against desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden. — F.P. photo

## Lawyers observed strike in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: Buner Bar Association observed strike and condemned desecration of holy Quran by wearing black ribbons boycotting court proceedings and staging protest demonstrations on roads respectively, on Tuesday.

The district bar Buner lawyers community and the judges were first to jointly held a gathering at district bar room in Daggar and boycotted court proceedings to register their anguish over this tragedy which first reported from Sweden and then Charsadha KPK Pakistan. The judges and lawyers communities unitedly passed a resolution was moved by district bar Buner general secretary Hazrat Hussain.

The resolution condemned desecration of the holy Quran in Sweden and Charsadha KPK Pakistan as well and demanded this

trend must be condemned and the accused traced and punished sternly to be made them an example for other to strictly discourage the growing trend which infuriate Muslims all over the world.

The bar president Rafiq Ahmed Khan advocate and district and session judge Haq Nawaz Khan addressed. The speakers bitterly condemned the accused and demanded stern action by the concerned governments and international community as well. They also urged upon Muslim scholars to write up books articles and convince the non-Muslims not to commit such like crime due to which Muslims all over the world are infuriated and peace is endangered.

Pakistan Tehreek Nawjawan Buner district chapter president Abdul Karim hailing from Sultanwas was also

arranged a protest demonstration in Pacha Kalay Pir Baba Bazaar and condemned desecration of the holy Quran both in Sweden and Charsadha KPK Pakistan and demanded of the government to ask international community for arrest of the accused and trace the accused of Charsadha incident and dealt them sternly so as others never commit such a crime of desecration of the holy Quran.

However, the Jamaat e Islami workers would stage protest on roads today Wednesday and the PTI activists to stage protest on roads on Friday as leadership of both the political parties were already announced schedules. It's merit a mention here that the PDM allied parties like JUIF PMLN ANP PPP and others leadership yet to announce their protest schedules either jointly or separately.

## 74 cases of dog-bite reported during Eid

F.P. Report

SWABI: As many as 74 cases of dog-bite were reported in three major hospitals of district Swabi during holidays of Eidul Azha. According to monthly performance report of three major health facilities, 60 cases of dog-bite were reported in Bacha Khan Medical Complex (BKMC), ten were reported in Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Topi and four cases were reported in Chota Lahor Hospital.

The number of road mishaps reported in these three hospitals during Eid in 549 while a total of 5111 patients were given medical service during the same period. As many as 155 children born during Eid holidays and more than 6000 diagnostic tests were conducted. The number of patients reported in BKMC is 3848 and 697 and 566 patients were reported in Chota Lahore and Topi hospital respectively.

According to spokesperson for Medical Teaching Institutes Swabi, emergency service remained operational during Eid round the clock for facilitation and assistance of people.

## IJC hold rally

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: International Journalists Council Hafizabad Chapter took out protesting rally against desecration of Holy Quran in Sweden led by Chairman Press Club Hafizabad Tanzel-ur-Rehman Butt. A large number of journalists across the district participated the rally.

Addressing the participants of the rally, ex-Chairman Press Club Rana Muhammad Arshad Anjum, District President Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists Hafizabad Hafiz Abdul Qadeer Chaudhry and Tanzel-ur-Rehman Butt said that Islam teach lesson of brotherhood, peace, unity and tolerance while non-Muslims elements heart sentiments of the Muslims to commit such acts which cannot be tolerated at all.

They said that some such elements were trying to provoke the Muslims for ruining steps taken by the International Community to promote interfaith harmony, peace and coexisting in the world. They urged the government of Pakistan to take action against this condemned act to boycott Sweden products and disconnect diplomatic relations as well as evolved affective strategy with the coordination of the Muslim Countries to contain such blasphemous act in future.

## Desecration of Holy Quran Govt urged to expel Swedish ambassador

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamiat Ulema Islam-Fazl on Tuesday held a protest rally in Timergara against the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden. Dozens of the party workers led by their district chief Sirajud Din marched on the road from Balambat to Timergara.

They were chanting slogans against the Swedish government for its frequent failure to stop such desecrations. Addressing the gathering the JUI-F district chief Sirajud Din, Timergara tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanul Din, provincial leaders Muhammad Rahim Haqqani, Qazi Ayazud Din and others demanded the government to immediately expel the Swedish ambassador from the country and severe bilateral ties with that government.

They said the Swedish government should have crack downed on the elements involved in the act. They said that it was not the first time that the Muslims' sentiments had been hurt by some elements in Sweden. The speakers said that a wave of anger had spread among the Muslims across the globe. They said the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) should

take it serious. They also demanded the Swedish government to seek a public apology from the entire Muslim community.

**Dead body:** The dead body of one of the two women drowned in the Panjkora River on the second day of Eid, was fished out by the Rescue 1122 divers from the Marchi Morr in Bosaq here on Tuesday. The search and rescue operation for the two women and a man continued for the fourth consecutive day.

The Lower Dir deputy commissioner Iftikhar Ahmad and Rescue 1122 district emergency in-charge Ibrar Ali visited the Shago Kas area of the Panjkora River and monitored the search operation. The DC lauded the efforts of the Rescue team and volunteers of the civil defense. He directed the ACs concerned to take strict action against the violators of section 144 banning bathing in the river.

Meanwhile unknown motorcyclists opened indiscriminate fire at Gosum in the jurisdiction of Munda police station and killed one Gul Bahadar s/o Saadat Hassan, a resident of Arang in Bajaur, currently living at Gosum here on Tuesday, residents and police said. They said the attackers fled

from the scene. The Munda police registered a case and started investigation. Also on Tuesday one Sulman 19 s/o Luqman Khan, a resident of Makhai village in Jandol committed suicide due to unknown reasons. The Munda police registered a case and started further investigations.

**Teachers' protest:** The Secondary School Teachers' Association Lower Dir chapter on Tuesday demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker government to issue a notification regarding the up gradation of SSTs. The demand was made during a meeting held at the government centennial model high school Timergara with provincial president of the association Zulfiqar in the chair.

Dozens of the secondary school teachers from all parts of the district attended the meeting which was also addressed by provincial general secretary Farhad Takkar, district president Ikram Khan and others. They complained that the post of SST had not been upgraded since 1991 while other cadres had been upgraded twice or thrice. The meeting announced to stage a protest sit-in in Peshawar on July 11 in case a proper notification was not issued by then.

## Development need of the hour in Waziristan

F.P. Report

WANA: Joint efforts for peace, prosperity, development, education and health are the need of the hour in Lower Waziristan.

Lower Waziristan is the only area in the entire tribal belt where people have not displaced to other districts during the military operations and they solved all the problems here with mutual consultation and wisdom.

They played an important role in saving this area from great trouble. The elders, scholars and political leaders here left no stone unturned to evict foreign terrorists from their areas. Efforts should now

be made to convince the elders to devote their energies to the prosperity and development of the region.

It is also important to mention here that if the people of all schools of Lower Waziristan put in a little effort, there are very few difficulties in developing connections among people, because today is the era of social media, in this modern age, people have a common national cause.

It takes very little time to bring on a platform for but for this a few sincere people have to come forward and at the same time, we have to learn the lesson of tolerance to work patiently for the collective interests of the region.

Media has the ability to play its key role in implementing such efforts. If a little work is done to make schools functional in Lower Waziristan, no child can remain illiterate and all children can get education.

But our misfortune is that our serious people do not give any priority to collective efforts in this direction. There is a lot of potential in Lower Waziristan but it is urgent need of the hour to provide a platform to utilize it and make joint efforts. Political leaders and media persons can play a role in providing a flat form for solving the problems, now they should work on the issue of collective interest.

## Northern varsity's Waleed gets 1st position in speech

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Northern University Nowshera has secured 1st position in speech competition among private sector varsities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Tuesday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Higher Education Authority and National Counter Terrorism has arranged the competition with the title "Role Universities for Sustainable Peace and Counter Extremism in which large students from private sector varsities participated.

Northern University Nowshera, CECOS University, Sarhad University Qurtaba, Iqra, Preston and Ghandahara varsities students partici-



pated in the speech competition while Northern varsity has secured his title.

During the competition Chairman Higher Education Authority Fazal Qadir, Vice Chancellor Iqra University Professor Shah Jahan and Director

NCTA Salah Zakria were present.

Northern University student Waleed Ali Gul, Muskan Shahid and Sana Khurshed secured 1st, 2nd and 3rd position respectively during the speech competition.

## Distribution of fruit fly traps starts in Swat

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Iftikhar Ahmed, Director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, Upper Swat on Tuesday informed that the distribution of fruit fly traps was underway in Upper Swat. He said that fruit flies spoil fruits by laying eggs in different fruits and to prevent this, landowners use pesticides every day, which causes economic harm to them and poisons the environment.

In this regard, the Department of Agriculture in collaboration with the World Bank has started

distributing free fruit fly traps to the landowners. He said that the free distribution of 184,000 traps has started in Swat, which will significantly reduce the loss caused by fruit flies in 36,800 acres of fruits and vegetables in Swat.

The move will benefit landowners in Swat by Rs3 billion, which the landowners earn annually due to fruit fly fruit and vegetables.

Iftikhar Ahmed exhorted the land-lords that it is their responsibility to plant these traps in their gar-

dens properly. If anyone destroys or sells these traps in any way, then they would be considered national criminals and legal action will be taken against them.

The landowners of Swat thanked Agriculture Minister Abdul Halim Kasuria, Secretary Agriculture Muhammad Javed Marwat, Director General Agriculture Jan Muhammad Khan, and Director Upper Swat Iftikhar Ahmed for taking concrete and timely steps to resolve this long-standing problem.

## Police raid houses of former KP minister and MPA

F.P. Report

MARAN: Police raided the house of former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister and provincial President of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Atif Khan and former MPA Zahir Shah Toro but vain to arrest them were out of their houses.

Earlier, police raided the Mardan and Islamabad residences of the former provincial minister Atif Khan but he wasn't present at their places. The police arrested the employees of their pharmaceutical factory and the factory was sealed also.

In another raid of police, the police also raided the house of former MPA Zahir Shah Toro in Mardan, but apparently he was not present at the house. The sources said that cases of violence

has been registered on 9 May against Atif Khan and Zahir Shah Toro. Sources confirmed that the police haven't been able to arrest any former member of the provincial assembly from Mardan so far.

**Police arrests 33 alleged culprits recovered cash, stolen items:** Mardan Region Police has arrested 33 accused in 15 different cases of theft, burglary and robbery during the last 20 days and recovered more than 25 lakhs in cash, 27 mobile phones, 11 motorcycles and other items.

The new Regional Police Officer of Mardan Muhammad Suleiman has issued orders to deal with criminals with an iron hand across the region, according to the details, fifteen cases

of theft, robbery and embezzlement were registered in different districts of the region, including 6 in Charsadha in Mardan 5, Swabi 3 While a case was registered in Nowshera, the DPOs of the respective districts under the leadership of RPO Muhammad Suleiman along with their teams traced all the cases and arrested 33 accused.

According to police sources, 25 lakh 14 thousand cash, 27 mobile phones, 11 motorcycles, one motor car, two solar panels and other items were recovered from the alleged accused. Instructions have been issued to the police across the region to deal strictly with anti-social elements and treat decent citizens with dignity and respect.



THARPARKAR: Women filling their pots with drinking water at Nagarparkar.

## Senator Zehri shocked over FC men martyrdom

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Central Vice President Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of police and FC personnel who were martyred in the attacks on check posts at in Shirani Dhana Sar area of Balochistan, Turbat and Hoshab last day.

In her condemnation statement, she condemned the incidents in strong words and termed the incidents as extremely cowardly act and said that the cowardly attacks of terrorists on the security personnel who are on duty like protecting the homeland is open terrorism. Terrorists want to sabotage the peace of Pakistan, especially Balochistan, with their cowardly acts. The people of the province stand by their army and other

security forces in this war against terrorism.

She said that the nation is major in the war against terrorists. Nation is proud of the martyrdom of Major Saqib and other martyrs. Martyrs are the assets of the nation and they protected the nation by sacrificing their lives.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has said that the increasing incidents of terrorism are worrisome and the fabric of these acts is linked to India, which is using some deserter people to carry out such cowardly acts and does not want peace to be established in Pakistan. This dream of enemy will never be realized. She further said that immediately after Eid, it is the nefarious action of the enemies to sabotage the atmosphere of law and order and the attack on the check posts and check-points is not under the grip

of the law.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that the terrorist elements are trying to establish an atmosphere of terrorism in the country under a well-thought-out conspiracy, which will not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. The determination and courage of the Pakistani nation against terrorism cannot be weakened by the cowardly acts of terrorists and the morale of the law enforcement agencies and the nation cannot be weakened by such cowardly acts.

She said that terrorism throughout the country and the recent incidents are part of the activities of terrorists for the nefarious purpose of disrupting the peace and order situation in the country, which will be thwarted in any case. She said that a handful of terrorists cannot shake the firm resolve of the nation.



# Thai opposition party struggles to take power after election win



BANGKOK (Agencies): Thailand's new parliament has convened nearly two months after a progressive opposition party won a stunning election victory, but there is still no clear sign its leader will be able to become prime minister and end nine years of military-dominated rule. The Move Forward Party's unexpected election victory in May alarmed the ruling establishment, which regards it as a threat to the status quo and the monarchy. Some senators have already announced their opposition to party leader Pita Limjaroenrat, a 42-year-old Harvard-educated businessman.

The election results showed Move Forward's progressive agenda resonated with a public weary of nine years of military-controlled rule under Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who as army commander seized power in a 2014 coup and returned as prime minister after a 2019 general election. But what made Move Forward popular with many voters was what alarmed royalist conservatives. The party pledged to reform many powerful institutions, including the monarchy and the military, which retain power and influence under a constitution written during Prayuth's administration.

While the threats from Move Forward's ideological foes are clear, what has been less expected are the tensions between it and the biggest partner in its coalition, the Pheu Thai Party. Move Forward and Pheu Thai have been squabbling over which will get the post of speaker of the House of Representatives, which is supposed to be chosen by the parliament on Tuesday. "The position of the House speaker is essential because he will determine the agenda of parliament, and so therefore the degree of political transformation," said Tyrell Haberkorn, a Thai studies scholar at the University of Wisconsin. The two parties announced a compromise after a meeting. The coalition will nominate Wan

Muhamad Noor Matha, a veteran leader of the Prachachat Party, to be House speaker, and Move Forward and Pheu Thai will each have one deputy speaker. Pita said the decision was reached to strengthen unity among the coalition's allies to support his bid to be prime minister. Pita needs 376 votes to secure the post. He currently has 312 and will need 64 more votes from either rival parties or members of a conservative-leaning Senate appointed under military rule. Attachak Sattayanurak, a professor of history at Chiang Mai University in northern Thailand, suggested the apparent distrust between the two parties is potentially the biggest threat to Pita's possible prime ministership.

Pheu Thai leaders, almost as a matter of pride, could not be seen as ceding too much to their Move Forward partner, he said. "The feelings of people in the Pheu Thai Party, that it used to be a heavyweight that had won many elections and was able to be an agenda setter" drove many to insist that Move Forward make the speaker's post part of Pheu Thai's share of the pie, he said. However, if Pheu Thai fails to show an unbreakable bond with Move Forward, it "reduces the power of the group that calls itself a democracy bloc" and gives the senators and their conservative allies "more grounds not to choose Pita", Attachak said. Aside from Move Forward's problems with the Senate and Pheu Thai, there are serious fears that Pita and his party will be blocked by legal challenges, a fate that brought down previous parties that ran afoul of the conservative establishment. King Maha Vajiralongkorn, accompanied by his wife Queen Suthida, reminded the rows of white-uniformed lawmakers of their duty to represent the people of Thailand. "The progress of the nation will be up to your intellectual ability and your honesty," he said in brief prepared remarks. "If everyone realises this, the work will achieve success smoothly."

# Japan to get UN verdict for Fukushima water release

TOKYO (Reuters): Japan is set to receive a report from a UN nuclear watchdog on Tuesday approving its plan to release treated radioactive water from the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima plant into the ocean despite fierce resistance from Beijing and some local opposition. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi begins a four-day visit to Japan on Tuesday, when he will meet with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and deliver the results of the agency's two-year safety review.

Japan has not specified a date to start the water release, which will take 30 to 40 years to complete, pending the IAEA's review and official approval from the national nuclear regulatory body for Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco). The nuclear regulator's final word could come as early as this week. Some Japanese fishing unions have opposed the government's plan, conceived in 2021, saying it would undo work to repair their reputations after several countries banned some Japanese food products following the

2011 disaster. Some neighbouring countries have over the years also complained about the threat to the marine environment and public health, with Beijing emerging as the biggest critic of the plan. "We will continue to explain the safety of the plan to release the treated water into the ocean to the international community, based on scientific evidence and with transparency," Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said at a joint briefing with Grossi.

Through its embassy in Japan, Beijing on Tuesday said the IAEA's report cannot be a "pass" for the water release and called for the plan's suspension. Japan maintains the process is safe as it has treated the water - enough to fill 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools - used to cool the fuel rods of the Fukushima plant after it was damaged by the earthquake and tsunami in 2011. The water has been filtered to remove most radioactive elements except for tritium, an isotope of hydrogen that is difficult to separate from water. The treated water will be diluted to well

below internationally approved levels of tritium before being released into the Pacific Ocean. In a presentation given to foreign journalists in China last month, Japanese officials said the tritium levels in the treated water are lower than that found in waste water regularly released by nuclear plants around the world, including in China.

The officials said that they had made multiple and repeated attempts to explain the science behind Tokyo's stance to Beijing, but that its offers had been ignored. China on Tuesday said Japan's comparison of the tritium levels in the treated water and waste water was "completely confusing concepts and misleading public opinion." Grossi will visit the Fukushima plant on Wednesday. After his Japan trip, he will head to South Korea, where consumers have been snapping up sea salt and other items ahead of the water release. He is also expected to visit New Zealand and the Cook Islands in a bid to ease concerns over the plan, according to media reports.

# Ubinas volcano set to trigger state of emergency in Peru

LIMA (Agencies): Officials in the Peruvian government have announced they will declare a state of emergency for the area surrounding the Ubinas volcano, after persistent seismic activity shook the region and sent a column of toxic gas into the air. Alberto Otárola, the president of Peru's Council of Ministers, announced that the emergency declaration was anticipated for the southern department of Moquegua, where the volcano is located.

"We are taking charge of these phenomena, and we are always proactively coordinating with all institutions to face them," he said. The emergency order will allow the government to take "the measures necessary" to pre-

vent health risks, Otárola explained. Already, masks are being distributed as ash fills the air. Some 2,000 people stand to be affected in the immediate area, Otárola said. He urged the population to remain calm. Moquegua's regional government raised the alert level from yellow to orange, to indicate heightened danger from the volcano. Ubinas is the most active volcano in the country, forming part of the "Ring of Fire", an area of seismic activity that surrounds the tectonic plate underneath the Pacific Ocean.

The current eruption began around June 22, according to the Geophysics Institute of Peru (IGP). The institute recorded 402 earthquakes associated with the

volcano between June 23 and 25. During that period of activity, a plume of ash rose nearly 1,300 metres (4,265 feet) above the volcano's peak. The National Civil Defence Institute has since advised residents to wear face masks and protect their eyes from the ash as well as create an evacuation plan for use if necessary. The last large eruption at Ubinas came in 2019, resulting in thousands of people being displaced. While Ubinas has been erupting regularly since 1550, one of the most dramatic incidents came in 2006 after several decades of relative dormancy. That eruption blanketed the region with ash, prompting evacuations and killing livestock with its toxic emissions.

## Climate change spells 'terrifying' future: UN

NEW YORK (AFP): Climate change threatens to deliver a "truly terrifying" dystopian future of hunger and suffering, the United Nations' human rights chief warned.

Volker Turk slammed world leaders for only thinking of the short term while dealing with the climate crisis. Turk told a UN Human Rights Council debate on the right to food that extreme weather events were wiping out crops, herds and ecosystems, making it impossible for communities to rebuild and support themselves.

"More than 828 million people faced hunger in 2021. And climate change is projected to place up to 80 million more people at risk of hunger by the middle of this century," said Turk. "Our environment is burning. It's melting. It's flooding. It's depleting. It's drying. It's dying," he said, evoking a "dystopian future". "Addressing climate change is a human rights issue... there is still time to act. But that time is now," he said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries agree to cap global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 -- and 1.5C if possible. The global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15C above the 1850-1900 average. On current policy trends, the planet will be 2.8C warmer by the end of the century, according to the UN's IPCC climate science advisory panel. "We must not deliver this future of hunger and suffering to our children, and their children. And we don't have to," Volk said. "We, the generation with the most powerful technological tools in history, have the capacity to change it."

Turk said world leaders "perform the choreography of deciding to act and promising to act and then get stuck in the short term". He called for an end to "senseless subsidies" of the fossil fuel industry, and said the Dubai COP28 climate summit in November and December needed to be the "decisive game-changer that we so badly need". Turk urged the world to "shun the green-washers" as well as those who cast doubt on climate science, driven by their own greed. The Human Rights Council's 53rd session runs until July 14.

## Sudan's army calls for young to enlist in fight

CAIRO (AP): The Sudanese army called on young people and anyone else capable of fighting to enlist at the nearest military command for battle against rival paramilitary force.

Sudan descended into chaos after fighting erupted on Apr. 15 between the military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo. Since then, over 3,000 people have been killed, the country's Health Ministry said, while about 2.5 million people have been displaced, according to the UN. The true death toll is believed to be much higher.

"The commanders of the military divisions and regions have been instructed to receive and equip the fighters, and they must go to the nearest military command or unit," the army said on their official Facebook page. Call to arms comes just days after Burhan made a near-identical appeal during a televised speech, asking Sudan's youth and those capable of fighting to support the army, either from "their place of residence or by joining the military movement." It remained unclear if call to arms was a forced conscription. In the capital, Khartoum, RSF troops appear to have the upper hand on the city's streets, having commandeered civilian homes across the capital and turned them into bases. Throughout the 10-week conflict, the army has retaliated with airstrikes that have hit residential areas and sometimes hospitals. The province of West Darfur has seen some of the worst violence.

# UN talks aim to harness AI power and potential

NEW YORK (AFP): The United Nations is convening this week a global gathering to try to map out the frontiers of artificial intelligence and to harness its potential for empowering humanity. The UN hopes to lay out a clear blueprint on the way forward for handling AI, as development of the technology races ahead the capacity to set its boundaries.

The "AI for Good Global Summit", being held in Geneva, will bring together around 3,000 experts from companies like Microsoft and Amazon as well as from universities and international organisations to try to sculpt frameworks for handling AI. "This technology is moving fast," said Doreen Bogdan-Martin, head of the International Telecommunication Union, the UN's information and communications technology agency that convened the summit. "It's a real opportunity for the world's leading voices on AI to come together on the global stage and to address governance issues," she told reporters. "Doing nothing is not an option. Humanity is dependent upon it. So we have to engage and try and ensure a responsible future with AI."

She said the summit would examine possible frameworks and guardrails to support safe AI use. Listed participants include Amazon's chief technology officer Werner Vogels, Google DeepMind chief operating officer Lila Ibrahim and former Spain football captain Iker Casillas -- who suffered a heart attack in 2019 and now advocates for AI use

in heart attack prevention.

They will be joined by dozens of robots, including several humanoid-like Ai-Da, the first ultra-realistic robot artist; Ameca, the world's most advanced life-like robot; the humanoid rock singer Desdemona; and Grace, the most advanced healthcare robot.

The Geneva-based ITU feels it can bring its experience to bear on AI governance. Founded in 1865, the ITU is the oldest agency in the UN fold. It established "SOS" as the Morse code international maritime distress call in 1906, and coordinates everything from radio frequencies to satellites and 5G.

The summit wants to identify ways of using AI to advance the UN's lagging sustainable development goals on issues such as health, the climate, poverty, hunger and clean water. Bogdan-Martin said AI must not exacerbate social inequalities or introduce biases on race, gender, politics, culture, religion or wealth. "This summit can help ensure that AI charts the course that benefits humanity," UN chief Antonio Guterres said. However, while AI proponents hail the technology for how it can transform society, including work, healthcare and creative pursuits, others are worried by its potential to undermine democracy. "We're kind of in a perfect storm of suddenly having this powerful new technology -- I don't think it's super-intelligent -- being spread very widely and empowered in our lives, and we're really not prepared," said serial AI entrepreneur

Gary Marcus.

"We're at a critical moment in history when we can either get this right and build the global governance we need, or get it wrong and not succeed and wind up in a bad place where a few companies control the fates of many, many people without sufficient forethought," he said. Last month, EU lawmakers pushed the bloc closer to passing one of the world's first laws regulating systems like OpenAI's ChatGPT chatbot. There is also growing clamour to regulate AI in the United States. ChatGPT has become a global sensation since it was launched late last year for its ability to produce human-like content, including essays, poems and conversations from simple prompts. It has sparked a mushrooming of generative AI content, leaving lawmakers scrambling to try to figure out how to regulate such bots.

Juan Lavista Ferres, chief data scientist of the Microsoft AI For Good Lab, gave an example of how AI could be used "to make our world a better place". He compared the more than 400 million people diagnosed with diabetes, a major cause of blindness, with the small number of ophthalmologists. "It's physically impossible to diagnose every patient. Yet we and others have built AI models that today can take this condition with an accuracy that matches a very good ophthalmologist. This is something that can even be done from a smartphone. Here AI is not just a solution, but it's the only solution."

# Family of Navalny file lawsuit over visiting rights

MOSCOW (Reuters): Relatives of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny have filed a class-action lawsuit against the penal colony where he is being held over its refusal to let them visit him. The Navalny family intends to take the case as far as the Constitutional Court, the politician said in a post on his official Instagram page, which is run by his lawyers and allies.

"I am a convict. And they never cease to remind me that I am 'like everyone else.' But I've had 0 (zero) visits in the last year. 0 (zero) long visits, 0 (zero) short visits and 2 (two) phone calls 11 months ago," Navalny said. The post names Navalny's wife Yulia, his parents and his children, Dasha and Zakhar, as the plaintiffs.

Navalny, 47, is serving sentences totalling 11-1/2 years in the IK-6 penal colony in Melekhovo, about 235 km (145 miles) east of Moscow, on fraud and other charges that he says were trumped up to silence his criticism of President Vladimir Putin. The Kremlin routinely declines to comment on his case, saying it is a matter for the prison service. Reuters has requested comment from the prison authorities. A new trial for alleged "extremist" activity began against Navalny last month, which could extend his prison term by decades. Acquittals of opposition figures are practically unheard of in Russia.

Navalny has filed numerous complaints against the penal colony since his imprisonment, all

of which have been rejected. One complaint over prison officials' refusal to grant him writing equipment made it to Russia's Supreme Court. Prisoners are "as a general rule" entitled to three long and three short visits per year in penal colonies like the one in Melekhovo, as well as at least six phone calls, Navalny said in the Instagram post. "The constitution guarantees the rights of my children - they have the right to see me, and I am obliged to participate in their upbringing. The constitution guarantees the rights of my elderly parents, I am obliged, as best I can, to take care of them," Navalny wrote, noting that his parents were barred from entering the courtroom during his latest trial in June.

# Jordan calls for investment into Syria

DAMASCUS (AP): Jordan's foreign minister called for international investment into conflict-ravaged Syria's crippled infrastructure to speed up refugee returns. Ayman Safadi made the remarks during a visit to the capital Damascus, where he met with Syrian President Bashar Assad and his counterpart, Faisal Mekdad.

Jordan, which shares a border with the war-torn country and hosts some 1.3 million Syrian refugees, played a crucial role in the once-pariah state's return to the Arab League. It hosted regional talks in May between Syrian, Saudi, Iraqi and Egyptian officials in an initiative to reach a political solution to the years-long crisis.

Syria's uprising-turned civil war, now in its 13th year, has killed nearly half a million people and displaced half of its prewar population of 23 million. Syrians in both government-held territory and an opposition-held enclave in the country's

northwest suffer from rampant poverty and crippled infrastructure. "We have offered everything we can to ensure them a dignified life," Safadi said at a news conference following his meetings. "But what we are sure of is that the refugees' futures lie in their country." The Jordanian foreign minister said that securing critical infrastructure and basic necessities will speed up voluntary refugee returns, especially as international aid for refugees continues to decline.

Assad in a statement released by his office echoed similar sentiments, saying that investment in infrastructure and reconstruction would create the "best environment" for refugee returns. "We reaffirm that the refugee file is a solely humanitarian and moral issue that should not be politicized in any way," the statement read. Anti-refugee sentiment has soared in Lebanon and Turkey, two other neighboring countries hosting

Syrian refugees. But while government-held Syria receives humanitarian aid through United Nations agencies, Western-led sanctions have made it difficult for Damascus to fix electricity, water and other infrastructure decimated in the conflict and more recently by a devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake in February. Western countries, most vocally the United States and the United Kingdom, say that Syria is still not safe for return. UN agencies and human rights organizations say the same, with groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch saying they have documented cases of arbitrary detention and disappearances. Safadi's meetings with Mekdad and Assad also discussed the humanitarian crisis in Syria, steps toward a political solution to the conflict, and drug smuggling, which has become a lucrative industry in the economically shattered country.

# Elections in Ukraine could be cancelled

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia's top election official said that if the situation worsened in four Russian-controlled parts of Ukraine, local elections scheduled there for September would be cancelled. Russia controls just under one-fifth of Ukraine, including Crimea, which it annexed in 2014, and parts of four other regions that Russian troops have taken control of since the current war began in February 2022.

President Vladimir Putin says the regions - Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson - are now part of Russia, after Moscow unilaterally annexed them last year. Ukraine says the annexation is illegal and void, and that it will not rest until every last Russian soldier is ejected from its internationally recognised territory. The front line of the conflict - which Moscow calls a "special military operation" - runs through all four regions. "Since the situation is really difficult, anything can happen," Ella Panfilova, who chairs Russia's Central Election Commission, told Putin at a meeting in the Kremlin. "If unforeseen circumstances arise - in some areas the situation may deteriorate dramatically - and we see that there is a serious danger to the life and health of residents, then we have the right to postpone these elections," she said. "We will certainly use this right if there are serious reasons for it," Putin replied. "Understood." Russia holds regional and municipal elections on Sept. 10, including elections of 21 regional leaders and 20 regional legislatures, Panfilova said. There are also four by-elections for seats in the federal parliament.

# Macky says he won't run for 3rd term

DAKAR (BBC): Senegal's President Macky Sall has ruled out seeking re-election in 2024, ending widespread speculation that he would run for a third term. "The 2019 term was my second and last term," he said in a televised address.

Rumours he would try to extend his grip on power have fuelled unrest several times since 2021, with dozens killed. The opposition had called for fresh protests if Mr Sall decided to run again - which most legal experts say would have violated the constitution. In his address, Mr Sall, 61, said: "There has been much speculation and commentary on my eventual candidature on this election. 'My decision, carefully considered... is not to run as a candidate in the upcoming election.' 'Senegal is more than me, and is full of capable leaders for the country's development,' he added. Recently there had been anger in Senegal over the sentencing of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko to two years in prison for the crime of "corrupting youth".

# North Korea appears to lift COVID mask mandate

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea appeared to have eased a strict COVID-19 mask mandate, media reports said this week, after state news agencies showed many people maskless. The isolated country has maintained border lockdowns and other anti-COVID measures long after most other nations ditched such restrictions.

North Korean state television and newspapers did not make any official announcement, but showed crowds of people at theatres and other locations without masks. That was a "stark change" compared to newspaper coverage

dating back to September, according to analysts with NK News, a Seoul-based site that monitors North Korea. Residents, factories and social groups were told that the mandate was lifted as of July 1, US-based Radio Free Asia (RFA) said, citing unnamed sources. The report said authorities had eased the mandates because wearing used masks and strict mask control had led to the spread of skin and eye infections.

Last August, North Korean state news agency KCNA said Pyongyang had dropped a face mask mandate along with other social distancing rules as

leader Kim Jong Un declared victory over COVID-19. But one month after the announcement, the authorities ordered citizens to wear masks in public again, citing flu and infectious diseases that can occur during fall and winter, but without specifying COVID-19. South Korea's spy agency has said defectors who fled North Korea in May decided to do so because of the country's strict COVID-19 controls. North Korea's strict coronavirus curbs have also been criticized by a United Nations report last year as worsening its human rights violations.

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# Bilawal’s Japan trip and controversy of family politics

**F**OREIGN Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with a delegation has recently paid a four-day state visit to Japan. During his visit, Foreign Minister met with the top Japanese leadership including his Japanese counterpart, Hayashi Yoshimasa, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Japanese National Security Advisor Takeo Akiha, and other high-level dignitaries along with interacting at the Asian Development Bank Institute, a Tokyo based renowned think tank based in Japan.

During his joint press stakeout with his Japanese counterpart, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari told the media that Pakistan and Japan have agreed to further deepen their bilateral cooperation in diverse fields including trade, investment, and Information Technology. According to him, the two sides also agreed to enhance cooperation in mutually beneficial people-to-people contact, human resource development, tourism, agriculture, Solar energy, desalination, water purification, and reconstruction of houses in the flood-affected areas of Pakistan. Meanwhile, the two sides agreed to conduct language skills assessment tests for the Japanese language in Pakistan to facilitate the export of a skilled workforce to a major economic and industrial power in the world.

Pakistan and Japan had longstanding and cordial bilateral relations since the early years of the country's independence in 1947. Both countries had worked closely in multiple domains over the past decades and there is tremendous potential to enhance bilateral collaboration in trade, investment, agriculture, infrastructure development, services delivery, automobile industry, energy sector, education, people-to-people contacts, and other areas of mutual interests. Both nations are eager to forge a long-term and sustainable partnership to benefit from each other expertise, resources, and knowledge. Presently, there is an enormous attraction for Japanese firms in Pakistan's developing blue economy, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) related projects including Special Economic Zones (SEZs), energy projects, waste management in megacities including Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Faisalabad, and Hyderabad. At the same time, Pakistan is home to nearly 230 million people, two-thirds comprising below 30 years of age, an educated and skilled youth workforce that can play an important role in the development and growth of any nation including Japan. Pakistan is eager to leverage its geostrategic location at the crossroad of Central Asia and South Asia to foster regional connectivity, economic growth, regional transnational trade, and economic cooperation in the region and beyond through its road and rail infrastructure and related facilities that have no alternative so far.

Apparently, Pakistan has presented its case in a very impressive manner by shedding away from the ongoing global rivalry and cold war-style confrontation between major powers and completely shifting its vision from geopolitics to geoeconomics through enhanced economic and trade cooperation with regional and extra-regional players. Pakistan and Japan could leverage their respective strengths through joint efforts and cooperation in political affairs, to realize the untapped potential in trade and investment, poverty elevation, climate change, global health, and other aspects of mutual and regional importance. In this contemporary world, each nation is dependent on other countries in one or the other way, Pakistan and Japan had a history of teamwork and cooperation, and expansion in this journey will surely benefit both nations in the future.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's Japan tour is very significant in many ways. It was an important diplomatic expedition of the Foreign Minister to the East Asia region that has been largely ignored over the past year. At the same time, it attracted massive public criticism and outrage at home and abroad, because an important member of the Zardari family and younger sister of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had been spotted alongside Mr. Bhutto during multiple official events in Tokyo. Civil society, media, and independent analysts had raised their voices against the coalition government and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, for promoting nepotism, abusing authority and misusing national resources. Although, the PPP media cell has tried to clarify the situation by saying that Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari, who accompanied Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to Japan, was on a private visit and bearing her expenses. However, this explanation is totally insufficient and could not alter the fact that government resources or the Foreign Minister's position had been used to make it possible that his family member travel with or accompanied the state delegation at important movements.

In fact, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto had been under stern criticism from the opposition for his week-long tours of foreign nations and excessive ambassadorial work in the past year. The opposition criticized him for wasting taxpayers' money on his unnecessary foreign trips of the least importance that otherwise could be managed through Pakistani envoys in host nations/multilateral forums. However, the Foreign Office clarified to the nation that the young Foreign Minister had paid for all his foreign trips from his pocket and no extra financial burden had been put on the national exchequer in this regard. It is worth praising that Bilawal has almost completed his ambassadorial internship successfully and now his younger sister is preparing to take this assignment if PPP succeeded in securing a majority in the next election.

Unluckily, family politics, feudalism, and institutional cartelization are those realities that are the core reasons for Pakistan's economic and constitutional setback in the contemporary world. Several nations that got independence after Pakistan and numerous institutions/businesses that took assistance/guidance from Pakistani state institutions to get startup are now at the peak in their fields while the Pakistani nation has plunged into the darkness of corruption, nepotism, moral and institutional depletion. Because feudal, dictators and despots never legislated in favor of the public and always protected their communal, and party interests throughout history. In fact, no real change or improvement is possible until and unless people raise their voices for their rights, and stand up against social injustices, corruption, feudalism, and family politics, while ultimately using their power of the vote to defeat such menaces.

### Important Notice

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## The weird US-Israel relationship just got weirder

Marwan Bishara

**L**ONG called the most special bilateral relationship, US-Israeli ties are in fact the world's strangest. The weirdness, as we have witnessed in the past few weeks, comes in different forms - ranging from the cynical to the surrealistic.

Take for example Friday's tweet by the US ambassador to Israel, Tom Nides, containing a video of himself and Israeli soldiers at the Israeli-Lebanese border, wishing everyone "Shabbat Shalom". This bizarre display of support for the Israeli military, which is de facto still at war with Lebanon, came amid heightened tensions between the two countries.

Earlier in June, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant threatened to bomb Lebanon back into the "Stone Age" if the Lebanese group Hezbollah starts a war. Likewise, Amir Baram, the head of Israel's northern command, declared that in the event of a war, the Israeli army would "destroy all the infrastructure ... to the last stone" in Southern Lebanon - which would amount to a war crime.

On Monday, three days after the "Shabbat Shalom" clip appeared on Twitter, the Israeli army sent 1,000 troops from its elite forces along with armoured vehicles, helicopters and drones into the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, killing at least eight Palestinians, including children, within the first few hours. Nides, a banker-turned-diplomat, engaged in his publicity stunt at a time when Israel is snubbing the US, its closest and most generous ally, with increasing frequency and intensity.

Apart from launching deadly assaults on the Palestinians, Israeli officials have also repeatedly challenged the official US position in support of Palestinian statehood. Just last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Knesset's foreign policy committee that Israel must "crush" the idea of a Palestinian state. The Israeli leader has also openly disregarded warnings from the US against fostering closer ties with China. Most recently, he announced he will be travelling to Beijing, giving the cold shoulder to US

President Joe Biden's administration, which has not yet invited him to visit Washington. Netanyahu and his ministers have not minced their words when expressing dissatisfaction with Biden's policies. In March, the prime minister accused the American leader of meddling in Israeli affairs over his comments about the controversial judicial reform his government has been trying to pass and which has sparked months-long protests across Israel.

In February, Israeli Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli reprimanded Nides for "interfering" in Israel's internal affairs, telling him to "mind [his] own business". The US ambassador is not the only US official to engage in bizarre diplomatic stunts amid growing disparagement from the Israeli government. Last month, US Secretary of State Tony Blinken went out of his way to lobby Saudi Arabia to normalise relations with Israel despite its ever-expanding illegal settlements and mounting violence against Palestinians, which have already embarrassed its new friends in the Gulf along with the Biden administration.

Then the US Congress announced that Israeli President Isaac Herzog will address both of its houses to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Israeli statehood, an honour extended previously to Netanyahu three times. The last time Netanyahu spoke to a joint session of Congress was in 2015 when he tried to mobilise, if not outright incite, US lawmakers against then-President Barack Obama's administration over its decision to negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran. This came after he publicly humiliated Obama at the White House in 2011, lecturing him about Palestine and the Middle East.

This did not deter the Obama administration from committing to send Israel \$38bn in military aid over 10 years, subsidising its purchase of F-35 jet fighters. And if that wasn't enough, this "single largest pledge of military assistance in US history", a pricey gift from the American taxpayer, was

met "not with big love, but with mostly meh", according to The Washington Post. Last year, the Biden administration reaffirmed and even expanded these military commitments in a new strategic memorandum, the Jerusalem US-Israel Joint Partnership Declaration, in return for, well, nothing. Nada. It couldn't even get the previous, presumably more moderate Israeli government to embrace the standard rhetoric on achieving peace in Palestine. Meanwhile, Biden has decided not to reverse any of his predecessor's major concessions to Israel concerning its illegal annexation of Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights.

That's not just strange, it is obscene. Even mad. And it begs the question, is there a method to this madness? Otherwise, why would the US reward Israel despite its intransigence when such support boosts its militaristic and colonial tendencies and feeds its bellicosity? Several explanations come to mind. First is the state of US domestic politics. Biden is desperate not to alienate a single pro-Israel Democrat in the Democrats' razor-thin majority in the Senate, especially when the Republicans, who control the House of Representatives, are blindly following Netanyahu, come what may. This is perhaps why Biden, the leader of the world's foremost superpower, asked for Israeli approval to rejoin UNESCO six years after his predecessor abandoned it to appease Israel. This was to make sure that the vote in Congress on the issue would pass.

Second is Washington's political tactics. Biden wants to offset the temporary coolness towards the Israeli government by warming to its military, presidency and secular business elites to illustrate his bona fide "love for Israel". Such misplaced sentiment towards a colonial, apartheid regime has become more of an obsession in Washington, totally disconnected from the rest of the country, indeed the world. In fact, when it comes to Israel-Palestine, Biden and many Democratic senators are not exactly aligned with the

Democratic Party's base, which has become ever more critical of the Zionist state. Dissatisfaction is growing even among the party's Jewish members. According to a 2023 Gallup poll, 49 percent of Democrats sympathise more with the Palestinians, 38 percent sympathise more with the Israelis and 13 percent sympathise with neither. Third is traditional US foreign policy. Conventional wisdom in Washington has long revolved around satisfying Israel's needs and desires to encourage it to moderate its positions on peace with the Palestinians and make the necessary "compromises", even "sacrifices", for peace. But in reality, unconditional US support has thus far hardened Israel's stance, radicalised its society and driven its polity towards fascism.

Finally, there is also Washington's strategic thinking. Historically, the US has maintained strong and consistent strategic cooperation with Israel, seeing it as its most reliable ally in the Middle East despite political and diplomatic ups and downs. Just last year, Biden repeated this mantra, saying that if there was no Israel "we'd have to invent one."

But treating it as a strategic asset has long proved of illusory utility as the Zionist state has shown itself to be an utter liability, at least since the end of the Cold War. In fact, Israel's primary objective is to keep America stuck in the Middle East to clean up its messes. Recently, Netanyahu was quite honest about it, telling Knesset members that China's growing involvement in the region may not be so bad because it compels America to stay engaged. Well, on Israel's side, of course. But much of the Middle East's hostility towards the US is driven by its decades-long support for what countries in the region see as a colonial warmongering state. That's why only by freeing itself from Israel's paranoid influence could Washington begin to act as a responsible and respectable actor in the region. Wishful thinking? Perhaps. But the shift in the Democratic Party in favour of justice in Palestine does provide some hope when it is needed most.

Aljazeera

## The next shoe to drop in Russia

David A. Andelman

**F**OR hours, as Friday morphed into Saturday and then into Sunday in Russia, the world seemed to be holding its collective breath, to be bracing for the next shoe to drop. Then suddenly it was over. Or was it? I think not - at all. The stunning announcement that Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner paramilitary group, was halting what seemed to be an inevitable confrontation with the forces of Russian President Vladimir Putin - some called it a coup d'état, others a civil war - did indeed remove the prospects of a bloody battle at the gates of the Kremlin.

Prigozhin was turning his troops around from advancing to Moscow and heading (or so the Kremlin and Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko avowed) into what appears to be exile in Belarus. Halted indeed was the immediate crisis, but not the underlying foundations that Prigozhin and Putin had laid long before. Above all there was the long-unspoken belief by many Russians who feared to make their voices heard that fundamentally, the war in Ukraine is not worth fighting or dying for - far from it. Now, that dirty little secret has had a full, if not yet complete, airing. And the consequences of that alone could be monumental. The most immediate and perhaps epiphanous moment began on Friday when Prigozhin released a stunning 30-minute video describing the invasion of Ukraine as "a racket" carried out by a corrupt elite, though he carefully avoided any direct mention of Putin.

"The oligarchic clan that rules Russia needed the war," Prigozhin said. "The mentally ill scumbags decided: 'It's OK, we'll throw in a few thousand more Russian men as cannon fodder. They'll die under artillery fire, but we'll get what we want.' " Of course, it wasn't the first time Prigozhin has spoken so directly about the corruption he believes is eating away at the Russian state and military. Last month, he gave an incendiary interview to pro-Kremlin blogger Konstantin Dolgov, charging, "While the children of the elite smear themselves with cream on the Internet, ordinary people have children in battle, torn to pieces, and a mother cries over her son." Noting that the war had accomplished none of its objectives of disarming Ukraine, Prigozhin added, "If (the Ukrainians) had 500 tanks before, now they have 5,000. If 20,000 fighters were skillful then, now it's 400,000." Will relocation to Belarus quiet Prigozhin? That's hard to see. Now, in theory, though he is beyond the long arm of Putin's justice system, he could still be brandishing a powerful cell phone and laptop.

But perhaps even more monumental was the equally unspoken but hardly invisible suggestion, now all but a reality, that the emperor really does have no clothes. Not anymore. Sure, Putin managed to avoid a violent confrontation that could unseat him. Still, he was forced to renege on his pledge made in a nationwide broadcast, while Prigozhin's forces were on the move, that those on a "path of treason" would be punished: "Those who (organized) and prepared the military mutiny, who turned weapons against their comrades-in-arms, have betrayed Russia, and will be held accountable for that." Not really - this was without question the greatest, most direct challenge to his presi-

dency, and there have been no apparent consequences. Of course, some may not become apparent for a while. First, the Russian leader has not only Prigozhin to deal with but also thousands of soldiers who more than ever may be wondering just why they are fighting Putin's war. Prigozhin's Friday video was issued on his Telegram channel, certainly widely watched, especially among troops in the field and by millions across Russia. Many of his earlier interviews, especially with Dolgov, are equally followed. How, then, does Putin or his generals persuade the forces deployed in Ukraine that theirs is a war worth dying for? At least 10,000 appeals from Russian military forces to surrender voluntarily were received on Ukraine's "I want to live" hotline since September.

Moreover, there seems little evidence that Putin will ditch any of his top generals in the immediate future despite Prigozhin's warnings that they are incompetent and losing a war they had long ago pledged to win quickly and painlessly. That would appear to hand Prigozhin too easy a victory. Indeed, Prigozhin's Wagner Group seems to be the only force that's winning at all methodically in Ukraine these days. As he pointed out, it was his men who finally seized the strategic town of Bakhmut after weeks of fruitless fighting. But beyond the battlefield, other uncertainties may loom for Putin. He now appears to be faced with circumstances of his own making and apparently outside his control. That it was necessary for him to turn to Lukashenko, who has long served effectively as a lapdog, to defuse a potentially mortally dangerous situation cannot go unnoticed in the circles that Putin has long relied on for support. And the fact that Putin's trusted spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, was unable to tell reporters where Prigozhin was located seems even more troubling. Above all, the facts on the ground effectively rebut virtually everything Putin has said. Russia is not winning this war that was supposed to be over in a matter of days or weeks more than a year ago. Ukraine is only getting stronger and better armed, as Prigozhin has pointed out most directly. And the fear is spreading that Putin may no longer be the unchallenged strongman he has portrayed himself for two decades. Indeed, if it was a question of who was the more powerful, it may be argued that Putin was the one who blinked.

"Sixteen months ago, Russian forces were on the doorstep of Kyiv, Ukraine, thinking they were going to take the city in a matter of days, erase the country from the map," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Dana Bash on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday. "Now they have to be focused on defending Moscow, Russia's capital, against mercenaries of Putin's own making. So this raises lots of profound questions that will be answered, I think, in the days and weeks ahead." Ultimately, the focus shifts to Ukraine and how President Volodymyr Zelensky and his generals can best capitalize on this gift that Prigozhin has suddenly bestowed on them. Could a powerful strike from Ukraine's forces be the answer to the tough questions Prigozhin has surfaced during this extraordinary week-end? If so, it may simply be a matter of sitting back to observe how Kremlin power struggles play out.

CNN

## Protests, riots, mayhem in France: What's the real reason?

Mick O'Reilly

**I**N spite of a relatively peaceful evening of protests following the tragic police killing of a 17-year-old, two incidents targeting civic leaders underscored the volatile nature of the situation. The mayor of a suburb of Paris said on Sunday that protesters had rammed a car into his home and then set the vehicle on fire, injuring his wife and one of his children.

In the last few days, the killing of a 17-year-driver by police in a Parisian suburb has provided a spark. Several hundred people have been arrested in nights of rioting and protests following the incident in Nanterre, where the boy was fatally shot following a traffic stop. Tear gas, bin fires, batons, blood and broken glass. These are the sights and sounds that pervade parts of Paris - about as far removed in every sense from the summer evenings enjoyed by those who escape the city. "A night of unbearable

violence against symbols of the Republic: town halls, schools and police stations set on fire or attacked. 150 arrests," said Interior minister Gerald Darmanin on Thursday. "Support for the police, gendarmes and firefighters who face up with courage. Shame on those who did not call for calm." Unrest was also reported in other cities including the industrialised centres of Lille and Amiens in northern France, along with Dijon in the east and Toulouse in the south. Dozens of police have been injured in the rioting and extra police have been drafted in to try and quell the violence. But there is an all-too-familiarity to this summer's social crisis.

This time, it was the shooting of the youth, named in local reports as Nahel M., that sparked the chaos. Months ago, it was pension reforms that sparked widespread violence, rioting and protests. Sadly there is a tragic list of youths - seemingly always from immi-

grant backgrounds or ethnic minorities that came off second best in dealings with police - that have led to similar convulsions. Those speaking out include French footballer Kylian Mbappe, the Paris Saint-Germain star who captains the French national team and grew up in Saint-Denis, near Nanterre. He tweeted it was an "unacceptable situation". President Emmanuel Macron called the shooting "unexplainable and inexcusable" and called for calm. "Nothing justifies the death of a young person," he said as the police officer accused of the killing was held in custody on suspicion of manslaughter. The official version is that the teenager - of North African origin - failed to comply with an order to stop his car and that officers feared for their lives after he threatened to run them over.

That is disputed by his family and their lawyers,

and they cited a video circulating online that shows two police officers leaning into the driver-side window of his yellow car, before the vehicle pulls away and an officer opens fire. The car is later seen crashed into a nearby post. The driver was fatally wounded by a bullet and died at the scene. But this latest incident, along with a long deep and difficult reflection on how security officials reacted to the anti-pension reform protests of March and April, has resulted in a searing spotlight being shone on police and their tactics in dealing with unrest, protests and what is perceived as an inevitable slide into rioting and street violence. The Council of Europe - the European Union's human rights watchdog - has weighed into French policing methods, citing them for "excessive use of force" during demonstrations against Macron's pension reforms,

noting that officials failed to protect peaceful demonstrators and journalists from police brutality. Reporters Without Borders has said police assaulted several "clearly identifiable" journalists. Police officials deny the claims, saying they were responding to violent rioters and anarchist groups that frequently infiltrate French demonstrations to provoke clashes.

The respected French newspaper Le Monde obtained and published an audio file recorded by an arrested person that captures police slapping, making sexual remarks, threats and boasts and appears to be in blatant breach of their expected behaviour code. While most European police forces handle protesting crowds with restraint, letting protesters blow off steam, the French method seems to be one of confrontation - meeting protests with force. And escalation, once that occurs, seems inevitable. There is a common theme,

one that has been visible during the pension protests, or during the long-running Gillets Jaune - Yellow Vests - protests over inflation and higher petrol and toll charges. Indeed, during the hours before last year's Champions League football final in Paris between Liverpool and Real Madrid, police used heavy handed and unnecessary rough tactics to subdue what was a peaceful crowd simply trying to enter a stadium.

An investigation into that incident found policing to be shameful and their accounts conflicted by what eyewitnesses and camera footage detailed. This autumn, France plays host to the Rugby World Cup and, next summer, will welcome the world to the 2024 Olympics - meaning its police and security services will be very much under the microscope. Until French policing is reformed, its long hot summers will continue to simmer.

Gulf News

# Why Netanyahu removed the final mask on Palestinian aspirations

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not just against the establishment of a Palestinian state, he wants to eliminate the very aspirations for such a state. This was the gist of recent remarks made by Netanyahu at a meeting of the Israeli Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. They were reported in the Israeli media on June 26.

Some, including officials in the Palestinian Authority, seemed oddly surprised following the release of the reports, as if Israel's intentions regarding Palestinian freedom and statehood are not known even to a political novice. The official spokesperson for the Palestinian presidency retorted by emphasizing that only an independent Palestinian state can achieve "security" and "stability." These two terms are often used by Palestinian officials to induce US sympathy, as such language is borrowed from the American political discourse on Palestine and the Middle East. Practically, the term "security" is almost always linked to Israel and "stability" is related to the US agenda in the region.

For Israel, however, such language is of little urgency, because security, from Tel Aviv's perspective, is obtained through two different channels: unconditional US support and the security coordination between the Israeli military occupation and the PA. Both aspects are already satisfied. Tel Aviv is content with this arrangement to the extent that Netanyahu, in his recently reported comments, stressed: "In the areas which (the Palestinian Authority) manages to act, it does the work for us. And we have no interest in it collapsing." So, Netanyahu sees the PA as another line of defense against the

same Palestinians that the PA is supposed to represent. As for stability, this is of little concern to Israel, for it practically defines stability as complete Israeli dominance over the Palestinians - actually, the whole region.

None of the above assertions are predicated on complex analyses or guesswork but are exacted from official Israeli statements and actions on the ground. When far-right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich declared in March that there was "no such thing as Palestinians because there's no such thing as the Palestinian people," he was not giving a history lecture or merely engaging in hate speech. He was circuitously stating that Israel cannot be held morally, legally or politically accountable for its actions against those who do not exist. Smotrich's remarks were consistent with the pogroms carried out by his supporters, the armed and dangerous illegal settlers of the West Bank, against Palestinians in Huwara in February, Turmus Ayya last month and other Palestinian towns and villages.

Neither the Americans nor the Europeans took any punitive action against Smotrich or the gangs of settlers who torched Palestinian homes and cars, killing and wounding many in the process. However, that is only a microcosm of a larger ailment, whereby Israel says and does what it wants, while the Americans continue to read from an old political script as if nothing has changed on the ground. Without doubt, US foreign policymakers know only too well that Israel has zero interest in a just and peaceful settlement to its

Ramzy Baroud

military occupation of Palestine. But if this is the case, why does the US government insist on following the same tired blueprint of urging both sides to reengage in the so-called peace process and return to negotiations? This mantra has defined the US foreign policy agenda since the early 1990s, when Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed the Oslo Accords. These worsened the bad situation, tripled the illegal settlements and settlers, and made the Palestinian people even more vulnerable, not only to Israeli violence but to the PA's repression and corruption as well.

Though Oslo was unfair to Palestinians since it operated largely outside acceptable international paradigms and had no enforcement clauses or deadlines, Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders objected to it anyway, because it expected - although symbolically - Israel to behave in a certain manner. To be told not to build or expand settlements, for example, has always infuriated Netanyahu, who has even lashed out even at his American benefactors many times in the past, most notably under the administration of President Barack Obama. Israeli leaders feel that they are above any law or expectations emanating from outside, even if these expectations are quite minimal and made by close allies, such as Washington. Alas, with time, Netanyahu prevailed, not only over any supposed pressure from the US and the international community, but also over the more liberal political forces in his own society.

Now, armed with a stable coalition and immune from any mean-

ingful criticism, let alone tangible consequences for his actions, the Israeli leader feels ready to carry out his right-wing agenda without hesitation. Netanyahu's recent remarks are a more emboldened version of the derisive comments made in October 2004 by top Israeli government adviser Dov Weissglas, who explained the true intentions behind the Israeli military deployment in Gaza in 2005. It was an Israeli tactic aimed at "freezing the peace process," he said. "And when you freeze that process," Weissglas told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, "you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and you prevent a discussion on the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem. Effectively, this whole package called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda." Though this "whole package" has indeed been long removed from the Israeli agenda, the country's leaders kept referencing a Palestinian state anyway, only to satisfy the minimal expectations of US policy. Even Netanyahu played this game on more than one occasion, including his February interview with CNN, during which he argued that a Palestinian state is possible, but only if it has no sovereignty.

Now, Netanyahu is ready to move past that seemingly old language to new political territories, where the very aspiration of an independent Palestine is not permissible. While Netanyahu's bad but honest language is likely to invite yet more Israeli violence and Palestinian resistance, it should also bring about greater clarity, shelving, once and for all, the fraudulent discourse of "security," "stability" and all the rest.

# France, S Arabia working together for a better future

FROM the dawn of the relationship between France and Saudi Arabia in March 1926, almost a century ago, to the visit of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Paris last month - his second to France in less than a year - our partnership has undergone an unprecedented evolution.

The month of June 2023 was one of the richest ever in the long history of French-Saudi relations, during which Paris has become "a second home for Saudi decision-makers." The successful official visit of the crown prince, at the head of a large ministerial delegation, is a tribute to the importance of this relationship between our countries and to the convergence of our visions for the future: Building together a better world for our youth and future generations and meeting the challenges that threaten our planet.

President Emmanuel Macron welcomed the crown prince at the Elysee Palace on June 16. On this occasion, they discussed strengthening the French-Saudi strategic partnership, as well as the regional and international issues on which our two countries have converging analyses and interests. During the crown prince's visit to Paris, a series of ministerial meetings strengthened our strategic partnership in key areas. Foreign Ministers Catherine Colonna and Prince Faisal bin Farhan continued in Paris the consultations initiated during the former's two visits to Saudi Arabia in February and June. Bruno Le Maire, minister of the economy and finance, also held talks with Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih a few months after their meeting in Riyadh. Rima Abdul Malak, France's minister of culture, met again with her counterpart Prince Badr bin Farhan, who had received her in Riyadh in March. The meeting was an opportunity to acknowledge the dynamism of our cultural cooperation and the success of our exceptional partnership in AIUla.

Oliver Becht, minister of foreign trade, attractiveness and the French abroad, discussed with Al-Falih the opportunities for strengthening our economic partnership in the energy, mobility, new technologies, health, tourism and culture sectors, as he did last December during his visit to Saudi Arabia. And Jean-Noel Barrot, minister for digital affairs, met with

Ludovic Pouille

Abdullah Al-Swaha, Saudi Arabia's minister of communications and information technologies, to develop our partnership in the context of the digital transition in our respective countries. Meanwhile, Business France organized the "Vision Golfe" forum at the Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty on June 13-14. It brought together more than 900 participants, including almost 200 Saudis.

The success of this forum confirms the interest of French companies in the dynamic markets of the Gulf Cooperation Council states and, in turn, the interest of the region's authorities and business community in French expertise. Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar bin Ibrahim Alkhorayef carried the voice of the Kingdom and presented the Saudi Industrial Strategy to position Saudi Arabia as a leader in cutting-edge industries. On June 19, the Saudi Ministry of Investment organized the Saudi-French Investment Forum in conjunction with Medef International. Under the joint chairmanship of Al-Falih and Becht, it brought together more than 700 business representatives. The forum strengthened the ties between our business communities and gave impetus to new dynamics in key sectors such as energy, culture, tourism and sustainable development. The forum concluded with the signing of 24 memorandums of understanding and investment agreements worth about \$3 billion. The agreements were signed between French and Saudi public and private entities and covered a wide range of key sectors related to the implementation of Vision 2030, particularly energy, telecommunications, sustainable materials, construction, waste management, museum development and promotion of the cultural scene.

This latest success demonstrates the vitality of our exchanges. France supports the ambitious Vision 2030 projects. The country's companies have a great deal to offer Saudi Arabia and are ready to share their know-how, localize production, contribute to the training of Saudi elites and place their expertise at the service of the Kingdom's economic diversification megaprojects. It is a win-win relationship. The most spectac-

ular recent example of this relationship was the signing, on June 24, of the contract for the \$11 billion Amiral petrochemical megaproject between Aramco and TotalEnergies. The Paris Air Show, from June 19-25, welcomed many Saudi delegations as part of the strengthening of our partnership in the aeronautical sector. This was headlined by the signing of a contract for the purchase of 30 Airbus A320neo aircraft by the airline flynas, worth almost €uro;3 billion (\$3.2 billion). The crown prince also honored with his presence the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact held in Paris from June 22-23, at the initiative of the French president. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Prince Faisal, Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan and Yasir Al-Rumayyan, governor of the Public Investment Fund. In the words of Macron, "no country should have to choose between reducing poverty and protecting the planet: both challenges must be met at the same time." On this subject, we share with Saudi Arabia the same vision of development and the fight against inequality. The Kingdom is a major actor in humanitarian aid and development assistance. France is delighted to be able to count on its support in the fight against climate change and the reduction of inequalities. Our cooperation is already bearing fruit in Lebanon, where the joint humanitarian aid fund we have set up provides invaluable support to the Lebanese population, which has been weakened by the ongoing economic crisis.

Finally, the crown prince attended the superb reception held at the Grand Palais Ephemere to mark the presentation of Riyadh's candidacy to host the 2030 World Expo. He met with many actors in the French private and public sectors who were convinced by the quality of the Saudi project. France is proud to support this candidacy. Following this historic visit, which marked a crucial milestone in our near-century-old friendship, we will continue to work together for peace in the region and the world, in the service of prosperity, development for all and the preservation of the planet. It is up to us to build a better future together on the solid foundations of our strategic partnership.

Arab News

# The Sudan crisis and the international community

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

THE Sudan crisis, caused by the conflict between Sudanese army factions and the Rapid Support Forces, has raised many questions about the position of the international community, specifically the major powers, in regard to this explosive situation. This conflict between warring Sudanese factions over influence and control of the country has created a situation that is perilous and thrown not only Sudan but also the African continent into a security vortex with far-reaching consequences, hence necessitating serious action from the international community.

The crisis cannot be separated from other major conflicts, especially the Western crisis led by the US and Europe on the one hand and Russia on the other, as well as the "soft" conflict between China and the US. Despite the geographical distance of these actors from the mentioned conflict zones, the intertwining of international interests makes them the epicenter of the conflicts.

In addition, the initiatives presented to solve the crisis in Sudan clash directly with those other conflicts and prevent, rather than assist with, the resolution of the Sudanese crisis. Three main initiatives have been presented. The first is the one put forward by the African Union. The AU is the primary regional organization concerned with this crisis and it fears it spreading to other countries. Many countries have already suffered deeply because of this crisis. The flow of refugees and the adverse political, security and economic

ramifications of the crisis on the African continent have hit many countries hard. Secondly, there is the initiative to boost intra-African trade to address the economic repercussions of the Sudanese crisis on the African continent.

Thirdly, there is Saudi Arabia's Jeddah initiative, which aims to resolve the differences between the rival Sudanese forces, while underlining the need to respect Sudan's sovereignty, preserve its unity and territorial integrity, and agree that the interests and safety of the Sudanese people are the key priority. In addition, the initiative emphasizes the need to protect Sudanese civilians at all times, allow civilians to safely leave areas where hostilities are taking place, allow humanitarian organizations to evacuate the wounded and sick without discrimination, and it calls on fighting factions not to recruit children. Despite the difficulties and challenges, the Kingdom may again need to revive its initiative and work to ensure its success unilaterally, given its positive image in Sudan. In addition, the Kingdom's efforts are appreciated in Sudanese political circles and there is public confidence in Riyadh and its goals. While the Kingdom called on some of the rival political forces in Sudan to attend the Jeddah meeting, some Sudanese observers believe that it is necessary to involve some other forces, especially those that are active on the ground. These include representatives of social initiatives and civil society institutions that are independent and not

affiliated with any of the main parties to the conflict. There is a need to try a new approach in order to spare the blood of brothers in Sudan.

Sudanese society does not trust the international community's forces much and believes that they are seeking to manage the crisis according to Western interests rather than to resolve it. By contrast, the Kingdom aims to solve the crisis in order to achieve security and stability in the region. Riyadh's policy has clearly been created by Saudi experts who have a deep understanding of the regional situation. In light of the international community's failure in the Middle East, the Sudanese people strongly and understandably fear and distrust international non-governmental organizations and have the right to be afraid of their goals.

This is a result of the negative role played by many of these organizations in countries such as Yemen, Somalia and others. The obstruction of the arrival of humanitarian aid for many reasons, including the insistence of NGOs on the presence and involvement of their officials in aid delivery, has raised a lot of suspicions about the goals of some of them. To overcome this dilemma, the Kingdom has proposed that all humanitarian aid can be sent to Jeddah Islamic Port, with Riyadh taking responsibility for coordinating with Sudanese civil society organizations, along with the Saudi aid agency KShrelief, which plays a major positive role in many affect-

ed areas and has built up vast experience and professional capabilities in this regard.

The Sudanese people also rely greatly on the Kingdom to stop the fighting in Yemen. Saudi Arabia has many influential tools to achieve this, especially since it chairs the current session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Therefore, it may merge all the initiatives put forward into one that achieves the aspirations of the brotherly Sudanese people. To achieve this end, the Kingdom could invite Sudanese from different political factions and civil society organizations to come to Saudi Arabia in order to build trust and confidence between these elements and so that a comprehensive roadmap based on the integration of the mentioned initiatives could be fashioned to lead Sudan out of its current perilous situation.

This is a critical task that needs to happen, especially as the Kingdom is now at the heart of regional developments in line with its foreign policy recalibration and Vision 2030, which hinges on establishing peace, security and economic development across the Middle East. The region cannot wait for the international community to come to its rescue, especially as major powers have other security considerations and are disunited when it comes to their strategic interests and considerations. Thus, regional powers must take the lead, with the Kingdom best placed given its positive relations, economic weight and ability to ensure outcomes and settlements are reached and fulfilled.

# China's new problem: climate misinformation driven by nationalism

MUCH has been written about climate misinformation in the West but there has been far less scrutiny of the problem in China - a country that is both a significant carbon emitter and a leader in developing green technology. Annie Lab, our fact-checking project at the University of Hong Kong, looked into the diverse narratives of such climate misinformation, examples of which we have encountered and verified in the past.

One thing we can say is that these narratives are deeply connected to China's assertion of its identity and pursuit of its aspirations. China has bounced back after years of poverty, establishing itself as an economic behemoth. It takes pride in this shift and development, so any challenge to this progress - and to the image of China - is perceived as hostile. Not too long ago, that included climate change, which, from about 2009-2011, was often depicted in Chinese books and popular TV shows as a Western hoax designed to torpedo China's economic rise. After 2011, however, the messaging changed. These books and public statements disappeared amid growing public consciousness about climate change. This forced, in some ways, the government to take the problem seriously. However, online, climate denial lives on and remains strong. From September 2022 to April 2023, we collected more than a hundred posts from Chinese video, messag-

ing and social media platforms such as Douyin, Bilibili, Xigua, Weibo and WeChat, among others, which showed different kinds of misleading posts about climate change.

We also found similar dodgy Chinese posts on YouTube and Twitter as well as articles from The Epoch Times, a news organisation reportedly linked to Falun Gong, a religious group banned in mainland China. Our research unveiled various narratives, one of which explained the recurring manipulated images depicting Swedish activist Greta Thunberg as having gained weight. As it turned out, the doctoring of her photos to make her look that way is not an isolated case, nor is it a juvenile attempt at malicious pillory or an example of harmless mockery. A deeper look takes us back to comments by Thunberg that stirred patriotic assertions, including that she was a tool or puppet of the West. In a May 2021 tweet, Thunberg said that while China remains a developing country, it must be more conscious about its carbon emissions. She was accused of being a "selective environmentalist" because she did not comment on Japan's plans to release nuclear wastewater into the Pacific Ocean, although she did share an article about it. Chinese online posts also said Thunberg told the Chinese people to stop using chopsticks to reduce deforestation - though there is no evidence the climate activist ever

made such a statement. Tensions between China and the West have shaped another narrative, too.

If before, Chinese book authors said climate change was something the West invented so China would rely on it for green technology, now there are social media posts saying the opposite. As the Asian giant has emerged as a leading manufacturer of clean tech, it is now the target of West-based right conspiracy theories, too. Misleading posts were found on Twitter as well as video-sharing platforms Rumble and Bitchute suggesting that climate change is supposedly just a scam concocted by China so the West could depend on it for green technology. An offshoot of this is another strand of misinformation: The use of unverifiable videos on Twitter in Chinese allegedly showing Chinese-manufactured e-vehicles and wind turbines of shoddy quality. Meanwhile, other social media claims and articles have downplayed the role of man-made emissions. On YouTube, one said volcanic eruptions put more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere than human activities do. This has been debunked. On WeChat, a user said global warming was caused by changes in the Earth's orbit around the sun. The United States space agency NASA has clarified that while the sun does indeed have an effect on the Earth's climate, "it isn't responsible for the warming trend we've seen over recent

decades".

Chinese experts themselves stepped in to correct some of these claims. Authorities from the National Space Weather Forecasting Station of the China Meteorological Administration debunked a claim about solar activity being the main driver behind changes in the Earth's climate. The China Environment News, the official outlet of China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment, meanwhile, came out with an article that explained why, contrary to viral claims, rising temperatures will not usher in a period of prosperity for mainland China. This particular claim is very specific to China as it harks back to the Han and Tang dynasties, which were said to have experienced stability and prosperity during warmer climates. Wu Yixiu, a former climate journalist with China Dialogue, a non-profit organisation that analyses climate issues in China and has offices in London and Beijing, told us the claim resonated with the public because it mirrored China's aspiration of "rejuvenation".

This narrative, along with the others, reveals that climate misinformation in China is largely shaped by nationalism, a sentiment that has become more fervent under President Xi Jinping, even if the Chinese government itself has to step in at times to challenge false claims. It is not always about the science but about the story. And if the story is uncomfortable, a dose of climate misinformation is never far away.

# Japan's toxic water plan defies int'l law

THE Japanese government's decision to discharge the nuclear-contaminated water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the sea has, from the very beginning, been questioned and opposed by the international community. News reports say Japan plans to release the tritium-contaminated water from the crippled plant into the sea this summer.

Japan's plan is an extremely irresponsible move. It has ignored the professional and authoritative opinions of international agencies and opposition at home and abroad, showing its disregard for the marine environment and public health. The volume of nuclear-contaminated water Japan has decided to discharge into the sea and its potential risks are unprecedented. The radioactive wastewater contains more than 60 radionuclides, many of which cannot be effectively treated with existing technologies.

Some of those radionuclides could be spread across the oceans by currents and eddies and damage the marine environment and ecology. The contaminated wastewater, planned to be discharged into the sea over a period of 30 years, will have an impact on the marine environment and public health worldwide. According to a German marine scientific research institute, given the strong currents along the coast of Fukushima, radioactive materials could spread to most of the Pacific Ocean within 57 days from the day of the discharge, and reach all oceans within a decade. And Greenpeace nuclear experts have said the level

Liu Xianfa

of the radioactive isotope carbon-14 in the wastewater will remain hazardous for thousands of years with potential to cause genetic damage. All countries are obliged to abide by the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the protection and preservation of the marine environment, and jointly protect planet Earth.

According to provisions of general international law and the UNCLOS, Japan is obliged to take all possible measures to prevent pollution of the marine environment, notify and consult with states likely to be affected, assess and monitor the environmental impact, take precautionary measures to minimize the possible hazardous effects, ensure transparency, and engage in international cooperation to reduce the risks of damaging the marine environment. But the Japanese side has been shunning its responsibilities and international obligations using various pretexts, and has audaciously decided to discharge the nuclear contaminated water into the sea. In fact, the International Atomic Energy Agency task force, which is conducting a safety assessment in Japan now, has a very limited mandate as agreed between Japan and the IAEA. Also, the IAEA is not authorized to evaluate options other than the discharge plan. Therefore, Japan cannot use the IAEA's report as an excuse to dump the nuclear-contaminated wastewater into the ocean.

Japan's plan to dump the toxic wastewater into the sea is not the only way to deal with the contaminated water nor is it the safest way

of disposal. But before thoroughly exploring all safe means of disposal, Japan has unilaterally decided to discharge the toxic wastewater into the ocean to reduce economic costs, and put marine life and human health at serious risk. The Japanese government has repeatedly claimed, albeit without proving it, that the contaminated water is safe enough to drink after being treated. But according to the data released by Japan, more than 70 percent of the treated contaminated water stored in tanks still has radioactive elements that far exceed the regulatory limits for discharge. As a matter of fact, a report from Japan said fish caught in the harbor close to the crippled nuclear plant contain radioactive caesium more than 180 times Japan's legal limit. It is a pity that some Western governments and media outlets, which are prone to hyping up environmental issues such as the Chernobyl nuclear accident in the Soviet Union in 1986 and smog and sandstorms in China in past years, have responded to Japan's decision rather passively. They avoid talking about the hazards the radioactive wastewater pose to the marine environment and human life, with some even acquiescing to Japan's move, thus exposing their hypocrisy.

The ocean is neither Japan's trash bin nor sewer. Instead of sacrificing marine life and human health, Japan should heed international concerns, fulfill its international obligations, change its discharge plan, and explore all alternative means to dispose the radioactive wastewater in a scientific, transparent and safe manner under international oversight.

The China Daily



# ‘ICCI Tourism Summit to be milestone for promoting northern areas’ beauty’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday highlighted the significant growth potential tourism industry, emphasizing its status as one of the fastest-growing sectors globally.

Despite possessing immense tourism potential, Pakistan has yet to establish itself as an international tourism destination due to various reasons, he said in a press statement while mentioning many countries that generated billions of dollars annually through tourism “with more than 200 million tourists having traveled worldwide last year alone.”

In this context, he said the upcoming ICCI Tourism Summit, scheduled to be held in Skardu next week, was aimed at attracting global tourism by showcasing the positive

image of the country to the world.

Bakhtawari mentioned that during the Eid –ul-Azha holidays, millions of tourists have already visited tourist resorts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the northern regions. “These areas, despite facing challenges such as insufficient infrastructure and hotel industry regulations, possess a natural beauty that attracts tourists.”

The ICCI President said Pakistan’s tourism resources, particularly in KPK Kashmir, and the northern regions, were among the best in the world, capable of attracting tourists from all corners of the globe.

To increase the tourism industry’s contribution to the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), he said it was crucial to attract foreign tourists, requiring focused attention

from the government.

Bakhtawari stated that the global tourism industry was projected to generate approximately \$2 trillion in revenue this year, compared to \$1.451 trillion in 2018. “Tourism remains one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide.”

Egypt, for example, derives 50% of its GDP from tourism. Similarly, countries like Turkey, Malaysia, the Maldives, several African countries, Dubai, and Saudi Arabia serve as examples for Pakistan, having made substantial investments in tourism, he added.

Arab countries, the ICCI President said, by reducing their reliance on oil, have shifted their focus toward tourism and other industries. “Notably, Dubai and Saudi Arabia have invested billions of dollars.”

He was of the view that

Pakistan should consider adopting a similar approach to attract international tourists. “This entails establishing direct flights, simplifying visa processes, and internationally branding the country’s tourist destinations.” He said several international organizations had already recognized Pakistan as one of the best tourism spots globally.

Moreover, with its impressive collection of towering peaks, including K-2 and Nanga Parbat, Pakistan has the potential to become a centre for adventure tourism, he added.

Bakhtawari said the primary objective of the ICCI tourism conference was to attract global attention to this breathtaking region, expressing hope that this summit would serve as a significant milestone in promoting tourism in the northern regions.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors busy in cleaning onion at fruit and vegetable market.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, MSC Tokyo, MSC Krittika, Huang Shan-16, Al-Marrouna and Chemroad Hope carrying Containers, Palm oil, LNG and Chemicals, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile two more ships, Atrotos Heracles and N-Orhan with Canola and LPG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them an edible oil tanker ‘GC Berly’ sailed out to sea Tuesday morning on Tuesday and three more ships, MSC Krittika, MSC Tokyo and Aruna Berk are expected to sail on today.

Cargo throughput of 81,894 tonnes, comprising 74,142 tonnes imports Cargo and 7,752 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 875 Containers (419 TEUs Imports and 456 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are six ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Yankul Silver and N-Orhan & two more ships Maersk Brooklyn and Maersk Chicago carrying Palm oil, LPG and Containers are expected to take berths at LCT, SSGC and QICT on today & five more container ships, MSC Lisbon and Maersk Pelepas are expected to take berths at QICT on Wednesday.

## Trade deficit narrows by 43%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The trade deficit witnessed a decline of 43.03 percent during the fiscal year 2022-23 as compared to the previous year (2021-22), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The trade deficit during July-June (2022-23) was recorded at \$27.547 billion against the deficit of \$48.354 billion in July-June (2021-22), a decline of 43.03 percent. The exports during the period were recorded at \$27.744 billion against \$31.782 billion last year, showing a decline of 12.71 percent.

On the other hand, the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 31 percent falling from \$80.136 billion last year to \$55.291 billion during the fiscal year 2022-23.

On a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country witnessed a decline of 18.72 percent and were recorded at \$2,366 billion in June 2023 against the exports of \$2,911 billion in June 2022.

The imports also decreased to \$4,180 billion in June 2023 from \$7,857 billion in June 2022, showing negative growth of 46.80 percent.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports during June 2023 however increased by 7.55 percent when compared to the exports of \$2,200 billion in May 2023.

The imports into the country declined by 3.42 percent in June 2023 when compared to the imports of \$4,328 billion in May 2023, according to the data.

Meanwhile, the deficit in services trade declined by 88.26 percent during the first eleven months of the fiscal year (2022-23) compared to the corresponding period of the last fiscal year. The services trade deficit was recorded at \$607.67 million against the deficit of \$5,175.24 million last year.

The services exports during the period increased by 3.38 percent by going up from \$6,438.33 million in 2021-22 to \$6,655.82 million in the first eleven months of FY2022-23, according to PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports declined from \$11,613.57 million to \$7,263.49 million in FY2023, showing negative growth of 37.46 percent.

## Pakistan Digital Awards 2023: Adamjee Life wins ‘Best Website of the Year’ award

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Adamjee Life, a prominent provider of life insurance solutions, has been recognized with the esteemed “Best Website of the Year” Award at the Pakistan Digital Awards 2023. This award acknowledges Adamjee Life’s dedication to delivering an exceptional online experience for its customers and highlights their commitment as a Trusted Partner.

Expressing his gratitude, Mr. Manzar Mushtaq, CEO of Adamjee Life, stated, “We are immensely honored to receive this accolade. We understand the

importance of a robust digital platform and an enhanced user experience, enabling us to seamlessly and efficiently connect with our customers. Our focus remains on providing state-of-the-art digital solutions as part of our commitment to being a Trusted Partner.”

Adamjee Life’s website has been meticulously designed to cater to the evolving needs and preferences of its diverse customer base. With its contemporary design and user-friendly interface, the website offers a seamless and engaging journey. Users can explore insurance products, calculate premiums

using the coverage calculator, manage policies, submit claims, and make informed decisions about their insurance needs. The comprehensive suite of features provided by Adamjee Life’s website meets the demands of today’s tech-savvy customers.

This prestigious award serves as a testament to Adamjee Life’s commitment to innovation and customer-centricity, further solidifying its position as a leading life insurance provider. The company continues to push boundaries in order to provide its customers with an unparalleled digital experience.

## Pakistan Stock Exchange’s 100-index sheds 341 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 341.99 points, a negative change of 0.78 per cent, closing at 43,557.02 points against 43,899.01 points the previous trading day.

A total of 419,302,491 shares were traded during the day as compared to 381,904,794 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.15.839 billion against Rs. 8.647 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 333 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 103 of them recorded gains and

211 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 19 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Pak Refinery with 44,181,355 shares at Rs.15.31 per share; Energycico PK with 42,405,536 shares at Rs.3.15 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 26,598,690 shares at Rs.1.15 per share.

Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.39.00 per share price, closing at Rs.1,234.00, whereas the runner-up was Al-Abbas SugarXD with an Rs.32.78 rise in its per share price to Rs.469.78.

Nestle Pakistan wit-

nessed a maximum decrease of Rs.150.00 per share closing at Rs.6,450.00; followed by Pak Tobacco with Rs.39.00 decline to close at Rs.681.00.

**Rupee on recovery path; gains Rs10.56 against US Dollar**

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday showed remarkable recovery by gaining Rs10.56 against the US Dollar (USD) in the inter-bank trading as it closed at Rs 275.43 against the previous working day’s closing of Rs 285.99.

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

Rs 271 and Rs 279 respectively.

The price of the Euro came down by Rs 12.79 to close at Rs 300.14 against the last day’s closing of Rs 312.93, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen lost 0.90 paisas to close at Rs1.09, whereas a decrease of Rs14.44 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 349.69 as compared to its last day’s closing of Rs 364.13.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by Rs2.88 and Rs2.81 to close at Rs74.98 and Rs73.44, respectively

## Huawei unveils innovations in ICT services, software

ISLAMABAD (APP): Huawei, the global technology leader, showcased its latest innovations in ICT services and software at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) Shanghai 2023 aimed to empower industrial intelligent digital transformation in collaboration with global carriers and industrial partners.

Vice President of Huawei’s Global Technical Service Department Bruce Xun while addressing the MWC Shanghai 2023 emphasized that by innovating ICT service and software solutions, Huawei will continue to work alongside global carriers to build green, efficient, and robust networks that provide the ultimate experience, chart new growth curves, develop the intelligent digital talent of the future, and drive industrial intelligent digital transformation to create an intelligent world that prioritizes ultimate user experience.

project to reconstruct the sites and equipment rooms of China Mobile Shandong.

As of June 2023, the impact of this project has been substantial, with a total energy savings of 10.6+ million kWh and a reduction in carbon emissions of 3720+ tons, which is equivalent to planting about 200,000 trees.

The explosive growth of computing power requirements has led to a sharp increase in AI computational capacity, accompanied by a dynamic surge in energy consumption. Shenyang AI Computing Center was successfully launched in just six months, achieving a high level of computing density while maintaining exceptional energy efficiency.

In Q2 of 2023, Huawei efficiently upgraded the center’s computing power from 100P to 300P, resulting in sustained and efficient business growth for the customer.

facilitating the identification of potential network risks up to 12 hours in advance. AUTIN has also significantly reduced the average fault diagnosis duration from hours to a few minutes and improved service availability by an impressive 15%.

China Mobile Shanghai is dedicated to constructing high-performance networks that provide superior user experience and drive business success. With the implementation of Huawei’s innovative technologies, including multi-carrier dual-layer beam adjustment, SRCON wireless channel simulation, and scenario-based network optimization, China Mobile Shanghai has achieved the top spot in the MIIT benchmark ranking for two consecutive years.

Huawei’s Smart Decision solution has enhanced the marketing efficiency of China Mobile Shanghai and facilitated coordination between its marketing and network departments in marketing activities such as the promotion of the 700M devices, VoNR, and second SIM slots.

As a result, China Mobile Shanghai has experienced a sustainable increase in its 5G user penetration rate and 5G traffic ratio as well as service revenue compared to previous years.

The cloud-native Convergent Billing Solution (CBS) is a comprehensive billing solution designed specifically for carriers, offering a full-stack heterogeneous platform with 99.9999% reliability. With CBS, carriers can drive innovation in subscription packages, streamline operations, and accelerate time-to-value.

Huawei’s next-generation Mobile Money solution offers customers with a comprehensive suite of mobile wallets, mobile payment, and mobile financial services.

Following an 18-month collaboration with Huawei, bank K in Asia Pacific has emerged as the largest financial service provider in the local market and maintained this position for four consecutive years.

With its advanced features such as omni-channel access, all-scenario intelligence, high reliability, and large capacity, the AICC has played a significant role in reducing the overall OPEX of China Unicom’s 10010 customer service center by 16.5%.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I /Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No 164/1, Institution 9/3/2023. Date of hearing, 18/7/2023. Nor Mohamad Khan VS Sher Mohamad Khan. Notice to No. 2/2. Akmal Khan s/o Bajowray. 7/1.Ashar Ali s/o Muzafar Khan. 3/4. Sawar Khan s/o Amer Wass. 8/2. Asrar Ali. 8/4. Fawad Ali. 8/5. Fawad Ali sons of Seraj Khan resident of Chanal tehsel Mandanr district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 18/7/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Sahar Civil Judge IX Bannu, Suit No.47/1 institution 19.02.2021 & 16.02.2022 Next date of hearing is 19.07.2023. Title: Faiz Ur Rehman etc vs Sher Abbas Khan etc To:17/2. Akhtar Ali 17/3. Murad Ali 17/5.Abid Ali Sons Akhtar jan R/o Chashmi Kila Tehsil Domil & District Bannu Presently Saudi Arabia. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 19.07.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

### Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Razzaq Civil Judge VI Bannu, Suit No. 16/1 institution 21.01.2023 Next date of hearing is 18.07.2023. Title: Ashraf Khan vs Majid ur Rehman etc To: 2. Jalil Ur Rehman Son Muhammad Ali R/O Havid Khas District Bannu. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 18.07.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

## Asian markets up as traders weigh outlook on rates

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets mostly rose on Tuesday as investors weighed signs of a slowing US economy against hopes the Federal Reserve’s interest rate hiking cycle could be nearing its end.

Data showing a sharp drop in the central bank’s preferred gauge of inflation for May fueled a rally across equities in New York last week and Asia on Monday.

The readings followed a series of indicators suggesting the economy remained in rude health, putting pressure on the Fed to keep tightening monetary policy.

Bank boss Jerome Powell has warned more hikes are in the pipeline owing to still-elevated inflation and the strong labour market, though analysts question whether it will follow through with that.

However, while traders take the view that “bad news is good news” as it gives the bank room to hold

rates, the possibility of a contraction was keeping the optimism in check.

On Monday, a closely watched survey of US factory activity showed the sector shrank again in June and hit its lowest level since May 2020. The reading from the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) also indicates the ongoing contraction in the sector is picking up pace.

Wall Street limped to a positive close -- with business thinned by traders winding down for the July 4 holiday -- and most markets in Asia managed to push higher Tuesday.

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Wellington, Taipei, Manila, Mumbai and Bangkok edged up, but Tokyo, Singapore and Seoul dipped.

Sydney got a lift from the Reserve Bank of Australia’s decision to hold interest rates, though the local dollar fell against the

greenback.

London was flat, while Frankfurt and Paris rose.

However, Jim Bianco, president and founder of Bianco Research, warned that while inflation was still falling, the Fed should be on alert as it could begin to climb again after getting to as low as three percent -- still above the bank’s two percent target.

“If the inflation rate bottoms at three and starts drifting higher, the Fed’s going to find this unacceptable, and that two rate hikes that we have priced in for the rest of the year will happen, if not three,” he told Bloomberg Television.

Oil prices edged up on Tuesday, a day after dropping more than one percent as an initial rally sparked by Saudi Arabia and Russia’s announcement of further output cuts faded away.

While the cuts will mean tighter supplies, rising interest rates and

the lingering threat of recession are weighing on demand expectations.

“It was not too surprising that Saudi Arabia decided to roll over its additional, voluntary cuts,” Warren Patterson, at ING Groep NV, said.

“Fundamentals are not having as much influence on price direction as one would expect. Instead, the uncertain macro outlook is what the market is focused on.”

Investors are keeping tabs on China-US relations after Beijing on Monday imposed export controls on two rare metals essential for the manufacture of semiconductors, citing security concerns.

The move comes as the two tussle over the global market for chips and follows US moves to blacklist some Chinese companies in recent years aimed at cutting them off from access to American technologies, including the most advanced chips.



## In brief

## DG SBP review the facilities

LAHORE (APP): Director General sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail visited state-of-the-art Punjab International Swimming Complex to review the facilities on Tuesday. In-charge Punjab International Swimming Complex Aamir Shah and SBP Chief Sports consultant Hafeez Bhatti briefed Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail in detail about different functions and facilities of the swimming pool. DG Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail also checked the attendance of the staff. Dr Asif Tufail also had separate meetings with male and female swimming pool coaches, employees and summer camp swimming trainers on this occasion. He directed the Punjab International Swimming Complex staff to improve their performance. Speaking on the occasion, he said Sports board Punjab will conduct courses to improve the performance of swimming pool coaches and technical staff. "After the courses, our coaches and trainers will be able to impart modern swimming training to participants of summer camp". Dr Asif Tufail further said that state-of-the-art Punjab International Swimming Complex has been equipped with all modern facilities. "Coaches and technical staff should provide the best facilities to participants of summer camp and other members," he added.

## Philipsen wins second stage

NOGARO (Agencies): Jasper Philipsen won a second consecutive stage of the Tour de France in a sprint at the Nogaro racetrack on Tuesday marred by three high-speed falls. The Alpein rider Philipsen finished at a speed over 67kph and took the overall lead in the sprint points battle after pipping Caleb Ewan and Phil Bauhaus. British veteran Mark Cavendish came fifth as he continued to face frustration in his quest for a 35th Tour de France win to break the all-time record he shares with Eddy Merckx. The 38-year-old, who finished sixth in Monday's sprint, and then said he picked the wrong wheel to follow. In the shockingly accident-filled finish, the peloton sped around a motorbike racetrack where there was a string of crashes on the rounded chicanes. Tour medics have confirmed two riders broke collar bones. Adam Yates retained the overall leader's yellow jersey six seconds ahead of his teammate Tadej Pogacar and seven ahead of his brother Simon Yates. The Tour's first massive mountain stage awaits the peloton Wednesday with around 30km of climbing at an average gradient of over 7 percent.

## Pope out of Ashes series

LONDON (Agencies): England batter Ollie Pope has been ruled out of the rest of the Ashes series with a dislocated shoulder. England's vice-captain was injured diving in the field during the second Test at Lord's, which Australia won to take a 2-0 series lead. Scans on Monday showed Pope, 25, would require surgery. Essex batter Dan Lawrence, 25, is the most likely replacement for the third Test, which starts at Headingley on Thursday. Lawrence is the only spare batter in England's squad. England have said they will not call up a replacement for the Leeds Test, ruling out a possible recall for Surrey wicketkeeper Ben Foakes. Lawrence averages 29 from 11 Tests but has not played since the tour to the West Indies in March 2022, before captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum took charge.



BULAWAYO: Safyaan Sharif castles Tendai Chatara for his 100th ODI wicket. Zimbabwe vs Scotland.

## Pakistan men and women cricketers to tour England in May 2024

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 finalists will go head to head in May 2024 in the United Kingdom in the build-up to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the United States of America (USA). World champions England will host Pakistan in a four-T20I series from 22-30 May before both the sides will depart for the tournament. The matches will be played in Leeds (22 May), Birmingham (25 May), Cardiff (28 May) and the Oval, London (30 May).

England had defeated Pakistan by five wickets with one over to spare in the T20 World Cup 2022 final in Melbourne. Prior to the Australia event, Pakistan had hosted England for a seven-match T20I series in Karachi and Lahore with the visitors winning by 4-3. England is ranked second on the ICC T20I Team Rankings, while Pakistan is ranked fourth — five points behind.

Before arriving in the UK, Pakistan will play a three-T20I series against the Netherlands and two-T20I series against Ireland.

details of which will be announced in due course.

In addition to the men's side, Pakistan women's squad will also tour England in May 2024 for three T20Is and three ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 fixtures.

The tour will commence with the first T20I in Birmingham on 11 May with the remaining two matches in Northampton (17 May) and Leeds (19 May). Derby, Taunton and Chelmsford will stage the three ODIs on 23, 26 and 29 May, respectively.

England is ranked second and Pakistan seventh in the ICC Women's T20I Team Rankings, while Pakistan (10 points) is currently third in the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 and England seventh (six points) with one less series of three ODIs. England's third series in the Championship is against Australia from 12-18 July.

The series against England will be Pakistan women's last series in the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25. They will kick-start their 2023-24 season by hosting South Africa in Karachi from

1-14 September, which will be followed by series against Bangladesh (October/November, away), New Zealand (November/December, away) and West Indies (April/May, home).

In the three ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 series to date, Pakistan have defeated Sri Lanka (2-1) and Ireland (3-0), while they were beaten 3-0 by world champions Australia earlier this year.

### Pakistan to England 2024 Women's series

11 May: 1st T20I — Edgbaston, Birmingham  
17 May: 2nd T20I — The County Ground, Northampton

19 May: 3rd T20I — Headingley, Leeds  
23 May: 1st ODI — Derby  
26 May: 2nd ODI — Taunton  
29 May: 3rd ODI — Chelmsford

### Men's series

22 May: 1st T20I — Headingley, Leeds  
25 May: 2nd T20I — Edgbaston, Birmingham  
28 May: 3rd T20I — Sophia Gardens, Cardiff  
30 May: 4th T20I — The Oval, London.

## Neymar fined \$3.3M for illegal artificial lake at mansion near Rio



PARIS (Agencies): Paris Saint-Germain forward Neymar has been fined more than 16 million reais (3.06 million, \$3.33 million) by Brazilian authorities for breaching local environmental regulations while having work done on his coastal mansion in the city of Mangaratiba outside Rio de Janeiro.

Mangaratiba City Hall said in a statement on Monday night it had issued four fines after Neymar was accused of illegally building an artificial lake at his mansion.

Spokespeople for Neymar, 31, declined to comment to both ESPN and The Associated Press. Neymar can appeal the decision, which will be handed to police for possible prosecution.

On June 22, environmental officers inspected Neymar's property in the town of Mangaratiba following complaints made, which showed major construction work carried out without environmental authorisation.

Mangaratiba City Hall said in a statement that dozens of environmental infractions were made "in the construction of an artificial lake at the mansion."

Among the infractions was the capture and diversion of river water without authorisation, earth movement and suppression of vegetation without authorisation.

"The Department of the Environment, in addition to applying the fines considering the environmental damage caused, as well as the disrespect for the environmental laws in force, have notified the facts found to the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Civil Police, the Environmental Protection Police Station and other environmental control bodies," a statement said.

The company that built the artificial lake, Genesis Ecosystemas, celebrated the 10-day job for Neymar on its social media channels. It said the lake is 1,000 square meters (10,764 square feet). The company issued a statement on Instagram saying that it would seek the necessary permitting and work with the government to abide by the regulations.

The 46-page city hall document shows Neymar received the maximum fine for each of the violations he is accused of. It was signed by the city's attorney-general and also said the player's father, Neymar da Silva Santos, verbally abused local authorities last week when they came to the mansion to put the construction works to a halt.

Mangaratiba city hall said the illegal construction works cost Neymar about 120,000 Brazilian reais (\$25,000).

# Ireland edge Nepal to finish seventh in CWC Qualifier

HARARE (Agencies): Harry Tector and Curtis Campher scored half-centuries and propelled Ireland to a narrow two-wicket victory over Nepal and finish seventh in the ongoing Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier.

Put into bat first, Nepal piled up a decent total of 268/9 on the scoreboard at the back of a collective effort by their batters, led by Gulshan Jha's half-century.

Batting first, Nepal had a shaky start to their innings as they were 44/2 in the 13th over after opener Kushal Bhurtel (8) and Gyanendra Malla (7) perished cheaply. Following the slump, opening batter Arjun Saud got the support of his skipper Rohit Paudel and the duo added 50 runs for the third wicket until the latter fell in the 23rd over.

Paudel scored 29 off 35 balls with the help of two boundaries and a six.

Nepal were then jolted by another blow in the span of three overs as Saud was trapped by Gareth Delany and fell just two short of his half-century. He scored 48 off 84 balls, hitting three boundaries and two sixes.

Middle-order batter Kushal Malla took the reigns of Nepal's batting effort after Saud's dismissal as he scored a quickfire 44 off 38 balls and put on an important 59-wicket partnership for the fifth wicket with Bhim Sharki, who scored 20.

With the side struggling at 169/7 in 37.2 overs, lower-order batters Gulshan Jha and Sandeep Lamichhane stitched an astounding 80-run partnership for the eighth wicket.

The pair frustrated Irish bowlers until Mark Adair got rid of Lamichhane in the penultimate over. He played a vital 32-run knock on 30 deliveries. Gulshan Jha, on the other hand, carried his bat all the way through and scored a gritty 57 off 42

balls, smashing four boundaries and three sixes.

For Ireland, Craig Young, Adair and Barry McCarthy bagged two wickets each. Set to chase 269, Ireland amassed the total on the second delivery of the final over for the loss of eight wickets. Ireland had a shaky start to the run chase as they were 23/2 in the sixth over after Andy McBrine (17) and Andy Balbirine (1) fell in successive overs.

Following back-to-back blows, Harry Tector joined Paul Stirling (15) in the middle and put on a brief 37-run partnership which lasted when Gulshan Jha castled the latter in the 12th over.

Tector then stitched another crucial partnership for Ireland when he added 58 runs for the fourth wicket with Lorcan Tucker before both fell in quick succession, leaving Ireland reeling at 134/5 in 26 overs. Tector scored 60 off 76 deliveries with the help of four boundaries and two sixes while Tucker could score 24 off 22.

Curtis Campher then stood up for Ireland in the run chase and played a crucial knock and pave the way for his side to pull off the victory. Campher top-scored for Ireland with a 59-ball 62 which featured eight boundaries and a six.

Following his dismissal, George Dockrell (33), Gareth Delany (16) and Mark Adair (18) made important contributions at the end of a tense run chase.

## Scotland rest Zimbabwe's WC hopes with a stunning victory

BULAWAYO: Tournament favourites Zimbabwe have been knocked out of the World Cup qualification race after the hosts succumbed to a shocking defeat

against Scotland in the Cricket World Cup (CWC) Qualifier Super Six clash.

Set to chase a modest 235-run, the home side could only raise 203 before being bundled out in the 42nd over despite Ryan Burl's fighting 83-run knock. The hosts had a dismal start to the pursuit as they lost four wickets in the eighth with just 37 runs on the scoreboard with in-form batter Sean Williams (12) and skipper Craig Ervine (0) also falling victim to the early debacle caused by a ruthless Chris Sole's opening spell.

With Zimbabwe reeling at 37/4, in-form Sikandar Raza and Ryan Burl attempted to anchor the run chase and put on a valiant 54-run partnership for the fifth wicket. The pair appeared to have settled down and had put Scotland bowlers in dire need of a breakthrough which they eventually found in the 18th over when Raza miscued one off Chris Greaves and handed an easy catch to Tomas Mackintosh at long-off.

Raza could score 34 off 40 deliveries, laced with two boundaries and a six. Wesley Madhevere joined Ryan Burl in the middle after Raza's dismissal and put on another crucial partnership for their side in a daunting run chase.

The pair of Madhevere and Burl added a brisk 73 runs during their sixth-wicket partnership and had pulled Zimbabwe out of danger but Scotland once again managed to find a breakthrough at the perfect time when Brandon McMullen removed the former in the 31st over.

Madhevere scored a quick 40 off 39 deliveries with the help of three boundaries and a six. Zimbabwe then lost two more wickets in quick successions as Wellington Masakadza and Richard Ngarava perished in successive overs to leave Zimbabwe in heaps of trouble at 182/8.



LONDON: Andy Murray interacts with defeated Ryan Peniston after their Men's Singles first round match during day two of The Championships Wimbledon 2023.

# Andy Murray maintains perfect Wimbledon first-round record

LONDON (Agencies): Andy Murray maintained his record of never losing in the Wimbledon first round with an encouraging victory over fellow Briton Ryan Peniston.

Two-time champion Murray, ranked 40th in the world, started slowly against wildcard Peniston on Centre Court. But the Scot showed his greater class to fight off early break points, then going up a gear to win 6-3 6-0 6-1.

Murray, 36, will face Greek fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas or 2020 US Open champion Dominic Thiem in round two. Their contest was one of many matches scheduled to take place on Tuesday which was cancelled by heavy and prolonged rain in south-west London.

Murray and 268th-ranked Peniston were among the few players who could complete their first-round matches, with the all-British affair taking place under the Centre Court roof. British men's number one Cameron Norrie was also able to take to the court, playing his opener against Czech opponent Tomas Machac on Court One.

Fellow Britons Katie Boulter and George Loffhagen started their matches on Tuesday morning before being forced off the outside courts shortly after 12:00 BST.

Play was suspended for several hours on day two and the weather was not forecast to improve much over the rest of evening.

## Elena Rybakina avoids upset against Shelby Rogers

LONDON: Defending Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina recovered from a poor start to avoid a first-round exit against American Shelby Rogers.

The Kazakh, whose title defence began with a double fault, won 4-6 6-1 6-2. Hampered by illness in her build-up, she lacked energy against the world number 49 at the start but a dramatic shift in momentum sealed victory.

Later, Ons Jabeur, runner-up to Rybakina at last year's tournament, beat Poland's Magdalena Frech 6-3 6-3. Rybakina's win means she avoided becoming the first women's defending champion since 1994 to lose at this stage.

Steffi Graf was the champion who fell at that hurdle 29 years ago when she was beaten by American Lori McNeil - and after an error-strewn first set it had looked as if Rybakina would be joining the German in the history books.

But watched from Centre Court's Royal Box

by both tennis royalty and actual royalty in the shape of Roger Federer and the Princess of Wales, the Moscow-born 24-year-old battled to hold on to her own crown a little longer.

Rybakina got off to a shaky start, dropping serve in the opening game and serving two double faults in her first two service games, and she struggled to recover as a composed Rogers went on to seal the first set with an ace.

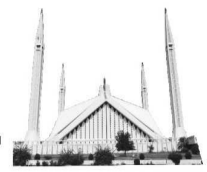
But it was soon the Kazakh who held all the aces, delivering five of them in a dominant second set that she whizzed through in 29 minutes as rain hammered down on the court's closed roof.

She broke in the opening game of the third set when a wide-looking forehand was shown to be in by Hawk-Eye, and maintained the advantage, wrapping up victory when Rogers could only net a return. "It was really tough for me today, I was really nervous," Rybakina said in her on-court interview. "The double fault said it all at the beginning of the match."

She will play France's Alize Cornet or Japan's Nao Hibino in the second round as she bids to become the first woman since Serena Williams in 2016 to defend the women's singles title here.



NOGARO: Jasper Philipsen of Belgium and Team Alpein-Deceuninck celebrates at podium as stage winner during the stage four of the 110th Tour de France 2023 a 181.8km stage from Dax to Nogaro.



## In brief

### Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon Islamabad Circle, Comsat, Chhata Bakhtawar, Park Enclave, Lahtrar, Tramiree, ISI Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nogzi, Bajnyal, Chakra, New Milpur, F-17/1, F-17/2, Nogzi Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, River Garden, River Garden.II, Sawan Garden.II Feeders, From 06:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Islamabad Feed Mill, Jhata Hatial, Bisali, Pind Jatla, Lab.I & II, Reliance Weaving Mill, Bhal, Jarrar Camp Feeders and surrounding areas.

### Member of bike lifter gang held

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police Khanna police team apprehended a wanted member of a bike lifter gang involved in a series of bike lifting incidents in various areas of Islamabad and recovered two stolen motorbikes from his possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police had started a crackdown against criminal elements involved in car and bike lifting incidents in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens. Following these directives, the Khanna police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending a wanted member of a bike lifter gang involved in numerous bike lifting incidents in various areas of Islamabad. Police team also recovered two stolen motorbikes from his possession. The accused was identified as Noman Aslam. Cases have already been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. During the preliminary investigation the accused confessed to being involved in numerous bike lifting incidents in the jurisdiction of the Khanna police station.

### NDMA alerts departments

ISLAMABAD (INP): National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has directed all relevant departments to remain alert in view of rain spell from Monday till July 8. According to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) spokesperson, heavy rains with gusty winds and thunderstorms are expected in different parts of the country during this period which can trigger land sliding in hilly areas and flooding in the lowlands. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has asked the relevant departments to ensure the presence of emergency machinery and staff and issue advance notice to people in flood-risk areas. It also advised tourists and visitors to remain informed about weather conditions before travelling and farmers and livestock owners to take necessary precautions in view of weather conditions.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Naeem had a meeting with the Turkish Ambassador Dr Mehmet Paçacı.

## PTI not in position to contest elections: Zubair

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former federal minister Muhammad Zubair said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is not in a position to contest elections.

In a statement PML-N leader Muhammad Zubair said that PTI is not in a

position to contest elections irrespective of its chairman's disqualification. If the PTI chairman is arrested and it will be because of his own actions, he added.

The PML-N leader said that everyone wants to see PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister for the fourth time as he was

unfairly disqualified. The environment is favorable for the former prime minister, he added.

He said that Nawaz Sharif came into power three times and was removed from power without proving him guilty, and was convicted in the hybrid regime.

### 6739 challan tickets issued for helmet violations

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi launched campaign about the use of safety helmets among motorcyclists. According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan, CTP carried out a special campaign aimed at raising awareness about traffic rules, road safety and the use of safety helmets. CTP issued 6739 challan tickets for not wearing helmet last month.

He directed the all incharges to take strict action against helmet less bikers. Motorcyclists are more prone to head injuries in case of road accidents, Khan said. CTP is sticking to its slogan 'Helmet Nahi To Safar Nahi'.

He said, adding that the Education Wing of traffic police was making efforts to spread awareness so that the road journey could be made safe and sound.

The CTO urged the people to cooperate with traffic wardens as they were on the roads to facilitate them.

### IRSA releases 329,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 329,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 376,000 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1512.00 feet and was 114.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 188,600 cusecs and 189,300 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1184.50 feet, which was 134.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 57,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 198,100, 181,700, 167,100 and 72,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 58,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 44,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

he submitted to the courts without delay, he added.

He further said that, the cases should be thoroughly investigated and improvements should be made in the inspection of cases.

The officers were given instructions to make patrolling more effective and purposeful. If any area is left unattended in terms of patrolling, and an incident of criminal activities occurs there, the concerned officer of the police station will be held accountable, and immediate action will be taken against them.

The protection of life and property of the citizens is the primary responsibility of the police, and no negligence will be tolerated in this regard, he added.

## Two royal families are deciding Pakistan's future: Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (PPI): Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that agreement with IMF will increase poverty, inflation and unemployment.

In a tweets on the social networking website Twitter, Rashid said the incumbent government, caretaker setup and the incoming government had to fulfill the IMF's strict conditions within nine months. He said Pakistan had to repay loan seven times greater than that of current foreign exchange reserves the country had in national kitty. "Debt repayment is still at risk," he said.

The former federal minister said that if the

IMF program was suspended, ruler would not be able to avert the economic crisis.

"Our expenses are much higher than our income. Those who wasted 10 months and tarnished the reputation of the company are not capable of bringing economic stability to the country," Rashid was of the view. The AML head said inflation and unemployment would increase further. "We have to pay more than 10 billion in debt by the end of this year," he said. Rashid said that Pakistan's political decisions were being made in Dubai and London. He said Nawaz Sharif remained busy in politics during his bail period

which he secured on illness basis.

"By August 12, everything will be clear in politics. Two royal families are deciding the future of Pakistan outside the country. 240 million people have no status or importance," he said.

The head of Awami Muslim League further said that those who thought the political field was clear in Punjab were blind to reason. "The stage of politics in Punjab has not been set so far. The cabinet has already decided to dispose of the waste in Islamabad," Rashid said and added, "The nation wants to dispose of the political garbage of the entire country."

## Capital Police initiate measures to ensure peace during Muharram-ul-Haram

ISLAMABAD (NNI): In preparation for the holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram, the Islamabad capital police have taken proactive measures to maintain peace and security in the federal capital. Instructions in this regard have been issued to all Zone DPOs to hold meetings with the organizers of Imambargahs.

On the other hand, an important meeting was held under the supervision of SSP

Operations/Investigation Malik Jameel Zafar, to assess the law and order situation, focusing on crime control and addressing the concerns related to professional criminals.

The meeting was attended by zonal DPOs, SDPOs and all concerned officers

from police stations. The meeting aimed to evaluate the performance of all police stations and take necessary actions against professional criminals.

S P Operations/Investigation directed officers to ensure that in future meetings, the performance of officers is assessed and no compromise is made in dealing with criminals. Safeguarding the lives and property of citizens in the capital city is the foremost responsibility of Islamabad capital police.

The cases of motorcycle and motor vehicle theft were discussed, and efforts were made to apprehend the culprits. The investigation of the cases should be expedited, and the challan should

be submitted to the courts without delay, he added.

He further said that, the cases should be thoroughly investigated and improvements should be made in the inspection of cases.

The officers were given instructions to make patrolling more effective and purposeful. If any area is left unattended in terms of patrolling, and an incident of criminal activities occurs there, the concerned officer of the police station will be held accountable, and immediate action will be taken against them.

The protection of life and property of the citizens is the primary responsibility of the police, and no negligence will be tolerated in this regard, he added.

## Rs 44124m allocated for construction of 51 new NHA road building schemes

ISLAMABAD (INP): For implementation of the present coalition government's vision of building road infrastructure in the country, Rs 44124.386 million have been earmarked in the Public Sector Development Programme for 51 new schemes of the National Highway Authority (NHA).

According to official data, Rs 6000 million have been proposed in the PSDP 2023-24 for dualization and rehabilitation of Karachi-Kararo and Wadh-Khuzdar road. Similarly, Rs 6000 million have been allocated for the Kararo-Wadh and Kuchlak-Chaman section. Rs 4000 million have been set aside for construction of Abdul Khel Interchange to Dhakki to Kalurkot road.

For rehabilitation and upgradation of 38 km Pezu-Tank Road, Rs 2200 million have been allocated whereas Rs 2000 million have been apportioned for 35 km road

from Yarik Interchange to Tank road.

For construction of 14.9 km two-lane D.I Khan bypass, Rs 1000 million have been set aside and as much amount has been earmarked for construction of 66 road link from Ramak (N-55) to Daraban (N-50). Rs 1800 million have been set aside for rehabilitation and reconstruction 86 km section of N-5 from Moro to Ranipur including damaged bridges under ADB flood emergency loan.

For establishment of Interchange at Tandlianwala Area, District Faisalabad on M-3 motorway, Rs 1000 have been kept. For rehabilitation and upgradation of 56 km Kundal Interchange to Lakki Marwat to Tajazai road under D.I Khan Development Package, Rs 1000 million have been allocated. Rs 2500 million have been allocated for the PC-1 for Lowari Tunnel electrical and mechanical works plus bridges.

## Pak-Kazakhstan direct air flight operation to start from July 8: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin said on Tuesday that Pak-Kazakhstan direct air flight operation will commence on from 8th of this month which will be helpful in boosting economic, social and cultural integration between the two countries. Addressing a round table on LKazakhstan and Pakistan bilateral ties and way forward, he said that a direct air flight between Lahore and Almaty would start on July 8 and the direct air flights between the two countries were crucial for regional economic and trade integration in Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

Ambassador Kistafin said that duration of the direct flight between the two countries would be 2 hours, which would promote mutual economic and trade relations and the possibilities of cooperation in the field of tourism would be brighter.

After success of direct flight operations in these two cities, such air service would be started between other big cities including Islamabad and Karachi, he added.

The Kazkh Envoy said that just last week; there was a phone conversation between the President of Kazakhstan, Kassim Tokayev, and Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif during which issues of mutual interest between the two countries were discussed.

The top leadership of both the countries was determined to strengthening and pro-

moting of bilateral economic, trade and diplomatic relations, he added.

He said that Kazakhstan was currently a great destination for foreign investment which attracted \$28 billion FDI this year.

Ambassador Kistafin said that there was a lot of potential in the ports of Gwadar and Karachi of Pakistan, through which Kazakhstan, including Central Asia, can be accessed to the markets of Europe and Africa. He said that Kazakhstan had vast reserves of energy, gas and oil which Pakistan could take advantage of. Kazakhstan was currently the third largest exporter of wheat in the world, which had wide possibilities for cooperation with Pakistan, he added. The Ambassador said that Kazakhstan is an important member of the Eurasian Organization, which Pakistan can also benefit from, he said.

He said the role of media was very important in the relations between the two countries, which could open new avenues of cooperation between the two countries.

On this occasion, Director Pakistan China Institute of Strategic Studies and Central Asia, Dr. Talat Shabbir said that Kazakhstan and Pakistan had wide possibilities of economic, trade and diplomatic cooperation. Dr. Talat Shabbir said that so far 35 bilateral MOUs have been signed between the two countries in various fields, most of which have been implemented.

## Special Traffic education and enforcement campaign in full swing

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police took prompt action against underage motorcyclists and drivers and imposed fines on them under the campaign of Special Traffic education and enforcement.

Following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police launched a special traffic education and enforcement campaign in order to solve the traffic related problems faced by the citizens on roads, a police public relations officer said.

He said that, campaign

is underway against underage bikers, those involved in rash driving and violating traffic rules. Under the supervision of chief traffic officer Islamabad, zonal DSP's are ensuring strict action against those violating traffic rules.

In this regard, Islamabad capital police already formed special squads to set up special roadblocks in major highways and squares of Islamabad in order to take strict legal action against underage drivers and other traffic rules violators. Pamphlets and leaflets are being distributed to create awareness among citizens.

While various teams of the education wing are spreading awareness about road safety rules among the road users.

Following the efforts of these measures, several underage motorcyclists and traffic rules violators were fined, while unregistered bikes were also impounded at different police stations. Parents are also requested to fulfill their responsibility, while also abiding by the law and forbidding the minor children to drive a car or motorbike. He added that the purpose of such a campaign was aimed to protect the precious lives of citizens.

## ANF seizes 97.133 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 97.133 kg drugs, 270 liters sulphuric acid, 50 kg caustic soda and 15 kg suspected powder worth US\$ 3.181 million internationally.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the force arrested 18 persons including two women and impounded six vehicles while conducting 13 counter narcotics operations throughout the country during last week.

The seized drugs comprised three kg heroin, 82.346 kg hashish, 11.783 kg methamphetamine (Ice) and four grams weed.

ANF Balochistan recovered 71 kg drugs, 270 liters sulphuric acid, 50 kg caustic soda & 15 kg suspected powder in five operations while

arrested six persons involved in drugs smuggling and impounded three vehicles. The seized drugs comprised 66 kg Hashish and five kg Methamphetamine (Ice).

Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Punjab recovered 13,435 kg drugs in five operations while arrested seven accused including two women involved in drugs smuggling and impounded a vehicle.

The seized drugs comprised three kg Heroin, 3,652 kg Hashish and 6.783 kg

Methamphetamine (Ice). Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan North recovered 12,698 kg drugs in three operations and arrested five accused involved in drugs smuggling besides impounding two vehicles.

The seized drugs comprised 12,694 kg hashish and four grams weed.

### Newborn loses limbs after doctors negligence

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A private hospital in Islamabad is facing accusations of negligence that resulted in severe burns to the legs of a newborn baby girl, and she has reportedly lost her limbs.

The child is currently receiving treatment at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), according to a spokesperson from the hospital's emergency department.

The spokesperson stated that the newborn girl is under the care of the Burn Centre. It has been reported that approximately 25% to 30% of the lower part of the girl's body has suffered burns. The victim's father Syed Ahsan said that his daughter was placed in an incubator due to her premature birth. However, when he visited her the following day, he was shocked to discover that her legs had been burnt.



ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration sealed Gas Cylinder filling shop at Sangjani locality.

#### Afghan team reached Maldives

KABUL (Agencies): The country's national bodybuilder team after visiting with the chairman of the National Olympic Committee, Mawlawi Abdul Wodood Haqani arrived in Maldives to participate in the 13th round of South Asian fitness competitions. The spokesman of the National Olympic Committee Atal Moshwani told BNA. Six players, one coach, and a general directorate of physical training and sports in Afghanistan participate in this competition.

# The Frontier Post

## AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Hajj 16, 1444 — Wednesday, July 05, 2023

#### Police arrest 29 criminals

KABUL (Agencies): 29 people were arrested by police on charges of murder, robbery, and keeping of illegal weapons from two provinces. The Ministry of Interior in a statement said police arrested 29 people on charges of robbery, murder, and keeping illegal weapons and other criminal offenses from Kabul and Kunar. 17 people were arrested on charges of robbery and keeping illegal weapons and other crimes from Kabul and 12 others were arrested.

## Situation in Afghanistan remains tense: Putin

KABUL (Khaama Press): Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a virtual summit that Afghanistan's volatile situation remains the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's top concern. "Traditionally, the situation in Afghanistan is the focus of the SCO attention. Moreover, our colleagues have just talked about it. The situation, which, unfortunately, is not becoming any less tense," Putin said.

Putin also said that the SCO's top priority should continue to be fighting terrorism, fighting extremism and religious radicalism, stopping drug trafficking

and other forms of smuggling, and fighting bandit formations.

"I would like to recall the Russian proposal to transform the SCO's regional anti-terrorist organization into a multi-purpose centre that would respond to the entire range of security threats," Putin said, Tass reported.

The virtual Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held virtually on Tuesday, in which several leaders, including Xi Jinping, Putin, Shehbaz Sharif and the Prime minister of India, joined the meeting.

The Summit was presided by Prime Minister Modi, and he said that the organization should work together to combat terrorism and not hesitate to condemn countries that support terror.

Meanwhile, the Indian Prime Minister urged the Eurasian political and security alliance to support Kabul with humanitarian aid and strive for the country's welfare.

The organization comprises eight countries: India, Pakistan, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

## Kabir urges strengthen of private universities

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Prime Minister of IEA Mawlawi Abdul Kabir in a meeting with Sheikh Nada Mohammad Nadeem said that the Ministry of Higher Education must do fundamental work to strengthen and grow private universities.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Acting Prime Minister met with Sheikh Nada Mohammad Nadeem, Acting Minister of Higher Education, according to a statement released by his office.

In the meeting, while presenting a report on the activities of the Ministry of Higher Education, Sheikh Nada Mohammad Nadeem said, they have taken important steps to improve the scientific level of universities.

They have provided the basis for improving the scientific capacity of universities in the country, Nadeem added.

With the help of experts, they are working on plans to make academic institutions meet the requirements of Afghanistan to graduate, said Kabir.

Mawlawi Abdul Kabir considered the development of higher education as the need of the present age and said the educational system in universities should be arranged and adapted in such a way that students are educated in all dimensions with the Islamic and national spirit in addition to scientific achievements.

For the development of higher education institutions, the experiences of other countries should be used and priority should be given to the capacity of scientific staff, said Kabir.

He added that the Ministry of Higher Education should do fundamental work to strengthen and grow private universities.

## Switzerland gives \$1.7m in aid to Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Switzerland has donated \$1.7 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, a United Nations agency said.

The contribution goes to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund for 2023 to support life-saving activities in the country, the UN humanitarian office (OCHA) said on Twitter. Switzerland, being a multi-year donor, has contributed \$20 million to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund since 2016, according to OCHA.

Afghanistan remains one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, according to UN, with more than two-thirds of the population in need of humanitarian assistance.

Last week, WFP's country director said food assistance to Afghanistan will shrink to nothing by the end of October under current funding projections.

## Jihadi Madrassas to be developed: Acting PM



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Prime Minister of IEA Mawlawi Abdul Kabir in a meeting with the head of Panjshir Jihadi madrassa, gave necessary directions to the Ministry of Education in order to increase the capacity of recruitment in madrassas in Panjshir.

According to a statement released by his office,

Acting Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met with Sheikh Masihullah Mossadiq the head of Panjshir Jihadi Madrassas.

In the meeting, Sheikh Mawlawi Mossadiq said that the people of Panjshir are happy with the activities of the jihadi madrassa and want to strengthen and further develop.

Since the opening of the jihadi madrassa, thousands of students have joined and are interested in teaching in this madrassa, he added.

The Islamic Emirate has provided the necessary facilities for the madrassa and the people of Panjshir have cooperated, he said.

Acting Prime Minister Kabir expressed satisfac-

tion with the activities of the jihadi madrassas in Panjshir and said that addressing the problem of the people of Panjshir and coordination between local departments and the people should be a priority.

In order to increase the capacity of recruitment in Panjshir jihadi madrassa, all the necessary facilities will be prepared said Kabir.

## Paktia residents urge completion of Machalgho dam project

GARDEZ (Pajhwok): A number of residents of southeastern Paktia urge the caretaker government to resume work on incomplete Machalgho dam project.

Haji Omar Gul, a tribal elder of Ahmadaba district told Pajhwok Afghan News that the security was ensured in the country and government should resume and complete the remaining work of the Machalgho dam. "Machalgho dam is a vital project for Paktia province and the people

have repeatedly asked the government for resumption of its construction work in the past and currently," he added.

Azizullah, a resident of Gardez city, said the construction work of Machalgho dam had started almost 10 years ago but due to various reasons its construction work had come to a halt.

He said that the security was stable currently and the government should resume the work of this huge project. Completion of the dam

in Ahmadaba district will help generate hundreds of megawatts of electricity and irrigate vast tracts of barren land.

Qazi Sawab Jan Islamy, director of information and culture, told Pajhwok: "The construction of Machalgho and other small dams is their priority." He said the governor and other officials visited the dam two days ago and assess the work of the project.

Few days ago, the Acting Minister of Water

and Energy Abdul Latif Mansour traveled to Paktia where he said that the construction of Machalgho dam was the caretaker government's priority.

He said the completion of the remaining works of the dam was the ministry's priority. The Machalgho Dam is one of the vital projects in Paktia, with its works construction completion the dam will be able to irrigate 2,300 hectares of farmland and will 800 kilowatts of electricity.

## Retired civil servants call on IEA to pay their pensions

KABUL (Agencies): Pensioners say it has been more than 22 months since they last received their pensions and that their financial challenges are growing.

These pensioners say they are currently in a bad economic situation and have no other income except their pensions. They called on the Islamic Emirate to pay their pensions as soon as possible.

Iffandi Sangar, head of the Pensioners Association, expressed his disappointment and said that during this period, they have approached various departments many times but have not received their pensions.

However, the Islamic Emirate says the work on



paying the pension is underway and this problem will be solved.

"Discussions are going on about the rights of the

pensioners, and it is hoped that a solution will be found to pay their rights," said Zabihullah Mujahid, IEA's spokesman.

Recently, some generals of the previous government in a meeting with the acting prime minister also demanded the pension to be paid.

## Undocumented vehicles nationwide problem

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Traffic Police Department reports that nearly two hundred people have been killed and injured in the last five days as a result of traffic incidents in the country.

The financial and administrative director of the department said that in the last three months, nearly 300,000 cars without documents have been registered across the country.

"Approximately 66 people have died, and 132 others have been injured across the country," said Abdul Wodod KhirKah, head of policy in the Traffic Police Department.

"Most of the vulnerable people are from cities and the reason is not following traffic rules," said Mohammad Nayeem Mangal, head of the regional office of Kunduz.

Meanwhile, residents of Kabul said the increase in cars without documents is the main reason for the increase in traffic incidents in the country.

## Tourists see need for rescue measures at Ghazni dams

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Boats have been brought to the Sarda and Sultan dams in southern Ghazni province to facilitate tourists but visitors have demanded investment in rescue and other related activities at these sites.

Tourists said boats were made available to them at the site from the past two weeks but they still did not feel safe because there were no safety equipment and during the past two weeks 10 persons were drowned in the water swimmers.

Mohammad Omar, one of the tourists told Pajhwok Afghan News, it was good that some of the tourism companies invested in Sardi dam but no one should play with the life of humans, it is important that the safety measures should be given priority.

Omar added: "I witnessed the horrible incident in Sultan dam a week ago, when 6 members of a family including women were drowned in the water of the

dams but the local swimmers succeeded to rescue them all, if there were no swimmers, they all could be killed".

But Mohammad Naem, another visitor of Sardi dam told Pajhwok: "Look four persons are riding in a boat which is made for two persons and they even do not wear life jackets.

He said, a boat capsized in Sardi dam during Eid days, three of the riding men were rescued by divers but another minor of Yahya Khel district of Paktika province lost his life.

He added, the boats capsize or break down in the middle of water, the company who brought these boats must provide all other facilities for outreach during critical time.

The interviewers all ask the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) to consider the safety of the tourists and not change their trips to sorrow.

But the officials of Information and Culture

Department of Ghazni reject all these words and call them baseless claims.

Mullah Hamidullah Nisar, the head of provincial information and culture department told Pajhwok, these entertainment materials have been provided by the Administration of Afghan Tour Office for the domestic and foreign tourists and all the income is also collected by Afghan Tour Administration.

According to Nisar, currently 12 boats had been brought to Sultan and Sardi dams and it is supposed that more boats will be also provided if needed.

This comes that earlier Ghazni Governor hailed those two swimmers who rescued six people including women.

It is worth mentioning these recreational facilities have been provided in Ghazni's Sardi and Sultan Dams, which have recently attracted the attention of domestic and foreign tourists.

## ACCI officials calls to facilitate int'l trade



KABUL (TOLOnews): A senior official of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) said that in the meeting between the members of the ACCI and Afghan traders based in China, there was emphasis on the removal of challenges facing Afghan traders and the business community.

A delegation of the ACCI recently visited China. The first deputy of the ACCI, Khanjan Alokzoai, said the delegation called on Chinese investors to invest in various sectors in Afghanistan.

"The traders should come to Afghanistan and invest here and also the negotiations should be conducted with the Chinese investors and they should

be provided with opportunities," he said.

Alokzoai said that an agreement is expected to be signed between the ACCI and China's Chamber of Commerce and Investment.

Meanwhile, some Afghan traders in China also voiced concerns over the existing obstacles facing their businesses.

"Since the change of (government) in Afghanistan, the process of passport distribution in the Afghan embassy in China has stopped.

This is a big problem for the traders," said Salman Raha, an Afghan trader in China.

"Some of the traders are still in Afghanistan. It has been three to four years that they do not have access to visas and they cannot take

Chinese visas," said Jamshid Asadi, an Afghan trader.

The economists said that China's investment in Afghanistan will improve the country's economy.

"If the investment happens by China, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, neighbors and other international investors in Afghanistan, it will be based on mutual and equal benefit and it benefits Afghanistan. It will cause job opportunities and economic enhancement," said Azeraksh Hafizi, an economist.

Earlier, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that China signed investment contracts in various areas worth around \$2 billion after the collapse of the former government in Afghanistan.

## Aid reached Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): World Food Program (WFP) announced that 10,000 metric tonnes of wheat aid has reached Afghanistan through Iran's Chabahar port to the western Herat province.

WFP wrote on Twitter the donated wheat will be floured and distributed to needy families throughout Afghanistan.

This is part of the 40,000 metric tonnes of wheat aid to Afghanistan announced in 2022.

In March 2023, the

Foreign Ministry announced that 20,000 metric tonnes of wheat will be transferred to Afghanistan via Iran's Chabahar port.

Furthermore, it is stated the wheat aid will be distributed to needy Afghan families through the World Food Program throughout Afghanistan.

Months after the Taliban returned to power in Kabul in August 2021, India announced assistance of 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghan people as they were

wrestling with a severe food crisis. Subsequently, the consignments were sent to Afghanistan using the land route through Pakistan. Islamabad had granted the transit facility after nearly months of discussions.

Despite the late regime change in the country and the Taliban's return to power in 2021, India has maintained friendly relations with Afghanistan and has donated thousands of tonnes of wheat to the people of Afghanistan.

## Traffic accident injures six in Bamyan province

BAMYAN (Khaama Press): At least six people sustained injuries in a traffic accident that took place on the Kabul-Bamyan highway, provincial officials in central Bamyan province said.

The press and public

relations department of Bamyan police confirmed on Tuesday to Khaama Press that the incident took place at 10:00 am in the Fatemisti village near the provincial capital of Bamyan.

The officials added that injured people were transferred by traffic personnel to Bamyan provincial hospital for treatment.

The incident took place as two Toyota Corolla vehicles collided on the

Bamyan highway, according to Taliban officials.

Previously, traffic officials reported to media that during Eid days, more than 100 road accidents took place throughout the country, claiming the lives of 66 people and injuring at least 132 others.

In similar road accidents in different parts of the country, many people including women and children have lost their lives, according to official reports.

In a separate traffic accident in the Yawan district of the northeastern Badakhshan province yesterday, three people including a woman and a child sustained injuries.

Experts link the increasing number of road accidents in Afghanistan to careless driving, poorly maintained vehicles, unpaved and cracked roads as well as failing to abide by the traffic rules.





ISLAMABAD: Security personnel securing a vehicle carrying PTI Chief Imran Khan during his hearing in the court.

## Holy Quran desecration Sanjrani writes to Sweden’s Speaker

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Sadiq Sanjrani has penned down a letter to Sweden’s Parliament Speaker over the desecration of the Holy Quran, urging the country to highlight the significance of interfaith harmony and dispel misconceptions about Islam.

“I believe that in such a modern era where we are all interconnected in this global village, there should be no more room or excuse for abuse and desecration of holy personalities, scriptures and religious sentiments of any community,” the acting president wrote in the letter.

He also expressed gratitude for the “swift denouncement” of the incident by the Swedish government, making it “unequivocally clear that such actions are not reflective of Swedish state policies and are rightly condemned as Islamophobic”. However, he regretted, the countries seem to be far from goals of ensuring world peace, tolerance and interfaith harmony.

“I represent a nation deeply committed to these principles, and I strongly believe that there is much that we as parliamentarians and world leaders can do to prevent such actions which can disturb world peace,” he added.

He pointed out that Islam strictly teaches to never disrespect other religions, prophets, or holy books. “In fact, a person is not considered a Muslim until they believe in all the preceding prophets of the existing Abrahamic religions and their holy books,” he noted. “This is the respect

and stature of other religions in Islam, yet frequent Islamophobic incidents prevail and are often swept under the rug in the guise of freedom of expression.

“The disrespect towards Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Holy Quran inflict immeasurable pain upon Muslims. It is crucial that this reality is understood and acknowledged, and steps are taken to prevent such acts from occurring through our national and global efforts,” he added. He stressed the need to grasp the true meaning and message of Islam, as well as the deep reverence and love we hold for our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Holy Quran.

Sanjrani further said that the recent desecration of the Holy Quran, like other similar incidents in the past, is rooted in a lack of understanding, and misconceptions about religion that must be dispelled. “It is incumbent upon all of us to educate ourselves and others, promoting understanding, tolerance, and interfaith harmony,” he added.

He urged the Sweden’s Parliament Speaker to not only appreciate the Kingdom of Sweden for condemning the burning of a Quran, but to also urge the Riksdag – the country’s supreme body – to highlight the significance of interfaith harmony and dispel misconceptions about Islam. “It is incumbent upon us, as representatives of our people, to guide and educate our people, fostering an environment that encourages tolerance, respect, and empathy among different faiths, religions and communities,” he added.

## Taliban order to shut down beauty parlours in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies): The Taliban administration has ordered to shut down beauty salons in Afghanistan, the latest restrictions on women and curb to keep them out of public places. The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice on Tuesday confirmed that the Taliban have given a one-month deadline to comply with the orders.

Thousands of businesses being run by women will be forced to shut down, leaving them unemployed. The Taliban have placed several restrictions on Afghan women since their return to power in 2021. They have barred teenage girls from classrooms, gyms and parks. A manager of the

Kabul parlour, who wished to remain anonymous, told AFP: “I think it would have been good if women did not exist at all in this society.”

“I am saying this now: I wish I did not exist. I wish we were not born in Afghanistan, or were not from Afghanistan.” They have also been banned from working for the United Nations or NGOs while thousands have been sacked from government jobs. Mohammad Sadeq Akif Muhajir, who is the ministry’s spokesperson, did not give the reason behind the closure.

“Once they are closed then we will share the reason with the media,” he told AFP. “Women used to chat, gossip. There was no fight-

ing here, no noise,” said a salon worker. “When we see some happy and active faces here, we are also refreshed. The salon has a very important role; this place makes us feel comfortable,” she added.

Richard Bennett, who is a special rapporteur for Afghanistan, wrote in a report to the UN’s Human Rights Council that the living conditions of Afghan women “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,” he wrote.

## Every party makes a plan of action: Qureshi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Tuesday that that a permanent solution to the problem should be found.

Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, he said the IMF agreement was for nine months. “It is not a permanent solution, the question persists; what will happen after nine months,” Qureshi asked. He said: “We must learn from the past. Agreements were made in the past as well, which could not be completed.”

The PTI leader said that he was appearing before courts and wanted to proceed in a political, legal and peaceful way. The PTI vice chairman said that every political party makes a plan of action. The party chairman is also appearing before courts. We are facing cases in accordance with the law. Regarding desecration of Holy Quran, he said there is anxiety in the Islamic world over the Sweden incident. “There is no justification for hurting the feelings of more than a billion Muslims,” he

continued.

Qureshi said that the Islamophobia was raised when the PTI was in the government. “We also raised our voice on the forum of United Nations, and March 15 was designated as International Day to Combat Islamophobia.” The PTI vice chief said only a resolution to condemn the desecration of the Holy Quran is not enough. “We have to consult the international law on the issue,” he stated. He said he favoured freedom of expression, but there should be limits and restrictions. The freedom of expression does not endanger someone’s life. “The whole nation must unite on the issue and express its indignation peacefully after Friday prayers. We are peaceful people. There should be an action plan,” he commented.

**Qureshi’s bail in May 9 arson case extended till 15th:** Islamabad district and sessions court on Tuesday extended Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi’s bail in May 9 arson case till July 15.

The court proceedings took place on Tuesday before Additional Sessions Judge Syed Muhammad Haroon Shah, where Qureshi appeared to request an extension of his bail in relation to a case registered at Kahna Police Station in Lahore following the May 9 incident. However, due to the absence of his lawyer, Ali Bukhari, the arguments could not proceed as planned. Consequently, the court decided to extend Qureshi’s bail and adjourned the hearing of the case until July 15.

After the court proceedings, Shah Mehmood Qureshi addressed the media outside the court, raising concerns about Pakistan’s financial situation. He highlighted the temporary relief achieved by securing a standby loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a period of nine months, which has alleviated the immediate risk of default. However, Qureshi questioned what might occur in the coming months, suggesting uncertainty regarding the nation’s financial stability.

### Asad Qaiser ‘evades arrest’ at PHC

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser has claimed that the police attempted to arrest him from the Peshawar High Court (PHC) despite being “granted bail” in all cases registered against him following May 9 mayhem.

“Police failed to arrest me,” he said in a statement on Tuesday. Qaiser, who served as National Assembly speaker during the previous PTI-led government, said party leader Wazir Abdul Karim Khan had been taken into custody. The close aide of PTI Chairman Imran Khan said he has been appearing before the court for hearings in all “illegal” cases.

“I have been granted bail in all cases registered against me,” he said, adding that the police attempted to arrest him when he came for court hearings. A day earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) granted interim bail to Qaiser until July 13 in a case related to May 9 violent protests.

### Nawaz to return before election drive

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum, Dr Musadik Malik on Tuesday said that Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supreme leader and former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will return back to the country before the election campaign.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said the party was fully prepared to go to the election and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif is the only capable leader who would steer the country out of present challenges. He said Pakistan always progressed in every field under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, adding, Nawaz Sharif is still the most popular leader in Pakistan and he will stand the country on its feet again.

Replying a question, he said PML-N led government was making strenuous efforts to preserve economic stability and move the economy towards growth, adding, the revival of International Monetary Fund (IMF) program will now give breathing space to Pakistan and the country will be able to get loans from multilateral financial institutions and trust of the international community will also be increased. To another question, he said that economic reforms are very important for a country’s economic survival and that signing a staff-level agreement with IMF is a great success of government policy and measures.

### IPP to contest upcoming polls: Tareen

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Chief of Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) Jahangir Tareen has said that his party would contest the upcoming general elections with full strength and a proper preparation.

The party chief held a meeting with Secretary General of IPP Amir Kayani and Additional Secretary General Awn Chaudhry and held discussion with them on various political issues.

# SC moved against military trials of civilians during PTI tenure

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Tuesday against military trials, convictions and sentences of 29 civilians during the tenure of former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan.

The petition, sought to declare “investigations and trials of civilian accused persons under the Pakistan Army Act, 1952, read with, the Official Secrets Act, 1923, and all actions taken subsequently in pursuant to it” as void from the beginning and of “no legal effect”.

The plea — which has not been fixed for hearing yet — was filed by Inamur Rahim, a lawyer and retired colonel, and named the Federation of Pakistan through the defence secretary, Imran, former army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, former director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed, Judge Advocate General at the General Headquarters, and registrars of all the Lahore (Pindi bench), Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and Balochistan high courts.

It stated that the trials of civilians under army laws were a result of the “unconstitutional decision of the federal government then headed by”

Imran, who the petition said was “abetted” by then-army chief Gen (retd) Bajwa and Lt Gen Hameed. The plea termed the trial of 29 civilians under the Army Act “in an unprecedented manner” a matter of grave public importance” and a violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 10-A, 14, and 25 of the Constitution.

“The said trials were in violation of the fundamental rights as embodied in Chapter I of Part II of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, and thus, are a matter of public importance,” the plea said. It maintained that Imran had himself filed a petition in the apex court seeking to declare military trials of civilians unlawful “whereas, the trials of these [29] civilians under the Pakistan Army Act, 1952, read with, the Official Secrets Act, 1923 were conducted on his orders being the chief executive of the country”.

Therefore, the plea continued, Imran’s conduct “is an admission of the illegal acts and offences committed by him, for which he must be held responsible”. The petition listed the civilians who were tried in military courts during the PTI’s tenure, adding that the families of these persons were not even informed about their arrests or whereabouts.

The 29 civilians named in the peti-

tion include Syed Adil Hussain Shah, Idrees Khattak, Muhammad Hussain, Ahmed Nawaz, Muhammad Imtiaz Khan, Habib Qadir, Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Saddique, Raja Mushtaq Ahmed, Syed Imtiaz Shah, Abid Zaheer, Muhammad Usman Akram Kiyani, Muhammad Haider, Ashfaq Masih, Asif Mehmood Shahid, Muhammad Amir Khan, Imtiaz Ahmed, Mushtaq Ahmed, Muhammad Akbar, Khizer Ahmed, Shahzad Asghar, Muhammad Asif Khan, Muhammad Irshad, Syed Irfan Hussain, Lt Col (retd) Akmal Ashraf, Lt Col (retd) Faiz Rasool, Maj (retd) Saifullah Babar, and Hassan Askari. Of these civilians, the petition added, only five were allowed to have counsels of their choice engaged by their families.

“The reasons were very simple as Idrees Khattak was working for Amnesty International, therefore, due to international pressure, his family members were allowed to meet him during the trial and accordingly they engaged the counsel of his choice for him. “The same was the case of three retired officers who were also civilians within the purview of section 92 of the PAA 1952,” the plea highlighted.

Referring to the trial of Hassan Askari — who had criticised Imran’s decision of giving Gen (retd) Bajwa an extension — it said, “Military court on August 20, 2021, awarded him five years of rigorous imprisonment during Imran Khan’s era.” The petition recalled that Askari was later moved to a high-security cell in Sahiwal and not moved to the Adiala Jail despite court directions. “It is learnt that recently the present government released the convicted engineer by granting him remission.”

However, the plea added, details of the whereabouts of the remaining civilians were not provided to their families until they were convicted and transferred to jail. “They were not allowed to engage a counsel of their own choice during their trials. They were not allowed to produce any witnesses in their defence. In the end, they were also denied a copy of their trial proceedings,” it said. “During their trials, Articles, 4, 9, 10 and 10A of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan were completely disregarded. The same treatment was meted out to them before the Army Court of Appeals, where appeals of most of them were rejected without assigning any reason or judgement,” the petition added.

It further recalled that during his tenure, Imran had failed to comply with orders pertaining to the execu-

tion of production orders for missing persons. “Respondent 2 [Imran] in connivance with respondents 3 (Gen Bajwa) and 4 (Gen Faiz) and in blatant violation of the fundamental rights of the citizens, authorised the trials of 29 civilians by the military courts”. “Now respondent 2 [Imran] is befooling the public that he is a champion of the rule of law and Haqeeqi Tabdeeli (real change), whereas, after ex-general Pervez Musharraf’s era, his tenure as chief executive was the darkest era so far as blatant violations of human rights are concerned.”

The petition also detailed the current military structure in Pakistan which entails arrest and investigation, the convening of the court-martial, confirmation by the commander, revision order detailing instructions (including analysing evidence), confirmation by convening authority, confirmation of chief of army staff, trial proceedings, and appeal after confirmation of army chief. It stated that the trials of 29 civilians under the Pakistan Army Act, 1952 and the Official Secrets Act, 1923 without the registration of a first information report against them and without producing them before the magistrate was “void ab initio (void from the beginning) and of no legal effect”.

“These civilians were kept in illegal custody for years and months before their trials were commenced. A person made subject to Pakistan Army Act 1952 cannot be held in detention beyond the period of 48 hours without trial in the light of sections 74 and 75 of the Pakistan Army Act 1952,” the plea added. It subsequently prayed to declare that Imran, Gen (retd) Bajwa and Lt Gen Hameed “had exceeded their power and illegally abducted, detained and sentenced without due process of law, the civilians and in violation of their fundamental rights and constitutional guarantees given for every citizen under the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan”.

Furthermore, it requested for the initiation of criminal proceedings against Imran, Gen (retd) Bajwa and Lt Gen Hameed for “abduction, illegal detention and conviction of the 29 civilians without due process of law and in violation of the fundamental rights and constitutional guarantees for every citizen, under the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan”. It also requested the court to summon the complete record of trials of all civilians under the Pakistan Army Act, 1952, and the Official Secrets Act, 1923 for the “just and fair disposal of the petition”.

### Ex-advisor to KP’s CM arrested

F.P. Report

MARDAN: PTI leader and ex-advisor to chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Abdul Kareem was arrested by officials of anti-corruption establishment here on Tuesday.

The PTI leader Abdul Kareem produced himself in the Anti-Terrorism Court before the Judge Syed Ubaidullah Shah in the cases related to violent incidents that took place on May 9. After his hearing in the ATC court Mardan, he was taken into custody outside the court premises by the anti-corruption establishment officials when he was on his way to home. PTI leader was arrested by the anti-corruption establishment officials Swabi on the charges of illegal recruitments in government departments.

Meanwhile, Assistant Director local governments Fazalullah, Progress officer Wisal Khan and Wazir Muhammad (local government official) were granted bail before arrest by the court. It is pertinent to mention here that the said officials were booked along with ex-provincial minister Atif Khan, ex-state minister Ali Muhammad Khan the anti-corruption officials in the case illegal appointments in local government department.

### ECP asks parties to file statement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has asked all political parties to file till August 29, the statement of their accounts for the financial year 2022-23.

According to Election Commission of Pakistan, the statement is required under section 210 and 204 of the Elections Act, 2017. The statement accompanying audit report of a chartered accountant declares that party has not received any funds from any source prohibited under the Elections Act, 2017 and the statement contains an accurate picture of the financial position of the party.

## No peace in S Asia sans Kashmir resolution: FM

TOKYO (Agencies): Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has ruled out sustenance of peace in South Asia until the region’s core dispute – the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir – is resolved through dialogue and in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions and the principles of international law.

In his remarks at the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADB), on the topic ‘Pakistan and Japan in the Asian context’, the foreign minister said that while Pakistan and Japan

were situated in different corners of the Asian continent, they shared important convergences in terms of their outlook and vision for the region. “Pakistan’s position has always been clear: there can be no peace in South Asia until the region’s core dispute – the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir – is resolved through dialogue and in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions and the principles of international law,” he stressed.

Pakistan has always been ready to work towards such a resolution, he said, adding tragically, Pakistan did not have a partner for peace in South Asia. The foreign minister said “India is in the grip of a form of religious hysteria that has closed out any space for dialogue and diplomacy.”

While this was expected given the ideology of India’s ruling party, what was surprising – and disappointing, he said, was the silence of the international community on India’s oppression in Kashmir and its provocations against a much smaller neighbor.

## Putin reassures Asian nations of stability

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russian President Vladimir Putin has assured leaders in Asia that his country is stable and united despite a brief mutiny instigated by the Wagner Group, which sent shock waves across the world. “The Russian people are consolidated as never before,” Putin told a virtual meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on Tuesday.

The Eurasian group includes China and India and focuses on international security, defence, and economic and political policy. “Russian political circles and the whole of society clearly demonstrated their unity and elevated sense of responsibility for the fate of the fatherland when they responded as a united front against an attempted armed mutiny,” Putin added. Putin thanked members of the SCO, who he said had backed his efforts “to protect the constitutional order, the lives and security of citizens”.

He told them that Russia would stand up against Western pressure, sanctions and “provocations” imposed over what Moscow calls its “special military operation” in Ukraine. The president added that he seeks to boost economic ties with members of the SCO. Russia views countries such as

### NATO extends Stoltenberg’s mandate in move welcomed by Ukraine

BRUSSELS (Agencies): NATO has decided to extend Secretar-General Jens Stoltenberg’s contract by another year, seeking to stick with an experienced leader to lead the military alliance, amid Russia’s raging war in Ukraine. The NATO chief, a former prime minister of Norway, has led the alliance since 2014. His current term in office was due to expire on October 1. He has already had his tenure extended three previous times.

The news of his latest extension comes a week before the alliance’s annual summit, which is due to take place in Vilnius, Lithuania, this year. Stoltenberg welcomed the NATO members’ decision in a tweet, writing, “The transatlantic bond between Europe & North America has ensured our freedom & security for nearly 75 years, and in a more dangerous world, our Alliance is more important than ever.” The 64-year-old is viewed by his supporters as a reliable figure who has played a key role in building consensus across the alliance. US President Joe Biden said in a statement that Stoltenberg’s “steady leadership, experience and judgement” has helped the alliance wade through some of the most “significant challenges in European security since World War II”. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hailed the news, saying “NATO has evolved to meet new threats, continued to protect our people and has been steadfast in support of Ukraine.”

China, India and Iran – the newest member of the SCO – as key partners in confronting the United States and resisting what it portrays as Washington’s attempts to dictate the world order.

Last month, Wagner Group boss Yevgeny Prigozhin seized the city of Rostov-on-Don and marched towards Moscow, demanding the removal of Russian Defence Minister

Sergey Shoigu. Prigozhin’s uprising ended hours after it began within 200km (124 miles) of Moscow. He struck a deal with the Kremlin to end the operation with a pact brokered by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. Prigozhin, now in exile in Belarus, later released an audio statement saying the march was not meant to overthrow the government.