

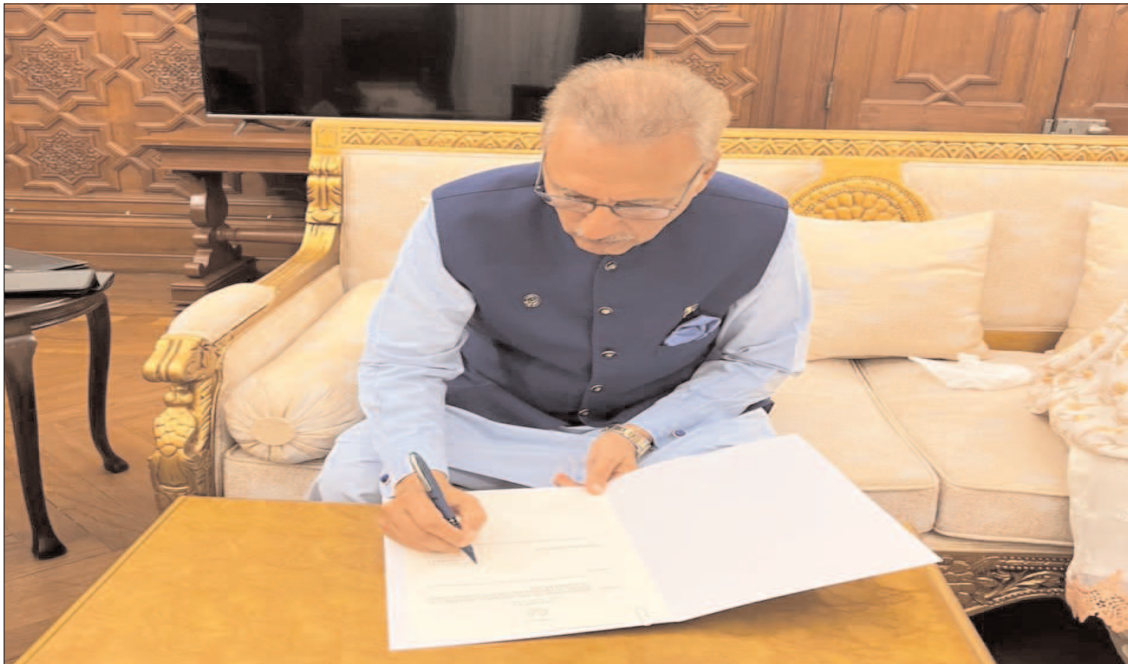
Three terrorists killed
QUETTA (PPI): Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Wednesday claimed to have killed three terrorists of a banned outfit in crossfire in Balochistan. The operation was conducted by CTD team in Zhob district on the intelligence information regarding the presence of highly wanted terrorists. Seeing the CTD team, the terrorists opened fire and in a exchange of fire three of them were dead, while two policemen were also injured.

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LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi signing the dissolution of the National Assembly in terms of Article 58(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973.

PPP govt to provide interest-free loans

F.P. Report

GHOTKI: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has announced that if the nation gives him a mandate in the upcoming general elec-

Addressing the event, he said that PPP governments have always introduced such revolutionary programs, whose aim is to combat poverty. He said that the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), the program of giving

tims has been started across Sindh. "Before (before I came to power) there was an elderly prime minister, who in his election campaign promised to build 1 crore jobs and 5 million houses to the people, he got 4 years but did not build even one house. "We got power for a few months, but this work (construction of houses for flood victims) has already started. (Of them) some houses have been built, others are being built, and the rest will be built soon," he pointed out.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that PPP was unnecessarily criticized in the past that it did not know how to govern, adding that the character assassination of PPP is based on total lies. He contended that whether it was the Covid-19 pandemic or last year's floods, the government of Sindh has performed significantly compared to other governments.

Chairman PPP, while announcing the establishment of IBA Sukkur campus in Ghotki, urged the Chief Minister Sindh to implement the project before the end of the tenure of the present provincial government. He said that the country is facing economic problems, inflation and unemployment are also on the rise, but we will all struggle together for betterment.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, MNAs Sardar Muhammad Bux Mahar and Sardar Khalid Ahmed Loond, Provincial Ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon, Nasir Hussain Shah, Abdul Bari Pitafi, Jam Ikramullah Dharejo and Mukesh Kumar Chawla, MPA Suhail Anwar Siyal, District Chairman Bangal Khan Mahar and other leaders were also present.

COAS viists Tilla field firing ranges

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, COAS visited Tilla Field Firing Ranges near Jhelum on Wednesday. COAS witnessed Live Fire and manoeuvres of the advanced VT-4 tanks, shoot and scout capabilities of long range SH-15 artillery guns and innovative equipment display.

COAS appreciated combat proficiency of the crews and their mastery over state-of-the-art weaponry. COAS remarked that "Pakistan Army was alive to the existing and emerging challenges and possessed the wherewithal to thwart nefarious designs of its adversaries through the entire gamut of threat".

COAS appreciated high degree of professionalism, battle worthiness and offensive spirit displayed by the troops of the Strike Corps. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Commander Mangla Corps and was briefed on operational readiness of the Strike Corps.

NA passes PEMRA (Amend) Bill

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly on Wednesday passed the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023 having the prime objective to benefit journalists and foster a free and responsible media environment.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb tabled the bill in the House as passed by the Senate with certain amendments. The minister said the bill was finalized after vigorous consultation for 12 months to repeal the black law enforced in 2002. Under the bill, the Parliament had been empowered to appoint the PEMRA chairman in future, she added.

The bill protects the rights of media workers and journalists. It mandates all media house owners to settle their outstanding dues, including salaries, within a two-month timeframe. The minister congratulated the entire House, the prime minister, Parliamentary Reporter Association (PRA), Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ) and all other organizations for the passage of the landmark bill.

Court transfers LNG reference against Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (INP): An Accountability Court (AC) on Wednesday transferred the LNG reference against former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi to the court of special judge central while declaring the case beyond the jurisdiction.

AC-I Judge Muhammad Bashir announced the verdict which was reserved previously after hearing arguments from the two sides. The defence side had challenged the maintainability of the case on the basis of amendments in NAB Act.

The Frontier Post

Imran's lawyers booked

ATTOCK (INP): A case has been registered against the two lawyers of PTI Chairman on Wednesday for scuffling with Attock Jail staff. The case was registered at Attock City Police Station. The FIR contains criminal provisions including serious threats. Lawyers Sher Afzal Khan Marwat and Umair Khan Niazi also tore the uniform of head warrant Abrar Khan, both lawyers wanted to meet the PTI Chairman after the jail was locked up.

In farewell National Assembly address PM thanks who's who of political parties for support

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, in his farewell address to the National Assembly, expressed heartfelt gratitude to a diverse array of political parties, underscoring their pivotal support and guidance during the challenging term of 16 months.

Just hours before sending advice to President Dr Arif Alvi for the dissolution of the National Assembly, the prime minister told the House that the 16-month tenure was the shortest ever period for a government particularly when compared to the plethora of issues inherited from the previous regime. He said besides other unsuitable conditions, the coalition government also had to face other massive challenges like the worst floods and the signing of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) deal which was breached by the previous government to hurt national integrity.

He said through its poor conduct and episodes like the "cipher drama" the previous government undermined foreign relations, including with the United States, besides carrying out defamatory propaganda against political opponents. "This is the painful story of the previous government's four years... During our 16 months, the incumbent government did not victimise anyone. Today, if a party leader has been punished, we are in no way happy over that. One should have the fear of Allah. There is no question of distribution of sweets (to rejoice the punishment)," he remarked.

Reiterating the condemnation of the May 9 arson, the prime minister said it would be remembered as the Black Day in history as it marked the "worst conspiracy" against the state of

Shehbaz lauds coalition partners for showing maturity and sincerity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday lauded and appreciated the coalition partners for demonstrating maturity, sincerity, dedication, and loyalty for bringing economic stability in the country.

Addressing the Cabinet meeting, he stressed the need for ensuring national unity as it was vital for socio-economic development of the country. The prime minister said the political leadership had set aside all their political differences and worked diligently to bring the country out of crises. He said the coalition government in its 16-month stint, the shortest tenure of a government in the country's history, endeavoured to serve the people.

The big challenge faced during the period was of flash floods that hit most parts of the country, especially in Sindh and Balochistan, but the way the federal and provincial governments joined hands to cope with the calamitous situation was worth appreciating, he said. All the institutions, including National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) played a crucial role in the rehabilitation process, he added. The prime minister also thanked Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister for Economic Affairs Ayaz Sadiq, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal and Minister for BISP Shazia Marri, who worked as a team during the rehabilitation process in the flood hit areas, PM Shehbaz said the government had to face another challenge of high inflation that affected the common man badly.

Pakistan, the Pakistan Army and Chief of Army Staff, as well as those who sacrificed their lives to safeguard the nation. He said the House should again take notice of that heart-wrenching incident and also pass another resolution to condemn it.

Prime Minister Shehbaz told the House that he would send the advice for National Assembly's dissolution on Wednesday night. He said that he would meet Opposition Leader Raja Riaz to hold a consultation to finalise the name of the interim prime minister. "These 16 months were the toughest trial of my life during my 38 years of political career when the country was faced with inflation, skyrocketing oil

prices, and political turmoil. Who will invest when there will be threats for long marches?" he questioned. He said with the signing of IMF agreement, the risk for default had ebbed away, despite the evil designs of those who tried to sabotage the process.

He said the country was steered out of turmoil as a mechanism in the form of SIFC had been put in place to boost investment in agriculture, information technology, mining and exports sectors. The prime minister paid tribute to Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and expressed gratitude PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif and all of the political leaders from both the ruling coalition and opposition parties for their support and guidance.

tions, he will provide interest-free loans and land ownership rights to build houses across Pakistan to families who have been living on government land for generations, but are deprived of ownership rights, adding, women will be made owners of such houses.

Condemning the anti-people actions of the PTI government, he said that the selected prime minister deceived the nation by making a false promise to provide 10 million jobs and build 5 million houses. According to the press release issued by media cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP participated in the inauguration ceremony of construction of houses for 82,746 flood victims in Ghotki district under Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affecteds (SPHF) and giving them ownership rights of residential plots. Under SPHF, 2 million houses are being constructed for flood affected families across Sindh.

interest-free loans to women for business, the Peoples Poverty Reduction Programme (PPRP), and now helping the flood-affected families in building houses and giving them the ownership rights of the land of such houses are similar measures. "We are not only fighting flood devastations, we are fighting poverty by building houses for the victims simultaneously," he added.

Talking about the Sindh government's initiative for flood victims, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that after the floods last year, whenever he went, everyone had one demand that help him to build the ruined house. "Within a span of 10 months, we planned a program to build houses for flood victims, arranged funding for these houses at the global level and ensured the implementation of the program," adding that under the project, the construction of 2 million houses of flood vic-

Secret Pakistan cable documents U.S. pressure to remove Imran Khan

WASHINGTON DC (THE INTERCEPT):The U.S. State Department encouraged the Pakistani government in a March 7, 2022, meeting to remove Imran Khan as prime minister over his neutrality on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, according to a classified Pakistani government document obtained by The Intercept.

The meeting, between the Pakistani ambassador to the United States and two State Department officials, has been the subject of intense scrutiny, controversy, and speculation in Pakistan over the past year and a half, as supporters of Khan and his military and civilian opponents jockeyed for power. The political struggle escalated on August 5 when Khan was sentenced to three years in prison on corruption charges and taken into custody for the second time since his ouster. Khan's defenders dismiss the charges as baseless. The sentence also blocks Khan, Pakistan's most popular politician, from contesting elections expected in Pakistan later this year. One month after the meeting with U.S. officials doc-

umented in the leaked Pakistani government document, a no-confidence vote was held in Parliament, leading to Khan's removal from power. The vote is believed to have been organized with the backing of Pakistan's powerful military. Since that time, Khan and his supporters have been engaged in a struggle with the military and its civilian allies, whom Khan claims engineered his removal from power at the request of the U.S. The text of the Pakistani cable, produced from the meeting by the ambassador and transmitted to Pakistan, has not previously been published. The cable, known internally as a "cypher," reveals both the carrots and the sticks that the State Department deployed in its push against Khan, promising warmer relations if Khan was removed, and isolation if he was not.

The document, labeled "Secret," includes an account of the meeting between State Department officials, including Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

Donald Lu, and Asad Majeed Khan, who at the time was Pakistan's ambassador to the U.S.

The document was provided to The Intercept by an anonymous source in the Pakistani military who said that they had no ties to Imran Khan or Khan's party. The Intercept is publishing the body of the cable below, correcting minor typos in the text because such details can be used to watermark documents and track their dissemination.

The contents of the document obtained by The Intercept are consistent with reporting in the Pakistani newspaper Dawn and elsewhere describing the circumstances of the meeting and details in the cable itself, including in the classification markings omitted from The Intercept's presentation. The dynamics of the relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. described in the cable were subsequently borne out by events. In the cable, the U.S. objects to Khan's foreign policy on the Ukraine war. Those positions were quickly reversed after his removal, which was followed, as promised in the meeting, by a warming between the U.S. and Pakistan.


Thank you



Mr. Ishaq Dar
Minister of Finance



H.E. Mr. Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif
Prime Minister of Pakistan




Dr. Musadik Masood Malik
Minister of State,
Petroleum Division

For 2023 Refining Policy! We extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the visionary leaders who have steered Pakistan towards a brighter energy future.

This policy and provision of adequate Fiscal Incentives will play a crucial role in driving the country's economic growth which will benefit consumers. The nation will reap the following benefits:

- Ensuring long-term viability of the refining sector.
- Additional savings in foreign exchange and reduction in import bill by ~USD 600 million.
- Generating substantial direct and indirect employment opportunities.
- Attracting an investment of around USD 4.5 billion to upgrade Pakistan's current refining infrastructure.
- Significant increase in local production of eco-friendly Euro V Petrol and Diesel and substantial reduction in Furnace Oil production.





ARL PIL National Refinery Limited PARCO PRL

Federal cabinet made 1295 decisions in 53 sessions with 99% implementation rate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday chaired the farewell meeting of the Federal Cabinet wherein it was told that the federal body made 1295 decisions in 53 sessions during the last 15 months. In the meeting, the Secretary Cabinet presented a detailed report on the cabinet's performance from April 20, 2022 to August 8, 2023. It was told that of 1295 decisions, around 99% were implemented. The prime minister thanked the cabinet members for their untiring efforts for the country's development. The cabinet offered Fateha for those who lost their lives in an accident of Hazara Express that took place near Nawabshah. The body approved the draft of the National Music Policy as well as the National Aviation Policy 2023. Under the National Music Policy, the application of legal frameworks and modern technological resources would be used to protect the musical heritage of Pakistan, promote

contemporary music, and prevent the plagiarism of musicians' works. On the prime minister's instructions, the cabinet approved the auction of all the valuable gifts received by him during the last 15 months in a transparent manner. He directed that the proceeds should be donated to organizations working for the welfare of orphans and destitute children in Pakistan. The cabinet also decided that the public would be able to participate in the auction process. On the Commerce Ministry's recommendation, the meeting approved the appointment of Abdul Rasheed Sheikh, Naeem Anwar, Iqbal Tabish and Ahmed Sheraz as the technical members of the National Tariff Commission. The appointments of Salman S. Mehdi as Chairman of Board of Directors of State Life Insurance and Saleemullah as Deputy Governor of State Bank of Pakistan were also approved. After detailed consultation on the summary of the appointment of Managing

Director / Chief Executive Officer of Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), the body decided that the vacancy would be re-advertised. The cabinet approved the inclusion of cabinet members in various committees of the Special Investment Council. As per the decision, the Federal Minister for Law and Justice would be the member of the Apex Committee; the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting would be the member of the Apex Committee and the Executive Committee; and the Foreign Secretary would be the member of the Executive Committee and the Implementation Committee. In addition, the cabinet also approved the appointment of Dr Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan as the Secretary Apex Committee of SIFC. It approved the establishment of the SIFC Secretariat and the appointment of Jameel Ahmed Qureshi as Secretary/Principal Accounting Officer.

CPEC to contribute peace, prosperity in region: Chinese CG

KARACHI (APP): Chinese Consul General in Karachi Yang Yundong, on Wednesday, said that future of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is very promising and it will greatly contribute to peace and prosperity of both countries as well as the region. The Chinese CG, while addressing a press conference along with Commercial Counselor Yang Guangyuan here, expressed the hope that CPEC will embrace a brighter and more splendid next decade propelling the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership of both countries to new heights. Since launch of CPEC in 2013, China and Pakistan have been advancing the project under the principle

of extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, and have achieved several early harvests, he said and observed that it has added new impetus to the economic and social development of Pakistan and laid a good foundation for regional connectivity and integration. Highlighting the major achievement of CPEC in ten years, he informed that 36 projects have been completed or are under construction, which has brought \$ 25.4 billion of direct investment to Pakistan, achieving cumulative revenue of \$17.55 billion, cumulative tax payments of \$2.12 billion, creating 236,000 job opportunities. It helped add 8,000 megawatts of electricity, 510 kilometres of high-ways, and 886 km of national core transmission lines, he added. Gawadar Port- the shining "pearl" of the CPEC- is accelerating its momentum towards becoming a strategic hub for logistics and industrial bases and significant progress has been achieved as 3 multi-purpose berths capable of handling 50,000-ton vessels were fully operational and projects like the East Bay Expressway, vocational and technical training institutions were already in operation, he noted adding that Gawadar New International Airport, the desalination plant and China-Pakistan Friendship Hospital were scheduled for completion. Yang Yundong said that the first phase of the Gawadar Free Zone has been completed, and several livelihood and agricultural technology companies have started operations. He said that energy was one of the most heavily invested and productive cooperation areas under the framework of CPEC and various energy projects along the CPEC has illuminated millions of Pakistani households and provided reliable power support for Pakistan's economic development. He said that 14 energy projects have already started commercial operation with the total installed capacity accounting for one-fifth of Pakistan's total capacity and Sahiwal, Port Qasim, and Hub coal-fired power plants were swiftly built and put into commercial operation at "China's speed".

Dengue tally reaches 58

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi dengue total tally had reached 58 cases while the district health authority(DHA) had lodged 41 FIRs and sealed eight premises on violations of anti-dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mahmood said that the health department, in collaboration with allied departments, had issued tickets to nine and imposed a fine of Rs 26,500 on violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. He informed that 11 FIRs were registered in Rawal town, ten in Potohar town, two in Taxila and Kahuta and one of each FIRs were registered in the areas of Murree and Gujar Khan. He said that dengue fever was not a life-threatening disease, but it can cause severe life-threatening complications if not treated properly. "If you have a fever of 3-10 days duration with associated symptoms like headache, muscle and joint pains, retro-orbital pain (pain behind the eye-balls), and skin rash, then you need to get yourself checked", he added. The health officer further informed that most of the cases were reported from the Rawalpindi Cantonment areas including Gulistan Colony, Dhoke Munshi Khan, Chaman Zar and Dhoke Ellahi Baksh where required response activity was being carried out to eliminate larvae.

LDA evacuates 23 illegally possessed shops LAHORE (APP): Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Wednesday evacuated 23 shops from illegal possession besides demolishing illegal constructions including plaza and several shops in the city. On the directions of Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the teams took action against illegal construction/commercialization and encroachment mafia in different areas of the city. The teams evacuated 23 shops worth millions of rupees in Tezab Market and Do-Morya Pull and took possession.

LDA evacuates 23 illegally possessed shops

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PUBLIC NOTICE

It is published through this notice that I Mr. Muhammad Ishaq S/o Mir Akbar Khan resident of P.O Essak Khumari Tehsil Banda Daud Shah District Karak is the owner of plot no. 223 Size 10 Marla Sector C-1 phase 11 KDA kohat. He has requested that the original allotment order of the said plot has been lost some where and now issuance of duplicate papers is desired the plot is not mortgaged there has been appointed no attorney and not sold to anybody if any bank institution /firm or person has any objections he/she should contact the housing officer UADA Kohat within 15 days of publication of this notice in writing with proof otherwise duplicate allotment order will be issued and no objection will be accepted (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat).

Caretaker setup: Sindh CM, opposition leader to hold talks after Aug 11

KARACHI (INP): Formal consultations between Chief Minister of Sindh Murad Ali Shah and Leader of Opposition Rana Ansar on the provincial caretaker setup will begin after August 11. The government and opposition leaders will discuss the caretaker setup of Sindh after dissolution of the provincial assembly. Chief Minister and the opposition leader are expected to reach a consensus over a name for the

caretaker chief minister of Sindh within three days of dissolution of the provincial legislature. An announcement of the name of caretaker chief minister from the chief minister house is likely on the night of August 14, sources said. In case of disagreement between the opposition leader and the chief minister the matter will be sent to the parliamentary committee to take decision. As per the constitu-

Shah inaugurates electricity resumption at NJHP

LAHORE (APP): Subsequent to completion of restoration works in the tail race tunnel, Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) has resumed electricity generation. Federal Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah visited Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project and resumed the electricity generation by pressing the button. WAPDA spokesman told media here on Wednesday. The minister also unveiled a plaque to mark resumption of electricity generation from the project. At present, Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project is providing 969 MW to the National Grid. The Federal Minister had a detailed visit

of the Control Room and the Power House. Federal Secretary Water Resources Hassan Nasir Jamy, Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), and Joint Secretary Water, Ministry of Water Resources, Syed Mehar Ali Shah also accompanied the Federal Minister. Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah commended the efforts made by WAPDA, the project team, the consultants and the contractors for resumption of electricity generation from the project. Chief Executive Officer Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project, Project Director, representatives of the consultants and the contractors were also present on the occasion. The Federal Minister was briefed that electricity gener-

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Kamran Hayat and Justice Fazal Subhan has rejected Contempt of Court (COC) proceedings against National Accountability Bureau (NAB) sought by Pakistan Railway Cooperative Society (PRCS) in call-up notice for appearance before inquiry, on Wednesday. The petition filed by Abu Saeed Jafari and Muhammad Khalid while argued that they are operating a housing society in which a residential scheme for Pak railway employees initiated but NAB has initiated inquiry in this regard. NAB has summoned the petitioners redundantly as well as issued advertisement in newspaper which has damaged good-will of the PRCS society while argued that court has stopped harassment of applicants but they were apprehended for five hours which is contempt of court. However, NAB's prosecutor Salman Fayyaz and Assistant

Prosecutor General Muhammad Ali appeared before court and argued that petitioners did not appear before inquiry which is initiated on public complaints because the applicants had obtained 200 Kanal land for five thousand persons. The prosecutors argued that petitioners had obtained status quo against their arrest while didn't appearing before NAB and now instating in the Investigation of Inquiry. In the meantime, Justice Kamran Hayat observed that applicant should appear before NAB for provision of information and it can't lay in the jurisdiction of COC.

از دفتر میڈیکل پری پریکٹس ڈسٹرکٹ ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور

ترمیم و تصحیح
(Corrigendum)

ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور کو ڈسٹرکٹ ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور پر تصحیح و ترمیم کی جاتی ہے۔

(1) تلفظ ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور کو ڈسٹرکٹ ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور پر تصحیح و ترمیم کی جاتی ہے۔

اب کیونکہ مورخہ 24-08-2023 کے فرسٹ ہڈا میں ہدف 11:00 بجے تک پہنچ جانی چاہیے۔

جو کہ ای روزوں 12:00 بجے فرسٹ ہڈا کے اندر ہونے کی وجہ سے ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور پر تصحیح و ترمیم کی جاتی ہے۔

دفتر ہڈا سے دفتری وقت کار میں ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور پر تصحیح و ترمیم کی جاتی ہے۔

نوٹ: ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور پر تصحیح و ترمیم کی جاتی ہے۔

ڈاکٹر محسن رضا تارابی
دفتر میڈیکل پری پریکٹس ڈسٹرکٹ ہیکوارڈ ہسپتال ہری پور

INF(P): 1869/2023

Government of Pakistan Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) Directorate General of Petroleum Concessions

INVITATION TO BID FOR GRANT OF PETROLEUM EXPLORATION RIGHTS

Applications are invited for grant of petroleum exploration rights (Exploration License) over the following Blocks:

S.No	Block	Zone	S.No	Block	Zone
1	KALAT NORTH (2966-4)	I (F)	6	MURRADI (2767-7)	III
2	RACHNA-II (3071-6)	II	7	SAWAN SOUTH (2668-26)	III
3	MALIR-II (2467-18)	II	8	MITHIANI (2667-17)	III
4	SARUNA WEST (2666-1)	II	9	GAMBAT-II (2668-25)	III
5	KOTRA EAST (2867-8)	III	10	ZAMZAMA WEST(2667-18)	III

2. Bid Documents can be obtained from the office of Director General Petroleum Concessions (DGPC) 3rd Floor, Petroleum House, G-5/2, Islamabad on a written request and payment of non-refundable fee of US\$ 100 (or equivalent in Pak Rupees) in favour of DGPC through a bank draft. The Bid Documents can also be downloaded from the website **www.pipsonline.com** by online payment of US\$ 100.

3. Sealed applications are required to be submitted by the interested exploration and production companies to DGPC, 3rd Floor, Petroleum House, G-5/2, Islamabad, Pakistan by **10:00 a.m. (PST) on 15th November, 2023**. Applications will be opened publicly by the Bid Opening Committee on the same day at **10:30 a.m. (PST)** in DGPC office in the presence of the applicants or their representatives.

4. Applicant shall also furnish bid bond with each application equivalent to 1% of the bid offered.

5. Bids submitted by all applicants will be considered as irrevocable and unconditional. In case any applicant states otherwise, his bid will not be accepted and will be treated as "non responsive".

6. The bidding process will be governed by and construed under the laws of Pakistan and any question or dispute regarding grant of Petroleum Right or any matter or thing connected therewith shall be resolved by arbitration in Pakistan and in accordance with laws of Pakistan as per applicable rules of Pakistan Onshore Petroleum (Exploration & Production) Rules, 2013.

7. The successful applicant will be selected in accordance with the provisions of the Bidding documents. The Authority reserves the right to exercise the power to accept or reject any application. In the event of refusal to grant such petroleum right, the Authority shall as far as possible provide the reason thereof. The Authority also reserves the right to cancel or annul the bidding process without specifying any reason.

8. Any bidder offering Work Units lower than the minimum threshold specified in the Policy or the bidding documents shall be treated as non-responsive and his bid would not be further evaluated.

9. In the event, any of the bidder(s) attempts to influence the DGPC in any manner whatsoever, it shall result in the disqualification of such bidder(s).

(Kashif Ali)
Director General (Petroleum Concessions)
Tel: 092-051-9204176 Fax: 092-051-9213245
website: www.petroleum.gov.pk

PID(I) 881/23

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

The Executive Engineer Highway Division Swabi, C&W Department Govt. Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites sealed E-Bidding Online Tender from the eligible Firms/Contractors in accordance with KPFPRA procurement Rules 2014, amended upto 10-05-2022 on single stage two envelope procedure for the following works:

Work No.	Name of Work	Required category of PEC	Tender Fee	Bid Security	Period of completion	Last date and time of submission E-Bids	Date and time of opening of Technical Proposal
A	AOM&R/Spical repair to all Metalled/Un-Metalled Roads in District Swabi during (July to Oct 2023) SH:						
1	(1). Repair of Dagai road Gadoon 0.24-Km (2). Repair of apron/Toe Wall & Parapet wall at Panjmand Pabini (Tehsil Topi)	C-6& Above with Relevant Codes	0.03% of Estimated Cost	2% of Estimated Cost	As per work order	29-08-2023 At 12:00 PM	29-08-2023 12:30 P.M
2	Repair of Nazar Esmaila road Mian Bridge (Tehsil Razzar)	C-6& Above with Relevant Codes	..do..	..do..	..do..	..do..	..do..
B	District Development Plan for Mardan Division ADP No. 210551 for the FY 2021-22						
3	(1). Street Pavement in UC Bachai Sikandari (2). Street Pavement in UC Dagai (3). Street Pavement in UC Yar Hussain (4). Street Pavement in UC Doblan (5). Street Pavement in UC Sard Cheena (6). Street Pavement in UC Sudhar (7). Street Pavement in UC Yaqoobi (8). Street Pavement in UC Ismaila (9). Street Pavement in UC Ialbai (10). Street Pavement in UC Jalsai	C-6& Above with Relevant Codes	..do..	..do..	..do..	..do..	..do..
4	(1). Street Pavement in UC Adina (2). Street Pavement in UC Asota (3). Street Pavement in UC Chak Noda (4). Street Pavement in UC Kali Khan (5). Street Pavement in UC KSK (6). Street Pavement in UC Parmoli (7). Street Pavement in UC Sheikh Jana (8). Street Pavement in UC Shewa (9). Street Pavement in UC Tarakai (10). Street Pavement in UC Turlandi	C-6& Above with Relevant Codes	..do..	..do..	..do..	..do..	..do..

1- Bid Solicitation Documents and Instructions to Bidders can be obtained from the office on any working day or can be downloaded from C&W website (www.cwd.gov.pk) before the submission of date/time.
2- A copy of technical proposal in the required format is mandatory and to be uploaded as a part of E-bid before submitting Financial Bid.
3- All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority, under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No. XXI of 2013).
4- The bidder should submit their E-bids as per KPFPRA Notification No. S.R.O(14)/Vol. 1-24/2021-22 dated: 10-05-2022
5- Original Copies of Call Deposit for Bid Security and Tender Fee should be enclosed in the Technical Proposal and shall reach to the Office before closing date/time.
6- Legible Scanned copy of bid Security shall be submitted Electronically along with the bid on E-bidding system.
7- All bidders are required that bid security shall be kept sealed in Financial Proposal. In addition keep an affidavit in the technical proposal stating that a bid security in percentage without indicating the figure.
8- Venue of bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W Highway Division Swabi.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER / C&W HIGHWAY DIVISION SWABI.
PH:# 0938-920077 / E-mail:cwd.hswabi@gmail.com INF(P)1867-23



Advocate General Office submit performance report

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advocate General Khyber (AG) Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javeed submitted a report regarding the disposal of cases by AG Office since the placement of interim government and forwarded to Department of Law, on Wednesday.

According to details, as many as 6098 cases were disposed off in which six thousand decided in favor

of government in five of months of interim government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The cases comprised as 1720 bail petitions while 4378 cases of other nature were disposed-off in last five months. The report timeframe from 13rd March to 31st July 2023.

It is worthy to mention that interim government called performance report from all provincial departments.

Drug smuggler convicted for lifetime imprisonment: Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Abdul Qayyum Saddiqi convicted drug-smuggler named Muzamal alias Tahir Rana resident of Lahore for lifetime imprisonment.

According to prosecution, the drug smuggler was arrested while carrying 30 kilograms hashish and 9 kilos opium in the premises of Sarband police station.

Excise Police recovered hashish and opium

PESHAWAR (APP): The Excise Police have launched various operations and recovered 20kg of hashish and 5 kg of opium and succeeded in arresting the alleged drug smuggler here on Wednesday.

Excise police station Mardan's attempt to smuggle large quantities of drugs failed, 6000 grams of hashish was recovered, and two accused were arrested, a spokesman of the Excise Police said.

The action took place at Charsadda Motorway Interchange towards Ghani Khan Road, Excise spokesman disclosed.

During a search, he said, 6000 grams of hashish was recovered from vehicle number LOP 9705.

A case has been registered by the Excise under the drug ACT with further investigation continued, the official said.

In another operation, 8400 grams of hashish was recovered from a Suzuki pick-up of Excise Police Station Peshawar, the accused was arrested, Excise Police said.

This operation was conducted on Peshawar Motorway Gol Chowk towards Islamabad, Excise Police spokesman said.

Excise Police recovered 8400 grams of hashish during a search from vehicle number B 1857.

In the third operation, 6000 grams of hashish and 5000 grams of opium were recovered from the motor car, with two accused arrested. The operation against drug smugglers took place on H Gol Chowk towards Islamabad Motorway, Excise Police said.

During the blockade, 6000 grams of hashish and 5000 grams of opium were recovered from vehicle number AXT 310, the spokesman informed.

Two suspects were arrested on the spot and a case has been registered for further investigation, the spokesman of the Excise Police said.

Seminar held on Thalassemia

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal arranged an awareness seminar on Thalassemia at Women Empowerment Center Peshawar in which people from every walk of life participated in the session, on Wednesday.

Assistant Director Monitoring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Iftikhar Khan was chief guest of the ceremony while Fatimid Foundation administrator Badr Hussain, Dr. Syed Farooq Shah and Malik Zulfiqar Ahmad along with officials from federal and provincial departments were present.

The participants stressed upon public at large to play their role in every aspect in society for awareness against thalassemia as well as other genetic diseases which ultimately impact national growth and population development.

Hot, humid weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Wednesday predicted that mainly hot, humid and partly cloudy weather is expected in most parts of the province.

However, it said that isolated rain-thunderstorm associated with gusty winds is likely to occur over Abbottabad, Mansehra, Battagram, Kohistan, Torghar, Shangla, Chitral, Upper Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Kohat, Karak, Hangu, Orakzai, North & South Waziristan, Tank, Bannu, Laki Marwat, D.I.Khan, Bajaur and Mohmand districts.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of KP were Peshawar 38/27, Chitral 36/17, Timergara 34/23, Dir 33/16, Mirkhani 38/16, Kalam 28/11, Drosh 34/19, Saidul Sharif 34/17, Pattan 36/23, Malam Jabba 25/15, Takht Bhair 35/26, Kakul 30/20, Balakot 34/22, Parachinar 28/14, Bannu 38/26, Cherat 32/19, D.I. Khan 40/30.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing 8th meeting of provincial caretaker cabinet.

Paraplegic Center sign MoU with UET

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between the Paraplegic Center (PCP) Peshawar and UET Peshawar here today. The Chief Executive Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, Paraplegic Center Peshawar and Dean Faculty of Mechanical Industrial and Chemical Engineering UET Peshawar Prof Dr. Sahar Noor signed the document in presence of senior officials of PCP and UET Peshawar.

Prof. Dr Sahar Noor said, UET Peshawar has initiated a number of projects funded by PCP in which the design of Smart Active Folding Wheel Chair (SMaCT) holds special significance in terms of its efficient design and economical aspects.

Under the project, 500 SMaCT Wheelchairs have been provided to the Physical Rehab Centers across Pakistan by the PCP. He said, another flagship project, "Design of Assistive Devices" is also in the final stages of completion, funded by Pakistan Science Foundation and PCP while work on related projects for improving the wheel chair such as its braking system, footrest and designing of Trike (extension of SMaCT wheel chairs) is also planned in future.

He expressed his utmost satisfaction over the fact that PCP, is a well reputed organisation of its kind in Pakistan and UET Peshawar will leave no stone unturned to do applied research in the field

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He expressed his utmost satisfaction over the fact that PCP, is a well reputed organisation of its kind in Pakistan and UET Peshawar will leave no stone unturned to do applied research in the field

as part of its policy for knowledge exchange and technology transfer.

Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas said, this initiative is a significant step towards providing vital assistance to the mobility-impaired patients of Pakistan.

He said, the SMaCT wheel chairs, manufactured successfully by the PCP was only possible with the help of the precise designing done by the expert engineers of UET Peshawar.

He said, PCP was in the process of manufacturing the wheel chair for many years but had faced multiple problems on its adaptability, precision and compactness aspects.

It is an evidence of the commitment of both the Paraplegic Center Peshawar and UET Peshawar towards enhancing the quality of disabled people through customized assistive devices.

ing the quality of disabled people through customized assistive devices.

"PCP is a successful model of third work country which has set an example for comprehensive physical rehabilitation that helps towards promoting mental, emotional and social well-being of people with disabilities", he remarked.

Earlier, Prof. Dr. Amjad Ullah Dean Faculty of Electrical Engineering welcomed the idea of joint efforts and appreciated the initiative for strengthening research in the development of assistive technology through academia-industry linkage. Mr. Alamzeb Director PCP, Mansoor Anwar Golra Deputy Director PCP and other team experts were present on the occasion.

Cost concerns on E-marking:

BISEP stuck in loop of 9th and 10th annual result date-changes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar (BISEP) appears to be caught in a cycle of repeatedly announcing the release dates for the 9th and 10th annual results. Concurrently, concerns have emerged regarding the substantial expenditure involved in the implementation of e-marking for exam papers.

The eagerly anticipated annual results for the 9th and 10th grade classes of 2023 are still pending. Preceding the most recent declaration of August 15th, the board had initially stated that the results would be disclosed on August 7th.

However, an inside source informed The Frontier Post that the likelihood of the results being revealed on August 15th is uncertain. Furthermore, it was revealed that the papers of the top-ranking students will be transported to Abbottabad on August 15th for a reevaluation process, which is projected to span approximately two days before the finalization of the top achievers' names and results.

The insider also included that the event honoring the toppers is anticipated to take place on either the 18th or 19th of August. Additionally, there is a possibility that the official results might be disclosed on the 22nd of August.

According to the details provided by the source to FP, this year, a total of four subject papers were subjected to electronic marking. Despite the undeniable costliness of this e-marking procedure, the source clarified the expenditure breakdown. Initially, the papers were digitally scanned and then dispatched to Lahore, to a software firm named Red Marker.

Following this, the same papers were returned to the examiners who had previously assessed them manually; however, this time, the evaluation was conducted digitally using the aforementioned software. Once the evaluation was concluded, the papers were reprinted.

The source underlined that this entire progression incurred additional expenses, including travel and daily allowance costs (TA/DA) for the board personnel. It would not be an exaggeration, the source asserted, to acknowledge that this process has seen a substantial investment of millions of rupees.

Chairman of the BISEP, Nasrullah Khan, conveyed his perspective on the matter to FP during a phone conversation. He pointed out that the escalating prices have led to an increase in paper rates, which have been rather volatile.

He clarified that while funds are being allocated for reforms, the financial burden has not been transferred to the students. He emphasized that these expenditures are intimately linked with the implementation of e-marking.

This shift to e-marking has phased out the conventional methods of manual paper assessment, code deciphering, fuel consumption for checkers, service charges, and excess electricity consumption, thereby substantially reducing costs and generating savings.

Nasrullah Khan noted, "We haven't officially announced any specific date. Different dates are being circulated on social media on our behalf." He mentioned that between the 15th and 17th of August, the examination papers of the top-ranking students will undergo meticulous scrutiny in Abbottabad.

Subsequently, within

two days, certificates and monetary rewards will be prepared for the top three achievers.

He revealed that the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has expressed a desire to organize a ceremony in Peshawar, provided it is feasible for students from all over to attend.

"All KP boards have formulated their results timelines on August 3rd. On August 15th, these boards will convene and proceed with the cross-validation process," Khan informed.

Regarding the official announcement date, Khan stated that the board will be in a position to declare it on August 20th, contingent on the Chief Minister's schedule. However, this timing is subject to the Chief Minister's availability.

Addressing a query, Khan elaborated that the e-marking procedure isn't overly complex.

Teachers assess the papers on-screen, but analyses have indicated that there is potential in e-marking method.

He noted that specific questions from each student's paper are assigned to an examiner, who then evaluates those particular questions.

FQJ hails setup of Ex-Fata Secretariat with reservations

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Fata Qaumi Jirga expressed its support for the establishment of a separate Secretariat but deemed it as an incomplete and insufficient solution for addressing the challenges faced by the people of Ex-Fata.

A few days ago, a Tribal Jirga was held in Balahisar Fort Peshawar in which Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir was a chief guest.

During his address to the Jirga, the Army Chief announced the establishment of a separate secretariat for Ex-FATA.

A statement issued by Fata Qaumi Jirga has said that since its inception, the FATA Qaumi Jirga has persistently fought for a sole objective, which is to put an end to the forced integration of FATA in the

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"The FATA Qaumi Jirga welcomes the establishment of a separate Secretariat, although we believe it is an incomplete and inadequate measure to address the challenges faced by Ex-FATA," said FATA Qaumi Jirga.

Statement added that despite our demands for more comprehensive solutions, we view this step as a positive one towards ending the forced integration of FATA.

Statement further added that the Jirga held in Balahisar Fort was not a representative Jirga of the tribes of FATA, it was a gathering of establishment favorites and official states, who have always supported every illegal move of the government.

We believe that it is absolutely necessary to restore the FATA

Secretariat and the FATA Development Authority. In order to save the funds allocated for Ex-FATA from being looted by the corrupt provincial bureaucracy and to ensure that these funds are spent on the development of Ex-FATA instead of being diverted to the settle areas of province.

Therefore, the FATA Qaumi Jirga strongly rejects the meeting of the lawyers' community held yesterday in Peshawar High Court against the holding of the Jirga in Balahisar Fort and the establishment of the FATA Secretariat and the unfounded and baseless response of the lawyers' community expressed in it.

They demanded that the unconstitutional merger of FATA into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be withdrawn and the special constitutional status of FATA should be restored.

Setup of merged district implementation secretariat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) Youth Association welcomed the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir proposed Merged District Implementation Secretariat, on Wednesday.

This was claimed by Fata Youth Association president Murtaza Mehsud, Umar Afridi, Wahab Chamkani and Salman Mohmand along with others while addressing at press conference held at Peshawar Press Club.

The participants claimed

that residents of erstwhile Fata are deprived of facilities as well as their rights after five years of the merger of the tribal belt with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and claimed that this was promised by the government at the time of constitutional amendment.

FATA Youth Association claimed that announcement of the Merged Districts Implementation Secretariat is the result of tribesmen's struggle to ensure the development of the tribal belt which is fulfilled by COAS at the grand jirga held at Peshawar last day.

The tribal youth claimed

that announcement of Rs81 billion should uphold the socio-economic status of erstwhile Fata which was neglected for the last five years after the 21st constitutional amendment. They claimed that it would bring education, health, employment opportunities and sustainable peace to the region.

Fata Youth Association thanked COAS General Syed Asim Munir and Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Ahsan Azhar Hayat for their commitment to redressal of tribesmen's grievances.

Pesco notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) on Wednesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Rahman Baba Grid Station on 10th August from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Subsequently, the consumers of 11 KV Kachori, Shalozan, Sharif Abad, Khan Mast, Hazar Khwani, Surizai, Pandu Baba, Umar, Yakatoot, Chamkani, Phando, Ring Road, Chairman Daftar, Beri Bagh, Rashid Garhi, Surizai Bala, Akhoun Abad and Ring Road-2 feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply, it said will remain suspended from 132 KV

Industrial Kohat Road Grid Station on August from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly consumer of 11 KV Sunehri Masjid, Banamari, Audit Colony, Civil Quarter, Nauthia, Murshid Abad, Abasin, Deh Bahadar, Kohat Road, Amin Colony, Bara, Nodeh Payan, Dora Road, Landi Arbab, Sheikh Muhammadi, Pishthakhara, Swati Gate, Gul Berg and Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, the power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar City Grid Station on 10th August from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11KV Sikanandar Pura,

Lala, Hashtnaghari, Chugulpura, Chamkani, Jaghra, Radio Pakistan, Sethi Town, Gulbahar, Zaryab, Pandho Road, City Home, Baghbanan, Urmur, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Shiekh Abad, Molve Je, Nishtar Abad and NHA feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Mansehra Grid Station on 10th August from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. due to which the consumers of 11KV Ghazikot, Ahsan Shaheed, City 1,2,3, Qalandar Abad, Attar Shisha, Shaheen Shaheed, Lassain Nawab, Murad Pura, Khaki and Shankari feeders will face inconvenience.



PESHAWAR: Labours busy in off-loading sacks of sugar from delivery truck in local market.

KP Health Care Commission organized one-day seminar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Directorate of Quality, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission on Wednesday conducted a one-day seminar focusing on the implementation of the Minimum Service Delivery Standards (MSDS) in MTI, Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar. The seminar brought together clinical and administrative staff of the hospital to ensure implementation of the essential components of the Minimum Service Delivery Standards.

The event was graced by the presence of Dr. Nadeem Akhtar, Chief Executive Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan, Medical Director of Khyber Teaching Hospital. Both shared their insights and underlined the significance of adhering to the implementation of the Minimum Service Delivery Standards.

Dr. Shabnum Gul, Director of Licensing, Mr. Mohsin Ali Turk, Director of Legal Affairs, and Dr. Uzma Syed, Deputy Director of Quality were

the main presenters of the informative session.

The seminar covered various aspects of the Minimum Service Delivery Standards for Category I Hospitals. Comprehensive presentations shedding light on the core components/indicators of the standards and emphasized the need of how they can be effectively integrated into the hospital's operations.

The CEO of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission, Dr. Nadeem Akhtar, lauded the dedication and commitment of the staff of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Care Commission. He also



expressed his gratitude to the administration of Khyber Teaching Hospital for their cooperation in ensuring the successful execution of the event. He also emphasized the com-

mission's commitment to facilitating the regulation of Healthcare Establishments, with a primary focus on delivering optimal benefits to the public at large.

ANP announces names of 2 more candidates on PA seats

PESHAWAR (APP): After consultation with the board members, Chairman Provincial Parliamentary Board, Awami National Party (ANP), Aimal Wali Khan on Wednesday announced the names of two more candidates on provincial

assembly seats for next general election.

According to a notification from Bacha Khan Markaz, Shahid Khattak will be the candidate of Awami National Party on PK-86 Nowshera while, from PK-88 Kohat-1, Yaqoob Khan will contest

for the provincial assembly seat on Awami National Party ticket.

The Provincial Parliamentary Board and its chairman have approved the two names for Awami National Party (ANP) ticket on provincial assembly seats.



In brief

Asif defends M. Phil thesis



Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Scholar Asif Raza successfully defends M. Phil Thesis. Scholar from Lahore Leads University Department of English, successfully defended his Thesis under the supervision of prof Dr. Parveen Akhtar. The title of his Thesis was "Teacher's perceptions towards CALL: A study at Collage level in District Bannu Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan". His Internal Examiner was Dr. Parveen Akhtar and Farman Arya while the External Examiner was prof Dr. Waseem Hassan, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, NUML Islamabad. He attributed his success to the prayers of his parents and the hard work of his teachers.

25 PTI's activists booked F.P. Report

LARKANA: PTI workers in Larkana raised slogans in support of Imran Khan. According to the details of the cases registered for sloganeering, after protesting in Larkana over the arrest of PTI Chairman, Larkana Police last night raided the Insaf House to arrest PTI senior Saifullah Abro's brother-in-law Samiullah Abro and other workers. Raids were conducted but no arrests were made while after the protest by PTI in Jinnah Bagh at Hudud Market Jail in the complaint of ASI Mir Hasan Chandio Crime 17/2023, Sin No. 131, 153, 341, 353, 504, 505, 147 cases have been registered against 25 workers, which include PTI workers Khan Muhammad Sangharu, Samiullah Abaro, Advocate Abdul Rauf Korai and others accused. As many as 25 people have used offensive phrases against our government offices and the Pakistan Army and have disturbed the citizens by blocking the roads of the public park.

Tourism Dept salutes climber F.P. Report

GILGIT: The Tourism Department of Gilgit-Baltistan commends the exceptional heroism of Austrian climber Mr. Lukas Woerle, who, on the 15th of July, 2023, chose to forego his life-long dream of paragliding from the summit of Broad Peak to save the life of local mountaineer and High Altitude Porter, Mr. Murtaza Sadpara. Facing a life-threatening situation near Camp 3 of Broad Peak (8047m), Mr. Woerle demonstrated unparalleled courage and selflessness by putting humanity above personal ambition. Mr. Woerle's act of kindness and bravery in rescuing Mr. Murtaza Sadpara at the peak's perilous altitude showcases a new standard of morality and humanity in the history of mountaineering. This remarkable display of empathy has not only earned Mr. Woerle admiration but has also set an inspiring precedent for future mountaineering endeavors. In recognition of his dedication and sacrifice, Syed Mehdi Shah, the Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, presented Mr. Lukas Woerle with a prestigious Commendation Certificate. The certificate was conferred during a special event organized by the Tourism Department of Gilgit-Baltistan at its Islamabad office, where Mr. Fateh Ullah Khan, Minister for Planning and Development of Gilgit-Baltistan, conveyed the Governor's appreciation to Mr. Woerle.



BANNU: Officials and others are offering funeral prayer of martyred police official Kamran.

Residents demand end to power outage

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The local government representatives from the Maidan area of Lower Dir have threatened to bring people onto the roads if prolonged power outage on the Manial and Maidan feeders was not ended. Talking to local journalists at Kumbhar, former tehsil nazim Fazal Wadood and village councils' chairmen Hamim Khan, Lal Zada, Zubair Khan and others complained that power supply on the Manial and Maidan feeders remained disrupted for over 12 hours daily in the name of load management, technical fault and work permit.

They said the prolonged power outage had made life of the locals miserable. The LG representatives said the Pesco authorities had been contacted several times but to no avail. They demanded of the Pesco high ups to take notice of the matter and resolve it soon. They threatened to stage a protest sit-in in front of the Maidan grid station and held a protest rally if the concerned authorities failed to end the unnecessary power outage within a week.

Pensioners' demand: The Lower Dir pensioners on Wednesday demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and authorities of the accounts' office to exempt the pensioners getting their pension amount by themselves of getting a life certificate. Talking to this reporter at Talash the pensioners complained that they had to go from pillar to

post for getting a life certificate as the banks and the post office were not issuing them their pension amount without it.

The pensioners said the life certificate should be sought from the pensioners whose pensions were received by their relatives. They said that they regularly got their pensions by showing their CNIC but now the banks and post offices refused to pay them without providing a life certificate.

Digital census: According to the district coordinator of the Bureau of Statistics for Lower Dir Bakht Alam, the total population of the district was 1.66 million. He said the district population had increased by 214101 as compared to the national census 2017. Talking to local journalists at his office, the official said that a total of 424206 men, 424775 women and 12 transgender resided in the NA 6 while 393339 men, 418212 women and 14 transgender were registered in the NA 7 Lower Dir district.

Tehsil council meeting: A meeting of the Adenzai tehsil council was held after one year at the University of Malakand's education complex with tehsil chairman Fairouz Shah in the chair. The meeting was attended by village council chairmen from all 42 village councils, assistant director local government Umar Rehman, TMO Iqbal Hassan and MS tehsil headquarters hospital Chakdara DR Hanmad Khan.

The meeting condemned the Bajaur suicide blast and prayed for the departed souls. Speaking on the occasion the councilors expressed grave concerns over the deteriorating law and order situation, drug abuse and selling of contrabands in the area. The participants demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to empower local bodies' institutions across the province and immediately release their development funds.

Demarcation of disputed land at Shatai in Dir completed peacefully: The Lower Dir administration in the presence of Dir Grand Jirga members completed the process of demarcation of the disputed lands between the residents of Shatai Dara and Khaima.

In this regard the additional deputy commissioner Abdul Wali Khan along with tehsildar Balambat Saeed-ul-Rehman, GIS officer Imtiaz Khan, revenue field staff and jirga members visited the Shatai Dara here the other day and completed the process of land measurement and demarcation as per the order issued by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The latest GIS technology was also used for demarcation. The Jirga's chairman Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan, former finance minister Muzaffar Syed, advocate Jehan Bahadar and JUI-F district chief Sirajuddin assessed the administration. A letter regarding the agreement between the parties was also written on the occasion.

LG members threatened to hold protest in Dir

F.P. Report

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The elected representatives said the prolonged power outage had made life of the locals miserable. The LG representatives said the Pesco authorities had been contacted several times but to no avail. They demanded of the Pesco high ups to take notice of the matter and resolve it soon. They threatened to stage a protest

sit-in in front of the Maidan grid station and held a protest rally if the concerned authorities failed to end the unnecessary power outage within a week.

Prisoners demanded exemption in pension procedure: Lower Dir pensioners demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and authorities of the accounts' office to exempt the pensioners getting their pension amount by themselves of getting a life certificate.

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without providing a life certificate.

Tehsil Council condemns Bajaur blast: A meeting of the Adenzai tehsil council was held after one year at the University of Malakand's education complex with tehsil chairman Fairouz Shah in the chair. The meeting was attended by village council chairmen from all 42 village councils, assistant director local government Umar Rehman, TMO Iqbal Hassan and MS tehsil headquarters hospital Chakdara DR Hanmad Khan.

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Policemen killing: RPO visits crime spot

F.P. Report

BANNU: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Qasim Ali Khan visited crime spot in which policeman was killed in firing, on Wednesday.

District Police Officer

Iftikhar Shah and SP investigation Mujeeb-ur-Rehman visited the site of incident in the limitation of police station Miryan and ordered a detailed scientific investigation to trace back the terrorists involved in it.

RPO Stated that the culprits would not be spared and such coward terrorist attacks cannot demoralize the society and specially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police. The martyred police constable kamran Khan was at duty with polio team.

Journalists hold protest in Swat

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Swat Press Club (SPC) journalists protested against the withdrawal of PEMRA bill, protesters were holding placards with different types of slogans written on them, on Wednesday.

Addressing the demonstration, Swat Press Club Chairman Sherinizada, General Secretary Niaz Ahmed Khan, Swat Union of Journalists vice President Shafiullah, General Secretary Saleem Athar, senior journalist Dr Mehboob Ali and others said that the bill that has been returned by PEMRA should be accepted immediately and its implementation should be ensured, and worker journalists should be given their rights.

They said that the problems of journalists are increasing day by day, they are facing various types of difficulties, they said, adding that we strongly demand the government to play its role in providing facilities to journalists. They said that if our legitimate demands are not considered, we will launch a protest movement.

WSSCM kicks off special cleanliness drive

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) and District Administration jointly started special cleanliness campaign in Chato chowk locality here on Wednesday.

Additional Assistant Commissioner Khola Haqdar, Deputy Manager Solid Waste Management Muhammad Ishaq and Assistant Manager Waste Water Management Ikramullah were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Khola Haqdar said that Clean and Green Mardan was their mission and all the available resources would be utilized to accomplish that mission.

"The main objective of the special cleanliness drive is to raise awareness among the citizens," she added. Deputy Manager Solid Waste Management Muhammad Ishaq said that the company's staff had been working day and night to improve their service delivery.

Deputy Manager claimed, "one hundred and eighty tons of waste is collected from fourteen union councils of the district in which five tons waste is converted into organic compost in daily basis." He said that eighty percent areas of the city had been covered in term of waste collection from every door and shops while in commercial areas second shift is also deployed in Mardan city.

Two killed

KAHUTA (INP): At least two people were killed and 11 others injured when a van fell into a gorge here on Wednesday, rescue sources said.

According to details, the incident took place on highway linking AJK near Kahuta where a van skidded off road and plunged into a ravine. As a result of accident, two people were killed on the spot and 11 others sustained injuries.

Governors inspection team visits KUST



F.P. Report

KOHAT: As per the direction of the Chancellor (Governor) Public Sector Universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to visit all the public sector universities of the province, Dr. Saad. S. Khan, Chairman Governor Inspection Team visited Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) along with the team on 8th August 2023.

This visit was in continuation to the schedule visits of all the universities of the province. Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor along with the senior management including Deans, Registrar and Directors of KUST warmly welcome chairman GIT and the team.

Vice Chancellor during the presentation exhibits the performance of the university in all perspective that includes Best Financial

Management, increase in enrollment, Quality education, launching market-oriented programs and departments that has resulted in enrollment increase, promotion/appointment of faculty members of the university to higher grades, innovative research and commercialization of the products developed.

VC also informed about the "Best Financial Management" and "Best Quality Assurance Practices" awarded to KUST by Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the year 2021 that endorse the performance of the university. The Vice Chancellor further informed that the Unigreen Metric World university ranking 2022 mentioned KUST as 4th in the Province, 23rd in the country and 578th world wide further endorse performance of the university not only in the province but

nationally and internationally.

The chairman after discussion with the Vice Chancellor and the senior management officers of the university appreciated the performance of KUST especially the initiatives taken by the Vice Chancellor in terms of Financial management, Quality Assurance, innovative research and commercialization. The Chairman GIT after discussion stated to share success stories of the KUST for the different initiatives with higher ups and other universities.

The discussion was followed by visit of the team along with Vice Chancellor and senior management of the university to Central Library, Incubation center and Directorate of ICT and appreciated the services offered by the university to students and faculty members.

Law & order situation discussed with politicians

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In view of the current situation, to ensure the implementation of the code of conduct issued by the Interior Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the light of the orders issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan to maintain law and order throughout the province including the district, an important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdur Rehman, on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by District Police Officer Mardan Najib Ur Rehman, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant and Additional Assistant Commissioners and district level heads /representatives of political parties.

Deputy Commissioner Mardan said that a detailed briefing was given regarding the election campaign and other activities and code of conduct for the future elections.

Deputy Commissioner also questioned the heads/representatives of the participating political parties regarding the problems and suggestions. He said that it is the responsibility of the district administration and the district police to strictly implement the issued code of conduct to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property.

District Police Officer Najib Ur Rehman, while expressing his views, said that under the current situation, it is important to not only follow the issued code of conduct but also cooperate with the law enforcement agencies to protect the life and property of the citizens.

Heads/representatives of political parties at the district level assured full cooperation from the district administration, district police and other law enforcement agencies.

ANP fights for provincial autonomy rights at

every forum: Awami National Party central vice-president and ex-chief minister Ameer Haider Khan Hoti said that it was their prior responsibility to protect the rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that the province had been given under the 18th amendment.

This he said while addressing a public gathering held in Sikandari Purdil Abad area. The former chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ameer Haider Khan Hoti lamented that the workers of both PTI and PML-N were celebrating and distributing sweets over the arrest of each other party leaders. He expressed that it was not a good tradition for political leaders and workers.

"Revolution cannot be brought through Facebook and twitter, rather, one has to jump to practical field so that to bring revolution," he added. He strongly condemned the blast in JUI-F workers' convention and expressed condolences and sympathies with the family members of Bajaur blast martyrs and injured persons.

Former CM Hoti reminded that the great Pakhtun leaders Bacha Khan and Abdul Wali Khan had declared those as "Mufsidis" who were fighting against the state, adding that now some religious scholars were declaring the anti-state fighters as "Mufsidis" which, however, was a good thing. He claimed that the ANP would sweep the coming general elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

He criticised the last PTI governments in centre and provinces for its poor policies. He deplored that PTI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had left the province with a big burden of more than 1000 billion loans which had deteriorated the financial condition of KPK province to a great extent.

On the occasion, the Jamaat-e-Islami leader

Babar Ali Khan along with family members and friends announced to join ANP and expressed his confidence in the leadership of ANP president Asfandiyar Wali Khan and Ameer Haider Khan Hoti.

Food safety authority discards 4800 adulterated milk: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority (FS & HFA) discarded nearly 4,800 liters of adulterated milk in Mardan district during last three months.

The relevant officials here on Wednesday told that a total of 347 inspections of milk outlets and vehicles transporting milk were conducted during May to July 2023, in which a total of 412 samples were tested in latest state-of-the-art mobile lab.

Deputy Director FS & HFA Mardan Division, Kamran Khan said the samples were tested for water and chemical adulterations, in which 88 were found to have water adulteration from 10% to 35%. He said two samples in Saro Shah area of Mardan district were found to have dry milk powder and starch was added for thickness. Most of the complaints received by this office from general public were regarding milk prepared from harmful chemical, however, he added that no such chemicals were detected in the samples tested.

"We have tested milk samples from different areas of the district including milk tankers having capacity upto 10,000 liters, however, no harmful chemicals have been detected during the period", he added. He claimed, during the period about 4,800 liters of adulterated milk were discarded and a total fine of Rs. 504,000/- were collected from the violators. The official said the FS&HFA teams were committed to provide safe and hygienic food to the general public.

Importance of breastfeeding highlighted

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: In connection with World breastfeeding week, a seminar was held in Jamrud hospital last day to sensitize the participants of the topic. District Health Officer (DHO) Dr Zafar, Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr Ihtesham Khan, Dr Nelum of National Nutrition program, Field Supervisor Motivation Officer (FSMO) Dr Usman, District Nutrition Manager Anum Afridi, Dr Shahid Khan Afridi and others were among the participants of the seminar.

Addressing on the occasion, the speakers thoroughly described the advantages of breastfeeding and said mother milk was the purist food for newborn which prevents them from many diseases while the formula milk was disastrous for the health of a mother and baby.

"The importance of breastfeeding can be derived from the fact that in the religion of Islam, the mother has been directed to feed her newborn for two years," they opined. They went on that mother milk not only

made the babies healthier but also had a healthier affect on mother health.

Those children who received mother milk were mentally and physically more fit than those who were denied breast feeding, they remarked. Later on the participants conducted an awareness walk while carrying banner inscribed with slogans in favor of breast feeding. It is worth mentioning here that World breastfeeding Week was started in 1992 to ensure child health and it is held in the first week of August every year.



Eritrean festivals attacked in Europe

NAIROBI (AP): Flaming cars, violent clashes, dozens of people detained. As one of the world's most repressive countries marks 30 years of independence, festivals held by Eritrea's diaspora in Europe and North America have been attacked by exiles that the regime dismisses as "asylum scum." People who fled the Horn of Africa nation say the violence against festivals in Germany, Sweden and Canada are protests against a repressive government that's been described as the "North Korea of Africa." Some allege that proceeds from festivals might support the government.

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled Eritrea over the years, many setting off into the deserts of Sudan and then North Africa in attempts to reach Europe. President Isaias Afwerki, 77, has led Eritrea since it won independence from Ethiopia in a long guerrilla war. There have been no elections. There's no free press. Exit visas are required. Many young people are forced into military service with no end date, human rights groups and United Nations experts say. The violence at some Eritrean festivals shows the bitter split in the diaspora between supporters of the government and their children - often protected by foreign passports - and exiles who fear for their loved ones back home.

Eritrea's government speaks harshly about those who flee and accuses the West of trying to weaken the country by depopulating it. Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel asserted that the attacks on the festivals were part of that strategy. "Complicity in attempts to disrupt decades-old Eritrean festivals using foreign thugs reflects abject failure of asylum scum," he said in a message posted on social media. The minister later criticized the "distorted portrayal" of the community's "joyous events." Beyene Gerezgiher, a member of the Eritrean community in Europe who leads an organization that seeks regime change in Eritrea, told The Associated Press that a separate group called the Brigade Nhamedu was set up last year to counter what it calls the government's hate speech and war propaganda. The word "Nhamedu" means being ready to fight and sacrifice. "Our movement helped and participated in recent rallies against the so-called Eritrean festival," he wrote in an email. In pursuit of regime change, the new group plans to act via "lawful democracy," sharing information with the interna-



tional community and "disturbing the situation."

He called the Eritrean foreign minister's comments "usual and laughable." Some Eritreans and state-backed media have blamed attacks in Stockholm, Toronto and the German town of Giessen in part on ethnic Tigrayans from northern Ethiopia. That's where Eritrean forces joined Ethiopia's military in fighting a two-year war against Tigray forces until a peace deal was made in November. Eritrean forces were accused of some of the worst atrocities, including gang rapes. Kassa Hailemariam, a US-based advocate for many Tigrayans, told the AP "it is ridiculous to blame Tigrayans for the global Eritrean movement against the age-long dictator in Asmara," Eritrea's capital. "We are not part of this movement!" In Giessen last month, German police said at least 22 officers were injured as people throwing smoke bombs and bottles tried to force their way into a festival. Dozens of people were detained.

In Stockholm this month, Swedish media reported that about 1,000 anti-Eritrea protesters stormed the festival, setting booths and cars on fire and using rocks and sticks as weapons, leaving at least 52 people injured. Police said more than 100 people were detained. "This is not a festival. They are teaching their children hate speech," one protester, Michael Kobrab, told Swedish broadcaster TV4. And last weekend, authorities in Toronto canceled the Eritrean festival after clashes sent several people to the hospital. Other festivals have been held without incident, and some Eritreans continue to share videos showing crowds dancing and waving the national flag, along

with messages of defiance and peace.

Eritrea's government openly encourages members of the diaspora to contribute funds to its activities back home. The information ministry published a story about Eritreans in Austria being urged by diplomats to "shoulder the timely responsibility of participating and contributing to the success of the national development drives." But citizens living overseas must show the government evidence of paying a 2% tax on income earned abroad if they want to obtain services such as passport renewals, which has been criticized. People who flee Eritrea without exit visas and wish to return must pay the tax and sign a "regret form," according to the US State Department's human rights report on the country. Eritrea, with a population estimated at less than 5 million, is one of the world's poorest countries, and one of the most secretive. The World Bank says poverty appears to be widespread but updated information is lacking: "The most recent available survey data from 1996/97 indicate a 70% poverty rate."

Rights groups say Eritrean authorities constantly keep the country's citizens in a state of war preparedness, despite making peace with Ethiopia in 2018. A UN independent investigator on human rights in a report circulated said some families are left destitute as Eritrean authorities use eviction and confiscations to force people into military service and punish draft evaders. Mohamed Babiker's report said Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers alleged torture, sexual violence, forced labor and other abusive conditions during compulsory national service. Eritrea's government, he said, maintains its national service program is "unfairly judged."

UN agency resumes some food aid in Tigray

ADDIS ABABA (Reuters): The UN World Food Programme (WFP) said it had resumed distributing food aid in parts of Ethiopia's Tigray region after a three-month pause. WFP paused food aid to the northern region in May following reports of widespread theft of donations. It then suspended aid to all of Ethiopia in June. The United States did the same. More than 20 million people need food assistance in Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous nation, largely due to the Horn of Africa's worst drought in decades and a two-year civil war in Tigray.

The WFP had been providing emergency food assistance to nearly six million of them. It said it started testing and verifying new measures on July 31 to deliver food assistance in four districts of Tigray to just over 100,000 eligible people. "The test distributions are being rolled out at seven food distribution points where WFP and partners have completed targeting of beneficiaries and digitally registered them," the agency said in a statement. The halt in aid was criticised by Ethiopia's government, which said it was investigating the claims of theft. The WFP and the US Agency for International Development said they were working to ensure aid reached the intended recipients before resuming any assistance. The WFP said it would continue to work with its partners in testing the latest measures prior to any wider distributions of aid, including to people in Amhara, Afar and Somali regions. The development comes on the heels of fresh violence in Amhara, where clashes between regional militia-

men and the military have quickly become Ethiopia's most serious security crisis since the end of civil war in Tigray.

Five people killed in Cape Town

CAPE TOWN (BBC): Five people have died in violent protests relating to a taxi strike in Cape Town, South Africa, officials say. The victims include a 40-year-old British national whose family is being supported by the UK Foreign Office. The week-long strike was called in response to what drivers said was "heavy-handed tactics" by law enforcement authorities.

The taxi drivers and owners said their vehicles were being targeted and impounded for minor offences. Infringements included not wearing a seatbelt and illegally driving in the emergency lane, drivers said. They claimed others doing the same only faced fines. Minibus taxi operators across Cape Town also aired frustrations that the government was impounding taxis they claimed were not roadworthy. South Africa's transport minister Sindisiwe Chikunga ordered the immediate release of the minibus taxis impounded by the City of Cape Town. Ms Chikunga said the legislation used by the city had been "executed and implemented wrongly" and added that "it doesn't exist" under current laws.

The South African Ministry of Police said 120 people had been arrested since the strikes began on 3 August and they were aware of incidents of looting, stone throwing and arson. Police Minister Bheki Cele also confirmed a police officer was among those who died.

Residents in the Masiphumelele township set up barricades, preventing other residents from leaving. Many of those barricades were set alight. Speaking to the press, Mr Cele called for co-operation between the Cape Town government and taxi operators.

He said those affected by the strike included children who could no longer get to school. "People must swallow their pride, come together and resolve this issue," he said. The UK has issued a travel warning after the strike was listed as a high security threat for tourists visiting South Africa.

Hawaii wildfires burn homes and force evacuations

HONOLULU (AP): Wildfires in Hawaii fanned by strong winds burned multiple structures, forced evacuations and caused power outages in several communities as firefighters struggled to reach some areas that were cut off by downed trees and power lines. The National Weather Service said Hurricane Dora, which was passing to the south of the island chain at a safe distance of 500 miles (805 kilometers), was partly to blame for gusts above 60 mph (97 kph) that knocked out power as night fell, rattled homes and grounded firefighting helicopters.

Acting Governor Sylvia Luke issued an emergency proclamation on behalf of Gov. Josh Green, who is traveling, and activated the Hawaii National Guard. Fire crews on Maui were battling multiple blazes concentrated in two areas: the popular tourist destination of West Maui and an inland, mountainous region. It wasn't immediately known how many buildings had burned, County of Maui spokesperson Mahina Martin said in a phone interview.

Because of the wind gusts, helicopters weren't able to dump water on the fires from the sky - or gauge more precise fire sizes - and firefighters were encountering roads blocked by downed trees and power lines as they worked the inland fires, Martin said.

About 13,000 customers in Maui were without power, Hawaiian Electric reported. "It's definitely one of the more challenging days for our island given that it's multiple fires, multiple evacuations in the different district areas," Martin said. Winds were recorded at 80 mph (129 kph) in inland Maui and one fire that was believed to be contained flared up hours later with the big winds, she added. "The fire can be a mile or more from your house, but in a minute or two, it can be at your house," Fire Assistant Chief Jeff Giese said.

Hurricane Dora was complicating matters for firefighters in an already dry season. Hawaii is sandwiched between high pressure to the north and a low pressure system associated with Dora, said Jeff Powell, a meteorologist in Honolulu. The dryness and the gusts "make a dangerous fire situation so that fires that do exist can spread out of control very rapidly," he said. "It's kind of because of Hurricane Dora, but it's not a direct result," he said, calling the fires a "peripheral result" of the hurricane's winds. In the Kula area of Maui, at least two homes were destroyed in a fire that engulfed about 1,100 acres (1.7 square miles, or 4.5 square kilometers), Maui Mayor Richard Bissen said. About 80 people were evacuated from 40 homes, he said. "We're trying to

protect homes in the community," Big Island Mayor Mitch Roth said of evacuating about 400 homes in four communities in the northern part of the island. The roof of one house caught on fire, he said.

Fires in Hawaii are unlike many of those burning in the US West. They tend to break out in large grasslands on the dry sides of the islands and are generally much smaller than mainland fires. Fires were rare in Hawaii and on other tropical islands before humans arrived, and native ecosystems evolved without them. This means great environmental damage can occur when fires erupt. For example, fires remove vegetation. When a fire is followed by heavy rainfall, the rain can carry loose soil into the ocean, where it can smother coral reefs. A major fire on the Big Island in 2021 burned homes and forced thousands to evacuate.

The island of Oahu, where Honolulu is located, also was dealing with power outages, downed power lines and traffic problems, said Adam Weintraub, communication director for Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. The weather service had in effect a high wind warning and red flag warnings for dangerous fire weather, Powell said. These conditions were expected, decreasing throughout the day Wednesday and into Thursday.

Diplomacy ‘best way forward’ in Niger

NAIMEY (AFP): Nigeria's president has not ruled out military intervention in neighbouring Niger after its president was ousted in a coup but believes diplomacy is the "best way forward" to resolve the crisis, his spokesman said. Bola Tinubu, also head of the West African bloc ECOWAS, weighed in for the first time since the soldiers behind the coup in Niger defied the bloc's deadline to reinstate President Mohamed Bazoum or face the possible use of force.

Meanwhile efforts by ECOWAS and the United States to parlay with Niger's new rulers have made no headway ahead of a crisis summit in the Nigerian capital Abuja. "No options have been taken off of the table," Tinubu's spokesman Ajuri Ngelale said, while adding that Tinubu and other West African leaders favour a diplomatic solution. The United States said it still held out hope for reversing the coup but was "realistic" a day after a top US envoy appeared to make no progress in an unannounced visit. "We do have hope that the situation will be reversed but at the same time, we are making clear, including in direct conversations with junta leaders themselves, what the consequences are for failing to return to constitutional order," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters.

ECOWAS -- the

Economic Community of West African States -- imposed trade and financial sanctions on Niger after the rebel soldiers toppled Bazoum. The bloc also gave Niger a seven-day ultimatum to reinstate Bazoum or face potential use of force. A source close to ECOWAS said that military intervention was not being immediately envisaged and that the path to dialogue still appeared open. The bloc had sought to send a delegation to Niamey ahead of the crisis summit due to be held in Abuja. But the soldiers who seized power in Niamey on July 26 blocked the mission, saying public "anger" triggered by the bloc's sanctions meant the delegation's safety could be at risk. In a statement, ECOWAS confirmed that the visit by a joint delegation with African Union and United Nations officials had been refused by Niger's new military rulers. ECOWAS is struggling with a cascade of coups since 2020 that was now hit four of its 15 members. In Mali, Burkina Faso and now Niger, all of the takeovers have been fuelled by jihadist insurgencies that have claimed many thousands of lives, forced at least two million from their homes and dealt crippling blows to some of the world's poorest economies. Victoria Nuland, a veteran US envoy, met with Niger's military rulers for more than two hours but came away empty-handed.

She described her talks as "extremely frank and at times quite difficult". She said she offered the coup leaders "a number of options" to end the crisis and restore relations with the United States, which like other Western nations has suspended aid. "I would not say that we were in any way taken up on that offer," she told reporters before her departure. Niger's new strongman, General Abdourahmane Tiani, did not attend the meeting, and Nuland was unable to see Bazoum, who has been detained since July 26. The military leaders in Mali and Burkina Faso have expressed solidarity with Niger, saying that any military intervention would be seen as a "declaration of war" against them. Algeria, which shares a long land border with Niger, has also cautioned against a military incursion, which President Abdelmadjid Tebboune said would be "a direct threat" to his country. Bazoum, 63, was feted in 2021 after winning elections that ushered in Niger's first-ever peaceful transition of power.

He took the helm of a country burdened by four previous coups since independence, and survived two attempted putsches before he himself was ousted. His support was a key factor in France's decision last year to refocus its Sahel anti-jihadist mission on Niger after withdrawing from Mali and Burkina Faso.

Pence says he’s now met polling and donor qualifications for debate

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP): Former Vice President Mike Pence announced he has qualified for the first Republican debate of the 2024 presidential cycle, securing the required number of donors with just two weeks until candidates gather in Milwaukee. According to his campaign, Pence has amassed 40,000 unique donors, checking off the final debate requirement set by the Republican National Committee.

Pence becomes the eighth candidate to announce qualification for the first debate, joining former President Donald Trump, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley, biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum. Pence had long

ago met the RNC's polling requirements for the Aug. 23 debate - at least 1% in three high-quality national polls or a mix of national and early-state polls, between July 1 and Aug. 21 - but struggled to notch the mandated number of donors. Both Pence and his advisers had expressed confidence that he would meet that qualification, but his fundraising appeals intensified as the prospect loomed that he might not make the stage. He got a boost in attention last week in the form of a newly unsealed federal indictment that outlined criminal charges filed against Donald Trump in connection with the former president's efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Highlighting Pence's central role to the case, the indictment was informed, in part, by notes that the then-vice president kept of his conversations with Trump in the

days leading up to the Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol. Trump tried to pressure Pence to go along with his attempt to keep the two men in power. In one episode, Trump is alleged to have told Pence that he was "too honest" for rejecting Trump's false claims that Pence had the power to stop congressional certification of Joe Biden's victory. Marking a notable change in tone for a usually cautious candidate who has struggled to break through in a primary dominated by his former boss, Pence's campaign seized on the opportunity, unveiling new T-shirts and baseball caps for sale featuring the phrase "Too Honest" in big red letters. Trump, meanwhile, has questioned why he should participate in the debate given his commanding lead in polls. He has floated the idea of holding a competing event of his own instead.

US vows to keep Syria’s chemical weapons program in UN spotlight

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The United States and its allies vowed to keep Syria's failure to account for its chemical weapons program in the spotlight at the UN Security Council every month despite opposition from Russia and China. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the council Syrian President Bashar Assad's government "has repeatedly lied to the international community" and to investigators from the international chemical weapons watchdog, which has confirmed that it used these banned weapons on at least nine occasions.

She said the Biden administration will continue to demand a full accounting from Syria as it pledged after joining the Chemical Weapons Convention in September 2013, when it was pressed by its close ally Russia following a deadly chemical weapons attack in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta, which the West blamed on Damascus. For the first time, Russia and China refused to speak at

the monthly meeting on the Syria chemical weapons issue, saying they are repetitive and should be cut back. Syria's minister counsellor Alhakan Dandy did speak, saying his country was surprised at this month's meeting "given that there have been no developments that would require it," other than what he called continuous attempts by the United States "to exploit the chemical weapons file to serve their agenda of hostility against Syria."

He repeated Syria's condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and called claims it used such weapons in Ghouta, where more than 1,400 people were killed, "lies." He also insisted the Syrian military doesn't possess any chemical weapons. Dandy said Syria has cooperated with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which monitors implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. But he also accused its investigators of

being politicized and "using unprofessional working methods and double standards." UN deputy disarmament chief Adedeji Ebo told the council, however, that Syria has failed again to provide the OPCW with a full accounting of its program, citing "gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies" in its declaration.

He singled out unanswered questions about activities at Syria's Scientific Studies and Research Center "and the declaration of quantities of nerve agents produced at one chemical weapons production facility that was declared by the Syrian Arab Republic as never having been used to produce chemical weapons." Ebo reiterated the UN's repeated call on Syria "to respond with urgency" to all OPCW questions. Syrian representatives did meet a delegation from the OPCW's technical secretariat in Beirut on June 22 and 23, and Ebo said Syria committed to present proposals for better

implementing its obligations. He said the OPCW is waiting to hear from Damascus about resuming consultations. Thomas-Greenfield expressed regret that two permanent council members, which she didn't name, didn't speak. Russia and China were the only countries to remain silent.

"The Assad regime is betting that this council will simply move on," she said. "It is hoping we will change the subject." "We must not succumb to fatigue or, worse, indifference. The Assad regime used weapons of mass destruction against its own people. And we will not move on, and the regime will not escape accountability," the US ambassador said. There was widespread support from other council members that Syria must answer all questions from the OPCW, although the United Arab Emirates, the Arab representative on the council, said the council should discuss the Syria chemical weapons issue every three months, not every month.

Investigators say Myanmar’s military is committing increasingly brazen war crimes

BANGKOK (AP): Myanmar's military and affiliated militias are committing increasingly frequent and brazen war crimes, including aerial bombings targeting civilians, a group of investigators established by the United Nations said. The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, or IIMM, said it found strong evidence during the 12 months ending in June that the army and militias indiscriminately and disproportionately targeted civilians with bombs, mass executions of people detained during operations and large-scale burning of civilian houses.

The group, which was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2018 to monitor violations of international law in Myanmar, said it is collecting evidence that can be used in future prosecutions of those responsible. "Every

loss of life in Myanmar is tragic, but the devastation caused to whole communities through aerial bombardments and village burnings is particularly shocking," said Nicholas Koumjian, head of the group. "Our evidence points to a dramatic increase in war crimes and crimes against humanity in the country, with widespread and systematic attacks against civilians, and we are building case files that can be used by courts to hold individual perpetrators responsible." Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military seized power from the elected government of civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, triggering mass nonviolent protests which were suppressed with lethal force. Opponents of military rule then took up arms and large parts of the country are now embroiled in conflict, in what some UN experts have

characterized as a civil war. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights monitoring organization, says security forces have killed at least 3,900 civilians and arrested 24,236 others since the military takeover.

The military-installed government has increasingly launched offensives in the countryside to counter armed opposition to its rule and has tried to secure territory by conducting airstrikes and burning villages, displacing many thousands of people. The resistance forces have limited weapons and no defense against air attacks. In April, the military dropped a bomb that the group Human Rights Watch said was an "enhanced blast" munition known as a fuel-air explosive in an attack on Pazigy village in Sagaing region that killed more than 160 people, including many children. The attack target-

ed a ceremony for the opening of a local office of the National Unity Government, the main nationwide opposition organization that considers itself to be Myanmar's legitimate administrative body. In response to accusations of abuses, the military government often accuses members of the pro-democracy People's Defense Forces, the armed wing of the National Unity Government, of terrorism against government-related targets.

IIMM said in a report that the military should have known, or did know, that large numbers of civilians were present at the time of some of its attacks. It said the incidents it investigated occurred particularly in the Sagaing and Magway regions and in Chin, Karen and Kayah states, the major strongholds of armed resistance to the ruling military.

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Onset of a new era, an impartial interim setup is mandatory

PRIME Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that owing to the relentless efforts of the incumbent government, Pakistan had been out of the most difficult times. Addressing a ceremony at the General Headquarters (GHQ), to honour the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada and Ghazis, the Prime Minister stressed that they all had to strive to rebuild Pakistan collectively. The Prime Minister said that the incumbent government would complete its term on Wednesday and after that they would hand over the reign of the government to an interim set-up in accordance with the Constitution. The Prime Minister's office has prepared a summary requesting the President of Pakistan to dissolve the National Assembly upon maturity of its five year term.

The tenure of the current National Assembly will end after a few days on August 12, while a caretaker setup is due to assume its responsibility to oversee day-to-day governmental affairs, and ensure organisation of a free and fair nationwide election to pave the way for a democratically elected government in the country. Currently, several names mostly from the ruling political alliance are being circulated in the media as potential candidates for the slot for caretaker Prime Minister, however, the Prime Minister Shehbaz and the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly Raja Riaz could not achieve consensus at any person who steer the country during the crucial period of election.

Constitutionally and according to the practice in vague, the caretaker setup must consist of impartial individuals from non-political background to ensure credibility and transparency of the nationwide election. However, a strange legacy is being introduced by the outgoing coalition government by nominating its senior politicians as the candidate for the most sensitive position of the caretaker Prime Minister. An uncertainty prevails in the country regarding the general election scheduled for November and rumours regarding possible extension in the period of the caretaker government is being spread by some Federal Ministers, quoting some constitutional and technical reasons.

There are certain scenarios, legal constraints and political preferences of the civic groups and ruling coalition government that cause an ambiguity regarding the upcoming generation election as the Council of Common Interests (CCI) had recently approved the results of the 7th population census while the ECP has to chart out new delimitation of electoral constituencies to hold next election on the basis of current population, which is the longstanding demand of all political and ethnic groups in the country. Similarly, a constitutional check regarding tenure of the caretaker setup asked for holding of the general election with in the 90 days if the National Assembly is dissolved before completion of the stipulated period as compared to 60 days if it smoothly expires.

The current political situation presents a gloomy picture of the Country's democracy and future political landscape not only in the context of the forthcoming general election but the political setup that emerged in the aftermath of the nationwide polls. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has officially disqualified Imran Khan for five years after the conviction of the PTI Chairman by the trial court.. The electoral watchdog also de-notified Mr. Khan from the National Assembly NA-45 Kurram. The recent conviction and denotification by the ECP has temporarily vanished the PTI Chief from the political scene while Khan's decision regarding PTI's participation in the next polls would not only have great impact on the future politics but would be crucial for cohesion and revival of his party that might face further contraction otherwise.

At the helm of this ongoing tripedation and anxiety, the role of the next caretaker government became more important and crucial. Meanwhile, the appointment of impartial and credible organizers is highly essential as it would not only validate the nationwide headcount but also crucial for consolidation of democracy and future political stability in the crisis-hit nation. A major political group is currently out from the ongoing bargain between the coalition government and a shady opposition leader who counts for less than a dozen opposition parliamentarians. Therefore, the relevant state institutions particularly the ECP must play its constitutional role in ensuring appointment of a neutral and apolitical caretaker setup that steer the country on merit, implement rule of the law, promote political harmony and hold transparent elections in the country. So, the nation comes out of the current chaos and moves toward political stability and economic revival.

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Time to talk openly about Israeli terrorism

Osama Al-Sharif

ISRAEL has a terrorism problem and it is not Palestinian terrorism, a term that the country's propaganda machine, the "hasbara" - Hebrew for explanation - has been using for decades to describe any form of resistance against the illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Israel's problem has to do with Jewish terrorism preached and adopted by ultranationalist and ultra-religious Jews whose end-game goes as far as killing as many Palestinians as possible in a bid to expel them from their native land - the term once coined by the notorious fanatic and racist rabbi-politician Meir Kahana was "transfer," which includes expelling Israel's Palestinian minority.

For decades any attempt to negate the hasbara's narrative and talk about Israeli state terrorism in the form of collective punishments, use of banned weapons against civilian population, and arbitrary killings of activists or even innocent bystanders was shot down; the risk being that one could be labeled as antisemitic. But that is now changing. It is top Israeli officials who have come out recently to warn their leaders of the impending danger of Jewish terrorism.

On Sunday, the head of Israel's Shin Bet, Ronen Bar, warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the rise of "Jewish terrorism," while former Defense Minister Benny Gantz slammed the phenomenon of "dangerous Jewish nationalist terrorism." Both were reacting to the cold-blooded murder of a 19-year-old Palestinian boy by rampaging Jewish settlers in the village of Burqa on Friday. In a rare rebuke, the US State Department condemned the incident as "terrorism by suspected Jewish settlers."

Compounding the problem for Israel is the fact that a number of Netanyahu's coalition partners actually support terrorist settlers. National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said the settlers suspected of the murder of the Palestinian youth deserve praise,

describing them as "heroes." Jewish terrorism, once a taboo subject, is now open for public discussion. The crimes of Jewish terrorists are inseparable from the history of Israel even before the birth of the state. One of the earliest instances of Jewish terrorism in Palestine was the formation of the Jewish Defense Party (HaShomer) in 1909, which carried out attacks on Arab villages. But it was in British Mandate Palestine that organized and well-financed Jewish terror groups were formed. In the 1930s, as tensions between Jewish immigrants and Palestinians escalated, several Jewish underground organizations emerged. These sought to counter Arab attacks and British restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchases. The most notable was the Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization), commonly referred to as the Irgun, and the Stern Gang (also known as Lehi, short for Lohamei Herut Yisrael). Both groups employed terrorism as a means to achieve their political goals.

The Irgun, led by Menachem Begin, who later founded the Likud Party and became prime minister in the 1970s, carried out numerous attacks against Arab civilians and British authorities. Their most infamous act was the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1946, which housed the British Mandate administration and resulted in many civilian casualties. While all these groups, including the Haganah, were later disbanded and merged into the Israeli army, the ultranationalists and ultra-religious groups continued to be part of the country's political setting. It was after the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza that these organizations began to play a more active role in Israeli politics, with one major goal: building Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, with the final aim of annexing all the territories into 'Greater Israel.'

As successive Israeli

governments opened the newly conquered Palestinian territories for illegal settlers - most were fresh immigrants from the US and, later, from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union - the ultranationalist and ultra-religious groups began to expand their political base in a country that was supposed to be secular, progressive and democratic. Right-wing governments, most led by Netanyahu, opened the floodgates of Jewish immigration, with the majority housed in new illegal settlements. From 2012 to 2022, the population of Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, grew from 520,000 to more than 700,000.

It is in these illegal settlements that the seeds of a vigorous wave of Jewish extremism, quickly morphing into terrorism, were planted. The settlement movement, driven by religious, ideological and security motivations, gained momentum over the years, leading to the establishment of numerous settler organizations and groups. These settlers often advocate for the expansion of Israeli settlements into Palestinian territories, viewing it as an essential part of Jewish identity and fulfilling biblical prophecies, believing that they have a divine mandate to establish Jewish sovereignty over all of historic Palestine. Motivated by a toxic mixture of racism and radical religious beliefs, extremist settlers began carrying out violent attacks against Palestinians, including assaults on individuals, homes, crops and places of worship. The most horrific was the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron in February 1994, which was also the 15th day of Ramadan, when Baruch Goldstein, a Zionist extremist from the far-right Kach movement opened fire on praying Muslims with an automatic weapon, killing 29 and injuring about 150 others.

The current far-right government has empowered these terrorist/settler groups and the fiery rhetoric by the likes of Ben-Gvir

and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich is normalizing and glorifying Jewish terrorists in the Occupied Territories. The most militant of these groups are Hilltop Youth, Price Tag Attacks, Lehava, Jewish Underground, Kach and Kahane Chai; the latter is considered a terrorist organization by the US and Israel. All of these settler groups openly advocate violence against the Palestinians. While Israel's dilemma with Jewish terrorism will not go away so long as the occupation and settlement building continues, the real problem lies elsewhere. It is in the backing and support that these terrorist and radical groups receive from one particular, but influential, group of US voters and politicians: evangelical Christians. Although not all evangelical Christians hold the same views, most believe in the biblical significance of Israel as a fulfillment of the prophecy and evidence of God's faithfulness to his covenant with the Jewish people.

Some evangelical Christians believe that the existence and flourishing of Israel are linked to their interpretation of end-times prophecies. They see Israel as a necessary precursor to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of God's ultimate plan. And they openly advocate policies that align with Israeli interests, such as recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and opposing international efforts to pressure Israel on issues such as illegal settlements and resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by ending occupation. While Israel today recognizes that it has a serious Jewish terrorism problem, it will be difficult for US politicians to renounce crimes committed against Palestinians for fear of losing the evangelical and Jewish votes. This will only empower the Jewish terrorists more, and although Palestinians will suffer, as they have always done, the fractures that will hit Israel's foundations as a result of the growing militancy of the settler groups will be unprecedented.

The Bibby Stockholm is a symbol of Britain's failed migration policy

Philip Johnston

WHAT is it about floating accommodation that inspires hysteria, unless it is a cruise liner? The Bibby Stockholm, a barge that the Government is using to house asylum seekers, has become emblematic of a failed policy and the focus of activists seeking to undermine Britain's efforts to control illegal migration.

We've been here before. In 1997, the then Tory-run Home Office ordered a floating barge to accommodate prisoners because of severe pressures on the system. It was called the Bibby Resolution, a sister ship of the Bibby Stockholm currently causing such consternation, and was also moored at Portland in Dorset, where it was renamed HMP Weare. There were objections by prison campaigners, who likened the barge to the dismasted hulks moored in the Medway during the Napoleonic Wars. Magwitch once again loomed out of the mists.

Local people protested, as they are doing now, and Labour complained. But since the party was on the cusp of taking office, shadow ministers were mindful that the problem of where to put the overflow would soon be clogging up their in-tray, as it will be again if they win power next year. For that reason, Labour is today not actually prepared to say barges or camps or tents or hotels should not be used to house the small boat arrivals, only that the Government should not have got into the position where they are necessary.

Labour kept the floating prison until 2006 when it was sold to Nigeria. By that time, the prison population had risen from just under 60,000 when the party took office under Tony Blair to 80,000. The latest controversy surrounding a Portland barge is somewhat different in that the occupants are not prisoners, though you would be hard put to know that, judging by some of the hyperbole the issue has attracted, not just here but overseas.

The CNN website, under the headline "Asylum seekers board UK's controversial 'death trap' housing barge", reported that "public health experts warned of the possible risk of infection in living conditions that campaigners branded as inhumane". It is hardly surprising that, given these accounts, some asylum seekers are resisting being moved to the barge. Yet it has been used in the past to house construction workers and was also deployed to the Falklands as a floating barracks. It is obviously not the Ritz but neither is it Dorset's answer to the Marshalsea. In fact, the migrants are being moved out of hotels, where thousands have been placed for weeks as ministers struggled to cope with the influx. As Alex Chalk, the justice minister, put it, they cannot pick and choose between staying in four-star hotels and a barge.

The problem the Government faces is that its policy isn't working. It is predicated on making it illegal to arrive in this country other than by lawful routes and then deporting the migrants to Rwanda. So far the detention powers in the much-contested Illegal Migration Act have not been used. If the idea were to send migrants to Rwanda in order to process applications for asylum, and then resettle in the UK those

whose cases were well-founded, this might be feasible. But that is not the plan. The proposal is that they should be sent to Rwanda and then resettled there or sent back to their home country. This is a breach of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which contains the principle of non-refoulement - an absolute bar on repatriating a refugee to a country where they might face persecution. This is why the Government will almost certainly lose the case in the Supreme Court when it appeals against last month's ruling by judges that it is unlawful to send asylum seekers to Rwanda on precisely these grounds.

The court ruled that there was a real risk that people would be returned to their home countries, where they face persecution or other inhumane treatment, when they had a good claim for asylum. Arguing that many of them are, in reality, economic migrants who are not fleeing for their lives is not going to work. Many dispose of their identity documents and concoct stories (with the help of some unscrupulous lawyers now being targeted by the Government) to say that they are at risk if returned. Sometimes it is not clear where they have come from and, if it is, their countries refuse to take them back. Even if the Rwanda transfers are ruled lawful, they will affect just a small proportion of arrivals, although it may act as a deterrent and reduce the traffic, as intended.

Nonetheless, the policy looks dead in the water, so what is the alternative both to stopping the boats and housing the migrants? Clearing the backlog of extant asylum cases would clearly help, but they number more than 100,000 so that will take ages. The Home Office appears to be cutting people from the list for failing to meet certain conditions, but that does not help with where to put them. If they cannot claim refugee status, they may never be able to work, at least not legally, and will become a burden on the state unless removed. The weather has helped by making crossings more difficult, with around 350 arriving this month so far. Nearly 2,000 came across in the same period last year. Rishi Sunak, sunning himself in California, must pray that England's unseasonable and stormy summer continues.

But if not Rwanda, then where? Someone in Whitehall has floated the idea of Ascension Island. As a British territory, this is less likely to be struck down by the courts, provided the asylum applications were properly processed and successful refugees were settled back in the UK. Those who failed could be deported, though, again, it is not always clear where they came from. It would also be hugely expensive and take time to set up a processing regime, even if there is an RAF/US base there already. There are largely uninhabited islands aplenty closer to home that could be used, though the good people of Lundy (population 28) or Egg (110) might object. For many years, Australia processed its asylum applications on the island of Nauru and successfully reduced the illegal traffic into the country. It is, like the UK, party to the 1951 Refugee Convention. If Australia can do it, why can't we?

The Telegraph

Ukraine is winning a crucial part of the land war. It's nuclear button time for Putin - again

David Axe

DMITRY Medvedev is afraid. He's afraid because his boss, Vladimir Putin, is also afraid. Former Russian president Medvedev, now deputy chairman of Russia's security council - which autocrat Putin chairs - is a useful mouthpiece for Putin. A proxy who's just far enough removed from Putin to say things even Putin should not say, but close enough that we can sense Putin silently mouthing the words coming from Medvedev's mouth.

So when Medvedev threatens for the umpteenth time to nuke Ukraine, we may as well attribute those words to Putin. And when we smell Medvedev's fear - the feeling soaking every syllable of his apocalyptic utterances - we can whiff if wafting off Putin, too. Medvedev is afraid. Two months into

Ukraine's long-anticipated counteroffensive, Ukrainian brigades have advanced only a few miles along three or four critical axes across Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in southern and eastern Ukraine. And they've paid in blood for every yard. But there's a reason the Ukrainians are moving slowly. Kyiv's fast-improving artillery corps, exquisitely supplied by NATO countries, is destroying three or four Russian howitzers for every one Ukrainian howitzer the Russians destroy. And, in stark defiance of history's preference for defending armies, the attacking Ukrainian army is killing as many Russians as the Russians are killing Ukrainians.

Kyiv's forces are moving slowly because they're letting their artillery lead the way. And the big guns are working methodically, grinding up

one Russian echelon at a time. Medvedev is afraid because Putin is afraid. And Putin is afraid because, 18 months into Russia's wider attack on Ukraine, his army of more than a million people still can't beat the Ukrainian army, which is half that size and has fewer of everything. It's Putin's fear that feeds his worst impulse: to threaten, through Medvedev, the nuclear annihilation of human civilization. The virtual destruction of the only sentient species we know to exist anywhere in the vast cosmos. Make no mistake, when Medvedev says Russia might use nuclear weapons - as he did again on July 30 - he's saying that Putin is saying that ending everything is a better outcome, for Russia, than losing a regional war of choice.

"Imagine if the ... offen-

sive, which is backed by Nato, was a success and they tore off a part of our land," Medvedev seethed on his official social media accounts. "Then we would be forced to use a nuclear weapon according to the rules of a decree from the president of Russia." "There would simply be no other option," Medvedev said. "So our enemies should pray for our warriors. They are making sure that a global nuclear fire is not ignited." He's bluffing. Because he and his boss are afraid and because the bluff is all they have left as Russia's disastrous wider war grinds into its 18th month, with no sign that Ukraine or its allies are giving up. If he weren't bluffing, we'd know. We'd know because we - well, a vanishing few of us, maybe - would already be living in an irradiated post-

apocalyptic wasteland. In the spring of 2022, Ukrainian brigades defeated Russia's assault on Kyiv and forced the Russian survivors back to the fringes of eastern and southern Ukraine. Six months later, eager Ukrainian brigades exploited gaps in Russian lines and pushed back the Russians even farther. And eight months after that, the Ukrainians kicked off their current counteroffensive.

And all the while, Ukrainian rockets, drones, saboteurs and assassins have killed Russian officials, shot down Russian warplanes, sunk Russian warships and blown up military sites in Russian air space, in Russian waters and on Russian soil. Putin didn't trigger a nuke then. He won't trigger a nuke now. Because even as wicked, craven and cruel as Putin is, he's not insane. And he doesn't want to die in the

retaliatory nuclear strike that surely would follow any atomic attack on Ukraine. And even if there's an edge of insanity in Putin's deepening desperation, the United States and its NATO allies shouldn't bow to nuclear threats. If Putin could merely say, through Medvedev, the word "nuclear" and get his way, he would say "nuclear" all the time - and march his army across Eastern Europe, its troops shielded by their leaders' atomic threats.

Medvedev is afraid. Because Putin is afraid. That fear makes them reckless with their words. But it doesn't make them suicidal. And if I'm wrong, it won't matter. If I'm wrong, then Putin was ready to end the world after any defeat. And if that defeat didn't come in Ukraine, it would eventually come somewhere else. Which means Armageddon has been inevitable since 1999.

Are smartphones dumbing down education?

A recent report by UNESCO, titled "Technology in Education," has warned about the potential pitfalls presented by the use of digital technology in the classroom. It reminded me of an experience I had when these gadgets first began to be used by students. During my Middle East politics class, while I was outlining some significant historical developments, I spotted a student laboring over his tablet.

To be honest, I thought he was sending emails or too busy with social media to engage with the class, until suddenly he interrupted me and announced to everybody that his search engine had confirmed the information that I was sharing with them. It was my first realization that my credibility as a lecturer depended on what the internet search results agreed with, and not necessarily on my track record. But it also made me aware of the potential of this new technology to enable students to be more proactive learners constantly looking for new sources of knowledge.

The UNESCO report highlighted the debate among many educators on whether the introduction of technology enhances the education experience or does the opposite, making it poorer, shallower and compromising quality in the name of glitz and gimmicks, while widening the gap between those who can afford the technology and those who cannot. The report does not pretend to supply conclusive results or recommendations, but it does a good job in highlighting what we who have been in education for many years sense - that the jury is still out concerning the benefits of digital technology and its added value.

It would be wrong to refer to digital education as one phenomenon, while in reality the term is a

Yossi Mekelberg

shortcut to a wide range of hardware, software and applications that are used in education to better and worse effect. The effectiveness and utility of using digital technology in education is determined by geography, the quality of the equipment and content available, how well staff are trained, whether gender and cultural differences have been taken into consideration, and how it is balanced with other methods of teaching and learning.

However, as we consider our ever-increasing reliance on technology, there are two sectors pushing hard for digital education that should be treated with suspicion. The first and most obvious group comprises those who develop and sell this technology. They are mainly better versed in technology than in education, and tend to neglect the human side of education and the need to deal with learners as individuals with different educational requirements. The other sector that suffers from an extreme case of ulterior motive is made up of those who manage education, whether in government departments or within schools and universities, and who see technology as a cost-cutting exercise. Many of them either have no first-hand experience in education, or have moved to management at a relatively young age and lost touch with what is taking place in the classroom. Counter-intuitively, a piece of technology is less flexible than a teacher.

It would be foolish to promote a blanket rejection of digital technology in education, just as it is equally imprudent to think that the future of education lies only with machines. In recent years, investing in digital education has, in many cases, replaced investment in teachers, and ensuring that they are efficiently and correctly employing

these digital platforms to enhance students' experience, as well as allaying teachers' fears that one day machines will replace humans in class. Moreover, many of those in charge of education are failing to distinguish between quality and standardization, which digital education exacerbates by allowing bureaucrats to attempt to control these elements at the expense of encouraging creativity and diversity. This leads to the mediocrity of a one-size-fits-all approach that leaves many young people behind.

Admittedly, there are positive examples of digital technology enabling increased access to teaching and learning resources in a way learners have never experienced before. But on the flip side, being exposed to infinite sources of information without the guidance and tools to discern between the reliable and credible ones and those that are merely figments of someone's imagination, is causing long-lasting damage to both the acquisition of knowledge and our ability to understand the world around us in any sphere of existence. Furthermore, high-quality education has always favored the haves over the have-nots, which in turn determines their future, while the disparities in access to digital resources worsen this inequality. A key finding of the well-argued UNESCO report is that there is "little robust evidence on digital technology's added value in education." One reason for this is that the new technologies emerge, change and are replaced at such a pace that makes it impossible to properly evaluate them, which is inevitable when commercial incentives to introduce new platforms are allowed to take precedence over educational considerations. Moreover, studies that sing the praises of digital education mainly

originate, unsurprisingly, from those who develop the technologies. This scenario mirrors that of the pharmaceutical industry, but this time it is damaging minds rather than bodies.

And, as with any other application of technology, there is the risk of inappropriate or excessive use that brings with it behavioral challenges that might be difficult to address, either in class or by educational managers. Bullying, for instance, has always existed, but perpetrating it on one's phone or computer, including while in a formal educational setting, is becoming easier, more intense and more harmful. There is also no escape from recognizing that the very nature of digital information affects detrimentally and disproportionately the younger generation, a cohort that is already suffering excessively from concentration deficit, a condition that affects a student's ability to pay attention to fully developed arguments or to read original texts, and limits their capacity for critical thinking, reading and writing. The very nature of much digital learning is rather solitary, and in a society where mental health issues affect a large proportion of young people, their social skills are bound to suffer, too. Such solitary learning also limits the ability of education staff to be present to assist them in seeking help.

Digital technology is here to stay, and AI will soon take it to a new, but not necessarily improved, level. The solution is not to reverse this development, but to ensure that in the march of humankind to acquire and improve knowledge, technology does not erase our humanity to the extent that instead of machines serving humans, the future becomes one in which humans serve the machines and those who profit from them.

Arab News

Plight of Afghan women and girls demands urgent global response

Dalia Al-Aqidi

continues to receive foreign aid amounting to billions of dollars annually. The lack of progress in improving human rights sends a distressing message about the Taliban's commitment to upholding fundamental rights and freedoms for all Afghans, especially women.

Last week, the US State Department released a statement expressing profound apprehension over the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, and emphasizing the need to continue supporting aid organizations and UN bodies that deliver assistance in accordance with humanitarian principles. During the diplomatic talks, US officials strongly advocated for the immediate and unconditional release of detained US citizens, highlighting that these detentions hindered any potential positive engagement. It was disclosed in December that two Americans held by the Taliban had been released, but there were indications at the time that more US nationals remained in captivity. However, the identities of these individuals have not been disclosed.

The US representatives also voiced serious concerns about the detentions of individuals, media restrictions and limitations on religious practices within Afghanistan. The State Department further noted that the delegation acknowledged the Taliban's commitment to preventing Afghanistan from becoming a base for attacks on the US and its allies, acknowledging a reduction in large-scale terrorist attacks targeting Afghan civilians. Their voices have been silenced as they are barred from participating in public life and politics. The gains made by women over the past two decades have been brutally stripped away, plunging them back into the dark ages of subjugation. The treatment of women and girls in Afghanistan has become a cause for global concern. The international community must unite to safeguard the rights and dignity of Afghan women. However, the nature of the Taliban's rule poses significant challenges for external intervention.

The group adheres to strict interpretations of Islamic law, often using religion to justify its oppressive actions against women. The lack of a clear and consistent approach from the international community

has further encouraged the Taliban, putting the lives of women and girls at greater risk. The consequences of the Taliban's rule on women's mental and physical health are profound. The return to repressive policies has led to widespread fear and anxiety among women and girls. Many live in constant terror, uncertain of their fate. Reports of forced marriages, sexual violence and human rights abuses against women have already emerged, creating a climate of fear and despair.

The international community must stand in solidarity with Afghan women and girls. Sanctions and diplomatic pressure should be applied to the Taliban leadership to ensure the protection of women's rights. The UN and other human rights organizations should closely monitor the situation on the ground and document any violations against women and girls. Safe routes for evacuation and resettlement should be established for those who are at immediate risk. It is essential to support local groups that have been advocating for women's rights in Afghanistan for years. These grassroots outfits have an in-depth understanding of the cultural context, and can provide effective aid and support. By empowering these organizations, the international community can amplify their efforts and positively affect Afghan women's lives.

Every individual must recognize that the future of these oppressed women and girls is at stake. It is not only a matter of human rights but also a reflection of our shared values as a global community. Their fate should be a concern for all, regardless of political affiliations. We must come together to ensure that Afghan women and girls are not abandoned to suffer under the oppressive rule of the Taliban. By standing united, we can help bring hope and a glimmer of light to the lives of those facing the darkest of times in the worn-torn country. Any efforts to advocate for women's rights should be approached with sensitivity to Afghanistan's cultural context while still remaining steadfast in upholding universal human rights principles. Together, we can strive to bring about a brighter future for the women of Afghanistan, and support their right to live in dignity, freedom and equality.

National unity and reconciliation

Ali Mohamed Ahmed Osman

ALMOST four months have elapsed since the Rapid Support Forces rebellion flared in Sudan, resulting in the death, injury or forced displacement of thousands of Sudanese citizens to other Sudanese states or neighboring countries. With the country's entire infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, water facilities and electricity stations, as well as residential areas in many neighborhoods, either destroyed or looted, the central government's civil service has been hampered. Meanwhile, in western Darfur, the RSF has committed grave violations that have culminated in a kind of ethnic cleansing.

These horrendous RSF acts have resulted in great suffering and subjugation for the Sudanese, and demand a rapid response after an end to the clashes and the defeat of the rebels. Consequently, the post-rebellion government is entitled to focus on restructuring the country's social, economic and political fabric, and bringing about national reconciliation, which is not an option at this stage but a necessity for the nation's survival.

The path toward comprehensive and inclusive national unity and reconciliation necessitates a government-centric approach, encompassing robust community involvement, solid integration and coordination mechanisms among these efforts, and, most importantly, the availability of evaluation tools to effectively monitor their implementation. The lessons learned from the case of Rwanda show that efforts to achieve national unity and reconciliation should be more innovative and rooted in societally integrated approaches, as opposed to several previous peace agreements, particularly the

comprehensive peace agreement, which focused its implementation on wealth and power sharing.

Constitutional and legal reforms, as well as socioeconomic welfare programs, are among the most effective methods for achieving inclusive national unity and reconciliation. Contrary to this, the lessons learned from Rwanda have demonstrated that the persistence of certain community attitudes and behaviors, such as conflict (genocide) ideology, ethnic stereotyping, psychological and physical wounds that remain unhealed, poverty, and a lack of restitution policies, will impede the process toward reconciliation and the restoration of human dignity. It is a fact that the events in Rwanda were genocide, which is a distinct circumstance from the situation in Sudan, where an insurgency and an attempted coup were undertaken by the RSF. Nevertheless, the nature of the ensuing violations committed by RSF personnel revealed that the conflict has deep-seated causes, particularly regarding the events in west Darfur, which were influenced by ethnic factors. Furthermore, the looting of normal Sudanese people's houses reflects the in-depth interest of the perpetrators in retaliation against the rich people of Khartoum, as they claimed.

Another argument that underscores the crucial need for national unity and reconciliation is that the rebellion of the RSF should not be viewed as a separation from the political division and polarization that have characterized Sudan since its independence. In the beginning, there are a few pressing issues that require immediate resolution. These include providing basic safety and

security measures and protecting civilians; promoting mental health and psychosocial well-being among the affected citizens; providing basic services such as water and sanitation, health, and primary education; and restoring core government functions such as basic public administration and public finance. To accomplish this, the essential characteristics of the initial step should place emphasis on the involvement of nongovernmental organizations.

The availability of a platform that will allow Sudanese, especially youth from various political and social groups, to exchange their views on national unity, reconciliation, and other social and development issues in a process of national dialogue is crucial; it is also crucial that such a national dialogue be strengthened if preceded by the voluntary repatriation of the refugees from neighboring countries. The promotion of national unity and reconciliation necessitates the integration of all armed forces, including the remnants of the RSF, into the Sudanese Armed Forces to prevent future occurrences of this rebellion and military coups. Furthermore, the adoption of national policies and institutions aimed at enhancing national unity and reconciliation in the country is crucial, as are constitutional, legal and educational reforms that promote the same reconciliation objectives. Moreover, to prevent polarization between political ideologies, these efforts will be undertaken by national independent experts' committees and institutions.

Experiences from all over the world have demonstrated that poverty reduction initiatives are fundamental to any reconciliation efforts,

along with other programs designed to protect the most vulnerable groups of people, such as orphans, people living with disabilities, widows, elderly people and the poor. It is important to note that economic revitalization plays a critical role in reconciliation efforts, as it not only addresses the wounds and divisions of the past, but also lays the foundation for a prosperous and inclusive future. It creates a conducive environment for equal growth and shared benefits by fostering economic opportunities and uplifting vulnerable communities. Economic revitalization improves the material well-being of individuals and communities through job creation, entrepreneurship, and investment in infrastructure. It also fosters social cohesion and bridges the gaps created by historical injustices. Promoting economic equality and giving all individuals a fair chance to succeed are some of the things that promote a society built on trust.

To conclude, it is evident that such mechanisms aiming at fostering national unity and reconciliation would typically be time-consuming and heavily dependent on the international community's support, be it in financial or technical aspects. Therefore, the significance of international organizations, donors, regional organizations such as the African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as Sudan's neighbors, is paramount in facilitating this transition. The greater the utilization of home-grown ideas, the greater the ownership of these mechanisms will be by the Sudanese people, and consequently, the more successful and sustainable reconciliation process we will achieve.

Britain is trapped in political purgatory

Rafael Behr

THE language of bureaucracy, while rarely poetic, sometimes has a sinister eloquence. Residents on board the Bibby Stockholm, the barge moored in Dorset to house asylum claimants, are classified by the Home Office as "non-detained" persons. They are not imprisoned, but nor are they free. Occupants of the vessel can travel to places "agreed with local agencies" on special buses provided by the Home Office. They are not subject to a curfew, but there is a register. Checks are made to count people out and in again.

There is nothing new in non-detention. It is the normal condition of people granted immigration bail, including tens of thousands of asylum seekers who are waiting for permission to stay in the UK. It is an ambiguous zone between sanctuary and internment, between arrival and acceptance, where rights available to a refugee blur into conditions imposed on a criminal. The government wants to shrink that zone, not least because it is expensive to keep people there. The Bibby Stockholm is cheaper than hotel accommodation but the barge only has room for about 500 people. It is what the Home Office might call a "non-solution" to the problem. Disused army barracks and portable buildings can add some capacity, but the obvious solution to an excess of people waiting for adjudication of asylum claims is to speed up the process.

That is notionally government policy, too. Rishi Sunak has set the improbable target of clearing the case backlog by the end of this year, which means churning

through hundreds of files every day. Meanwhile, new claimants keep arriving. The prime minister has a different plan for them. Under the Illegal Migration Act, given royal assent last month, anyone who arrives by illicit means - on a small boat from France, most pertinently - is disqualified from asylum in Britain. They become, in Home Office speak, "ineligible persons" liable for detention.

The law stipulates that these people be deported, a duty that Suella Braverman intends to fulfil with relish just as soon as there is somewhere for the deportees to go. Back where they came from is the home secretary's first choice, but that isn't possible if the country of origin is a war zone or brutal autocracy. Then the destination must be a "safe third country", defined as anywhere that will do a deal like the one Britain has done with Rwanda. Currently no one else has signed up and the Rwanda plan has been on hold since the court of appeal ruled it unlawful. If the supreme court agrees, the whole policy is non-operational, as the Home Office might say, or utterly screwed, as everyone else will say.

Even if the judgment goes in the government's favour, Rwanda can't take everyone. Facilities in Kigali are ready to accommodate 300 people. The government there says it can take up to 1,000 people over a five-year trial period. Last year, about 46,000 people crossed the Channel in small boats. This year's numbers are down slightly, but still high enough to guarantee that the main function of the Illegal Migration Act, if its pow-

ers are applied as written, will be to create a whole new problem: thousands of detainees stuck in bureaucratic limbo. Unlike the current non-detained persons, these "ineligibles" will have no prospect of release because their asylum claims will be automatically forfeit.

To avoid that scenario, or at least to delay its realisation, the government has postponed implementation of the law. It might never fully come into effect. Crossing the Channel without permission has been illegal for a long time. The Nationality and Borders Act 2022, Priti Patel's effort at a crackdown, introduced a two-tier system for asylum claims that was meant to discriminate against small-boat passengers. That mechanism was quietly abandoned as impractical earlier this year. Key provisions of the Illegal Migration Act may go the same way, once it becomes clear that pressing ahead as planned means indefinite internment of people with no legal avenue for staying in Britain but nowhere else to go.

By the time the full ineptitude of Braverman's project is on display, she will probably be a non-home secretary. Meanwhile, Sunak boasts that the system is already a success. Specifically, he says it works as a "strategy of deterrence". In theory, word of Britain's draconian regime spreads. Potential passengers on small boats grasp the futility of the journey and stay in France. As Sunak puts it: "When people know that if they come here illegally they won't get to stay, they stop coming." There is no evi-

dence that making access to democratic societies harder discourages refugees from fleeing persecution. It should be a compliment that victims of torture and repression take a bet that even the nastiest side of British justice is milder than the life they are leaving behind.

That perception could be shifted over time. It might be possible to enact an immigration regime so spiteful and inhumane that Britain's international reputation as a civilised nation and haven of law is eventually lost. Maybe Braverman and Sunak have the stomach for such cruelty. Still, there are international constraints on Downing Street's capacity to go full rogue on human rights, even if moral qualms are dispensable. The prime minister doesn't want to be a pariah among European leaders. He might not like pesky postwar conventions that insist that refugees cannot be cast as criminals for taking unorthodox modes of transport, but he prefers not to shred Britain's treaty obligations as ostentatiously as some Tory MPs demand.

This is what politics looks like between now and the next election. Ministers simulate the business of serious administration but with a singular focus on trapping and unsettling the opposition. The statute book is cluttered with laws drafted for use as campaign slogans, regardless of whether they can be made to work in practice. Here we are all now detained, condemned to the in-between zone where a prime minister has run out of road but not yet arrived at defeat; a country stuck in the purgatory of non-government.

The Guardian

SO far the conflict in Ukraine has become synonymous with many things: the advancement of drone warfare, casualty rates akin to the First World War, beautiful cities destroyed. Yet none, surely, have been as shocking as the Russian war crimes we have seen perpetrated on European soil - crimes thought to have been consigned to history.

Putin is already an indicted war criminal at the International Criminal Court for allowing the abduction of thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia, and there will be many other crimes added to his list and those of his henchmen: the deliberate targeting of civilians in missile strikes, for instance, and the summary executions of innocent people in Bucha and Irpin. The monstrous Russian regime is unconcerned with civilian casualties and collateral damage. Quite the opposite. It thinks that if it kills enough civilians and raises Ukraine to the ground they will prevail - as they did in Syria. Such horrors offered the UN the opportunity to prove its worth and stand by the principles of its foundation. Yet in the eyes of many the UN has been singularly useless so far in the war. Beyond platitudes, one would be challenged to point to a single achievement. It did not prevent the war from breaking out, it did not rally the world to Ukraine's cause, it has not preserved the grain deal so important to feed the starving in Africa, and it has gone silent about Russia's destruction of the Kakhovka Dam which triggered an environmental catastrophe. Its Secretary General, António Guterres, looks woefully out of his

Hamish De Bretton-Gordon

to be a permanent member: there are plenty of other nuclear powers who are not, like Pakistan and India. I feel those countries' frustration at being excluded for no more reason than tradition, especially when one of its permanent members perpetrates policies many consider genocidal. Besides, it was the Soviet Union that was granted permanent status: not Russia. I hear those who say that China would simply veto Russia's removal from the Council if the other permanent members sought to do so. Fine - let them. At least we will see their true colours, instead of veiling their hostile position in diplomatic niceties.

The UN should be the most powerful body on the globe - one feared and respected in equal measure. Instead, it looks like a talking shop which allows all and sundry to sprout disinformation and propaganda with no consequence. Heck, they allow Russia to preside over the UN - to set its agenda on rotation - even with an indicted war criminal as leader. You have to laugh, or you'd cry. The UN screams to me of an organisation treading water and unwilling or afraid of powerful pariahs who cajole and threaten members to support them. If the UN is to be the force for good it was initially set up as - if the rules-based world order is to endure - it must get rid of criminal states like Russia or at least take away their veto. Russia is a sea anchor dragging the UN down with it, and unpunished evil grows. We should at least be asking the question - the very essence of the democracy that Ukraine is fighting for, and which Russia is trying to stamp out.



PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 797 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 797.77 points, a positive change of 1.68 per cent, closing at 48,227.60 points against 47,429.83 points the previous trading day.

A total of 312,301,182 shares were traded during the day as compared to 336,078,121 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs14.305 billion against Rs12.547 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 335 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 207 of them recorded gains and 109 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 19 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Oil and

Gas Dev with 37,776,498 shares at Rs104.35 per share; Pak Petroleum with 22,796,703 shares at Rs.73.84 per share and JS Bank Ltd with 21,564,500 shares at Rs5.35 per share.

Mehmood Tex witnessed a maximum increase of Rs48.90 per share price, closing at Rs701.03, whereas the runner-up was Siemens Pak with Rs21.99 rise in its per share price to Rs672.99.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs439.00 per share closing at Rs8560.00; followed by Mari Petroleum with a Rs77.00 decline to close at Rs1605.33.

Rupee gains 45 paisa against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday was strengthened by 45 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading as it closed at

Rs287.46 against the previous day's closing of Rs287.91.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs293.8 and Rs296.7 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 26 paisa to close at Rs315.75 against the last day's closing of Rs316.01, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen lost 01 paisa to close at Rs2, whereas a decrease of 05 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs367.09 as compared to last closing of Rs367.14.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 12 paisa each to close at Rs78.26 and Rs76.62

respectively.

Gold rates increase by Rs1,100 to Rs222,200 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,100 and was sold at Rs222,200 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs221,100 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs943 to Rs190,501 from Rs189,558 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 Karat gold rose to Rs174,626 from Rs173,761, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2750 and Rs2357.68 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$1 to \$1,926 from \$ 1,927, the association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing meeting of Executive Committee of National Economic Council.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was recorded at the port where three ships namely, Maria Elena, Sun-9 and Golden Lotus carrying Containers and Palm oil, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal and Liquid Cargo Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile four more ships, MSC Sabrina-III, Zagori, Star Sabaru and TTC Vidyut carrying Container, Coal and Mogas are also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of 05 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a gas carrier 'Hafnia Experience' sailed out to sea on Wednesday (today) morning, while two more ships, MSC Maria Elena and Enugu are expected to sail on same day. Cargo volume of 81,078 tonnes, comprising 65,778 tonnes imports Cargo and 15,300 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,100 Containers (1,200 TEUs Imports and 900 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are seven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, MSC Sabrina, Zagori and Star Sabaru & another ship Bateleur is expected to take berths at Container Terminal, Bulk Terminal, Electric Power Terminal and Sui Gas Terminal respectively on 9th August, while another containership, Novios Constellation is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

Agriculture financing hits record Rs1.78 t

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The financial institutions disbursed Rs. 1,776 billion under agriculture financing during FY23 and achieved 97.6% of the agriculture credit target of Rs. 1,819 billion set by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), recording an impressive growth of over 25% compared to Rs. 1,419 billion disbursed in FY22. The outstanding portfolio of agriculture credit also registered a growth of 10% and reached Rs. 760 billion at the end of June 2023 compared to Rs. 691 billion at end June 2022.

The unprecedented performance in FY23 is owed to the collective efforts of the financial institutions and various initiatives taken in the backdrop of several challenges including the devastating floods of 2022, rising input costs and monetary tightening in recent years. Among the various initiatives, SBP's Champion Bank Model and Agriculture Credit Scoring Model played a key role in supporting financial institutions in extending agriculture financing, particularly in the underserved areas where significant growth was registered in FY23. In addition, the strategic guidance of Agricultural Credit Advisory Committee (ACAC) coupled with rigorous monitoring of financing by SBP provided further support in accelerating

agriculture finance. The last ACAC meeting, held in December 2022, brought industry's focus to the potential of Islamic banking for meeting the needs of the farming community. As a result, Islamic agriculture financing also grew significantly during the year.

SBP efforts were further bolstered by the Prime Minister's Kissan Package, which provided stimulus to revive the flow of agriculture financing especially in the flood affected areas. Under the Kissan Package, various measures were implemented to strengthen the agriculture sector in flood-affected regions, which included waiver of markup on outstanding small loans, interest-free loans for small and marginalized farmers, and risk coverage for banks. A subsidized scheme for purchase of farm machinery was introduced to promote mechanization and ensure national food security. Moreover, agro-based SMEs were included in SBP's Refinance Facility for Modernization of SMEs and Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme, which provided affordable loans to the agriculture sector.

SBP has also released the annual ranking of banks under the Agriculture Credit Scoring Model to bring transparency and competition among the various agriculture credit

providers. SBP's scoring model gauges the agriculture credit performance of banks against a multi-dimensional criterion with particular focus on regional and sectoral performance. Introduced in FY22, the model facilitated the banks to focus on areas where improvement is required to achieve their targets, particularly on improving qualitative aspects.

Tokyo stocks close lower

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks closed lower Wednesday on concerns over the banking sector and weak China trade data, while investors await US inflation figures for clues on Fed strategy.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index slipped 0.53 percent, or 172.96 points, to 32,204.33, while the broader Topix index trimmed 0.40 percent, or 9.16 points, to 2,282.57.

The dollar fetched 143.22 yen, against 143.40 yen seen in New York on Tuesday.

Moody's downgraded 10 US regional banks and placed another six lenders on watch for a possible cut, citing the rising costs of bank deposits and a worsening outlook for credit quality.

17-month Shahbaz coalition govt: Obituary of a civilian rule

Intiaz Alam

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif flip-flopped through the economic mess left by Imran Khan's govt to finally surrender to the IMF, to avert an imminent default. Shehbaz's focus remained on his pet construction projects, besides fiscal alms to show his magnanimity at the state's expense. Indeed, he ran a ragtag coalition without any hassle.

The PML-N monopolised all major ministries, ones related to the economy in particular. Hence, the blame for inflation and economic slowdown goes to PMLN, with dangerous consequences for the party in the next elections. In a shameful reversal of political roles, the PDM betrayed its 26-point agenda of civilian supremacy and to fill the subordinate-space forced to be left behind by the most favoured (?????)

of the military establishment.

Imran Khan having failed to retrieve his position as a protege of establishment have now turned into a rebel without a cause. On the other hand, the PDM and the PPP are competing for positions in yet another farcical elections under the tutelage of the military establishment.

Shehbaz regime is distinguished by having meekly surrendered to the Garrison's writ all around. Shehbaz helped engineer Four Coup D'Etat, which drastically reduced civilian space and civil liberties: first coup: under Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), by overriding federal ministries and discarding provincial autonomy (18th Amendment) created supra constitutional bodies to handle foreign investment and broad range of economic ministries.

The One-Window Operation through a Whole Govt body are the buzz words for military's takeover of all natural resources, agro-lands, minerals, water, power, energy, IT, AI, etc. Second Coup: surrendering parliament's supremacy by acting as a rubber stamp on the directions of GHQ.

Without quorum, the parliament legislated laws that deviate from the constitutional spirit, such as caretaker powers, amendments in the Army Act, Official Secrets Act, Digital Media Law, Privatization Law and PEMRA amendments not acceptable and dropped. Third Coup: CCI's approval of Census that paved the way to postpone elections till re-demarcation of constituencies.

Steps Against fairness of elections by implicating PTI Chairman and activists in innumerable cases, both prima facie factual and

false and empowering of hand-picked caretakers. Efforts are afoot to embargo PTI and its Chairman. Fourth Coup: By reducing civil liberties, freedom of expression and independence of media.

This is how Shehbaz has emerged as a favourite future PM of the Establishment he is so proud of being an old protege. Shehbaz has also pre-empted the chances of Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif/Maryam and Bilawal Bhutto to seek Premiership.

It's now a divide between pro and anti-Imran forces. In this confrontation, if Shehbaz has buried Charter of Democracy and "vote Ko Izat Do" narrative, an illiberal populist Imran Khan is on a war path without an end at the end of the tunnel. Worst sufferer are democracy and the people without a fair chance of franchise.

Pakistan's rice export to China surpassed USD 455 million

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's rice export to China in 2022 surpassed USD 455 million with a volume of more than one million tonnes, for the first time between China-Pakistan rice trade, said Gulam Qadir Commercial Counsellor.

"China's imports of Semi or wholly milled rice (Commodity Code: 10063020) from Pakistan touched USD 211.88 million, while two kinds of Broken rice (Commodity Code: 10064020, 10064080) reached USD 162.78 million and USD 80.74 million respectively."

Pakistani rice is getting popular in the Chinese market, he emphasized according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday.

"As per estimated, Pakistan will produce some

9 million metric tons of rice during the year and this will help to export more commodity," said Rafique Suleman, Convenor FPCCI Standing Committee on rice. "We could expect the volume to reverse decline last year."

Due to the flood-induced crop failure, in terms of volume rice export shrunk by 25 percent during the last fiscal year. Pakistan exported 3.717 million metric tons of rice including basmati and other varieties during July-June of FY23 as against 4.97 million metric ton in corresponding period of previous year. But an expected bumper crops this year will bring hope to the industry as a whole. The country's rice exports will not only be higher than previous year but likely to touch an all-

time high level, Suleman said.

Thanks to the expansion of planting area and the improvement of technology, growers will be the direct beneficiaries of the export expansion.

In addition, the ban on rice exports by India will also help to explore new export markets for Pakistani exports. Pakistan will earn USD 2.7 to USD 3 billion through export of rice during this fiscal as sufficient rice stocks will be available.

And the global food shortage caused by various factors has further pushed up export prices. Quotations for Pakistani rice exports (25 percent broken) climbed to an average of USD 503 per metric ton in May, an increase of 11.0 percent month on

month, to their highest level since August 2008.

Further, by July 15, Pakistan rice prices rose to USD 600 per metric tons.

"We started importing Pakistani rice in 2018, with the annual import volume has been stable at more than 200,000 tons in recent years.

Both basmati and non-basmati rice are within our scope. In China, basmati is used as a kind of high-end rice, mainly for Southeast Asia and South Asia restaurants.

This long-grain rice, which has a chewier taste, requires less water when cooking. It is suitable for making baked rice and hand-picked rice." Ding Yong, East China Regional Manager, Shenzhen Vintop Import and Export Co., Ltd. told Gwadar Pro.

Syngenta Pakistan awarded 'Employer of Choice' Gender Diversity Award 2023

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Syngenta Pakistan Limited, a leading agriculture innovation and technology company that provides crop protection, seeds, biologicals and digital services to millions of Pakistani farmers, has been awarded the "Employer of Choice" Gender Diversity Award 2023 by the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) and International Finance Corporation (IFC) in a high-powered award ceremony which was held in Karachi.

This award is a recognition of Syngenta Pakistan's strong commitment towards Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) which is reflected through a range of initiatives that the organization has implemented to pro-

mote gender diversity. Speaking on this, Mr. Zeeshan Hasib Baig - Country GM Syngenta Pakistan - emphasized the importance of gender diversity as a key lever for a successful organization and a healthier society as it is not just a moral imperative but is also a business imperative and reiterated his commitment of taking bold actions to disrupt the status quo and achieve greater representation of women in leadership roles. He further congratulated his team on this great achievement.

The "Employer of Choice" Gender Diversity Award by PBC and IFC is based on the Gender Diversity and Disclosure scorecard which encourages business leaders in

Pakistan to voluntarily participate in sharing best practices in gender diversity for the country's private sector. Participating companies were evaluated and scored along 5 Gender Equity Principles (GEPs) that capture gender mainstreaming practices including Leadership and Accountability, Gender Diversity (Workforce Representation), Gender Pay Gaps (Compensation and Benefits), Optimal Workplace Culture and Coaching and Mentoring for Female Employees. A total of ten employers were awarded this award for 2023.

Syngenta Pakistan, a subsidiary of Syngenta Participations AG Basel Switzerland, is the leading agriculture company and is

providing crop protection, biologicals, biopesticides, seed and other crop enhancement products. We offer complete solutions for all major crops including Cotton, Wheat, Rice, Sugarcane, Corn, Vegetables and Fruits. Naya Savera is Syngenta Pakistan's exclusive franchise network responsible for distributing our crop protection products across Pakistan. With over 850 outlets, Naya Savera along with our team helps farmers/growers in making the best choice for their crops. Syngenta revolves around addressing the challenges faced by growers in order to contribute towards sustainable agriculture growth and subsequently providing greater food security.

Lucky Cement achieves all-time high consolidated profit after tax of Rs59.5b



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Continuing its streak of surpassing milestones, Lucky Cement Limited achieved an all-time high consolidated profit after tax of PKR 59.5 billion for the year ended June 30, 2023, with PKR 10.8 billion attributed to non-controlling interests. This marks an impressive 63.5% surge compared to the same period last year, translating to an EPS of

PKR 152.97. The remarkable increase in profit includes gain on disposal made by Lucky Core Industries, a subsidiary company, of approximately 26.5% of the issued and paid-up share capital of NutriCo Morinaga (Private) Limited resulting in an after-tax gain of PKR 9.6 billion.

In response to inquiries about the financial results for the year ended June 30, 2023, a Lucky Cement spokesperson expressed

sincere gratitude for the Company's outstanding accomplishments. These achievements were attributed to the gracious blessings of the Almighty. "Our recent journey has been punctuated by significant milestones, including the commencement of profitable operations of Lucky Electric Power Plant, the strategic part-sale of NutriCo Morinaga, the announcement of a new 1.82 MT production line in

Samawah, Iraq, a substantial 3.15 MT expansion in our cement division, the strategic integration of solar power plants for self-sustained energy consumption, the successful conclusion of our 1st share buy-back initiative, and the start of a 2nd share buyback. An integral facet of our accomplishments is the unwavering dedication of our employees, who consistently exemplify a profound commitment to growth and operational efficiency. Their steadfast determination resonates in every interaction," the spokesperson elaborated.

Moreover, following the successful completion of the Company's first buy-back of 10.0 million shares, the Company has started another buy-back of 23.8 million of its own shares, slated for completion on November 20th, 2023. By repurchasing its own shares, the Company aims to optimize its capital structure and unlock additional value for its stakeholders. This buy-back initiative showcases the Company's proactive approach in managing its financial

resources, fostering investor confidence and reinforcing its commitment to maximizing long-term shareholder value.

On a consolidated basis, the Company attained a gross revenue of PKR 459.5 billion showcasing a significant 15.8% increase compared to the revenue of PKR 396.7 billion during last year. The noteworthy growth in gross revenue is mainly attributable to the full-year's commercial operations of Lucky Electric Power Company Limited.

On an unconsolidated basis, the Company reported a gross revenue of PKR 125.8 billion, which signified an increase of 15.9% as compared to the last year. The Company reported a net profit after tax of PKR 13.7 billion. Moreover, the EPS for the period is calculated at PKR 43.06, as compared to an EPS of PKR 47.31 during last year. This slight decline in the Company's profitability is attributed to lower dividend income from subsidiaries and higher tax charge during the current year.

Along with the announcement of financial

results, the Board of Directors of the Company has recommended a final dividend of PKR 18 per share.

Aligning with its growth strategy, the Company had announced the commencement of operations of Line-2, at Pezu Plant on December 22, 2022. This addition increases the production capacity of the Company's cement production by 3.15 Million Tons Per Annum (MTPA), thereby, bringing the total capacity to 15.30 MTPA. After the successful completion of the aforesaid expansion, the Company has further reinforced its rank and prominence as the largest manufacturer and exporter of cement and clinker in Pakistan.

Furthermore, to meet growing cement demand in Iraq and secure clinker supply for our associated company, Al Mabrooka Cement Manufacturing Company Limited, the decision has been made to expand clinker production capacity in Najmat Al Samawah Company for Cement Industry, Iraq. This involves adding a new 1.82 million tons per annum production line,

enhancing operational efficiency, and promoting clinker self-reliance in Iraq. Engineering contracts are in place, negotiations with potential contractors are ongoing, and construction is set to start in IQ FY24, with an estimated 18-month completion timeline.

Continuing its commitment to clean energy, post the successful 34 MW solar power project, the Company has finalized commercial negotiations for a 25 MW Solar Power Project at Karachi Plant. Procurement of essential equipment and materials is finished, with the project anticipated for completion in 2Q FY24. These investments align with the Company's goals of advancing renewable energy, reducing fuel import reliance, and enhancing cost-efficiency.

Moreover, in line with the Company's commitment towards environment sustainability, it has won CSR award in the "Green Energy Initiative" category for adopting renewable energy solutions to promote environmental conservation and ensure sustainable

business operations. The Company also secured 1st rank for its ESG reporting by the CFA Society.

The Company firmly upholds its commitment to various important causes, including education, women's empowerment, health, environmental conservation, and community development, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

Amidst ongoing economic challenges like high inflation, interest rates, and weakening currency, cement demand remains under pressure. Prospects of political stability and redirected funds for Public Sector Development offer potential economic revitalization and increased cement demand. Easing commodity super cycle effects, reflected in falling oil and coal prices, are favorable for the cement industry, boosting margins via reduced coal costs. Yet, concerns persist, with potential Pakistani Rupee devaluation and higher energy tariffs posing margin pressure and export competitiveness risks across sectors.



In brief

SBP Summer Swimming Camp continues

LAHORE (APP): Sports board Punjab's Summer Swimming Camp continued at state-of-the-art Punjab International Swimming Complex here on Wednesday where SBP's nine expert coaches are training hundreds of young male and female swimmers in two sessions daily. Director General Sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail has said that qualified trainers have been assigned duties to train potential budding swimmers. "We are quite confident these summer camps will help a lot in producing top future swimming stars," he added. He said that certificates will be distributed among all the participating male and female camp probables after the completion of SBP Swimming Summer camp. "The holding of Summer Camp is a useful activity carried out by Sports Board Punjab and young swimmers must avail this golden opportunity and polish their skills under the guidance of qualified coaches". Dr Asif Tufail said that swimming is one the most popular sports among the younger generation. "We are quite upbeat that the swimming summer camp will help a lot in further nurturing the potential of young camp probables".

2023 Oceania Cup from Aug 10

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 2023 Oceania Cup (men and women) would be played in Whangarei, New Zealand from August 10 to 13, with the winners being the first qualifiers for the 2024 Olympic Games, joining hosts France, in Paris. The Oceania Cup would be played between men's and women's teams from Australia and New Zealand, who were the only participants in the event, said a press release. The teams would face each other three times over the 4 days, with 3 points awarded for a victory, while a draw would result in both teams earning a point apiece. If the two sides were tied on points at the end of the three matches, the team with the better goal difference would take the top spot, and if this is equal, then the winner will be decided by a shootout. The team that finishes on top would become the first direct qualifier for the Olympic Games Paris 2024, joining hosts, France. The team that finishes in second place would move on to the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers 2024, where they would have a second opportunity to qualify for the Olympic Games. In the men's competition, Australia's dominance has been absolute, since the inception of the Oceania Cup, back in 1999. Since then, the event has been held 11 times and Australia has been the winner of the event in every single edition, gaining direct qualification to every Olympic Games since Sydney 2000. New Zealand would be hoping to break Australia's stronghold on the Cup and directly qualify for the Olympic Games Paris 2024. In the women's competition, Australia possesses a stellar record but has been upstaged by New Zealand on multiple occasions. Australia has been a winner in 7 editions of the Oceania Cup, while New Zealand has claimed gold in 4. New Zealand came into the 2023 Oceania Cup as defending champions, having won the 2019 edition, which gave them direct qualification to the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.



MONTREAL: Belinda Bencic of Switzerland hits a return against Alycia Parks of the United States of America on Day 3 during the National Bank Open.

Nine Cricket World Cup matches to be rescheduled

DELHI (AP): The meeting between archrivals India and Pakistan at this year's Cricket World Cup was among nine matches to be rescheduled on Wednesday, less than two months before the start of the tournament. The India-Pakistan game will now take place in Ahmedabad on Oct. 14, a day earlier than originally scheduled. The original date had been heavily criticized as it would have clashed with the start of Navratri festivities in the city and strain police resources in Ahmedabad. The Navratri week, starting Oct. 15, is celebrated with pomp and splendour across India and leads up to the festival of Diwali every year.

Further changes to the

schedule were necessary as Pakistan was set to play Sri Lanka in Hyderabad on Oct. 12, leaving only a two-day gap to the rescheduled India game. That match was moved to Oct. 10.

Two other games originally scheduled for Oct. 14 were also moved to make sure the highly anticipated India-Pakistan game is a stand-alone event. New Zealand vs. Bangladesh in Chennai will be played on Oct. 13 as a day-night game, while England vs. Afghanistan in Delhi has been moved forward to Oct. 15.

As a result, Australia-South Africa in Lucknow on Oct. 13 has also been moved forward one day. Meanwhile, England vs. Bangladesh in Dharamsala on Oct. 10 is now a day

game instead of a day-night affair to accommodate Pakistan's game against Sri Lanka.

Security concerns in Kolkata in connection to the Diwali festivities in November also led to some scheduling changes. The double-header with Australia vs. Bangladesh in Pune and England vs. Pakistan in Kolkata has been moved to Nov. 11, one day earlier than planned. In turn, India's game against the Netherlands in Bangalore was moved down one day to Nov. 12.

The World Cup will kick off in Ahmedabad on Oct. 5, with the opening game between 2019 World Cup finalists England and New Zealand. Tickets for the event will go on sale on Aug. 25.

World University Games end with spectacular closing ceremony

CHENGDU (APP): The breathtaking closing ceremony of the 31st FISU Summer World University Games was held at the Chengdu Open Air Music Park in Sichuan Province late Tuesday.

Featuring a large main stage and cutting-edge sports facilities, the Music Park provided a nice ending to the games.

Celebrating the achievements of the participating athletes, the ceremony was a showcase of music, dance, and cultural performances that reflected China's rich traditions and heritage.

The highlight of the closing ceremony was the official handover of the FISU flag to the next host city Rhine-Ruhr of Germany. This symbolic gesture signified the transfer of responsibility for organizing the next edition of the World University Games.

The closing ceremony offered a chance to athletes to come together one last

time, celebrate their achievements, and bid farewell to their fellow competitors. It was a joyous and emotional occasion as athletes reflected on their experiences and the friendships they had made during the games.

Overall, the FISU World University Games closing ceremony was a grand finale that encapsulated the spirit of unity, sportsmanship, and cultural exchange that defined the games. The ceremony served as a fitting tribute to the athletes and a celebration of the international sporting community.

"Chengdu has truly made all dreams come true," FISU President Leonz Eder told the audience.

"From the very beginning of our journey in China, we have been embraced with warmth and hospitality that words cannot fully express.

"Today as we gather, we share a bittersweet moment, on the one hand

over the last 12 days, we have witnessed the best Games ever, on the other, we must now bid a heartfelt farewell to the wonderful city of Chengdu."

Ceremony director Jia Ding said: "We want to share China's young spirit with the world and let it feel the power of youth."

A giant dove tree rose centre stage into the air before its blossoms transformed into doves, the universal symbol of peace.

Giant panda Rongbao, the mascot of the Games, performed alongside dancers dressed as pandas in a performance of music and dance specially written for the occasion and entitled: "Dreams Lighting up the Future."

"Giant panda and dove tree, ambassadors of friendship across time and space, carry the message that be it in the past, present or future, the Chinese people stand ready with the people of the world to create a brighter future," a message on the scoreboard said.



NORTHAMPTON: Prithvi Shaw made the second-highest score in English List A history, Northamptonshire vs Somerset, Metro Bank One-Day Cup.

Pakistan squads for Asia Cup, Afghanistan Series announced

PESHAWAR (APP): Inzamam-ul-Haq, the head of the national men's selection committee on Wednesday announced squads for the ACC Men's Asia Cup and the three-match One-Day International series against Afghanistan.

An 18-player squad will take on Afghanistan in Sri Lanka from August 22 to 26 and it will be trimmed to 17 players for the Asia Cup, which begins from the Multan Cricket Stadium on August 30 when Pakistan play Nepal.

Openers: Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq Middle order: Babar Azam (captain), Salman Ali Agha, Iftikhar Ahmed, Tayyab Tahir and Saud Shakeel (only for Afghanistan series).

Wicketkeepers: Mohammad Rizwan and

Mohammad Haris.

Spinners: Shadab Khan (vice captain), Mohammad Nawaz and Usama Mir Pace all-rounder: Faheem Ashraf

Pacers: Haris Rauf, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi Tayyab Tahir, Faheem Ashraf and Saud Shakeel have been included in the squad for the Afghanistan series.

Shan Masood and Ihsanullah are the two players from the squad that played New Zealand in the five ODIs in April and May to miss out.

Faheem returns to the side after two years and further adds to the balance of the side as a fast-bowling all-rounder.

His last outing in the format was during Pakistan's three-match away series against England in July 2021.

This is Tayyab's sec-

ond call-up on the ODI side. His maiden call-up came ahead of the three ODIs against New Zealand in January following a stellar show in the Pakistan Cup 2022-23 that saw him finish as the leading run-getter in the event.

The right-handed middle-order batter recently struck a scintillating century to orchestrate Pakistan Shaheens' thumping 128-run win over India A in the ACC Men's Emerging Cup final.

Saud, who does not feature in the Asia Cup squad, has played five ODIs and his last was in March 2022 when Pakistan chased down 348 against Australia with six wickets in hand in Lahore.

Shan has missed out on selection following a string of low scores, while Ihsanullah is undergoing a

rehabilitation program under the observation of the PCB's medical panel following an injury in his bowling elbow.

The team will assemble in Hambantota on August 18 with the players in Pakistan departing on August 17.

The players in Pakistan will hold a three-day camp on August 14, 15 and 16 at the National Cricket Academy, Lahore.

The squad has been finalised following consultations between the national men's selection committee — which also includes Mickey Arthur (team director), Grant Bradburn (head coach) and Hassan Cheema (secretary) — and Pakistan captain Babar Azam.

Players participating in Lankan Premier League and the Hundred will join the squad directly in Sri Lanka on 18 August.

Pakistan Shaheens beat NT Strike by 84 runs in last ODI

DARWIN (APP): Faisal Akram got 5 wickets by giving only 37 runs. The Pakistan Shaheens defeated NT Strike by 84 runs in the last One Day International match of Australian tour.

The 19-year-old left-arm spinner Faisal Akram's brilliant performance of 5 wickets for 37 runs played a key role in this victory.

In this tour, Pakistan Shaheens also played the final of the six-team T20 tournament in which they were defeated by NT Strike by 46 runs, but in this ODI match, they outclassed the rival team as a result of their brilliant bowling.

In the ODI match, Pakistan Shaheens won the toss and batted first, and the entire team was dismissed for 232 runs in 47.3 overs.

Ali Asfand was the leading scorer with 42 runs not out.

In reply, the NT Strike team was bowled out for 148 runs in the 40th over.

Pakistan Shaheens openers Basit Ali and Azan Owais gave the team a good start of 53 runs. Azan Owais scored 36 runs and Basit Ali got out after scoring 33 runs, after which none of the batsmen could play a big innings.

Wahaj Riaz scored 24, Hussain scored 7, and Captain Rohail Nazir scored 2 runs.

Pakistan Shaheens' seven wickets fell for 160 runs on this occasion. Ali Asfand and Ahmed Khan added 44 runs in the eighth wicket partnership.

Ahmed Khan was dismissed for 39 runs, which included six and two fours.

Ali Asfand was not out by scoring 42 runs off 42 balls. His innings included five fours.

Charlie Smith took 4 wickets for 31 runs from NT Strike. Tom Menzies and Jack Wood got two wickets each.

Both the NT strike openers were dismissed for a total of just seven runs after Jason Sangha and Kobe Edmondstone added 79 runs for the third wicket partnership.

Sangha was dismissed for 34 runs. Kobe Edmondstone scored 65 runs with the help of six fours and a six, but on the other hand, Faisal Akram took 5 wickets in just 28 balls, including the top scorer Kobe Edmondstone and the wicket of Jack Wood, who made a century in the T20 final. His excellent performance brought Pakistan Shaheens into a position to win the match.

Captain Rohail Nazir showed good performance in wicket keeping and took three stumps and one catch.

Short score. Pakistan Shaheens 232 runs (47.3 overs). Ali Asfand not out. Ahmed Khan 39 Charlie Smith 31 / 4 wickets.

NT strike. 148 runs. (39.3 Overs) Kobe Edmondstone 65. Faisal Akram 37 / 5 wickets.

Harmas bags U11 title of Asian Jr Super Series

ISLAMABAD (APP): Harmas Ali clinched the U11 category of the 1st Asian Junior Super Series here at Mushaf Squash Complex on Wednesday.

The championship organized by Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) includes seven age categories (BU-11, BU-13, BU-15, BU17, BU19, GU-11 & GU17). The final matches of the championship were played where

Adnan Asad graced the ceremony as Chief Guest.

In Boys U-11, Harmas Ali PAK beat Mustafa Khan PAK 12/10, 11/8, 10/12, 11/8 30 min.

In Boys U-13, Noman Khan PAK beat Ahmed Rayyan Khalil PAK 11/3, 11/9, 11/6 25 min.

In Boys U-15, Ibrahim Zeb PAK beat Mubeen Khan PAK 11/5, 11/4, 9/5, match conceded by Mubeen Khan PAK in the 3rd game.

In Boys U-17, Abdullah Nawaz PAK beat M Azan Khalil PAK 11/6, 14/12, 11/2, 40min.

In Boys U-19, Anas Ali PAK beat Usman Nadeem PAK 8/11, 6/11, 11/7, 11/4, 11/2 73m.

In Girls U-11, Maleeha Shah PAK beat Zainab Gillani PAK 11/2, 11/1, 11/2 16min.

In Girls U-17, Mehwish Ali PAK beat Mahnoor Ali PAK 11/9, 11/6, 11/6 27min.

Rahim fully focused to outshine for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Young talented badminton player Abdul Rahim was fully focused to make the nation proud by winning laurels for the country at national and international level.

Rahim, who won a gold medal in badminton in the National Special Olympics Games, said he was a resident of Rawalpindi and is currently studying here at the National Training Center for Special Persons School.

"I'm focusing on the game of badminton, acquiring technical skills along with the techniques as to excel in the game. I leave home at 6am in the morning

for the National Training Center and reach by 8am. I am getting training along with school studies," he told APP in an interview.

He said he was playing badminton for two years and won the gold medal in the National Special Olympic Games in September last year.

"My family and friends praised me for winning the gold medal, which made me encouraged and determined to take sports as a career and win medals for the country by performing well in future."

He expressed hope that if he gets a chance to compete in badminton in other countries, especially in

Germany, then he would display top notch and make the country proud.

"I request the government to provide me a job as I'm currently unemployed. If I get a job I'll be able to support my family. I have a stutter in my tongue due to which I face difficulty in speaking."

Rahim said the National Training Center was fully supporting them for school-level competitions. It may be mentioned that Rahim performed brilliantly in the badminton event of the National Special Olympics Games last year, which was an example for other special children.

Murray, Zverev master Toronto wind to advance, Ruud wins

TORONTO (Agencies): Former Toronto Masters winners Andy Murray and Alexander Zverev dispatched first-round opponents in windy conditions on Tuesday to power into the second round of the Canadian hardcourt event.

Britain's Murray worked through a marathon opening set before dominating the second for a 7-6 (7/3), 6-0 victory over Italy's Lorenzo Sonego.

The 36-year-old Scotsman, with three Toronto Masters titles on his resume, earned his first victory in the country since his 2015 trophy as he defeated the Italian in two hours, eight minutes in a challenging wind.

Germany's Zverev, who defeated Roger Federer for the 2017 Toronto Masters title, reached the second round by defeating Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor 6-4, 7-6 (7/3).

Third seed Casper Ruud began his US Open run-up after a bye, struggling at the start but wrapping up a 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 defeat of Jiri Lehecka for a 199th career ATP match win.

The Norwegian trailed 4-0 in the first-set tiebreaker but found form in his first hardcourt match of the summer to reach the third round. "I told myself not to give up, just keep holding onto the score," he said. "I saved a couple of set points."

"It was all about luck and margins and they were on my side. By the end of the second set I was hitting and serving better — I'm happy how I progressed in the match." Murray won his only previous encounter with Sonego last February in Doha, saving three



match points. Murray, ranked 40th in his opponent's 39th, also lifted the Toronto Masters trophy here in 2009 and 2010.

Murray's opening set lasted 90 minutes, with the two-time Wimbledon winner saving set points in the 10th game. He profited from Sonego's 44 unforced errors to sweep into the second round.

"I'm really pleased to have won. Those were blustery conditions," Murray said. "The wind was changing conditions during the points. 'We knew it would be like this after hitting here this morning. The breeze added a bit of stress.'"

Andy Murray said getting through the first set was a challenge. "It was tight, there were a lot of opportunities on both sides," he said. "I managed to sneak through the tiebreaker, he probably got disappointed and I relaxed a bit in the second set."

"I hope to build confidence and win a few matches," said the three-time Grand Slam champion, who exited last week in the Washington third round to Taylor Fritz. "I had success here but it was a long time ago. Hopefully I can build

some momentum." Former ATP number two Alexander Zverev, seeded 13th and playing here for the first time in four years, extended his current win streak to six matches after taking his home event in Hamburg last month.

The German battled the wind for an hour and three-quarters to prevail.

He sent down an ace for three match points and won as his opponent missed on a drop shot attempt. Alexander Zverev ended with 27 winners and 20 unforced errors — the exact reversal of Griekspoor's 20 and 27. "It was a win in tough conditions," Zverev said. "It was very windy. 'I'm just happy to get through. I hope it gets nicer to play tomorrow.'"

Britain failed to get two men into the Toronto Masters second round as 11th-seeded Cameron Norrie went down 7-5, 6-4 to weekend Los Cabos finalist Alex de Minaur of Australia.

Britain suffered another blow as Dan Evans, who took his first ATP title in 2 1/2 years on Sunday at Washington, lost to Canadian wild card Gabriel Diallo 7-6 (7/4), 7-5, the local taking his first tour-level match triumph.



In brief

Missing boy reunited with parents

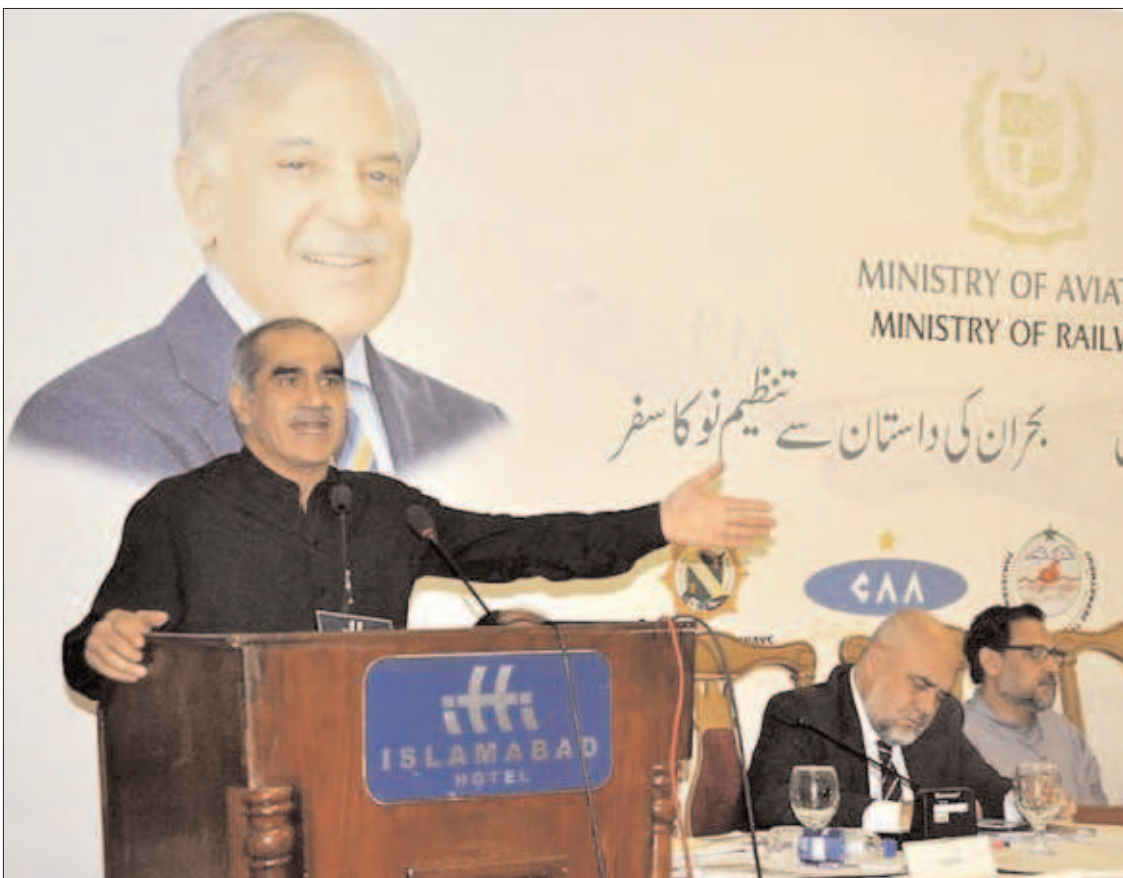
ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police Tarnol Police Station team reunited a missing boy with his parents, a Police Public Relation Officer said. According to the details, a citizen named Sajjad Ali submitted an application at Tarnol police station and stated that his son namely Abdullah had been missing and could not be traced despite hectic efforts by family members. Upon receiving the application the police team registered a case and immediately started the investigation. The police team used technical and human resources and succeeded to trace the missing boy Abdullah and reunited him safely with his family. The parents appreciated the police team's efforts and thanked the Islamabad Capital Police for immediate assistance. CPO/ DIG (Operations) Islamabad Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari said that, safety of lives and property of the citizens is our prime responsibility and no stone would be turned to secure the city.

IRSA releases 359,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 359,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 416,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1548.00 feet and was 150.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 255,700 cusecs and 226,300 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1236.95 feet, which was 186.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 37,400 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 276,300, 219,900, 259,100 and 166,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 51,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 42,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

CTO directs to remove encroachment

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan has directed to wipe out encroachment without any discrimination. CTO was of the view that illegal encroachment was the main hurdle in the smooth flow of traffic. He expressed these views while addressing a meeting held on Tuesday at the Traffic Headquarters to improve traffic management. The meeting was attended by various sectors and circles in charge, including STO Rawalpindi, Munir Ahmed Hashmi. Taimoor Khan asserted that any circle in charge found negligent in performing their duties would be held accountable. Taimoor Khan urged the initiation of legal actions against encroachers despite warnings. He also stressed that encroachments on highways would not be tolerated. Khan highlighted the strict implementation of traffic laws, especially concerning violations such as helmet-less riders, driving without a license, and underage driving, which would result in zero-tolerance. Stringent actions were advised against lane cutting, stop-line violations, and one-way rules. Taimoor Khan reiterated that no leniency would be shown towards traffic violations in the Rawalpindi district.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Aviation and Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique briefing on Insightful Interactive Discussion with the Media Personnel at local hotel. —APP Photo

BISP's Benazir Nashonuma Programme reaches 770,000 beneficiaries

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has so far reached over 770,000 lactating mothers and infants to deliver nutritious food, cash stipends and guidance under the Benazir Nashonuma initiative.

This was revealed by the Federal Minister of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri who was called on by the Country Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), Chris Kaye, at her office on Wednesday.

Shazia Marri said that the Benazir Nashonuma Programme has transitioned and expanded beyond its initial pilot project phase, now encompassing the entire country.

Presently, BISP is provid-

ing support to 770,000 lactating mothers and infants through 488 Facilitation Centers spread across Pakistan, delivering both Special Nutritious Food (SNF) and cash stipends.

The federal minister expressed her gratitude for the technical assistance provided by WFP to the BISP's Benazir Nashonuma Programme.

She highlighted that this initiative facilitates 770,000 mothers and children with specialized nutritious food and cash stipends.

Additionally, she shared that BISP is in the process of implementing an innovative payment mechanism.

Through the introduction of the "Benazir Social Protection Account" under the Benazir Income

Support Program (BISP), the government is taking a significant stride towards ensuring transparency in cash disbursements.

This novel payment system empowers women by enabling them to choose their preferred banks, ensuring direct payments into their accounts for convenient withdrawals.

The Country Director of WFP commended BISP for its commendable service delivery and pledged to continue the partnership between WFP and BISP, particularly in addressing the critical requirements of vulnerable individuals, especially during times of crisis.

Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmad and DG (CCT) were also present at the meeting.

Polio vaccination drive continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The polio immunization campaign continued on Wednesday across the country to protect children from the crippling disease.

According to official sources, trained and dedicated "Sehat Muhafiz" have been engaged in the vaccination drive to inoculate the targeted children at their doorstep.

"I urge all parents and caregivers to ensure the vaccination of eligible children during the campaign to save them from the debilitating disease. Polio is incurable, and vaccines can protect our children," Federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel said.

"The front-line health workers have been playing a vital role in keeping our children safe from the debilitating effects of polio. Despite facing many challenges, they have been working tirelessly."

"We recognize the important contributions of the health workers to achieve the goal of polio eradication," said the Minister.

Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre, Dr Shahzad Baig said, "Let's work together and play our part to protect our children from vaccine-preventable disease."

He said, "I particularly urge all parents and caregivers to get their children vaccinated instead of hiding them or refusing to take the necessary drops during all vaccination drives. It is important to realize that the polio virus still exists in our surroundings, and no child is safe until all children are truly vaccinated."

He said that the Sehat Tahhafuz Helpline 1166 and 24/7 WhatsApp Helpline 0346-777-65-46 will be available to assist parents and caregivers in reporting missed children.

He added that repeated polio vaccination campaigns are imperative for building immunity among children and preventing lifelong paralysis.

Raja Riaz seeks share of credit in averting default

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Opposition leader Raja Riaz said on Wednesday chairman PTI destabilised the country and resultant no-confidence motion was moved.

Speaking in the National Assembly, Raja Riaz said they were electSays DCs, DPOs used to pay money for lucrative transfers in Usman Buzdar's tenure ed on the PTI ticket.

"I separated myself from the PTI chief, telling him his policies were harming the country," he said.

The DCs, DPOs used to pay money for their lucra-

tive transfers during Usman Buzdar's tenure in the Punjab government.

Opposition leader Raja Riaz stated they strongly opposed the PTI chief in the no-confidence motion against him. Similarly, The PTI chief carried out the May 9 incident where the statues of the martyrs were burnt and broken.

"Shahbaz Sharif saved us from default with all his dedication. Khawaja Asif has forgotten that if the country is saved from default, we also have played a central role. We are very happy today that we have played our role to save the

country from defaulting.

"Now there is a top issue of inflation for which the government has not been able to control inflation, electricity rates are continuously increasing.

"I hope the caretaker government will take care of the poor people, saving them from clutches of inflation as it has become difficult for the poor man to survive," the opposition leader said.

He hoped the caretaker government would work to contain inflation besides supporting the legitimate policies of the current government.

Rashid hopes judiciary will take key decisions till September

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former federal interior minister Sheikh Rashid on Wednesday hoped that the judiciary would take all important decisions till September.

Taking to Twitter, he said today (Wednesday) was the last day of the government but the rulers were going to increase the unit price by Rs6, putting a financial burden of Rs721 billion on electricity consumers.

Rashid said the name of the caretaker prime minister was still hanging in the air and it would land in a day or two. "The rulers are not in a position to face the masses that's why they are employing delaying tactics in the name of census."

"We are waiting for the

Election Commission's decision after the new census," the seasoned politician added.

The ex-minister said the constitutional issues would benefit those who wanted to delay the elections. Keep in mind that the Senate elections are also to be held in March and all political decisions are in courts and revolving around them.

He said that people were finding it difficult to make both ends meet that's why they had no interest in politics. Economic destruction, political chaos, constitutional destruction and mockery of law had become the destiny of Pakistan's politics.

Bilawal is seeking an easy way through 'charter of democracy' which can provide him and Maryam

Nawaz 30 years, he claimed. Rashid said why the rulers were escaping elections if they had they made considerable progress in one-and-a-half years. "Why are they not going to the public," Rashid asked.

He said those talking about the protection of constitution now want to extend elections duration beyond 90 days. "We had approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) 24- 25 times as our affairs are not in order," he added.

He said the stock exchange shed by 1,000 points in a day and dollar price rose to Rs302. "One million people are leaving Pakistan and the condition and political issues of Pakistan are going from bad to worse."

ANF recovers 32 kg drugs in six operations; arrests 7

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 32 kg of drugs and arrested seven accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that in an operation, 300 grams of heroin concealed in beauty cream in the passenger's baggage was recovered at Islamabad Airport.

The accused resident of Upper Dir was leaving for Jeddah on flight number QR-615.

In another operation, a

husband and wife, residents of Hangu, were arrested at Islamabad Airport. A total of 60 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from their possession. The accused were leaving for Qatar on flight number PK-287.

350 grams of ice was recovered from the possession of two bikers intercepted in PWD Town Islamabad. 297 grams of MDMA was recovered from a parcel confiscated from a courier office in Rawalpindi. The parcel was booked from the Netherlands to Karachi.

10 kg heroin and 7 kg ice drug were recovered from a

motorcycle intercepted on the RCD highway, Hub. During the operation, an accused resident of Panjgur was also arrested.

14.4 kg hashish was recovered from the secret cavities of a Honda car checked near the Mansehra toll plaza. An accused resident of Charsadda who was trying to smuggle hashish from Peshawar to Mansehra was arrested during the operation.

Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: Diplomatic women performing traditional dance during the 56th Anniversary of the ASEAN Day celebration at a local hotel

Govt approves new National Aviation Policy -2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Wednesday said that the federal government has approved the new National Aviation Policy -2023 to help reviving the national carrier and promoting public-private joint ventures.

Addressing a press conference, the minister expressed the hope that under this new policy all missing aspects will be covered and private investors will be encouraged to invest in this sector.

He said that the policy will also help in promotion of the domestic aviation industry, attract private investment for the management and development of new airports, increasing facilities for passengers, improving

consumers' protection and encouraging aviation sector.

He said that the privatization or public-private investment is the only option to improve the standard of aviation sector in Pakistan as attracting international brands is not possible when the sector is working in limited resources. He said that the capturing the business of international brands is the need of the hours to increase business activities at country's airports to increase revenue generation.

He said that the Islamabad Airport was being outsourced through international competitive bidding for 15 years but no employee would lose job. He said that the outsourcing does not mean that airports are being sold.

He said that the government had decided to outsource Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi airports. He said that the Civil Aviation Authority has issued tender for outsourcing of Islamabad Airport while applications have been sought by November 8 and so far 25 applications have been received.

He said that many countries have adopted the trend of outsourcing their airports for revenue generation including India that had planned to outsource its 25 airports. He said that the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was in a pathetic state despite efforts. However, he added, "We have laid the foundation to improve it."

The minister said that the

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has inked an agreement with the New York City Government to lease out Roosevelt Hotel in the US state. The Roosevelt Hotel will be operated by the New York city local corporation for a period of three years, he added.

He said that under the agreement, the US firm will provide residential facilities to housing migrants in the hotel. He added the management had got an opportunity offered by the New York City government to utilize the hotel's 1,025 rooms for migrant business.

"It will generate \$220 million of investment for Pakistan with \$18 million as clear profit." He said that the Roosevelt Hotel

was shut down during the coronavirus pandemic.

Replying to a question on Hazara Express incident, he denied any chance of terrorist attack and said that the negligence of Pakistan Railways officers and lack of resources are the main reasons behind this incident. He added that six officers have been suspended and the matter is being investigated.

"The responsible persons will be held to account but the actual responsibility lies in the lack of resources," the minister said.

Khawaja Saad Rafique, who is also Minister for Railways has termed the Main Line-1 (ML-1) project "a backbone for the railways". He stressed that the project, which was conceived under

the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), should be taken forward on a priority basis.

He said that the special directions have been issued to the Pakistan Railways administration to develop a strategy to make the production units of the railway profitable and private investors should also be given opportunities to join the railways production units.

He said that a detailed business plan of the Pakistan Railways Freight Transportation Company (PRFTC) has been prepared to take all possible steps to increase the revenue of the PRFTC, saying that the railway companies would have to increase revenue by getting business from private projects as well.

Seven passengers rescued

HELMAND (Agencies): Officials in Helmand province on Wednesday said they have rescued seven members of a family after their vehicle broke down in the desert. Consisting of three men, one woman and three children, was stranded at 11 a.m on Tuesday in the desert in Bahramcha district. According to the statement, local authorities received information about the accident at 10 p.m. and a rescue operation started under the leadership of the district governor.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 22, 1445 — Thursday, August 10, 2023

Weekly market price

KABUL (Agencies): In the first week of June 2023, most of the main commodity's prices have negligibly increased compared to last week, except for cooking oil and sugar. However, the prices of rice, sugar & pulses are substantially high compared to the 3-year average. Both purchasing power of unskilled casual labour and livestock keepers declined by 2%, mainly due to increased wheat prices & decreased labour wage as well as sheep price compared to the previous week.

Bodies of 800 refugees repatriated in past year

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation announced Wednesday that the bodies of 800 Afghan refugees have been repatriated from a number of countries in the past year.

According to officials, 2,900 Afghan citizens, who were being trafficked, were rescued and returned to the country.

Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Mohammad Arsla Kharoti said in the government's accountability program that

more than 952,000 Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan, Iran and other countries in the past year.

He added that in one year, around 4,000 Afghans have been released from the prisons of Pakistan and Iran and transferred to Afghanistan.

There are seven million Afghan refugees abroad and another three million internally displaced people, he said.

Officials of the Ministry of Refugees also stated that

discussions are ongoing regarding the release of the remaining Afghan prisoners in Pakistan and Iran. They called on hosting countries to treat refugees well.

The officials said that they are working on ways to attract national and international aid for returnees, holding multilateral meetings to solve the problems faced by Afghan refugees abroad and facilitating the return of refugees are among the focal areas of the ministry this year.

Ministry reports 98% of SIM cards now regulated

KABUL (Agencies): The acting Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology said on Wednesday during his accountability report to the nation that the distribution of SIM cards in the country is now almost completely regulated.

Najibullah Haqqani said that after the establishment of the Islamic Emirate, internet services costs have dropped by between 40 and 60 percent and air time costs have dropped by about 30 percent.

He said the ministry has collected millions of dollars in revenue in the past year and currently 23 million SIM cards are active in the country.

In the past year, 39 postal service companies that were operating illegally in Kabul have closed down, unethical websites have terminated and others modified, Haqqani added.

Some officials of this ministry say that in the current year, this ministry has been able to set a ceiling for the tariffs of telecommunication companies, and according to this ceiling, the rate of domestic calls has decreased from 2.58 to 1.58 afghanis, and the rate of foreign calls has been reduced to 2 afghanis per minute.

According to officials, in order to improve the quality of internet services in the country, 641 sites have been changed from 2G to 3G and for the first time, mobile devices have been activated to determine the quality of telecommunications services in the country.

‘Central bank lacks independence from Taliban’

KABUL (Al Jazeera): A US-funded assessment of Afghanistan's central bank found that it lacks independence from the Taliban administration and adequate safeguards against money laundering and terrorism financing, a US watchdog has told the US Congress.

The US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), in a quarterly report to Congress on Tuesday, disclosed that the assessment found flaws with the management of the central bank, known as Da Afghanistan Bank, or DAB.

The DAB “lacked independence from the Taliban regime and had deficiencies in anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism”, SIGAR said the assessment showed.

The US Agency for International Development funded the review by an outside contractor.

The finding that DAB lacks independence from the Taliban, which returned to power after the August 2021 US troop pullout, apparently referred to the three Taliban officials who oversee the bank and are under US and UN sanctions.

Concerns in Washington and other capitals about the bank's leadership and anti-money laundering safeguards are at the heart of a standoff over the Taliban's demand for the return of DAB cash frozen in other countries since their takeover.

Half of about \$7bn frozen in the US Federal Reserve Bank of New York was placed in the Swiss-based trust fund. The rest is being sought in lawsuits against the Taliban brought by families of victims of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. The Taliban harboured al-Qaeda fighters who plotted the attacks.

A US Treasury official told the Reuters news agency last month on condition of anonymity that Washington will not support a return to DAB of Swiss-based trust fund assets until the bank shows it is free “from political influence and interference.”

Muttaqi tells national cricket team they are role models for all Afghans



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a meeting with the national cricket team on Tuesday that they stand as role models for the nation.

“When you win on the cricket field, an engineer thinks about winning in his profession, a doctor thinks about winning in his profession, a teacher thinks that in his profession, he

will present qualified individuals so that the country can develop in all areas,” Muttaqi said.

He stated that the Afghan team managed to be among the best teams in the world under difficult conditions.

“It is a source of happiness that every section praises you. No one opposes you. It is hoped that you will also remain

committed to national and Islamic interests... Religion does not conflict with sports. With your religiosity, hundreds of thousands of young people will acquire religiosity,” Muttaqi said.

He wished the team success in the upcoming series against Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in the Asia Cup and the World Cup.

In the meeting, Mirwais

Ashraf, acting chairman of the Afghanistan Cricket Board, said that since he secured the post, there has been no interference from the government in the appointments in the board and selection of players.

“We have said at the international level that the cricket board is independent and there is no political interference in it,” Ashraf said.

Iran demands clarity on 1998 killing of diplomats in Mazar-e-Sharif

KABUL (Agencies): The Iranian Foreign Ministry urged Afghanistan's interim Taliban administration to provide more details regarding the 25-year-old “terrorist” incident that claimed the lives of eight Iranian diplomats and a journalist in Mazar-i-Sharif.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry condemned the

“bitter and unforgettable” atrocity in a statement on its anniversary, honoured those who lost their lives and urged the Taliban administration to provide “clarity” on the incident.

The Taliban stormed the Iranian consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif on August 8, 1998, killing journalist Mahmood Saremi and eight diplomats.

People condemned the carnage throughout the world. Meanwhile, the ministry added that it was “in contradiction with the moral, humanitarian and international commitments.”

Since then, Iran has declared August 8 to be National Reporter Day.

Iran accused the Taliban of being responsible for the

deaths following the attack, but the Taliban denied this, saying that “renegade forces” had killed the Iranians instead.

The statement also emphasized establishing an inclusive administration in Afghanistan representing all ethnic groups, bringing peace and progress to the war-torn country.

Acting Defense Minister visits 209 Al-Fath Army Corps

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of National Defense Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqub Mujahid visited the 209 Al-Fath Army Corps and said that the ministry actively works for the timely supply of necessary equipment to all military divisions across the country.

A statement from the Defense Ministry stated Acting Minister of Defense Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqub met with the commanders of 209 Al Fatah Army Corps and cadets of the training center of the corps.

During the meeting, Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqub Mujahid said that the Mujahideen should always strengthen unity among military ranks, obey their elders, work for the stability of the Islamic system,



and the protection of national interests.

He also directed brigade

commanders and officials to prioritize the safety of the Afghan nation and prom-

ised to supply the necessary equipment to all military units across the country.

Kunar residents want rehabilitation of some monuments completed

ASADABAD (Pajhwok): Some residents in eastern Kunar province have asked the government to complete the rehabilitation projects of historic monuments in the province.

They said rehabilitation work on a mosque and a shrine was started during the past regime which is now left incomplete.

Mohammad Shoiab Gharawal, the resident of Adamkhelo locality in Marwawa district, said: “The rehabilitation work on Mawlawi Sahib Shrine in Watapur district and Hazrat Ghofran Baba historic mosque started during the past regime and some work was done, but due to recent rainfall it was damaged and now facing serious threat of eradication.”

He asked the government to resume the rehabilitation of these projects soon and complete them.

Rasoul Mohammad Khaksar, the resident of Nishgam district in Watapur district,

said: “The Mawlawi Sahib Shrine in our area is over 100 years old and its rehabilitation work was started during the past regime which is now half completed.” He said the provincial Information and Cultural Affairs Department should pay attention to the rehabilitation of historic monuments.

Mawlawi Monibullah Afghan, head of the

Information and Cultural Affairs Department, said the completion of some historic sites rehabilitation work had been discussed with the centre but still work could not be resumed.

He said the rehabilitation work on Hazrat Ghofran Baba Mosque is 80 percent completed. Its rehabilitation work was started during the past regime at the

cost of nine million af.

He said: “The Mawlawi Sahib Shrine which is over 300 years old gets 20 percent of its rehabilitation work done during the past regime, over four million af was allocated for the scheme.” He said a large number of historic places situated in Kunar which required serious attention and rehabilitation work.



IRC: 30m people remain in dire need of assistance



KABUL (TOLONews): The International Rescue Committee said that almost 30 million people remain in dire need of assistance as funding shortfalls jeopardize the humanitarian response after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan.

The IRC also warned that cuts to humanitarian aid for Afghanistan have contributed towards a 60% increase in the number of people in need alongside economic collapse, climate change, and reduced access to basic services.

“Since August 15th 2021, Afghanistan has continued to suffer from a rapid economic collapse. Ordinary Afghans have paid the price; people who previously had jobs and were self-sufficient are now reliant on humanitarian aid and many families can no longer afford to feed themselves,” said Salma Ben Aissa, IRC Afghanistan Director, as quoted in the statement. “Two years later the economy remains cut off from

international systems and 28.8 million people require humanitarian assistance, while nearly the entire population lives in poverty. Almost 80% of those in need are women and girls.”

Mir Shikib Mir, an economist, said that the lack of recognition of the Islamic Emirate directly affects the aid distribution process.

“The reason is lack of recognition of the Taliban regime which has directly affected the aid process to Afghanistan. Another reason is the Taliban's interference in assistance,” he said.

This comes as the residents of Kabul called on the interim government and aid organizations to distribute their assistance transparently to the people.

“In the past, I was making even 500 Af on a daily basis. I now cannot even earn 200 Af,” said Sayed Naim, a resident of Kabul.

“The people are so worried. There is a spike in prices,” said Mohammad Ishhaq, a resident of Kabul. This comes as the

Ministry of Economy said that the continuation of assistance in the current situation is important for Afghanistan.

“The international assistance should be continued to the people of Afghanistan and this assistance should be in the field of infrastructure and development,” said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy minister of Economy.

According to the IRC Afghanistan director, this year, “in the face of significant challenges, humanitarian actors have been able to maintain and expand their activities to deliver lifesaving assistance to over 17 million Afghans. Thanks to the tenacity and dedication of Afghan aid workers, whose commitment to the Afghan people has never wavered, organizations like the IRC have been able to deliver emergency support to families in remote communities who were unable to receive support before August 2021 when the conflict was ongoing.”



RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, COAS shaking hands with jawans during his visit to Tilla Field Firing Ranges, Jhelum.

Court adjourns Imran's plea for transfer to Adiyala

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice (CJ) Justice Aamer Farooq said on Wednesday that investigation did not mean harassing somebody.

During the hearing of the petition filed by former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan for his transfer from Attock Jail to Adiyala Jail, counsel for Imran Sher Afzal Marwat told the court that it was on the court's directives that he and other lawyers had gone to the jail yesterday to meet his client, but the jail authorities refused to let them in. The CJ asked whether there was a specific time for meeting with the jail inmates. Advocate Marwat informed the court that visitors were allowed to meet prisoners by 6:00 in the evening. "Yesterday when we went to see Imran, the jail administration did not allow us to meet him, saying the time was over," he replied.

CJ Farooq said everybody, including prisoners, had rights. "A prisoner should get that right which has been guaranteed to him by the constitution," he said, adding, "The jail administration cannot disallow inmate's meeting with his lawyer." Imran's lawyer also raised the issue of appearance of his colleague Naeem Haider Panjtoha before the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) team yesterday. "My colleague was questioned for nine hours," he told the court, adding, "Grilling somebody for so many hours amounted to illegal detention."

The chief justice asked as to who would decide whether to send the PTI chairman to Adiyala or some other jail. Imran's lawyer opined that the court only had to determine whether the prisoner's request for his transfer from jail was done with a mala fide intent. The court then adjourned hear-

ing of the case until Friday.

SC stops authorities from arresting PTI chief in lawyer murder case: The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday barred authorities from arresting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman till August 24 in a case pertaining to the murder of lawyer Abdul Razzaq Shar in Quetta.

A three-member bench led by Justice Yahya Afridi and comprising Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Hassan Azhar Rizwi issued the directives while hearing Imran Khan's plea seeking to quash the case. At the outset of the hearing, SC judges and the applicant's lawyer Amanullah Kanrani have a heated exchange of words. During the hearing, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizwi asked Amanullah to sit down. At which, lawyer Kanrani raised objections on the bench hearing lawyer murder case against PTI chief.

KP CM launches tree plantation drive

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The caretaker Chief Minister KP Muhammad Azam Khan on Wednesday launched Monsoon Tree Plantation campaign 2023 by planting a sapling in the lawn of Chief Minister's House Peshawar.

Provincial caretaker cabinet members Bakht Nawaz Khan, Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakakhel and relevant higher authorities of the forest department were also present on the occasion. Briefing the chief minister about monsoon plantation drive, it was told that during the campaign, more than 13 million saplings will be planted across the province. The chief minister was also informed that under the 10 billion tree project, the total area of forests in the province has been increased by 6.3%. Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister lauded the efforts of KP forest and wildlife department in promoting tree plantation.

GOVERNMENT OF SINDH TAKES ANOTHER HISTORIC STEP

BY PROVIDING HOMES AND LAND TITLES TO THE DISPLACED FLOOD AFFECTEES

The Government of Sindh remains committed to restoring hope and normalcy in the lives of

2million

families affected by the devastating floods of 2022. In addition to financial assistance, the government has taken a significant step forward by granting land titles to the beneficiaries.

In a bid to empower flood-affected families across various districts in Sindh, Pakistan, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party **Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** has embarked on a transformative endeavor in District Ghotki. This initiative not only grants ownership rights to families but will enable them to rebuild their homes and rebuild their lives.



SINDH GOVERNMENT
AT THE FOREFRONT OF
SERVING ITS PEOPLE

INF/KRY/3549/2023



Our Mission: Free, Quality Health Services for All

Inauguration of SIUT Medical Complex and 200 bedded Child Health Institute in Sukkur

As part of Sindh Government's commitment to make modern medical facilities available across the province, **Bilawal Bhutto Zardari**, inaugurated **Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT)** in Sukkur which is spread over **27 acres of land** providing **170 bedded medical complex**.

Moreover, with the support of South Korea, the Sindh Government has also constructed **200 bedded Child Health Institute**.

The **Child Health Institute** has **Pediatric OPD, Emergency along with Radiology, Day Care and ICU facilities for children**.

These modern medical facilities will not only benefit the people of Sukkur city but also many other people living in nearby cities.

Khidmat main sab say aagay – Sindh



INF/KRY/3543/2023



Government of Sindh