

Two injured in Quetta blast

QUETTA (INP): Two people were injured in blast at decorations shop in Quetta on Thursday, police said. The blast which took place at a decoration shop located at Moti Ram road of Quetta left two people injured. SSP Operation Zohaib Mohsin said that the blast could be outcome of fireworks as firecrackers were present in the shop. However, the SSP Operations said that investigations into the incident were underway.

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Cop gunned down

PESHAWAR (APP): A police constable was shot dead by unknown gunmen here Thursday, police said. Constable Sarwar Shah was going for duty when came under attack in the limit of Bhana Mari police station. He was rushed to hospital but lost battle of life before receiving medical attention. KP CM Azam Khan, police and relatives of the Shaheed constable attended his funeral prayer at Malik Saad Shaheed Police Lines.

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Nawaz will return next month: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif would come back to Pakistan next month and face his cases in courts.

The prime minister, in an interview with a private news channel, said after the formation of the caretaker government he would visit London to consult Nawaz Sharif on his plan for return. Nawaz Sharif would lead the election campaign of his party and would be the next prime minister for the fourth time if the PML-N won the next election, he added.

The prime minister said last night the president signed the advice to dissolve the National Assembly and he had talked with the coalition partners about the caretaker prime minister and the decision in that regard would be made in the next three days. "Tomorrow we will hopefully finalize a name for the post of caretaker prime minister," he said, adding he would further consult the matter with the allied parties and Nawaz Sharif.

He said as he had been saying all along he would hand over the government to the caretaker set-up and the Election Commission would decide about the date for new elections. The Council of Common Interests (CCI) had already approved the new digital census and the election would be held according to it, he added. "We have followed the Constitution and now the institutions have the responsibility to hold the elections," he remarked, adding he desired that elections should be held as soon as possible. Shehbaz pointed out that he led the shortest government of 16 months formed by the coalition parties of various ideologies and thinking.

"We proved to the people that the coalition parties were united for sake of the country. We performed our responsibilities in the best interests of the state." He said after his taking charge of office the country faced devastating floods and the government within its limited resources pro-

Agriculture, IT, minerals priority areas under SIFC, says Shehbaz

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) established under a collaborative approach had prioritized five key areas of national economy, including agriculture, information technology, mines and minerals, defence production and energy. The prime minister, in a post on social media platform X, said, "This institutional arrangement that has representation of all stakeholders, offers one-window facility to fetch foreign investment to unlock the potential in the select areas. SIFC is an economic revival plan that has been carefully thought through and is being implemented under the whole-of-the-government approach."

He said, "At the end of government's tenure, it is apt for me to take stock of the last sixteen months since the coalition government assumed office through the constitutional process of no-confidence and share my perspective with the nation." "The political parties that formed the government have different political manifestos and agendas. Despite being political rivals, we chose to come together on a national agenda shared and owned by us all. The last sixteen months saw how decision-making by consensus became the norm. I consider it a major step forward in our democratic evolution," he added. The prime minister said, "Among the crises that challenged me personally, giving me many sleepless nights was saving the country from the threat of default in particular and stabilizing the economy in general. I would never have forgiven myself had such a scenario (God forbid) come to pass during my time in office. We have yet to fully grasp the consequences of the country defaulting on its international obligations. "Secondly, restoring Pakistan's prestige, honour and credibility as a reliable partner, and friend in the comity of nations was another challenge that we dealt with collectively. Thanks to our collective efforts, Pakistan has largely repaired the damage and emerged as a responsible member of the international community. We have revived our trust with our brotherly countries, including China, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, etc. CPEC has not only been put back on track but the second phase is also underway.

vided timely relief to the people, took steps for their rehabilitation and transparently distributed the aid that came from foreign countries.

The biggest contribution of his government, he said, was that Pakistan was saved from default and for that his government went through a difficult phase of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF managing director at one point in a meeting with him in Paris said that no time was left for revival of the programme but later an agreement was reached for loan of three billion dollars, he recalled.

The PM said in the four years of the previous government, relations with friendly and brotherly countries were damaged and long time friends of Pakistan were alienated. He said the countries like Saudi Arabia unconditionally came to the rescue of Pakistan on numerous difficult occasions in the past, provided monetary assistance to it and gave oil on deferred payment for three years but despite all that the previous government could not maintain better ties with the brotherly country.

(Continued on Back Page)



ISLAMABAD: Leader of Opposition Raja Riaz Ahmad called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

PM, Opp leader to meet again today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Raja Riaz met with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday as part of the consultation process for the selection of the caretaker prime minister.

After detailed deliberation, the two leaders decided to meet again tomorrow (Friday) to reach a consensus on selecting a name for the caretaker prime minister. As per the constitution, the prime minister had invited the opposition leader to a meeting regarding the appointment of the caretaker prime minister.

The meeting to consult the name of the caretaker prime minister was held in a cordial environment, said a press release issued by the Prime Minister Office.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and discussed the prevailing political situation in the country.

The Chairman Senate paid tribute to the prime minister for amicably leading the coalition government for 15 months and for stabilizing the economy.

Moreover, former members of the National Assembly Ranalradat and Ahmed Raza Maneka called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In the meeting, they discussed the overall political situation in the country, a PM Office statement said.

PPP to protect Pak's true social values: Bilawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI / ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that only his party can end the politics of hatred and division from the country, and bring social justice to all the backward sections, including the minorities.

According to the press release issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, in his message on the National Minorities Day, has further said that the protection of the rights of minorities is also the observance of the Constitution. "Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah made it clear in his historic speech of August 11, 1947 that all citizens will have equal rights and religious freedom in the new state established under his leadership," he reminded.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the PPP has always taken a fair and practical approach regarding the protection of the rights and interests of minorities, and the 1973 Constitution is a clear example, which guarantees equal rights to all minorities. He recalled that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had taken several revolutionary measures during her tenure as the Prime Minister to solve the problems of minorities

and for their progress and welfare, including the establishment of the Ministry of Minority Affairs. He also paid tribute to President Asif Ali Zardari for deciding to celebrate August 11 as the National Minorities Day and said that taking everyone into confidence and moving forward together is the vision of President Zardari.

Chairman PPP said that his party is the only party in the country, which has given tickets and elected its non-Muslim workers to the general seats of the national and provincial assemblies besides giving them representation in the Senate, adding that compared to other parties, PPP also gave the largest representation to the minority community in the cabinet of its governments. "Legislative and practical steps taken by PPP governments regarding the rights and progress of non-Muslim citizens are unprecedented," he added.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari paid tribute to all the minorities of the country for contributing much more than their number in nation-building and progress of the country, adding that Pakistan's majority and minority communities have been living with brotherly ties for centuries, and now no one can be allowed to tear apart the social fabric.

ECP bans transfers, postings

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday banned transfers and postings on the federal level until the formation of a caretaker setup.

The development came following President Dr Arif Alvi's assent to the premature dissolution of the National Assembly after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif forwarded the summary. In a letter sent to the Establishment Division, the electoral body said that the National Assembly has been dissolved, adding that all the transfers and postings should be stopped until the formation of a caretaker setup.

The ECP's letter also said that the interim government will take charge soon. "It has been learnt that transfer and postings of officers have been planned in ministries and divisions on a large scale," said the ECP, urging that any such decision should be avoided until the interim government comes.

The transfers and postings can take place as per the law and policy after the interim government takes charge, added the letter. With the dissolution of the lower house of parliament, the federal cabinet also stood dissolved.

After the dissolution of the National Assembly, a process to appoint a caretaker prime minister will begin under Article 224-A of the Constitution. PM Shehbaz and Leader of the Opposition Raja Riaz will hold consultations to finalise the name of the interim prime minister.

Marriyum urges journalists, media workers to remain united

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Information Secretary of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and former Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday urged the journalists and media workers to remain united and ensure implementation of PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023, which would replace the 2002 PEMRA Ordinance, a black law introduced by Perviz Musharraf.

Marriyum Aurangzeb thanked all the media organizations including All Pakistan Newspaper Society (APNS), Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), Parliamentary Reporters

Association (PRA), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) for their guidance and support in the preparation of the PEMRA Amendment Bill 2023.

During her visit to National Press Club here, she said that for the past over 12 months, consultations were held with all stakeholders for the preparation of the Bill. She said that the rights of working journalists and media workers have been protected in the Bill as the issuance of government advertisements has been linked to payment of salaries and dues of the journalists and media workers. Moreover, the rule of minimum wages would now be applicable for media organiza-

tions, she added. The former minister said that the outgoing government had introduced Health Insurance Card scheme for journalists and media workers and had created a fund for payment of Rs 4 million to the families of those who die in the line of duty.

She ruled out the impression given by a certain lobby that the Bill was prepared in haste or it was being passed on the instructions of someone. The former minister also rubbished the impression that she had withdrawn the Bill from the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting under pressure of some persons.

19 members of KP caretaker cabinet resign

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa interim Information Minister Feroze Jamal said on Thursday that nineteen members of the caretaker cabinet in the province, including him, had submitted their resignations to interim Chief Minister Azam Khan in light of the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) instructions.

The ECP had directed the caretaker CM last month to immediately sack his ministers, advisers and special assistants "involved in politics" to ensure free and fair electoral exercise in the province. The instructions were issued after PTI KP chief Ali Amin Khan Gandapur wrote a letter — which was signed by 52 ex-MPAs — to the ECP, seeking a level-playing field for all political parties in the coming general elections.

"The CM told us the election commission has made it clear that he needed to constitute a new non-political interim cabinet as all of its current members had political associations," Jamal told media on Thursday, adding that 19 of them had resigned and the rest could not as they were out of Peshawar. "Those who are out of the city are returning [to submit their resignations]. But in case they are unable to resign for any reason, they would be de-notified tomorrow," he

said. Jamal added that it was "too early to say when the resignations will be accepted".

A caretaker government has been at the helm at KP since January when the provincial cabinet was dissolved after PTI Chairman Imran Khan had vowed to disassociate himself from the "current corrupt political system" by quitting the assemblies where his party was in power. Last month, 52 former MPAs from the PTI's KP chapter approached the ECP seeking a level-playing field for all political parties in the coming general elections.

They were signatories on a letter written Gandapur to the ECP, which said: "The conduct of KP caretaker government from its inception has raised serious concerns about its impartiality and intentions towards PTI. This is evident not only from its pressers and statements but also from the very composition of the entire cabinet, which consists almost exclusively of nominees from parties of Pakistan Democratic Movement and their allies like PPP and ANP." The PTI letter said that "admission along with the blatant interference and alleged corruption by the office of the governor" was made by the representatives of the ANP, PPP and PML-N during talk shows on news channels.

رایگاں ایک بھی قطرہ نہیں جاتا
لاتا ہے رنگ شہیدوں کا لہو زمانے میں

The government of Sindh has increased perks and privileges for the martyrs of Sindh Police

▪ Thank you Mr. Asif Ali Zardari ▪ Thank you Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari
▪ Thank you Mr. Murad Ali Shah ▪ Thank you Mr. IG Sindh



We are highly indebted and thankful to the Government of Sindh on their feelings and care for the families of Sindh Police martyrs.

We also pray for the IG Sindh and value his efforts from the core of our hearts.

Thank you Government of Sindh
Long Live Sindh Police
Long Live Pakistan
From the heirs of Sindh Police martyrs

INF/KRY/3591/2023



Rain in city brings relief from humidity

LAHORE (APP): After days of unbearable heat and humidity, the citizens heaved a sigh of relief on Thursday afternoon with scattered rain in the provincial capital which turned weather pleasant.

The downpour occurred in different localities of the city broke intensity of humidity 65 per cent with maximum temperature 36 degrees Celsius.

In some areas, the rain added to woes and miseries of motorists and pedestrians as the rainwater inundated on portions of roads and roadsides. Frequent traffic jams were witnessed on a number of roads due to inundated rainwater and slippery conditions.

The maximum rainfall was recorded in Gulshan-e-Ravi 71 milli-metre while Pani Wala Talab, Laxmi Chowk and Upper Mall received 49 mm, 46 mm and 35 mm, respectively.

"Hot and humid weather is expected in most parts of the country. However, rain-wind/thundershower is expected in northeast Punjab, Potohar region while gusty/dust raising winds are likely in central and southern parts of the country during the next 24 hours", daily weather report said.

Additional IGP inaugurate traffic checkpoint

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Javed Alam Odho on Thursday inaugurated the Firozabad Traffic Checkpoint in District East.

The city police chief inspected the section officer's office, record room, wireless room, staff room and mobile workshop and other vehicles in the post.

DiGP - Traffic gave a detailed briefing to the Additional IGP Karachi regarding the traffic checkpoint and described the utility of the checkpoint in terms of traffic control. Javed Alam Odho issued necessary instructions to the officers and directed the police to be kind to the citizens and requested the public to abide by the law and cooperate with the police. The SSP East, SP - Traffic and other police officers were present on the occasion.

10 killed, 1152 injured in 1113 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least ten persons were killed while 1152 injured in 1113 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 564 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 588 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that 584 drivers, 43 underage drivers, 123 pedestrians, and 455 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics showed that 279 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 288 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by 77 in Multan with 81 victims and at third Gujranwala with 75 RTCs and 68 victims.

Punjab govt releases Rs3 billion for govt hospitals

LAHORE (NNI): In an effort to improve the condition of government hospitals in the province, the Punjab government, on the special instructions of Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, on Thursday released Rs3 billion for their repair and renovation.

Over Rs30 million were released for Lahore's Mayo Hospital; Rs300 million for Faisalabad's Allied Hospital, Multan's Nishtar Hospital and Lahore's Children Hospital each.

Similarly, the provincial government released Rs500 million for Lahore's General Hospital; Rs200 million for Lahore's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, and Rs900 million for Lahore's Jinnah Hospital. The chief minister visited Liberty police station in Gulberg and reviewed the working of police personnel at the front desk.

Expressing his annoyance that no action had been taken on people's complaints even after the passage of 24 hours, he

directed the cops manning the desk to ensure that action was taken on time.

CM Naqvi directed the police station staff to not only intimate complainants about registration of their FIRs through SMS but also through e-mail so that they could be spared the agony of visiting the station frequently.

On the occasion, a couple told the chief minister that they had been forced to bribe some policemen deployed at the Qaddafi Stadium. Taking notice of their complaint, he ordered the SP Model Town to take action against the guilty cops.

He also checked the roznamcha (daily register), treasury, investigation wing and Gulberg traffic sector.

CM Naqvi also visited the anti-car lifting cell and inquired from the prison inmates about their cases.

He ordered that work on improving the condition of the police station should be completed at the earliest.

CS orders I-Day celebration with grandeur

LAHORE (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman on Thursday issued directions to all the deputy commissioners regarding celebrations of the Independence Day in a befitting manner.

He directed this while presiding over a high-level meeting here at the Civil Secretariat.

The meeting reviewed preparations to mark the Independence Day and decided that fireworks display would be held in all district headquarters at 12 night on August 13, while concerts of national songs would be organized in all districts at 8pm on August 14.

The Chief Secretary Punjab said that freedom was a great blessing, it should be valued. He said the purpose of celebrating Independence Day with grandeur was to make the young generation aware of the importance of freedom. He said that living

nations celebrate Independence Day with great enthusiasm.

The meeting was briefed that a comprehensive plan had been prepared to observe the Independence Day with national zeal and zest. Events would be organized at provincial, divisional, district and tehsil levels. The main flag hoisting ceremony would be held at Huzuri Bagh, Lahore. The Sports Department would organize 252 sports competitions across the province. All the government buildings would be decorated with national flag and lights. Speech competitions and seminars would be held in schools, colleges, and universities. The administrative secretaries of local government, schools, higher education, information, and sports departments attended the meeting while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

Senator Abdul Qadir chairs Senate Committee on Petroleum meeting

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum, under the chairmanship of Senator Abdul Qadir, convened a meeting to discuss a range of pressing energy matters.

Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) provided insights into the ongoing supply of Natural Gas to Fauji Fertilizer Bin Qasim Limited (FFBL). MD SSGC informed the Committee about the allocated 45MMCFD Natural gas and 10MMCFD RLNG provided to FFBL against the demand of 68 MMCFD, stressing that these allocations are the maximum feasible. The SSGC said their resources are quickly depleted owing to the downward trajectory of gas production reduced from 1100 MMCFD to 750 MMCFD at present. FFBL representatives shared their operational struggles due to these limitations, citing substantial financial losses amounting to Rs. 5 billion in the first two quarters being the sole manufacturer of DAP in Pakistan. If Pakistan imports Urea/DAP then national exchequer will suffer an accumulative loss of \$1-1.5 billion a year. In a pivotal move, the Committee resolved to call representatives from gas-consuming industries and fertilizer companies in the forthcoming meeting, to devise collaborative solutions that address the evolving energy landscape.

The issue of gas supply irregularities in various areas of Karachi also came under the Committee's scrutiny. SSGC revealed that substantial progress has been made, with 0.1 million meters already installed and plans to bring 0.4 million more houses under the metering system by June 2024. The Committee directed the immediate installation of meters for households utilizing gas without meters, or else discontinuing their gas connection.

The committee also received a comprehensive briefing on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives undertaken by OGDCL/PPL in Balochistan. The funds expenditure under CSR in DC head usually lapsed and not allocated appropriately. The Committee, emphasized the prioritization of education/health in Balochistan under CSR. After a brief discussion, the Committee decided to form a sub-committee to oversee the CSR initiatives undertaken in Balochistan by OGDCL/PPL.

Senator Saifullah Abro brought forward the issue of the kidnapping and murder of Dr Syed Raham Ali Shah, a dedicated SSGCL employee. MD SSGC acknowledged the tragedy and shared that the family of the deceased had been provided with compensation, including funeral expenses, 12-month salaries, and a life insurance amount of Rs. 3.5 million.

The Committee recommended special consideration for accommodating the deceased's family member in SSGC, urging a review of the organization's policies in case of murder of the employees during service and his sole son may be accommodated in services as per govt policy as SSGC is also being a government entity.

The Committee also delved into concerns related to the issue of non-provision of gas supply to the residents within a 5km radius of the Jhal Magi Oil & Gas field. The Chairman Committee recommended a joint visit by SSGC and MNA Magi to assess the area and conduct a re-evaluation as the houses in the area are being increased many times with the passage of time from the earlier 600 houses. If government could not release the project amount in time then OGDCL which is casting Rs. 1800 /MMCF need to be adjusted in the project completion.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori addressing as a Chief Guest of the Graduation Ceremony for the participants of 33rd Senior Management Course at National Institute of Management (NIM).

Governor proposes setting up Primary Education Commission to ensure quality learning

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh, Kamran Khan Tessori, on Thursday, suggested the formation of a Primary Education Commission for improving the quality of early childhood education. The Governor, while addressing the Graduation Ceremony of the 33rd Senior Management Course at the National Institute of Management, Karachi, said that the proposed commission may be constituted on the pattern of the Higher Education Commission with objectives of ensuring quality education to children aged between 5 to 8 years.

The commission would ensure learning along with training of the future generation on the lines that they grow to become productive, sensible and contributing citizens of the society who are always ready not only to help their fellow citizens but also contribute wholeheartedly to the efforts of social and economic development of the motherland, he stated.

Stressing the need for the promotion of national spirit, the governor said that all 240 million Pakistani have to join hands for economic and social development and solidarity of

the country.

National spirit and nationalistic vision were the key to the success of all the developed nations who grew and prospered in the world, he noted and urged that the Pakistani nation has to unite under the national flag while putting aside all the political, linguistic, sectarian and other differences. Kamran Tessori while recalling the sad incidents of May 9 said that those unfortunate occurrences were the manifestation of the fact that society had lost valuable qualities of patience and endurance and an infuriated mob inflicted damages to a house attributed to the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah without having a second thought that it is our own country.

"Today, we have to pledge that we will thoroughly consider the objectives and consequences of each of our actions and set the right direction for ourselves and perform at least a single act that will contribute to national development," he urged.

Kamran Tessori said that the doors of the Sindh governor's house were opened to the public as soon as he

assumed the charge of the office and a number of philanthropists joined his hands in welfare initiatives like Iftar dinners in Ramzan-ul-Mubarak, provision of food ration to deserving families and free IT courses for youth. He said that modern technologies were emerging at a fast pace around the world and the governor's house in collaboration with philanthropists decided to organise free IT courses for 50000 youth.

There were 550000 applications received within a week of the announcement of IT courses and tests were being conducted in phases for the selection of 50 thousand eligible candidates, he informed and said that arrangements were being made at the governor's house for holding classes of IT courses.

He felicitated the participants of the 33rd Senior Management Course on completion of the course and said that the graduating officers will serve the key posts. The governor urged them to carry out their official responsibilities with honesty, dedication and sincerity and take all the decisions as per laws and rules.

Police & PSCA jointly arrest 3 drug-dealers

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Police and Punjab Safe Cities Authority collaborated and arrested three drug dealers in a joint operation here on Thursday.

In a series of joint operations, Lahore Police and the PSCA successfully apprehended a group of drug-dealers. Utilizing live monitoring through the PSCA cameras, they targeted the suspects, who were under surveillance. Prominent drugs dealer Farhan was arrested along with his accomplices for supplying drugs. The Safe Cities Monitoring Team observed the accused with drugs in the Baghbanpura area. The area police came into action and recovered two kilograms of hashish and two pistols from the accused. Following the arrests, cases were registered against all the accused, and investigation was currently under way. SP Waqar Azeem, emphasising the commitment to eradicating the drug menace, announced that the crackdown on drug dealers would continue. He urged citizens to report any suspicious activities they observe to the 15 helpline number.

'Hafiz Naeem to be defeated in general election like LG polls'

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Senator Waqar Mehdi on Thursday said that Jamaat-e-Islami's Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman will be defeated in the next general elections as like local body elections.

Reacting to Hafiz Naeem Rehman's remarks in a press conference against PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Senator Mehdi said that Jamaat-e-Islami has always done nothing but mislead the nation. Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman wants to become the emir of Jamaat-e-Islami by making rhetoric against Bilawal Bhutto, Senator Waqar Mehdi said and added that Jamaat-e-Islami is afraid of the public popularity of Pakistan People's Party. He addressed Hafiz Naeem and asked him to be ready for a crushing defeat in the general elections after the mayorship.

Mayor Karachi calls upon journalists to discourage false, fake news

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Thursday said that access to information, investigative reporting and fact-finding are the main responsibilities of professional journalists, success in this field is possible only through hard work and continuous struggle. Therefore, he said that journalists related to local government institutions always keep the larger interest of Karachi and citizens in mind by discouraging false and fake news.

He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of a one-day training workshop organized by City Institute of Image Management of KMC on the topic of "Role and Responsibilities of local government Journalists". The Mayor Karachi's Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, Senior Journalist and Scholar Mahmood Sham, Mazhar Abbas, Head of the

Journalism Department, the University of Karachi Dr. Muhammad Shahid and Tausif Ahmed Khan, other officers were also present on this occasion.

پاکستان کیلویں اویشن اتھارٹی

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (CAA)
FINAL SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

Ref No. IIAP/1763-04/S15112/ISHR/II

To,

i-Permanent address:-
Ms. Natasha Nawaz,
Accounts Asstt. Grade-II (CAA/S15112),
Village and P.O. Battail, Teh and Distt. Mansehra.
Contact No. 0334-5866583

ii-Present address:-
Ms. Natasha Nawaz,
Accounts Asstt. Grade-II (CAA/S15112),
H # 116, Lane 5/C, Judicial Colony, Rawalpindi. Contact No. 0334-5866583

1. You, Ms. Natasha Nawaz, (CAA/S15112) Accounts Assistant Grade-II (SG-05) (contract) were granted Ex-Pakistan leave for 45 days w.e.f. 15-03-2023 to 28-04-2023 by the Competent Authority. Le Addt. DG CAA vide letter No. HQCAA/S15112/9317/HRPM(S) dated 28th February, 2023. In this regard, you submitted departure report w.e.f 16-03-2023 and you were required to join duty on 02-05-2023 after availing aforesaid leave; however, you have not joined duty till date. Accordingly, a Call up Notice dated 12th May, 2023 and its subsequent reminder dated 22nd May, 2023 was served to you with the instructions to resume duty and explain the reasons for unauthorized absence. Subsequently, a Show Cause Notice dated 05th June, 2023 was also served to you but you failed to join duty and neither submitted reply to Show Cause Notice. To meet the end of justice, you were given opportunity of Personal Hearing on 26th June, 2023 to offer your defence / additional defence on account of your absence from duty w.e.f. 02-05-2023 to till date vide letter of even number dated 16th June, 2023. However, you did not appear for the same on due date and time.

2. And whereas, taking into consideration the offence of misconduct committed on account of unauthorized absence from duty, you are, hereby given the last and final opportunity to join duty immediately and submit your reply to Final Show Cause Notice which should reach the undersigned within fifteen (15) days of the publish of this notice, failing which an ex-parte decision shall be taken under CAA (Efficiency & Discipline) Regulations-2014 (Revised-2019).

3. It is also stated whether you would like to be heard in person or otherwise.

(SYED AFTAB ALI SHAH GILANI)
COO/Airport Manager
(Authorized Officer)

PID(K)#440/23 www.caapakistan.com.pk

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICER
Dir Lower at Timergara Ph: 0945-9250098 Fax: 0945-9250176 Email: dhdhdir@gmail.com

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to advertisement published in daily Aaj No.INF(P)1722/23 dated: 23-07-2023. The following amendment in the tender may be read as.

1. KPRARegistration is not mandatory, other terms and condition is remain the same

2. The tender must be reached to the office of the undersigned though courier or by past before on 21-08-2023 at 11:00 am & shall be opened on the same day at 1:00 pm.

Detail are as follows.

S.No	Name of article	CDR Amount	S.No	Name of article	CDR Amount
I	Laboratory Chemical	10000	VI	Labor Room Medicine	4000
II	Emergency Medicine	8000	VII	Dialysis Disposable Kits / items	6000
III	Instrument / Equipment	10000	VIII	Repair of Transport and Purchase of tyres	5000
IV	Repair of Equipment	5000	IX	X-ray Films	5000
V	Bedding Clothing	5000			

(Dr Irshad Ali) District Health Officer, Dir Lower INF(P) 1887/23



KARACHI: Large number of people selecting and purchasing National Flags, badges and other stuff at as the nation starts preparations to celebrate Independence Day in befitting manners.



In brief

Mudassir is missing



F.P. Report

MINGORA: Mudassir son of Sultan Ahmad resident of Jowar area of Buner district is missing since last day from Madrasah Subhaniya Saidu Sharif, Swat. If anyone has information in this regard please contact: 0316-9141110, 0313-9345535.

Scholar defends M.Phil thesis

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Mr Fazli Dayyan, MPhil scholar in Department of Education, University of Malakand has successfully defended his MPhil thesis titled "Role of school heads in the professional development of teachers in administrative and academic matters". His research supervisor was Dr. Iqbal Amin Khan and Co-supervisor was Dr. Munir Khan, Department of Education, UoM. The external examiner was Dr. Zafar Khan, Assistant Professor, Institute of Education and Research, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan. The faculty members and students graced the occasion and congratulated the scholar and his research supervisors.

CWIS meeting concluded

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In a major effort to promote Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) policy, a district-level consultative meeting was held, bringing together key stakeholders and decision-makers. The objective of the meeting was to identify sanitation-related gaps and solutions to the identified gaps and identify the necessary actions to ensure the effective implementation of CWIS for the betterment of the city's sanitation system. The interactive meeting, organized by FANSA Pakistan-IRSP, aimed to foster collaboration and cooperation among various stakeholders to address the critical sanitation challenges faced by our district/city. Recognizing the significance of inclusive and sustainable sanitation practices, the event drew participation from representatives of government relevant bodies, local authorities, civil society organizations, and media. During the consultative meeting, a detailed mapping exercise was conducted to identify the gaps in sanitation policy. This mapping will play a crucial role in developing a comprehensive approach that encompasses the diverse perspectives and expertise required to achieve the desired outcomes. By engaging all relevant stakeholders, the district/city local government hopes to build a strong alliance that can effectively address issues related to sanitation infrastructure, waste management, hygiene practices, and access to sanitation services. The collaborative efforts will facilitate the implementation of inclusive policies that prioritize the needs of marginalized communities and promote equitable access to clean and safe sanitation facilities. A wide range of multi sectors representative attended the interactive meeting such as President Women's Chamber of Commerce Aqeela Sumbal and Nusrat Ara Coordinator District Reconciliation Committee, Advocates and representatives from civil society and trade unions.

Role of plants in hanging climate & food security stressed

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SSBU) Sheringal Upper Dir organized a three-day national conference on plant sciences and climate changes. SSBU's department of Botany hosted the event that aimed to bring together researchers from academia and industry for developing an environment to promote and share scientific information about 'plants in the changing climate and food security'.

The event organizer Dr Khan Sher informed the participants that national level researchers and experts would present their thesis on environmental changes and plant sciences during the course of the conference. He said that former vice-chancellor, University of Agriculture Peshawar Prof Dr Khan Bahadar Marwat, VC University of Peshawar Prof Dr Muhammad Idrees, Chairman Pakistan Science Foundation Prof Dr Shahid Baig, VC Agriculture University Peshawar Prof Dr Jehan Bakht, VC

University of Swat Prof Dr Hassan Sher and Prof Dr Anwar Naseem would also attend the event.

On the first day speakers shed light on environmental changes, food security and plant sciences. The speakers including the event organizer Dr Khan Sher Yousafzai, co-organizer Dr Asif Nawaz and others said the climate changes had an enormous impact on the environment.

The conference was also addressed by the SSBU vice chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Shahab, former VC University of Karachi Prof Dr Muhammad Qaisar, former VC Quaid I Azam University Islamabad Prof Dr Zabita Khan Shinwari, SSBU former VC Dr Khan Bahadar Marwat and SSBU pro-vice chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Khaliq. They said that ruthless deforestation caused climatic changes that led to global warming. The speakers said that cutting of forest was the major cause of climate change that also led to glacial melting causing floods in parts of the developing

world.

The speakers were of the view that deforestation could promote the breeding of a dangerous virus on the planet that could be fatal for human life. They said that deforestation, soil erosion, intense climatic change, natural disasters like floods and earthquakes all were related to human activities that caused the omission of poisonous and greenhouse gases.

The researchers said that a single plant could produce coolness equal to one ton produced by the air conditioner. They said that plants were rightly termed as lungs of the soil as it produced fresh oxygen for all living organisms. SSBU vice chancellor distributed shields and souvenirs among the guests and researchers on the occasion.

Moreover, a book stall regarding plant sciences was also arranged both for the students and participants of the conference. The varsity male and female students took a keen interest in the book-stall.

TMA staff continue strike in Chitral

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) Chitral staff have been on strike for the last ten days due to non-payment of their salaries of 135 staff for the last 6 months. Due to the strike of sanitation workers, apart from the Women and Children Hospital in Chitral, District Headquarters Hospital, Shahi Masjid Road, Ataliq Chowk and various bazaars turned into piles of dirt where the stench and smile of the wastage causing naissance for the passers-by to walk.

There are many difficulties for shopkeepers too. TMA staff also locked the Tehsil Municipal Office's office and staged a sit-in in front of the TMO office. Our correspondent visited the protest camp and tried to know their problems.

Umar Atiq says that I have been working in TMA for the last 13 years. We are not getting salaries for the last six months. We did not buy new clothes and shoes for our children either on Eid ul Fitar or on Eid ul Azha. People around us were making sacrifices on Eid, but due to our lack of salaries, we were only looking at them with sad and frustrated eyes.

Zar Bahadur Khan is his supervisor, he says that we can't even pass through this road because of the shame of taking loans from the shopkeepers, when we pass in front of the shop, the shopkeepers are demanding for their loans. He said that we are regretting that we are cleaning the entire city, we have been sitting on strike for the last ten days, but still, neither the Deputy Commissioner nor the Assistant Commissioner or any other responsible person has come to us so that to listen to our problems. He said that if our genuine demand was not fulfilled, we will be forced to take stern action, including blocking the road and suspending the supply of drinking water to the people.

Khursheed Ali Sanitation Supervisor says that he is responsible for cleaning the entire Chitral Bazar. He has 18 sweepers and four vehicles. We have not been paid for the last six months due to which we have been on strike for the last ten days. He expressed great regret that so far no responsible officer has even asked about our condition. He said that for ten days there has been a foul smell in the market and people are facing a lot of problems due to the bad smell. In our

houses, our children are starving.

Abdul Rahim is also an employee of TMA who is sitting in the strike camp. He says that we were forced to sit on strike due to non-payment of salaries, but so far no one has even asked us about our condition. He said that our strike will continue until we do not get our salaries. On this occasion, some political activists and the lawyers' community also visited the strike camp and expressed solidarity with them.

In this regard, Tehsil Municipal Officer Muhammad Hanif was also contacted and tried to know his position, he said that he has sent a written report to the higher authorities to release the salary of these employees and we will try to get payment for these class IV employees. Especially the salaries of those who clean the city all day can be released as soon as possible. When he was asked that some circles are now alleging that more than 150 employees were recruited in TMA Chitral on a political basis, most of them are not working and are drawing salaries at home, he said that we have dismissed 70 employees on the instructions of the provincial government.

KUST 109th ASRB meeting held

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat University of Science and Technology held 109th meeting of the Advance Studies & Research Board (ASRB) under the convener-ship of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, on Thursday.

The main agenda included 30 cases and the table agenda 01 case. The ASRB in its meeting, approved HEC-Graduate Education Policy-2023 (GEP-2023), Thesis Evaluation Form for MS/M. Phil, and granted approval to data of comprehensive examination of enrolled students till date. Besides that, the board approved 06 Ph.D. summa-



ry cases, 01 Ph.D. referred back case, 05 Ph. D. fresh cases, and referred back 01 Ph.D. fresh case. Approved 01 referred back M. Phil case and 01 M. Phil fresh case.

The Vice-Chancellor while concluding the meet-

ing appreciated the important inputs of the ASRB members during the meeting that is playing a key role in raising the academic quality standards of higher studies at KUST. At the end Vice Chancellor thank all the members of the board.

DC chairs meeting on sub-national governance program

F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: Deputy Commissioner Mansehra Bilal Shahid Rao chaired a meeting to review the ongoing activities of Sub-National Governance (SNG) Program, on Thursday. SNG provides Technical Assistance to government on improved governance in Pakistan.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance and Planning), Tehsil Chairman Mansehra, Assistant Commissioners, TMOs, and representatives of concerned district

departments participated in the meeting. On DC Mansehra special invitation, Dr. Abdul Majid, Dean, faculty of Management Sciences, University of Haripur and Dr. Yasir from Hazara University participated. SNG Team has undertaken various initiatives with the collaboration of academia of these universities.

SNG team was represented by Dr. Raheel Ahmad Siddiqui, Provincial Team Lead, and Mr. Kashif Ali, District Team Lead and others. The forum was informed that

SNG provides technical support to district and tehsil administrations and tehsil local governments on budgeting, planning, and improving revenue generation at the local level.

In this regard, the team of SNG is working with TMA Mansehra on various interventions to improve the sources of income, besides supporting the Land-Use Planning and Management Committee of District Mansehra and Strengthening governance model of Disaster Risk Management in Tehsil Balakot.



LAKKI MARWAT: Police officials showing seized weapons to media persons after search and strike operations in various areas.

BISP to launch mobile van & bike facility

F.P. Report

PABBI: Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) will inaugurate mobile van and motorcycle facilities across all three tehsils of Nowshera to facilitate beneficiaries at their doorsteps, on Thursday.

This was announced by Director General BISP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zuhra Aslam at the residence of PPP leader Ibrahim Khan. Facilitation and launch were arranged in honour of Director General BISP at Pabbi by PPP's activists.

PPP's Pabbi president Muhammad Ilyas briefed the participants about problems by BISP beneficiaries on the premises and suggested different possibilities for the facilitation of marginalized women folk.

Moreover, PK-87 candidate Ibrahim Khan, Noor-ul-Bashr Sawl, Muhammad Anwar, Tahir Aslam Khan, Sajjid Ali and Wisal Khan along with others also addressed the participants while paid thanks to BISP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Director General Zuhra Aslam for announcing mobile van and motorcycle facilities in the premises.

People plant trees in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: Department of Watershed kicks off the monsoon drive under the banner of the Plant for Pakistan drive at Mandanr tehsil to mark a week of the independence celebration while arguing the public to plant maximum saplings to fight global warming and climate change.

In this regard, Nazim Mandanr Naseeb Khan, Assistant Commissioner Maryam Bakhtawar, Divisional Forest Officer Watershed Zarin Gul and Tehsil Municipal Officer Amin Khan planted saplings at Captain Waqas Shaheed Sports Complex and kicks off the independence celebration in the premises. They stressed upon maximum plantation forests are shrinking in Pakistan on one hand while on the other side climate change has hit the country multiple times with extreme floods and weather.

2 employees suspended

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Two ghost employees among dozens reported to have been deputed in Municipal Corporation, were suspended on Thursday after an enquiry. Administrator Municipal Corporation Asghar Laghari sought attendance of the employees during surprise visit.

He found that 27 employees were collecting salaries worth lacs at their homes while absent from the office since induction. The administrator suspended two employees on the spot while served show cause notices on rest of the fifteen employees. They were given a five-day deadline to submit reply otherwise warned to be terminated from services.

Essentials of successful democracy

Mustajab Nazir Dhoki

PEOPLE of Pakistan will never forget injustice to Shaheed ZA Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and the President Asif Ali Zardari.

Few years back, Niazi was addressing lies to manipulate public about President Asif Ali Zardari to drag him down. Upon orders of Imran Niazi, President Zardari was summoned to Apex Court during his illness while he was under treatment at a hospital in Karachi. Ma'am Faryal Talpur was also arrested a day before Eid to make her distressed by the authorities of Niazi, PM Yousuf Raza Gillani was disqualified back in 2012 without any strong proof, but PPP never pushed supporters for public damage, abuse army or defame state institutions like sorrowful tragic events that were created on 09 May 2023.

Shaheed Mohtarma's family members were murdered during her office

incumbent, many injustices were happened to President Asif Ali Zardari and the mother of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari (Daughter of Pakistan) was brutally murdered in Rawalpindi but they never took path of aggression and tried their best to make Pakistan peaceful and strong because they believe in democracy and "Democracy is the best revenge".

Back in the month of May 2023, PTI's puppets were asked to disturb the peace of Pakistan and their leader always blamed others. He lied to public for everything and blamed past governments for his failures. Literal hypocrite person Niazi is not only a corrupt himself but committed many other crimes like selling of state gifts worth 140 million PKR, proved in court and sentenced imprisonment of 3 years along with disqualification from elections for 5 years, which will lead state to fair elections

which will lead PPP as the most winning party of Pakistan, as always PPP is working hard for betterment of country and its nation by increasing salaries, giving benefits to labours, providing better healthcare system, educational system, and other sustains for better lives.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari being the Foreign Minister of Pakistan takes keen interest for rehabilitations and betterment of flood affected areas of Sindh and Balochistan in which many people lost their lives and shelters. Sindh government is also taking strong initiatives in rehabilitation work as many people got their own homes, Sindh government is also enhancing modern and affordable transport system, increased salaries/daily wages of labours and inaugurated modern equipped hospitals for free treatment. Pakistan will be tracked back on the path of success in all aspects under the leadership of PPP.

Food dept launches drive against adulterated milk

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Food department has launched a special campaign to crack down on milkmen and owners of dairy farms involved in selling substandard and adulterated milk in parts of Lakki Marwat district.

"The campaign was launched on the directives of provincial authorities of the food department who had received complaints about the availability of milk adulterated with water and chemicals in markets", said district food controller Aman Khan on Thursday. He said that the adulterated milk was not fit for human consumption and that legal action against the milkmen and owners of dairy farms was inevitable.

District Food Controller

(DFC) said that special teams had been formed to make the ten days long drive against selling of sub-standard milk a success. Aman said that he had also approached the authorities of Food Safety and Halal Food Authority to depute officials for launching a joint action against milkmen.

"The mobile lab facility and milk testing kits are available with the food authority therefore the joint venture will prove result-oriented", he claimed. He said that the presence of FS&HFA officials with milk testing tools and kits would enable the food authorities to collect milk samples from outlets and dairy farms and check the quality of the commodity on the spot.

Patriotic songs competition held: The district

education department with the support of the boy scouts association held a patriotic songs competition in connection with Independence Day celebrations. Students from public sector schools took part in the competition held at Government Shaheed Muhammad Ghasan Khan Centennial Model High School No. 1, in Lakki city. Vice principal of the school Khalilur Rehman presided over the event.

The students of the host school and Government Middle School Khoidadkhel got first and second positions respectively. Khalil appreciated the students for their outstanding performance in patriotic songs competitions and said that such events provided an opportunity to them to exhibit their potential.

First-ever geodetic reference installed in Hafizabad

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A pivotal milestone has been achieved under the ambit of the Punjab Urban Land Systems Enhancement Project with the successful installation of the first geodetic reference point in District Hafizabad. This achievement ushers in a new era of precision in land measurements and calculations, bolstering urban planning, construction, and infrastructure development initiatives.

Project Director, Asim Saleem, told that the geodetic reference point, established through meticulous efforts and advanced technology, holds paramount importance as it serves as a foundation for accurate and reliable land surveying and mapping activities. He said these reference points, often referred to as control points, play an indispensable

role in ensuring the utmost precision in measuring distances, angles, and elevations.

Project Director said Land surveyors and urban planners rely on these well-defined reference positions to facilitate the creation of comprehensive maps, delineation of legal land boundaries, and execution of vital infrastructure projects. This precision is of the essence in guaranteeing seamless urban development, construction projects, and land measurement undertakings.

The Punjab Urban Land Systems Enhancement Project's dedication to meticulous detail and state-of-the-art technology aligns with the modern demands of urbanization and development. The newly established reference point not only signifies accuracy in measurements but also reinforces

the project's commitment to enhancing urban planning and land management.

Asim Saleem, Project Director, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "The installation of the inaugural geodetic reference point is a testament to our commitment to harnessing cutting-edge technology for sustainable urban development. This achievement marks a significant step forward in our endeavor to establish a robust spatial information infrastructure that underpins our vision for a well-planned and technologically advanced urban landscape."

The successful installation of the geodetic reference point reinforces the Punjab Urban Land Systems Enhancement Project's dedication to innovation, precision, and excellence in urban development.



Putin profits off global reliance on Russian nuclear fuel

WASHINGTON (AP): The US and its European allies are importing vast amounts of nuclear fuel and compounds from Russia, providing Moscow with hundreds of millions of dollars in badly needed revenue as it wages war on Ukraine.

The sales, which are legal and unsanctioned, have raised alarms from nonproliferation experts and elected officials who say the imports are helping to bankroll the development of Moscow's nuclear arsenal and are complicating efforts to curtail Russia's war-making abilities. The dependence on Russian nuclear products - used mostly to fuel civilian reactors - leaves the US and its allies open to energy shortages if Russian President Vladimir Putin were to cut off supplies. The challenge is likely to grow more intense as those nations seek to boost production of emissions-free electricity to combat climate change.

"We have to give money to the people who make weapons? That's absurd," said Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Washington-based Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. "If there isn't a clear rule that prevents nuclear power providers from importing fuel from Russia - and it's cheaper to get it from there - why wouldn't they do it?" Russia sold about \$1.7 billion in nuclear products to firms in the US and Europe, according to trade data and experts. The purchases occurred as the West has leveled stiff sanctions on Moscow over its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, blocking imports of such Russian staples as oil, gas, vodka and caviar.

The West has been reluctant to target Russia's nuclear exports, however, because they play key roles in keeping reactors humming. Russia supplied the US nuclear industry with about 12% of its uranium last year, according to the US Energy Information Administration. Europe reported getting about 17% of its uranium in 2022 from Russia. Reliance on nuclear power is expected to grow as nations embrace alternatives to fossil fuels. Nuclear power plants produce no emissions, though experts warn that nuclear energy comes with the risk of reactor meltdowns and the challenge of how to safely store radioactive waste. There are about 60 reactors under construction around the world - 300 more are in the planning stages.

Many of the 30 countries generating nuclear energy in some 440 plants are importing radioactive materials from Russia's state-owned energy corporation Rosatom and its subsidiaries. Rosatom leads the world in uranium enrichment, and is ranked third in uranium production and fuel fabrication, according to its 2022 annual report. Rosatom, which says it is building 33 new reactors in 10 counties, and its subsidiaries, exported around \$2.2 billion worth of nuclear energy-related goods and materials last year, according to trade data analyzed by the Royal United Service Institute, a London-based think-tank. The institute said that figure is likely much larger because it is difficult to track such exports. Rosatom's CEO Alexei Likhachyov told the Russian newspaper Izvestia the company's foreign business should total \$200 billion over the next decade. That lucrative civilian business provides critical funds

US and UN concerned for Bazoum's health

NIAMEY (BBC): The US and UN are concerned about the health and safety of Niger's elected president Mohamed Bazoum, who has spent more than two weeks under house arrest. "We are greatly worried about his health and his personal safety and the personal safety of his family," a US state department spokesman said.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also said he was concerned, including about the reportedly "deplorable living conditions" the family were in. Mr Bazoum was deposed on 26 July. Earlier Mr Bazoum's party said he and his family were being detained under "cruel" and "inhuman" conditions, Reuters reported. Since then, a military junta has ruled Niger while Mr Bazoum has been kept in the presidential palace. Members of the junta have made no comment about the ousted leader's condition. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called Mr Bazoum assuring him of the US's ongoing support, Washington said. US State

US accuses Sudan of threatening to expel UN mission

WASHINGTON (AFP): The United States accused Sudan of having threatened to expel the United Nations mission from the war-torn country if the UN envoy, already in Khartoum's crosshairs, speaks before the Security Council on the atrocities of the conflict. During a session devoted to Sudan and South Sudan, US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, whose country is chairing the Council in August, slammed the absence of Volker Perthes, the special representative of the secretary-general in Sudan and head of the UN mission there, known as UNITAMS.

"We had expected SRSG Perthes to brief the Council. We now understand that the Sudanese government warned it would end the UN mission in Sudan if the SRSG participated in this briefing. And that is unacceptable," the US ambassador said in

front of her Sudanese counterpart, Al-Harith Idriss Al-Harith Mohamed. The Sudanese ambassador denied the charge. "The mission of Sudan has not sent a letter or a correspondence saying that we are threatening to boycott the session," he said. But Thomas-Greenfield repeated the charge in front of assembled media after the session.

"We were told yesterday that Volker would be briefing the Council. And this morning his name was pulled. And we understand that that happened because the Sudanese government threatened to pull UNITAMS out of Sudan if he briefed the Council," she said. "We were appalled by it, it was outrageous, it was unacceptable," she added. The Sudan briefing was delivered by the Assistant Secretary General for Africa, Martha Ama Pobee, who said the conflict "con-

tinues to have immense repercussions on the country and its people who continue to face unimaginable suffering."

She noted that "sexual violence continues to be perpetrated on a large scale, while children continue to be killed or victimized or are at risk of being recruited to fight." The war in Sudan, pitting the nation's army under General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (FSR) of General Mohamed Hamdan Dagli, began on April 15 and has claimed around 4,000 lives according to the NGO Acled, and has left nearly four million internally displaced persons and refugees.

In June, Perthes denounced possible "crimes against humanity" in Darfur, after which Khartoum declared him persona non grata, accusing him of being biased.

US nurse, child safely released in Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Reuters): A US nurse and her child have been safely released after their kidnapping in Haiti two weeks ago, a faith-based humanitarian aid organization where the nurse works said. "We are so thankful for everyone who joined us in prayer and supported us during this crisis," humanitarian aid organization El Roi Haiti said in a statement.

The nurse, Alix Dorsainvil, and her child were kidnapped from El Roi Haiti's campus near Port au Prince on July 27. Gang violence in Haiti has sent kidnappings surging, with nearly 300 cases confirmed in the first six months of 2023, almost as many as were documented for the entire previous year, the UN Children's Agency, UNICEF, said. In most cases, children and women are forcefully taken by armed groups and used for financial or tactical gain, UNICEF said.

The US State Department welcomed reports of their release but declined to comment further due to privacy concerns, a spokesperson said. "We express our deepest appreciation to our Haitian, and US inter-agency partners for their assistance in facilitating their safe release," they said.

Iraq's extreme temperatures a 'wake-up call'

BAGHDAD (AFP): Iraq's rising temperatures and protracted drought are a "wake-up call" for the world, United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk said in Baghdad. Turk spoke to AFP during a visit to Iraq, which the UN says is one of the five countries in the world most touched by some effects of climate change. Iraq has been experiencing its fourth consecutive summer of drought, and temperatures in parts of the country including the capital Baghdad, and in the far south, have been around 50 degrees Celsius (120 degrees Fahrenheit).

"Rising temperatures plus the drought, and the fact that the loss of diversity is a reality, is a wake-up call for Iraq and for the world," Turk said. "When we look into the situation of these communities we look into our future," he added.

The era of global boiling has come and here we can live it and see it on a daily basis," Turk said at the end of his four-day visit, echoing comments by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres last month. Guterres had said: "The era of global warming has ended. The era of global boiling has arrived."

He called for immediate and bold action, after scientists confirmed July was on track to be the hottest month in recorded history. In addition to declining rainfall and rising temperatures, Iraqi authorities say upstream dam construction by Turkey and Iran has affected the volume of water in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers through Iraq. In Iraq's far south, high salinity has harmed fishing in the Shatt al-Arab waterway, where the Tigris and Euphrates converge before spilling into the Gulf.

Turk, who visited the south, told a news conference that he was shown by community leaders and others "pictures of the lush date palm trees that - just 30 years ago -- lined parts of the now dried-up Shatt al-Arab waterway". Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani has vowed that battling climate change would be one of his priorities, but activists say little has been done.

Turk told the news conference there had been reports "of violence, intimidation and death threats against environmental activists" in Iraq. One of them, engineer Jassim al-Assadi of Nature Iraq, the country's leading conservation group, was abducted for two weeks in February and held by armed men.

Kim calls for his military to sharpen war plans as his rivals prepare drills

SEOUL (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered his military to sharpen its war plans and signed off on expanding combat operations of frontline units, state media said Thursday, as the United States and South Korea prepare for a large-scale combined military exercise. Condemning the allies' expanding drills as invasion rehearsals, Kim has used them as a pretext to further accelerate his weapons demonstrations, which have included the testing-firings of more than 100 missiles since the start of 2022, driving tensions on the Korean Peninsula to their highest point in years.

Experts say Kim's nuclear push is aimed at forcing the United States to accept the idea of the North as a nuclear power so he can eventually negotiate economic and security concessions from a position of strength. Thursday's meeting of the North Korean ruling Workers' Party's central military commission, which Kim controls as chairman, was to discuss advancing his military's war readiness and establishing offensive countermeasure plans to deter his adversaries, which state media said were getting more blatant in their "reckless military confrontation" with the North. After talks of boosting North Korean frontline units and stepping up war drills to incorporate new strategies and weapons, Kim signed an order to implement unspecified "important military measures." Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said.

During the meeting, Kim stressed that the military must acquire "more powerful strike means" to bolster his nuclear deterrent and make speedier deployments of those weapons to combat units. He called for the country's munitions industry to step up mass production of various weapons and systems, and for the military to actively conduct "actual war drills" to digest those systems and enhance its war-fighting capabilities, KCNA said.



Photos of the meeting published by state media showed Kim pointing to spots in a blurred map of the Korean Peninsula. The spots appeared to be the metropolitan region surrounding the South Korean capital of Seoul, where half of the country's 51 million people live, and an area around the central city of Daejeon, the location of South Korea's army headquarters. Kim also made personnel changes during the meeting, appointing Vice Marshal Ri Yong Gil as his new chief of general staff to replace Gen. Pak Su Il, KCNA said. When asked about Kim's comments, Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a briefing that the US and South Korean intelligence authorities were closely monitoring North Korean weapons development activities and possibilities of provocations. He did not discuss it further.

Kim's comments during the meeting echoed what he said last week during a three-day tour of the country's key weapons factories, including a facility that produces launcher trucks for his intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to target the US mainland, and called for significant improvements to the country's arms and war readiness.

Kim's visits also included an artillery factory that deepened outside

concerns that North Korea was preparing to export artillery and other arms supplies to Russia as President Vladimir Putin reaches out to other countries for support in the war in Ukraine. In the face of deepening confrontations with Washington and Seoul, Kim has been trying boost the visibility of his partnerships with Moscow and Beijing to break out of diplomatic isolation and insert himself into a united front against the US. Kim invited Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and a Chinese ruling party officials to share center stage at a giant military parade in Pyongyang where he rolled out his most powerful missiles designed to target South Korea and the United States. Shoigu's presence at the July 27 parade came after Kim took him on a tour of a domestic arms exhibition, which demonstrated North Korea's support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine and added to suspicions the North was willing to supply arms to Russia. During Thursday's meeting, North Korean officials also agreed to hold another military parade to mark the 75th anniversary of its government's founding. The Sept. 9 parade would be the country's third event in 2023 alone. Analysts say the North has never staged military parades more than twice in the same year.

Armenians face genocide in Azerbaijan: Ex-ICC prosecutor

KORNIDZOR, Armenia (AP): The former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court warned that Azerbaijan is preparing genocide against ethnic Armenians in its Nagorno-Karabakh region and called for the UN Security Council to bring the matter before the international tribunal.

A report by Luis Moreno Ocampo issued said Azerbaijan's blockade of the only road leading from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh seriously impedes food, medical supplies and other essentials to the region of about 120,000 people. "There is a reasonable basis to believe that a genocide is being committed," Ocampo's report said, noting that a UN convention defines genocide as including "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction."

"There are no crematoriums and there are no machete attacks. Starvation is the invisible genocide weapon. Without immediate dramatic change, this group of Armenians will be destroyed in a few weeks,"

the report said. Nagorno-Karabakh is a region within Azerbaijan that came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by the Armenian military in separatist fighting that ended in 1994. Armenian forces also took control of substantial territory around the region. Azerbaijan regained control of the surrounding territory in a six-week war with Armenia in 2020. A Russia-brokered armistice that ended the war left the region's capital, Stepanakert, connected to Armenia only by a road known as the Lachin Corridor, along which Russian peacekeeping forces were supposed to ensure free movement.

A government representative in Azerbaijan dismissed the report from Ocampo, who was the ICC's first prosecutor, saying it "contains unsubstantiated allegations and accusations." "It is biased and distorts the real situation on the ground and represents serious factual, legal and substantive errors," Hikmet Hajiyev, an assistant to Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, told The Associated Press. In December, crowds of demonstrators who

claimed to be environmental activists blocked the Lachin Corridor. Azerbaijan later established a military checkpoint on the road, blocking traffic that it alleged was carrying weapons and other contraband. In Kornidzor, near the Azerbaijan border, a line of 19 trucks loaded with some 360 tons of medicine and food supplies have been parked for two weeks waiting for permission to cross.

Vardan Sargsyan, a representative of a crisis management working group for Nagorno Karabakh set up by the Armenian government, told The Associated Press the Armenian government had asked for permission for the trucks to cross via Russian peacekeepers and provided details on their contents but so far received no response from Azerbaijan. "Unfortunately, there have been many attempts from the Azerbaijani side to manipulate this situation," he said. "We just hope that this humanitarian initiative will be accepted as humanitarian and that it will be possible to transfer the goods." The International Committee of the Red

Cross has also complained of being unable to bring aid shipments into the isolated enclave during the blockade, although the organization was permitted to evacuate a limited number of patients to Armenia for medical care.

Ocampo said the UN Security Council should refer the situation to the International Criminal Court, a step that would be necessary for the ICC to take it up because Azerbaijan is not a signatory to the statute that created the court. It is not clear if Russia would use its veto power on the Security Council against such a move. Russia has faced persistent criticism for its peacekeepers' inaction in the blockade. "Russia, responsible for peacekeeping in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the US, promoting current negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, are state parties of the Genocide Convention. ... They have a privileged position to prevent this genocide. Their intense confrontation due to the Ukrainian conflict should not transform the Armenians into collateral victims," Ocampo wrote.

Assad says destroyed Syria infrastructure blocks refugee returns

DAMASCUS (AFP): Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said that the biggest obstacle to millions of refugees returning home is a lack of infrastructure, devastated by more than a decade of civil war. The Syria conflict has killed more than 500,000 people, displaced millions and battered the country's infrastructure and industry since it began in 2011 with the government's repression of peaceful anti-government protests.

The war pulled in foreign powers and jihadists, and while the front lines have mostly quietened in recent years, large parts of the country's north remain outside government control. Asked during an interview with Abu Dhabi-based Sky News Arabia television about the greatest challenge to refugee returns, Assad responded: "Logistically, infrastructure which terrorists destroyed." "We have started general dialogue" with United Nations humanitarian bodies "on return projects", financing and UN demands, said Assad, citing a lack of water, electricity, schools and health care

facilities. Assad, who refers to all those opposed to the government as "terrorists", has seen increased engagement with Middle East countries this year.

Syria was readmitted to the Arab League in May, ending more than a decade of regional isolation during which some powers bet on his demise. Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt host at least 5.5 million refugees, according to the United Nations, and refugee returns have been a key issue at recent regional discussions. But as countries have increased calls for refugees to return, rights groups warned against forced returns and raised safety fears, saying some returnees have faced arrest or persecution, allegations which Assad denied in the interview. Regional countries are also seeking cooperation from Damascus on issues including fighting the drug trade. "When there is war and the state is weakened," the drug trade flourishes and "this is normal", Assad said.

"The countries that contributed to creating chaos in Syria bear the responsibility

for this, not the Syrian state," he added. An AFP investigation last year found that Syria has become a narco state, with the \$10 billion captagon industry dwarfing all other exports and funding both Assad and many of his enemies. The Syrian president pointed to dialogue between Damascus and Arab officials on fighting the drug trade. "We have a shared interest in eliminating this phenomenon," he said, during his rare interview with a Middle Eastern media outlet.

Arab outreach to Assad gained momentum this year after a deadly February 6 earthquake struck Syria and Turkey, and accelerated as regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed to restore bilateral ties the following month in a surprise China-brokered deal. Analysts say Assad is hoping wealthy Gulf states can help fund reconstruction, although Western sanctions are likely to deter investment, and broader international funding remains elusive without a UN-backed political settlement. Asked about mending ties with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who

has long supported rebel groups in Syria's north, Assad said: "Why should I meet Erdogan? To drink refreshments?"

Erdogan and Assad had amicable relations in the 2000s but as war broke out, Turkey supported early rebel efforts to topple the Syrian president. Erdogan reversed course in past years as Damascus clawed back, with Russian and Iranian support, much of the territory it had lost to rebels early in the conflict. But Assad has long said he will not meet Erdogan unless Turkish forces leave Syria, where they control parts of the north. "Erdogan's goal is to legitimize Turkish occupation in Syria. This is why a meeting is not possible under Erdogan's conditions," Assad said. Twelve years of war have also strained Syria's ties with Palestinian movement Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip and was long one of Assad's closest allies. The Islamist group was headquartered in Damascus before the war but left Syria in 2012 after condemning the Assad government's brutal suppression of protests.

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Cipher saga and State of Pakistan

A US media outlet has recently claimed that the 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. The online paper published the text of leaked Pakistani cable, produced from the meeting by the ambassador and transmitted to Pakistan, mentioning 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 retains his office. According to the report, US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Donald Lu raised the issue of the no confidence motion against then Prime Minister Khan and was noted that all will be forgiven if a vote against Khan succeeds because Washington looks his Russia's trip as a sole decision by the Premier himself. Otherwise, it will be tough going ahead and Pakistan would face marginalization and diplomatic isolation by its western allies including Europe and the United States. The report claimed that after the warning by the US officials, the Pakistani military managed the situation and things moved in the direction, which resulted in success of no-confidence vote and ultimate ouster of Mr. Khan from the premiership of the country.

The saga of foreign conspiracy and cipher rigmarole rebirth once again after almost one year and a half when a US based online media outlet published the content of the leaked diplomatic cable commonly known as cipher containing detailed discussion held between Pakistan envoy Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Donald Lu and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Les Veguerie in the presence of than Pakistan Defense Attache (DA) and Deputy Chief of the Mission (DCM) on March 7, 2022. The paper briefly described the events led to and immediately followed the ouster of Popular Pakistani leader, who for the first time waved that cipher in the air during a public rally in Islamabad and disclosed a conspiracy allegedly hatched by a foreign power without naming the US to oust him from the country's premiership. Khan claimed that he was punished for his pro-nation independent foreign policy, and a pre-planned visit to Moscow ahead of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, apparently to normalize relations with Kremlin and buy cheaper Russian oil, fertilizer and wheat grains. The transcript published by the America media also mentioned that US senior diplomats categorically conveyed that Washington was unhappy over Khan's visit to Moscow and Pakistan's foreign relations with Europe and America likely to sour if the no-confidence vote to dseate Khan from Prime Minister office. There had been a flurry of questions on State Department Spokesperson, and Pakistani authorities for confirmation of the story and authentication of the allegations levelled by the PTI Chief in the past but no one was present to andwer those queries and satisfy needs of the media.

Historically, Pak-US ties had always been of transactional nature and Islamabad never enjoyed an all time promising relationship with Washington throughout history. South Asian nation faced periodic coercion and diplomatic isolation from the United States and allies on the charges of nuclear proliferation, terrorism safe havens, Afghan policy and other contentious issues in the shape of Pressler amendment, Glen and Symington Amendments and infamous South Asia strategy of Trump administration but all those politically motivated unilateral actions of the successive US administrations failed to persuade Islamabad to change its stated position in any case. Hence, Washington's displeasure over Khan's efforts to improve relations with Moscow or Beijing was less likely to compel Pakistani establishment to dseate popular Pakistani leader to appease Washington, whose friendship always proved to be a water drop that vanished after touching the land.

As a case in point, dozens of the world nations including India, Sri Lanka, Gulf and African nations did not support Western nations in the Russia-Ukraine war and stayed neutral at the global level. Washington is still ok with them and trying to garner their support through motivation, political and economic incentives while Pakistan was the only nation that was liable to regime change for its noncooperation, trade and economic ties with Moscow that is something unbelievable and mysterious.

In fact, Khan's months-long antagonism over appointment of the new Spy Chief was the beginning of the rift in military-government ties that not only set the stage for no-confidence motion but prompted the military's search for an alternative. Thus post cipher events were not only well aligned with the conspiracy theory and resulted in the removal of Khan's government but also caused great embarrassment and diplomatic tension between Islamabad and Washington. Apparently, the doubts and speculations regarding the foreign conspiracy and US pressure would be surfaced in due course of time that will not only expose the different characters of the Pakistani politics and bureaucracy but also highlight the weaknesses of Pakistani state institutions that fails to rescue their nation by not playing a constitutional role during the crucial moments in the country's history.

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Resurfaced....



You think Trump's indictments are 'historic'?

Amal Mudallali

WASHINGTON is using the word "historic" a lot these days. Last week, for example, two "historic" events happened on the same day in the American capital. One was the third indictment of Donald Trump, a first for an American president, especially in the form of a federal indictment. The other was the downgrading by Fitch of the US debt rating from the highest AAA level to AA+.

Both events were branded historic by the American media and political observers, who tried to pin the responsibility for both on either the Democrats or the Republicans, depending on political affiliations or leanings. The bigger story of the two was the indictment of Trump in connection with his alleged efforts to overturn the result of the 2020 presidential election. He appeared in federal court to face charges of "conspiracy to defraud the United States, conspiracy against the rights of citizens, and obstruction of and attempt to obstruct an official proceeding." These are serious charges that go to the heart of the democratic system and the peaceful transfer of power. The New York Times wrote that this "third indictment in four months gets to the heart of the matter, the issue that will define the future of American democracy."

Trump pleaded "not guilty" and called the situation a "very sad day for America." Describing the indictment as "persecution of a political opponent," he claimed he is leading President Joe Biden "by a lot" in opinion polls and dismissed the case as a politically motivated attempt to prevent him from running for election. "So if you can't beat him, you persecute him or you prosecute him," he said. "You can't let this happen in America". It is clear that his strategy, and that of his team, is to win this case in the court of public opinion before any trial takes place in judicial courts. Trump's claim that the indictments he faces are politically motivated is certainly a belief shared by many of his supporters. According

to a CBS poll in June, 76 percent of Republican primary voters said they believed this to be true in the case of the indictment over his alleged possession of classified documents. The poll also revealed that 61 percent of the Republican voters who were questioned had not changed their opinion of Trump as a result of the indictment, and 41 percent said it had made them view him in an even more positive light.

A new ABC poll after the third indictment showed that support for indicting the former president fell along party lines too. In the poll 89% of the Democrats believed Mr. Trump "should have been charged with a crime in this case," compared to 14% of Republicans who believed that. These polls are but one more illustration of the political fault line and deep divisions in the country along party lines, raising concerns that they are starting to have real consequences for the country and its financial and economic stability. Experts are worried about the message these repeated political confrontations are sending to the financial markets, and to the world in general, about the health of American democracy and the country's economic and political stability.

The most glaring illustration of this concern came on the same day Trump was indicted for the third time, as if to make the point in unmistakably stark terms. It was, however, a coincidence that Fitch, the ratings agency, downgraded the US debt rating on the same day the former president was accused of inciting political instability. Fitch cited "a steady deterioration in standards of governance over the last 20 years" and added that the "repeated debt-limit political standoffs and last-minute resolutions have eroded confidence in fiscal management."

Fitch's director, Richard Francis, explained to Reuters the specific concerns that led to the downgrade, saying that "you have the debt ceiling, you have Jan. 6. Clearly, if you

look at the polarization with both parties, the Democrats have gone further left and the Republicans further right, so the middle is kind of falling apart."

In a story headlined "Yet another Trump indictment: Fitch blames Jan. 6 for US credit downgrade," New Republic magazine described the coincidental timing of the two announcements as "a weird stroke of irony." Not surprisingly, the White House saw it as vindication of its claim that the attack on the Capitol, and the hard-line tactics of Republicans in blocking the president's agenda in Congress, have contributed to the economic woes of the country. Spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre was very clear about where the administration believes responsibility for the downgrade lies. "It's clear that extremism by Republican officials, from cheerleading default to undermining governance and democracy to seeking to extend deficit-busting tax giveaways for the wealthy and corporations, is a continued threat to our economy," she said.

The White House is, and should be, concerned because the 2024 election campaign is already underway, in the court of public opinion and in actual US courts. The Biden team knows that Trump and his campaign will use the downgrade to attack Biden and his economic policies as "disastrous Bidenomics," as they put it, regardless of whether or not the Fitch data and analysis were "outdated," as Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen suggested. This 2024 presidential campaign is shaping up to be the most contentious and divisive in American history, not only because of the deep divisions in the country, or the increased role of artificial intelligence in the spreading of fake news, but because it is obvious from last week's developments that Trump is not taking hostages.

In a message posted on his Truth Social platform, he wrote: "IF You Go After ME, I'M Coming After You." His campaign

defended the message as being "the definition of political speech." But some commentators, and Justice Department prosecutors, saw it as a threat and expressed concern that the former president might disclose in his social media accounts information that is important to the cases he faces.

But the main concern is what Trump would do if he does return to the White House. According to the New York Times, he and his allies "are planning sweeping expansion of presidential power over the machinery of the government" and to "centralize more power in the Oval Office and his hands." After reviewing "his campaign policy proposals and interviews with people close to him," the newspaper wrote: "Mr. Trump and his associates have a broader goal: To alter the balance of power by increasing the president's authority over every part of the federal government that now operates, by either law or tradition, with any measure of independence from political interference by the White House."

Moreover, the language of the former president is clear about his intentions should he win the election. During a speech in Bedminster, New Jersey, after his second indictment in New York, he laid out his plans very clearly. He announced he would "appoint a real special prosecutor to go after the most corrupt president in the history of America, Joe Biden, and the entire Biden crime family." But most importantly, he said: "I will totally obliterate the deep state. We know who they are. I know exactly who they are."

No presidential candidate has ever used this kind of language. If any of this comes to pass it will be truly "historic" and America, as we know it, will cease to exist as a democracy in which the transfer of power is a normal, peaceful and orderly process. But this is what Trump and his supporters believe the Democrats are doing to him now, through the indictments. And that is why the 2024 presidential election will be truly historic.

'Decoupling' more detrimental to US tech

Zhang Xin

ON Wednesday US President Joe Biden signed an executive order to restrict high-tech US-based investments going toward China, which covers advanced computer chips, micro electronics, quantum information technologies and artificial intelligence. This executive order is just another "decoupling" move, which targeted China but will eventually be more detrimental to US industries and enterprises.

Collaboration in technology should have been the most mutually beneficial part of overall cooperation between China and the US. Scientists and technologists from the two countries have been forging connections in different fields since 1978. However, since former president Donald Trump took office in 2017, Sino-US tech collaboration has become a casualty of bilateral political and trade disputes, leading to a noticeable decline in global technological progress and the international community's ability to address global challenges. Instead of correcting the Trump administration's policies, the Joe Biden administration has intensified them under the guise of "strategic competition" to the detriment of both sides and further harmed global tech cooperation. Sino-US tech collaboration and overall bilateral relations have reached one of the lowest points since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Regrettably, the downward trend shows no signs of abating, leaving tech experts on both sides disheartened. The US has been abusing its tech and financial hegemony, with various kinds of sanctions imposed on more than 1,000 Chinese entities. Sino-US tech "decoupling" may lead to the gradual fading of the friendship and goodwill built by countless Chinese and US scholars and students over the past more than four decades. Hostility and the "chilling effects" of "decoupling", or later in the name of "de-risking", will diminish the atmosphere of cooperation between the two countries, and coerce multi-national enterprises to take sides.

The US administration has called for cooperation on common challenges such as climate change, but its actions such as decoupling in eco-friendly green industry prove to be opposite to the goals.

Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence could have significant ethical and existential impacts on society, necessitating global coordination and regulations to safeguard humanity's safety and common interests. However, since the US seems hell-bent on decoupling its AI industry from China's, collaborating in the sector appears almost impossible. Also, the deepening partisan divide in the US political circle prevents stable policies from being implemented in critical areas of global public interest.

For instance, the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, relaxation of regulations on the fossil fuel industry, and quitting international organizations such as UNESCO have caused irreparable damage to glob-

al common interests. While the Biden administration has rejoined the international treaties and organizations, the losses cannot be recovered nor can the consistency of policy be guaranteed in case of a government change in the next US presidential election. More important, Washington's "decoupling" policy may hasten the end of the US' global leadership in high-tech, which is a core pillar of US hegemony. As a matter of fact, China's rising competitive potential is partly a result of the US' push for tech "decoupling" from China. Due to China's advantage of scale and market vitality, "decoupling" from China will cause huge losses of US enterprises, and accelerate the end of the US' global tech leadership, and the Sino-US divide could slow down global tech progress. Because tech "decoupling" will significantly impact the US' tech development, China and the US are each other's top partners in many fields of technology, with China's talent and funding providing strong support for the US' tech advancement. And finding other partners to compensate for reduced cooperation with China will be very challenging for the US. Moreover, tech "decoupling" will prompt China to intensify research and development in order to become self-reliant in technology. China's deep integration into the global tech innovation system, since the launch of reform and opening-up has helped consolidate the US' global tech leadership. But the US' push to "decouple" will prompt China to develop independent tech capabilities. This will cause the US' influence on the new global tech innovation system centered on China to diminish, offering China opportunities to catch up or even overtake the US in many fields, such as space exploration.

The US' "decoupling" policy will also blunt American tech companies' competitive edge in China and foster strong global competitors. Chinese companies have long believed the US will uphold the principle of fair competition and not abuse its advantages in the global supply chains to suppress competing countries. This belief is what helped Chinese tech companies to establish close cooperation with their US counterparts in the global supply chains. But Washington's "chokehold" on tech has made US tech companies unreliable suppliers, shaking Chinese companies' confidence in cooperation with their US counterparts and prompted them to pursue local options. China has grown within the US-dominated global tech innovation system and has been both a beneficiary and contributor to the system. China does not seek to replace the US' position; rather it aims to share its global responsibilities according to its capability. However, confrontation between China and the US may lead to the upheaval of the existing global tech innovation system. "Decoupling" will deal a blow to Chinese tech sectors, but it will only be more detrimental to its tech hegemony in the long term.

The China Daily

Lee Anderson's vile anti-migrant comments pose this question: Do we want politics like this?

Hugh Muir

DOES it matter if Lee Anderson, the deputy chair of the Conservative party, thinks disgruntled asylum seekers should "fuck off back to France" and says so? "If they don't like barges then they should fuck off back to France," Anderson said.

"These people come across the Channel in small boats ... if they don't like the conditions they are housed in here then they should go back to France, or better, not come at all in the first place." He was speaking to the Daily Express, with the knowledge that this once-great British newspaper now thrives on printing such things.

One can be dismayed, if not surprised. Anderson likes to see himself as his party's man of the people. He serves a purpose as the supposed link between a

political organisation controlled and given its raison d'être by the hyper-wealthy and the Friday-night saloon bar of a rundown pub. He is there to offer a different tone and to push a particular envelope. He has a show on GB News, which in itself is a phenomenon designed to say "fuck off" to decent TV broadcasting.

But still: "Fuck off back to France"? Does it matter that he said it, that the justice secretary, Alex Chalk - whose shtick is fresh-faced good cop - defended Anderson's right to have said it in his "salty" way, and that No 10 gave Anderson its blessing? That depends what you want from democratic politics in our troubled, fractious time in this early portion of the 21st century. Anderson, asked to explain himself, said that he only sought to refer to underserving migrants. He can

have that view. We all have views. He has free speech, as we all do. But it does say something about this time, and something about his party, that he should be defended by the hierarchy for choosing - for political advantage - to pour more verbal sewage in the already fetid political swamp. He was, after all, using language that might well see him arrested were he to direct those same words, expressed in that same way, to an individual on the street within earshot of a diligent police officer.

It isn't a question of whether he can speak like this. It is a question of why, given his platform and the heft of his title, does he want to? If the idea is that he, as a tribune of ordinary people, has to speak in the plainest terms, one can grapple with

that argument. But does that also carry an assumption that ordinary people can only engage with meanness, coarseness and indecency? I don't think that is so. To suggest that "ordinary people" must want or need debate at this level reveals an offensively narrow-minded view of the diversity of views across a huge country. People clearly do not have one view on migration, but only a minority of deeply unpleasant people - however trenchant their views - would want the case set out in such a dehumanising way. I don't even think that Anderson's party used to think that. It is a sad peculiarity of our time that one can read the words of Anderson and hanker for the what now seems a golden age of Tory civility, when his precise role was once

executed by Norman Tebbit. One cannot imagine the so-called Chingford skinhead, unlovely as he was in his pomp, pursuing his objective of appealing to a rightwing working-class element in so foul a way. But then, one cannot conceive of the Thatcher governments, staggeringly unlovely as they were, contorting to slither underneath the bar for indecent policy that has been set by this recent succession of Tory governments. To that degree, Anderson well represents the laboratory-engineered toxicity of the Sunak era. Last weekend, I finally got a ticket for James Graham's great play Dear England, which deals with Gareth Southgate's tenure thus far as England manager and the way he has sought - with strength, humility and empathy - to lead successive groups of young men who

carry the hope of a nation and the burdens of a troubled society into sporting competition. Graham's Southgate, as portrayed by Joseph Fiennes, is an amusing figure because as he tries to cajole and persuade, we see behaviours and hear tones we recognise of a Briton keen to assert himself and move a project forward, but also keen to be respectful. We laugh because we recognise that type. John Major struck a chord for similar reasons.

When the play was over, the stranger sitting next to me asked what I thought. I said, forget about the football - I thought we had just been watching the only truly decent national leader this country has had for more than a decade. And now we have "fuck off back to France". It matters that politics stays above that.

The Guardian

How Trump made one of 'the worst diplomatic agreements' in US history

Peter Bergen & Laura Tillman

IN May 2018, then-President Donald Trump canceled the agreement with Iran to restrain its nuclear weapons program, saying "the Iran deal was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into." In fact, the Iran deal was substantially reining in the Iranian nuclear program, according to US intelligence agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

And oddly enough, Trump soon entered into negotiations for what would become, in reality, one of America's most one-sided and self-defeating deals: the agreement with the Taliban to withdraw all US troops from Afghanistan. Retired US Gen. David Petraeus, who formerly commanded US troops in Afghanistan, told us in an interview for the Audible podcast, "In the Room with Peter Bergen," that the deal with the Taliban "ranks with the worst diplomatic agreements in our history. We gave the Taliban what they wanted: We're leaving. The only thing we got in return was a promise they wouldn't attack us on the way out."

President Joe Biden became the second successive president to both Afghanistan policy when he went ahead and carried out the deal Trump's team negotiated, leading to the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan two years ago. On August 15, 2021, the Taliban marched into Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. Since then, they have banned women from jobs and have not allowed girls over the age of 12 to return to school. Afghanistan is the only country in the world that has suspended girls from school and women from universities. The Taliban have also provided safe haven to around 20 terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda, according to a UN report that was released two months ago. As the US military rushed for the exits in the summer of 2021, 70,000 armored vehicles and more than 100 helicopters were left behind, an arsenal worth an estimated \$8.5 billion, according to the UN.

Why did Trump and Biden make those mistakes? Two years ago, the Trump team negotiated the complete US withdrawal from Afghanistan that gave the Taliban the total victory they could never win on the battlefield, while the Biden team went through with this deeply flawed plan. That withdrawal ended in the hasty retreat of US forces and the chaotic scenes of thousands of desperate Afghans trying to get on flights out of Kabul Airport in August 2021. Televised scenes of the chaos at the airport make the fall of Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War look like a dignified exit. Lisa Curtis was the top official working at the White House on Afghanistan during the Trump administration. In an interview for the Audible podcast, Curtis told us that the US officials who negotiated with the Taliban, beginning in early 2019, gave the Taliban pretty much everything they wanted and got very little in return. The Taliban committed to breaking with al-Qaeda and entering into genuine power-sharing talks with the elected Afghan government, but neither happened.

Curtis explained that Trump never really was concerned about the details of the negotiations with the Taliban, saying, "I don't think he cared about a peace deal. He

cared about getting US troops out." The Taliban were no doubt also aware that Trump had long criticized US involvement in Afghanistan; for instance, Trump tweeted in 2013, "Let's get out of Afghanistan. Our troops are being killed by the Afghans we train and we waste billions there. Nonsense! Rebuild the USA." Trump always prided himself on his purported "Art of the Deal," but his administration's negotiations with the Taliban were more like a clueless customer shopping for a car who tells the salesman, "I'll pay the full sticker price," as a way of beginning the negotiation. Curtis says that at one point during the negotiations that she was part of in Doha, Qatar, Taliban officials didn't seem to believe that the US was really leaving Afghanistan, so the top US negotiator, former Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, brought in American military officers to brief the Taliban about what a US withdrawal would look like.

The US officers used a whiteboard to show the Taliban the unclassified locations of American troop positions in Afghanistan. Curtis recalled that one of the Taliban officials joked, "Oh look, they're bringing out the crown jewels before we've even gotten started." Curtis said this approach told the Taliban that "the US was really desperate to withdraw." In response, Khalilzad emailed us to say, "The technical military channel was set up AFTER there was already an agreement in principle on the withdrawal ... These technical meetings had the purpose of dealing with the logistics of both our soldiers and our materiel being withdrawn safely and related issues. Note: this was very successful, and we did not lose a single military member after the signing of the agreement at the hands of the Taliban." Curtis says the negotiations with the Taliban were also flawed because the US acceded to the Taliban's demand that the elected Afghan government be excluded from all their negotiations with the US. Curtis says this gave the impression that the US was "shifting our support to the Taliban, and I think it demoralized the Afghan government, which also contributed to the quick fall of the Afghan government." Khalilzad says the decision to negotiate with the Taliban directly was made because "the military situation on the ground was continuing to deteriorate with no roadmap to a plausible near-term victory...The plan was that our success in negotiating with the Taliban would open the door to negotiations between the [Afghan] government and the Taliban." Khalilzad added, "This indeed did happen, though it did not succeed."

Biden's top military adviser, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. Mark Milley, told Biden that unless the US kept a small military force in Afghanistan - at the time, around 2,500 troops - the Afghan military would collapse, which would pave the way for a Taliban victory. Biden, who had long been a skeptic of the war in Afghanistan, ignored this sound advice and, on April 14, 2021, announced the withdrawal of all US forces from Afghanistan. The Taliban couldn't believe their luck. When we spoke with the top Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, he told us,

"When President Biden won the election, we suspected that he might insist on continuing the war. But when he announced that he was withdrawing his forces from Afghanistan, it was a source of joy." Compounding the problems of the withdrawal deal with the Taliban, there was acute tension between two key players: the lead American negotiator with the Taliban, Khalilzad, who is Afghan American, and Afghanistan's then President Ashraf Ghani. The two men had known each other for decades; both had won scholarships to study in the US. Khalilzad received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, while Ghani's doctorate was from Columbia University. But now that Khalilzad was leading the US-Taliban negotiations, from which Ghani and his government were excluded, their relationship hardened: They loathed each other.

Khalilzad wrote in his email to us that "discussions with President Ghani became difficult once he realized that a political settlement would require a new Afghan government and the end of his presidency. He had a very strong wish to remain in power. But both Trump and Biden were clear that this wish on his part, was not sufficient reason to put the lives of US soldiers or the policy decision on withdrawal at risk. I had to convey this to him - but that was not personal." Matin Bek, who was Ghani's chief of staff and is now a fellow at New America, and who was often in the room with Ghani and Khalilzad, told us that their tense relationship was "like a wrestling match." Bek says both Ghani and Khalilzad share in the blame for the Taliban victory: "They are responsible equally." As the Taliban closed in on Kabul in mid-August 2021, Ghani, and his key advisers, including Bek, were in Ghani's presidential palace. A backchannel between Afghan government officials and the Taliban had opened up. Bek was hopeful that a peaceful transfer of power would ensure some normal contact with the outside world, such as the continued presence of Western embassies in Kabul. But then Bek discovered President Ghani had gotten on a helicopter and fled to neighboring Uzbekistan. Bek felt utterly betrayed, telling us, "He was the president of a country in war. In war, these things happen. You have to show leadership."

Ghani doubtless recalled that the last time the Taliban had taken Kabul in 1996, they had executed a previous Afghan president. Still, many Afghans felt Ghani should not have abandoned his post. Biden then shifted any blame from himself in a White House briefing. He had gone along with the flawed withdrawal plan that the Trump administration had negotiated, but instead he blamed the Afghans, claiming, "American troops cannot and should not be fighting and dying in a war that Afghan forces are not willing to fight for themselves." This observation irked General Petraeus, who said, "I was particularly hurt by statements 'Well, the Afghans wouldn't fight for their own country.' Sixteen times as many Afghans died for their country as did US and coalition forces."

Indeed, according to Brown University's Costs of War project, more than 66,000 Afghan national military and police died fighting the Taliban, while around 4,000 American and allied forces were killed in the Afghanistan war. In the two decades before the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan had made striking progress in reducing child mortality, providing jobs for women and schools for girls, nurturing scores of independent media outlets and holding regular, if flawed, presidential elections. That is all long gone. Why Biden went through with the withdrawal deal is still something of a puzzle, since there was no large constituency in the Democratic Party clamoring for an exit from Afghanistan. Meanwhile, a small contingent of US forces - 2,500 troops - was keeping the elected government of Afghanistan from a Taliban takeover. When those US troops were stationed in Afghanistan at the beginning of 2021, none of Afghanistan's 34 provincial capitals were in the hands of the Taliban, but by the time these troops were all withdrawn in the summer of 2021, the Taliban had seized all of those provincial capitals. It's worth noting also that today, seven decades after the end of the Korean War, the US still stations around 10 times more troops in South Korea than the 2,500 it had kept in Afghanistan, which has helped keep the peace on the Korean peninsula.

Today, the Taliban are international pariahs that no country recognizes as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Adding to their estrangement from the rest of the world, 58 Taliban officials have been sanctioned by the UN. Of these, 35 hold cabinet-level positions in the de facto Afghan government. The one relationship that is doing quite well in Afghanistan is the Taliban's alliance with al-Qaeda. According to the report by the UN released in June, an estimated 400 al-Qaeda fighters live in Afghanistan. Some members of the terrorist group have even received appointments in the Taliban administration as well as monthly "welfare payments" from the Taliban, according to the UN. Afghan Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, holds one of the most powerful posts in the Taliban's de facto government and is a member of al-Qaeda's leadership council, according to the UN. Haqqani is also on the FBI's most-wanted list and has a \$5 million reward on his head. Meanwhile, all you need to know about the Taliban's mindset, more than two decades after the 9/11 attacks, can be learned by listening to their top spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, who told us in December that Osama bin Laden wasn't responsible for the 9/11 attacks. Mujahid asserted, "We do not have evidence that he was directly involved in the attack." Of course, this is utter nonsense.

Mujahid also claimed to us that the Taliban's Ministry of Education is making plans to admit teenage girls to school. Two years after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, there is no sign that the Taliban will allow girls over 12 to be educated. Instead, the Taliban are running a profoundly incompetent theocratic state that is a magnet for many jihadist groups. And we all know how that can end.

CNN

UK's reluctance to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guards as terrorists is puzzling

IRAN'S Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps poses the single largest threat to the UK's national security, according to British Home Secretary Suella Braverman, after new evidence emerged about its influence within the country. Braverman expressed concern about the group's heightened activities, and was troubled by intelligence reports that suggest Iranian agents are making efforts to enlist members of organized crime syndicates to target opponents of the regime.

M15 previously warned that Tehran was responsible for 10 plots last year involving planned murders and kidnapping, a number that had grown to 15 by February this year, according to London's Metropolitan Police. A warning from Scotland Yard about inadequate protection for potential targets compelled Iran International, a dissident TV channel, to cease operations at its British base. The IRGC is a well-known provocateur and active participant in sectarian conflicts across the Middle East, and now it seems its considerable influence is extending further afield. It collaborates with banned terrorist groups and oversees extensive criminal networks, including a narcotics ring used to finance its political violence. Functioning as a distinct entity within the Iranian state framework, rather than an official arm of the government, the IRGC is a hybrid of a religious police force and an international terrorist organization. It employs repressive tactics against domestic Iranian protesters while simultaneously engaging in widespread sectarian warfare abroad.

Despite facing as many as 15 credible threats to the lives of UK residents in the past two years, authorities in the UK have yet again declined to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization, with the latest missed opportunity coming this month. The IRGC's foreign operations division, known as the Quds Force, gained significant notoriety under the leadership of Qassem Soleimani. He orchestrated the establishment of sectarian militias in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, embroiling the group in the internal political conflicts and civil wars of these nations. The Quds Force has also orchestrated the assassinations of political opponents and protesters, while evading international sanctions and condemnation.

Soleimani himself was a prominent figure and sym-

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

bol who toured battlefields and orchestrated violent reprisal actions such as the brutal siege of Aleppo in Syria, and the capture of Kirkuk from Iraqi Kurds. His actions became so troublesome that the US ultimately targeted him with a drone strike in Baghdad that killed him in January 2020. Since then, the IRGC's acts of terrorism have continued under less conspicuous leadership. Over the past decade, the group has directly participated in or ordered its affiliated militias to carry out the killings of political figures and journalists in Lebanon and Iraq, including notable figures such as Iraqi historian and security expert Hisham Al-Hashimi and Lebanese activist Lokman Slim. Its actions unmistakably meet the criteria for the definition of international terrorism. Furthermore, the IRGC has entered a new phase of its agenda by plotting the assassination of Iranian dissidents and other perceived enemies of the regime in Europe and the Americas. The US Department of Justice has warned a number of vocal critics of the regime in Tehran, including former National Security Advisor John Bolton and Iranian American journalist Masih Alinejad, that they were the targets of such plots in recent years. In the UK, workers at critical opposition organizations such as Iran International have been notified by the police of threats to their lives from hired criminals and hitmen, and surveillance of their offices and residences.

It is imperative that such activities are acknowledged as acts of terrorism. The fact that these assassination attempts have so far been unsuccessful does not diminish their terroristic nature. Countries such as the UK, which is already grappling with efforts to counter terror plots by proscribed organizations such as al-Qaeda, Daesh and domestic extremists, must proscribe and impose sanctions on Iranian IRGC forces and their proxies, should they continue to engage in similar behavior. Around the world, many nations face similar challenges. Australia, in particular, is engaged in a robust debate on the issue. As protests continue in Iran, now entering their eleventh month, the pervasive violent influence of the IRGC is increasingly evident. Its forces serve as the regime's enforcers, perpetrating torture and murder as their primary activities.

As the group continues to

import and deploy militiamen to brutalize and target civilians, authorities worldwide are reevaluating their perceptions of the Revolutionary Guards. Instead of viewing the group as an unconventional branch of the Iranian state, they now recognize it as a military entity within Iran that is driven by its own history of violence and internal motives. Essentially, the IRGC is an armed group, not a legitimate national military force. Proscription is not merely a matter of terminology. It holds profound implications for national security, international diplomacy and the lives of numerous individuals caught in the crossfire of the IRGC's actions. The group has significant control of a substantial portion of Iran's natural resources and mineral wealth. Taking decisive action and proscribing the IRGC as a terrorist organization could therefore potentially lead to sanctions targeting a key pillar of the regime in Tehran. Clearly, this is a priority for the UK, as evidenced by the British government's expansion of its criteria for subjecting Iran's supporters and businesses to sanctions.

Proscription would also help to thwart attacks within the UK by enabling the utilization of anti-terror legislation to freeze assets and facilitate surveillance of suspected attackers. It could also encourage other nations to follow suit, thus enabling collaborative policies such as those related to immigration powers, thereby hindering the international movement of IRGC agents and obstructing their operations. Considering the continuing and planned acts of terrorism perpetrated by this armed Iranian group in other nations, it is entirely reasonable for countries such as Britain to reassess their stance on the IRGC, an organization that will never stick to typical military behavior or operate in a legitimate manner. The inescapable conclusion is that the Iranian regime heavily relies on the IRGC, a terrorist organization, to maintain its grip on power. To aid the people of Iran in breaking free from the oppression of the IRGC, proscription is therefore essential.

Iran's expansive campaign represents a protracted endeavor by a revisionist force to reconfigure the international order. Geographical boundaries do not restrict its reach, as its influence extends across the globe through criminal networks and acts of terrorism that leave footprints on every continent.

Biden's greatest blunder has been a gift to Putin

IT'S two years this month since the fall of Kabul, and the disastrously mishandled US-led withdrawal from Afghanistan may seem like a distant memory - particularly given that so many other crises, domestic and international, have since intervened. Yet the consequences, bad enough at the time, can now be seen to have had a long-lasting and pernicious effect.

Internally, the Taliban's capture of Afghanistan was accompanied by a media blitz with the group claiming to the world that they had changed - a Taliban Mark 2 that would usher in a responsible and capable new government, would respect women's rights, and forgive those who fought against them. Certainly, this is not the same Taliban of the 1990s. They are much more dangerous. Beyond any military prowess, they are now adept at integrating non-military tactics into their arsenal, and have already shown themselves to be media savvy, capitalising on social media in particular. Photographs of their men sampling ice cream in Kabul and videos at the gym went viral, entrenching the idea of the radicals as friendly and approachable, rather than the brutal militants they really are.

The reality in Afghanistan quickly demonstrated the falseness of their claims. Women's rights built up over 20 years have been progressively unwound, whether in education, employment or social life. Those who fought for human rights have frequently been hounded into exile. The

Ivor Roberts

Taliban, fearful of being outflanked in extreme Islamist orthodoxy and losing young recruits to other groups, have continued to turn the screw on the life aspirations of girls and women. Externally, the damage to Western interests is hard to exaggerate. The intervention in Afghanistan, which started nobly enough as an attempt to eliminate the jihadists behind 9/11, quickly morphed into yet another benighted exercise in regime change. The disastrous Soviet experience in the country ought to have acted as a red flag for the US. Successful interventions - and particularly those with the aim of promoting democracy - are typically predicated on the invaded state having a vibrant national identity, cultural homogeneity and some contact with a state of rule of law.

Where the reverse is true, with deep religious and ethnic divides and a ruling class mired in corruption, failure is guaranteed. This set the stage for Joe Biden's mishandled withdrawal in August 2021, which took things from bad to worse. The chaotic scenes, including the suicide bombing by Islamic State at the airport and the agony of those left behind, were graphic in the extreme. The message the chaos conveyed was a green light to Vladimir Putin. He interpreted the withdrawal as a demonstration of American weakness, a mark of isolationism, of withdrawal into itself, thereby creating space for him to go very far if he wished. After the

Afghanistan debacle, Putin clearly felt confident that he could go ahead with an invasion of Ukraine without any fear of military consequences as far as Western intervention was concerned. It is no exaggeration to say that the invasion of Ukraine started in Kabul. Indeed, the Russian troop build-up on the border with Ukraine dramatically intensified after the August 2021 withdrawal.

Psychologically, America's clout in the developing world, already declining as China's increased, took a further hit with the flight from Kabul. China's economic inroads, bringing African countries into its infrastructure programme - the Belt and Road Initiative - are now eclipsing US trade and investment in Africa. Russia, through the malign influence of the paramilitary mercenary Wagner Group, is also expanding its footprint in the continent at the expense of the US. Its tentacles today reach Mali, the Central African Republic, Sudan and Libya. There are now suggestions that Wagner may enter Niger to support the coup leaders who last month detained and deposed the democratically elected president, Mohamed Bazoum. Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State, this week expressed his concern at such a prospect. "Every single space that Wagner has gone, death, destruction and exploitation have followed," he said, correctly. The trouble is, after the flight from Kabul, nobody believes the US has the gumption to do anything about it.

The Telegraph

Lebanese summers are often filled with uncertainty and this year is no different

AS the people of Lebanon last week marked the third anniversary of the devastating Beirut explosion, one of the world's biggest non-nuclear blasts, despair remained the name of the game in a country that continues to face extreme internal and external challenges. Most of these crises are authored by a discredited political elite dominated by advocates of resistance to Israel, as championed by Hezbollah. Meanwhile, the country is still without a president, a functioning government, a governor of its central bank, and soon, perhaps, will be without the heads of its armed forces, security services, judiciary and so on.

All of this while the midsummer winds of instability continue to blow along the border with Israel and internally within Palestinian refugees camps, adding to the countless woes endured by the population, regardless of which side of the political divide their loyalty tilts toward. The anniversary of the massive explosion at Beirut's port - which destroyed a large section of the Lebanese capital on Aug. 4, 2020, killed more than 220 people and injured at least 6,500 - passed as you might expect for the commemoration of an occasion that is imprinted in the memories of the Lebanese people generally and has left deep scars in the souls of those who lost loved ones. Impunity for those whose actions resulted in the disaster is still the name of the game three years later, and this is in keeping with a tradition of such crimes in the country being attributed to unknown individuals. Authorities allude to the fact that the disaster was triggered by a fire in a warehouse where a vast stockpile of the industrial chemical ammonium nitrate had been stored for years without proper safety precautions.

The investigation into the disaster has been politicized, shackling the judiciary and effectively rendering it redundant. Justice for the victims therefore remains out of reach, as versions of the truth(s) are subject to interpretation based on individual allegiances that reflect the same horizontal and vertical divides that have made the once quasi-independent judiciary ineffective. Since its earliest days, the probe has faced a slew of political and legal challenges. In December 2020, the lead investigator, Judge Fadi Sawan, charged former prime minister Hassan Diab and three ex-ministers with negligence. As the political pressure mounted, the judge was removed from the case. His successor, Judge Tarek Bitar, unsuccessfully asked for the immunity from prosecution granted to MPs who formerly served as cabinet ministers to be lifted in this case. In response the powerful, Iran-backed Hezbollah launched a smear campaign against Bitar, accusing him of bias and demanding he be dismissed. His investigation was suspended in December 2021 as he faced a barrage of lawsuits from politicians he had summoned to the inquiry to answer charges of negligence.

In January this year, though, Bitar resumed his investigation and charged eight new suspects, including high-level security officials and Lebanon's top prosecutor, Ghassan Oueidat. Oueidat in turn charged the judge with insubordination and "usurping power." Bitar remains the investigating judge despite not setting foot inside Beirut's justice palace for months. The stalled investigation into the explosion is just one of many long-running deadlocks Lebanon is faced with, leading people to question whether or not the country is ripe for a slide into another

round of violence of some sort. The inhabitants of this small yet complex Mediterranean country are well-trained in forecasting and speculating about the likely sources, and the wheres and the whens, of the next troubles they are likely to face. And evidence has been piling up, internally and externally, against a backdrop of the complete absence of any executive power able to deal with the ramifications of the crises afflicting the country.

The most recent such sign of trouble brewing was the violence that broke out last week between the mainstream Palestinian faction Fatah and hard-line Islamists at Ain Al-Hilweh refugee camp south of Beirut, where at least 13 people, most of them militants, were killed while the Lebanese security forces stood by and watched. Tensions between Israel and militant group Hezbollah have also been on the rise, following recent inflammatory incidents along the UN-controlled boundary between Lebanon and Israel, 17 years after the last devastating war between the two sides, in 2006. Many have questioned Hezbollah's brinkmanship and the timing of its volatile border clashes that are testing Israeli resolve, especially since Israel, too, seems to be in the grips of an internal schism, triggered by the election in November of the most right-wing administration in the country's history.

In particular, a large section of the Israeli population is at odds with the new government over its planned reform of the judiciary, which many believe is an attempt to help Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu avoid the corruption charges he faces and the prospect of a possible prison sentence. Though Netanyahu has been cautious about

Mohamed Chebaro

Arab News



Energy, infrastructure projects:

Iran's Consul General for cooperation with Pak, China

LAHORE (APP): Iran can cooperate with Pakistan and China in many sectors including energy, infrastructure projects, and many other fields by providing its manpower and skilled labor.

These views were expressed by Mr. Mehran Movahed Far, Consul General (CG) of Iran to Lahore who visited Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) on Thursday at PCJCCI Secretariat to discuss trilateral relations between Iran, Pakistan and China.

Mehran Movahed Far, on this occasion, expressed that Iran and Pakistan enjoy good relations that should be transformed into growing business relations to

achieve mutual economic benefits.

He stressed the need for a delegation of China and Pakistan to visit Iran see the potential for business and investment opportunities and assured that his Embassy would provide them all possible support and cooperation.

He also thanked China and Pakistan for providing support to Iran at international forums and reaffirmed that he would work to further strengthen trade and economic bonds between the three countries.

The meeting was attended by the executive committee members of PCJCCI and many top-notch business leaders from both Pakistan and China.

Moazzam Ghurki President PCJCCI said that Pakistan, Iran and China are three brotherly countries and they can complement each other's economy in many fields, therefore, they should focus on promoting trade and economic ties to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. He also said that the trilateral trade between Pakistan, Iran and China is quite negligible, that can be improved by promoting business linkages between the private sectors of these countries.

Ali Raza Rizvi, Chairman Standing Committee on Diplomatic & Government Relations and Gwadar Tourism Promotion & CPEC Projects PCJCCI said that the bilateral trade

between Pakistan and Iran stood at US \$293.18 million; with the volume of Pakistan's export to Iran US\$ 32.29 and Pakistan's import from Iran is US\$ 260.89 million.

The commodities which Pakistan imports from Iran include electrical machinery, minerals, oil, organic chemicals, iron, and steel.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI said that Pakistan considers Iran an important country for trade and welcomes Iranian counterparts to promote trilateral trade relations. He also said that PCJCCI aims to enhance regional connectivity by enhancing bilateral and trilateral trade relations between the countries.



MULTAN: Labourers offloading sacks of vegetables from delivery truck at vegetable market.

Total foreign reserves reach at \$13.33 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 13,339.1 million while reserves held by the central bank reached \$ 8,043.4 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves decreased by \$ 110 million to \$ 8,043.4 million on account of debt repayments during the week ended on August 04, 2023.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,295.7 million, it added.

In the previous week ending on July 27, 2023, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country was US\$ 13,463.7 million.

Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were US\$ 8,153.8 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were US\$ 5,309.9 million.

DC opens 'Technology, Innovation Summit'

SIALKOT (APP): Deputy Commissioner Adnan Mehmood Awan has said that Sialkot has no comparison globally in making surgical instruments.

Surgical Industries was a value added industry which earned valuable foreign exchange for the country by exporting 500 million dollars annually, he added.

It is immense pleasure to organize 'Technology and Innovation Summit 2023' at Surgical Instrument Manufacturers Association Pakistan (SIMAP).

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of surgical association members after the inauguration of 'Technology and Innovation Summit 2023' at SIMAP. Chairman SIMAP Yousaf Hassan Bajwa, Group Leader Jahangir Babar Bajwa, Senior Vice Chairman SIMAP Faisal Ikram, Fazal Jilani and Malik Ashraf and others participated in the summit. Later, the deputy commissioner also visited stalls set up at the 'Technology and Innovation Summit 2023'.

SCCI gets award

SIALKOT (APP): The government has bestowed upon the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry the prestigious 'Development Leadership Award'.

The award was given in recognition of the SCCI meritorious services in domains of trade, commerce, and industrial development.

Through this award, the government has acknowledged the Chamber's efforts in the promotion of exports, capacity building of entrepreneurs, skills development, and execution of mega projects, including the Sialkot International Airport, Sialkot Dryport and AirSial.

President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik received the award from former federal minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal.

The SCCI was the only trade body of Pakistan to be adorned with this exalted laurel.

BOP secures top rank in SBP's agriculture credit scoring model

F.P. Report

LAHORE: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) introduced a comprehensive Scoring Model to gauge the agriculture credit performance of the banks. Based on this scoring model, banks are ranked according to their sizes. The Bank of Punjab (BOP) has been ranked at 1st Position in the Mid-Size Banks for the FY 2023. It is pertinent to mention here that on an overall basis, BOP's score is the second highest among all commercial banks regardless of their Tier Size.

This score has weightage of outstanding borrowers, regional/geographical disbursements, outstanding portfolio and overall disbursement with regards to Agriculture sector and

includes both Farm and Non-Farm Sectors. BOP has not only increased its agriculture customer base but also booked one of the largest Collateral Free Loans portfolios of Agriculture customers whereby loans are extended for Poultry, Dairy and Animal Fattening against personal guarantee of the borrowers.

Introduction of Customer Centric proposition is the heart of bank's strategy. Bank has dedicated branches to cater to Agriculture Sector needs, equipped with well-trained Agriculture Relationship Managers. BOP offers extensive products under the Kissan Dost Umbrella which ranges from Lucrative everyday Banking accounts to Need Specific Loan Products.

BOP is also focused to use modern day technology and innovative tools for the well-being of its customers. Recent launch of Kissan Digital Portal is the testimony to this fact, followed by its collaboration with different Agritechs for provision of Advisory Services in respect of Weather Forecasts, Cropping, Pesticide spraying and Utilizing Drones for Sprays to the Farmers. Bank has also collaborated with Punjab Land Record Authority for real time lien marking on Agriculture properties situated in Punjab Province. BOP stands committed to promote development and sustainability of agriculture sector by leveraging its Network and State of Art products and services.

Business community asked to cooperate in controlling use of polythene bags

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General, Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) Ms. Farzana Altaf Shah Thursday said that the polythene shopping bags were posing serious threats to human health and the environment besides causing blockage of streams, nullahs and sewerage lines. Therefore, the business community should cooperate in controlling their use in the federal capital to promote a healthy environment, she said while addressing the members of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) during her visit to the Chamber.

Farzana Altaf Shah said that PAK-EPA needed the cooperation of ICCI and the Market Associations for proper implementation of plastic shopping bags laws and regulations to make Islamabad a plastic free city.

She briefed the business community about the key features of the new regulations to prohibit the use of plastic shopping bags and hoped that as responsible citizens, they would extend

full cooperation in complying with these regulations.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI assured that the business community would cooperate in controlling the plastic shopping bags in Islamabad in order to make Islamabad a clean and green and environmentally friendly city.

However, he urged the government to ensure the easy availability of the alternatives of plastic shopping bags and adopt a gradual approach for the implementation of a ban on their use to save the business community from unnecessary problems.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the rising heatwaves, droughts, floods and heavy rains are the outcome of changing climate and stressed the government to take urgent measures to promote a healthy environment to save the country from more natural tragedies.

He said that a national drive should be launched to promote tree plantation, green energy, recycling plans and waste manage-

ment systems to save the environment from further deterioration.

He said that strong measures should be taken to control illegal plastic bags production and urged the government to subsidize the production of alternatives of polythene bags.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, ICCI Group Leader showed concerns over the changing climate and emissions of various hazardous smokes in Islamabad and stressed that PAK-EPA should take strong actions to control them.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General UBG also urged the government to give awards to those businesses which fully comply with the environmental laws and contribute to promote a healthy environment. It would motivate others to implement such laws, he added.

He said that reward and punishment was part of every society and the ICCI would also give awards to those businessmen who would promote environmentally friendly business activities to motivate others.

Tokyo shares end higher on earnings

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks rebounded Thursday as investors cheered strong corporate earnings and the green light for Chinese tour groups to return to Japan and elsewhere.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index rose 0.84 percent, or 269.32 points, to 32,473.65, while the broader Topix index added 0.92 percent, or 20.94 points, to 2,303.51.

The market started underwater after New York's three main indexes sagged, but continued hopes for strong earnings in Japan lifted the mood, analysts said.

"In a word, Tokyo shares are going through a corporate earnings festival," said Chihiro Ota of SMBC Nikko Securities.

It was particularly true

for automaker Honda, which roared 5.87 percent to 4,670 yen. The company on Wednesday announced a strong quarterly net profit.

However, Sony sank 3.23 percent to 12,565 yen a day after announcing a drop in quarterly profit.

Investors were also encouraged by China's announcement that it will resume group international tours, including those for Japan. Tokyo shares related to inbound tourism jumped on hopes for the return of big-spending Chinese tourists.

Retailers sharply rose, with leading department store chain Isetan Mitsukoshi Holdings jumping 4.65 percent to 1,779 yen and rival Takashimaya up 3.71 percent to 2,223.5 yen.

Bullet train operator Central Japan Railway added 2.10 percent to 18,245 yen.

The dollar's rise continued to provide support for the market, particularly exporters. The greenback bought 143.97 yen, up from 143.69 yen in New York on Wednesday.

Toyota added 1.40 percent to 2,429 yen and construction equipment maker Komatsu rose 2.09 percent to 4,101 yen, while Uniqlo-operator Fast Retailing rose 1.83 percent to 34,500 yen.

SoftBank Group added 0.37 percent to 6,827 yen. The company declined to comment on a Financial Times report that it was in talks to bring in Amazon as an anchor investor for the initial public offering of chip designer Arm.

Workers' remittances record \$2b inflow in July

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2 billion during July 2023, the State Bank of Pakistan on Thursday said.

In terms of growth, during July 2023, remittances decreased by 7.3 percent on a month-on-month basis and of 19.3 percent on year-on-year basis.

This decrease largely reflected the lower number of working days in July as a result of Eid, at 17 working days compared to 22 last month and 18 in July 2021.

Remittances' inflows during July 2023 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$486.7 million), United Arab Emirates (\$315.1 million), United Kingdom (\$305.7 million) and United States of America (\$238.1 million).

Pak, Iraq sign convention for elimination of double taxation

ISLAMABAD (APP): FBR has initiated negotiations on the convention for the elimination of double taxation with respect to taxes on Income, Capital and the Prevention of Tax Evasion with the Iraq.

In this connection, tax delegations of both the countries met here for the first round of negotiations from August 7 to 9, 2023, said a news release issued here on Thursday.

After detailed deliberations, a consensus was achieved and draft of the convention was initiated by the respective heads of delegation on August 9th.

The convention would not only provide safeguards against double taxation on the income of the residents of both the countries but will also promote economic cooperation and enhance investments. It will further strengthen the existing bilateral economic relations between the two contracting states. It will provide adequate certainty in respect of taxation rules applicable to cross-border business transactions, dividends, interests, royalties and fee for technical services and income from automated digital services etc.

Pakistani hand carved furniture on high demand in global market: Kashif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Thursday highlighted the global significance and high demand of Pakistani hand-carved furniture, particularly in America and the Middle East.

Talking to a delegation of furniture manufacturers led by Araib Arain, he said it attracts foreigners, tourists and visitors who appreciate cultural authenticity, said a news release issued here.

It serves as a way to share Pakistan's artistic her-

itage with the world, promoting cultural exchange and appreciation, he added.

He said hand-carved furniture promotes sustainable practices by valuing quality over quantity that often utilizes locally sourced materials and minimizes the environmental impact associated with mass production.

He said each creation becomes a work of art, preserving the essence of Pakistani culture.

He said hand-carved furniture of Pakistan reflects the rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship of the

region that attracts foreign buyers.

He said these pieces often incorporate intricate designs and motifs that are deeply rooted in the country's history and traditions.

He said the creation of hand-carved furniture involves skilled artisans who have honed their craft over generations and their expertise and dedication contribute to the uniqueness and authenticity of each piece.

He said this uniqueness adds a touch of exclusivity and elegance to interior spaces.

Global stocks rise as US inflation inches up

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets rose on Thursday as highly anticipated data showed that US consumer inflation inched up last month but held at a moderate level.

The new figures come against a backdrop of renewed concerns that the Federal Reserve could announce another interest-rate hike before the end of the year.

Oil prices dipped on profit-taking, a day after reaching multi-month highs on worries about Russian supplies following a Ukrainian attack on one of the country's tankers.

Output cuts by Moscow and OPEC giant Saudi Arabia were also providing strong support to the market, analysts said.

The feel-good factor that characterised much of July has given way to uncertainty about the US central bank's plans amid warnings from policymakers that more is needed to finally get prices under control.

Ongoing weakness in China's economy -- and lack of concrete action by authorities to address it -- are also taking a toll on investor sentiment, helping to drive a retreat in global markets in recent weeks.

Traders were keenly awaiting Thursday's government data, which showed the consumer price

index (CPI) -- a key inflation gauge -- increased 3.2 percent from a year ago last month, rising from June's 3.0 percent pace and breaking a streak of cooling figures.

The closely watched gauge of inflation plays a key role in the Fed's decision-making on monetary policy.

Interest-rate hikes have dampened steep American price rises from a four-decade high of 9.1 percent in June last year.

However, their longer-term target is for inflation of two percent.

The US central bank hiked rates in July but indicated that could be the last such move, after more than a year of tightening.

Richard Flax, chief investment officer at digital wealth manager Moneyfarm, said the latest US inflation reading was "slightly better than expected".

"While previous drivers in inflation (in 2022) were due to supply chain bottlenecks amidst a strong consumer demand and the war in Ukraine, the current drivers appear temporary," he said. "After today's data, the probability of a Fed rate rise has decreased," he added.

All three main indices on Wall Street ended in the red Wednesday, dragged down by tech firms, and Asia

largely followed suit Thursday.

But US stocks rose in early trading Thursday, while Europe's main markets mostly made solid gains.

Luxury and travel firms boosted Eurozone markets after China lifted a Covid-era ban on outbound group tours to dozens of countries, which could see crowds of Chinese tourists return to destinations around the world.

Investors were keeping tabs on China, hoping for measures to support the ailing economy, after news that the country had slipped into deflation for the first time in more than two years and exports plunged at their fastest pace since the early days of the Covid pandemic.

With China being a key driver of global growth, the long-running slowdown is fuelling concerns about possible spillover effects.

There was also a little nervousness after President Joe Biden signed an executive order directing the Treasury to restrict certain US investments in China in sensitive high-tech sectors, including semiconductors, quantum computing and artificial intelligence.

Beijing hit out at the move, saying it "severely disrupts the security of global industrial and supply chains".



In brief

Mark Coles steps down

LAHORE (APP): Mark Coles, the head coach of Pakistan women's team has resigned due to personal reasons. He will not be available with the women's side for the upcoming white-ball series against South Africa, which is set to start from 1 September in Karachi. Coles, who had previously served as head coach of the women's team from 2017 to 2019, was appointed this year in April. The PCB would like to extend its gratitude to Mark Coles for his brief stint with the women's side and wishes him well in his future endeavors. The replacement of Mark Coles will be announced in due course.

Hazara-Azadi Cup

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Hazara Region Azadi Cup Squash Championship, under the aegis of Hazara Region Squash Association with the collaboration of Regional Sports Officer Hazara, got underway at Jansher Khan Squash Complex here Thursday. A total of 52 male and female players are taking part in the U11, U13, U15, U19, Open and Veterans category. On the first day, junior competitions were started with the Championship was formally inaugurated by prominent business and social personality Malik Ghulam Murtaza Awan. On this occasion, TMO Abbottabad Shakeel Khan and President of Regional Squash Association Tariq Mehmood thanked the Regional Sports Officer Ahmad Zaman for providing opportunities to the players. They said that sports were very important to attract positive activities. They said that through this way, the youth could be engaged in healthy sports activities. Regional Sports Officer Ahmed Zaman Khan said that all possible cooperation with the Regional Squash Association would continue and this event would be proved to be exemplary and memorable.

Jeep Rally on Independence Day

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Armed Forces, 4x4 Frontier Club and District Administration of South Waziristan are going to organize a jeep rally from Peshawar to Waziristan on the 76th Independence Day of the country. The rally will start from the Qayyum Sports Complex in Peshawar and will pass through Razmak on its way to Gomal Zam. A total of 50 jeeps will participate in the rally, with a race being held on a 7-kilometre track near Gomal Zam. The race would consist of three categories. Jeeps would be placed in Category A, vehicles with 2000 CC and above would fall under Category B, while jeeps with 2000 CC would be placed in Category C. This rally aims to promote the positive image of KP, especially of the merged district by showcasing its lush green valleys and plains and providing the local community an opportunity to be part of the Independence Day celebrations. Furthermore, the rally will serve as an invitation to foreigners and tourists to explore both the well-known and undiscovered beauty of the KP province.

PSB all-out support for athletes in preparations for Asian Games

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) was all geared up to provide all-out support and facilities to the athletes in preparations for the 19th Asian Games to take place in Hangzhou, China in September. In this regard, the Director General PSB, Shoaib Khoso, and Secretary General of Pakistan Olympics Association (POA), Mohammad Khalid Mahmood, discussed important matters in a meeting held here at the Pakistan Sports Board on Thursday.

The focus of the discussion was to ensure the seamless participation of the Pakistan contingent in the Asian Games.

Around 305 athletes both male and female would be participating in

the 19th Asian Games. To support the talented athletes, the contingent has been thoughtfully divided into three groups.

The first group was receiving full support from the PSB while the second is partially supported and the third group benefits from the backing of the POA.

This comprehensive approach aims to provide the best possible resources and assistance to our athletes as they represent our nation on this grand stage.

A noteworthy aspect of our contingent was the significant participation of women athletes, a source of immense pride for our country as their dedication and achievements inspire us all. The Asian Games, commencing on September 23 would witness a strong

representation from team Pakistan, with the volleyball team being the first to depart on September 14, followed by teams in Kabaddi and hockey.

Our athletes are no strangers to success, with many having secured medals in previous competitions, showcasing their exceptional talents. Our shooting, Kabaddi and athletics teams have great potential to secure medals in the 19th Asian Games. The Pakistan Hockey team, in particular, is under the spotlight, carrying the hopes of the nation with the potential to secure a victory that would propel them toward the highly esteemed Paris Olympics. The cricket and volleyball teams also hold a high chance of clinching victory, adding to our nation's pride.

KP Azam Khan Squash Championship begins

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Azam Khan Male and Female Squash Championship 2023 got under way at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex wherein more than 65 male and female players are participating.

Former World Champion Qamar Zaman along with Director Blue Tone Squash Academy Wazir Mohammad, who is also Secretary Finance, Associate Secretary Sajjad Khalid, Executive Member Sher Bahadur, Chief Organizer Manoor Zaman, Senior Coaches Tahir Iqbal, Muhammad Waseem formally inaugurated.

More than 65 male and female players, including

top players from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, are participating in Male and Female Squash Championship. The finals of which will be held on August 14. Speaking at the opening ceremony, World Champion Qamar Zaman said that the name of Azam Khan, former World Champion is not new to squash which is why the Championship was named after him.

The aim of organizing the championship is to provide new players to the game of squash so that they could follow the footsteps of their heroes and bring Pakistan back its rightful place in squash.

He said that the provincial squash association is

trying to organize two championships every month so that both senior and juniors can improve their skills. There were plenty of opportunities to bring and can go ahead and brighten the name of the country and the nation.

According to the results of the competitions played on the opening day, Hafsa Yousaf defeated Sahrish Noor, Nimrah Aqeel defeated Rohna Babar and Sana Bahadur defeated Sadaf Farhad. Similarly, Waqar Mahmood defeated Afaq Khan, Umeer Arif defeated Asim Shehzad, Khushal Riaz defeated Zeeshan Gul, Fawad Hussain defeated Rizwan Gul, Hasher Kafayat defeated Shah Zeb.

Pak team to feature in Asian Volleyball C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): A 14-member Pakistan team would feature in the Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship to be played from August 16 to 26 in Urmia, Iran.

National volleyball team coach Mohammad Ismail Khan said the Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship would be played from August 16 to 26 in Iran in which 18 teams from Asian countries will participate.

"Pakistan has been placed along with

Bangladesh and Korea. The 14-member national team will leave for Iran from Sialkot on August 11," he said. Khan said the team would be accompanied by Brazilian head coach Isa Tai while Ehsan Iqbal and Mohammad Ismail Khan will assist him. "The training camp in preparation for the Asian Senior Volleyball Championship was underway at Liaquat Gymnasium."

Speaking about talent in the country, he said there was no shortage of volley-

ball talent in the country but there is need to provide resources to the players.

To a question about the facilities, he said the facilities provided by the Pakistan Sports Board were satisfactory and the players also have full support from the hostel staff. Khan said that no sport can develop without the patronage of the government and sponsors. "The private sector should also focus on other sports like cricket so that they can develop the same way," he said.

England face Colombia test, Japan eye Women's World Cup semi-finals

AUCKLAND (AFP/APP): The Women's World Cup is down to the last eight, with European champions England widely seen as the favourites to lift the trophy following the elimination of holders the United States.

AFP Sport looks ahead to the quarter-final action on Friday and Saturday in Australia and New Zealand: The first quarter-final might be the most-evenly matched, with a Spain side sitting sixth in the world rankings facing the ninth-ranked Netherlands.

Spain are in the quarter-finals for the first time despite reigning Ballon d'Or Alexia Putellas struggling to make an impact as she continues to recover fitness following a ruptured ACL. Instead her Barcelona teammate Aitana Bonmati has been the standout. Coach Jorge Vilda made sweeping changes to his line-up for the 5-1 last-16 win over Switzerland and must decide whether to stick with the likes of Laia Codina in central defence and Cata Coll in goal.

The Netherlands, runners-up in 2019, have put the absence at the tournament due to injury of prolific striker Vivianne Miedema behind them and topped their group ahead of the USA.

Andries Jonker's team have conceded just one

goal so far. They will need to be strong at the back against a Spain team that has notched 13 goals in four games.

Practically written off before the tournament, Japan are the only former World Cup winners still standing following the exits of the USA, Germany and Norway. The 2011 champions have been clinical, scoring 14 goals and letting in just one in wins over Zambia (5-0), Costa Rica (2-0), Spain (4-0) and Norway (3-1).

The player grabbing the attention is Hinata Miyazawa, the 23-year-old leader in the race for the golden boot with five goals. But it is not just about her. "They're so disciplined and very structured in the way they play offence and defence," said Norway's Caroline Graham Hansen after the last 16.

World number three Sweden are the top-ranked team left in the tournament after they ousted the USA on penalties. However, they were second-best throughout that game and grateful to goalkeeper Zecira Musovic for several key saves. They have now kept three consecutive clean sheets. Japan beat Sweden 3-1 in the semi-finals in 2011, but Sweden won by the same scoreline when they met at the Tokyo Olympics.

Australia appear to be getting stronger as they go along, surviving a wobble in the group stage before comfortably dispatching Denmark 2-0 in the last 16.

They are aiming to reach the semi-finals for the first time and are boosted by the return to fitness of star striker Sam Kerr, who returned from three weeks out with a calf problem as a substitute against Denmark.

"For (other) teams looking ahead it's pretty scary to know that she's back in the team and she's going to be a part of it with us," said Caitlin Foord.

France are hoping Australia suffer the same fate as befell them four years ago, when as hosts they went out in the quarter-finals to the eventual winners, the USA.

Herve Renard's team cruised through in the last 16, beating Morocco 4-0. They have scored 12 goals in their last three games, but they will have to deal with a hostile atmosphere from 50,000 spectators.

"It won't be an easy match, but it won't be easy for either team," warned Renard, whose side lost 1-0 to Australia in a friendly in Melbourne on July 14. England are the favourites to win the trophy, while Colombia are the surprise quarter-finalists, and 21 places separate the teams in the world rankings.

Mark Coles resigns as Pakistan women's head coach

LAHORE (Agencies): Four months after he was appointed head coach of the Pakistan women's side for the second time, Mark Coles has resigned with immediate effect citing personal reasons. Coles had earlier served as the head coach of the team from 2017 to 2019.

The resignation comes at a less-than-ideal time for the women's side, who take on South Africa in a high-profile series at home that begins on September 1 in Karachi. The sides play three T20Is and three ODIs, with all six games taking place in Karachi. The PCB said a new coach will be announced "in due course" though there is no guarantee a permanent replacement will be in place by the time that series begins.



Pakistan have a busy upcoming schedule, playing 15 ODIs and 17 T20Is in the upcoming year. Aside from South Africa, they host the West Indies at home, and travel to Bangladesh, New Zealand and England.

It is understood the resignation came as something of a surprise to the PCB, and Coles has not made any public comment on the matter.

When he was announced as Pakistan's head coach alongside Nida Dar as the new captain, he said he was "excited to lead the team in the upcoming events". "It has been a privilege to work with such a talented group of players and I look forward to the exciting times ahead as we aim to improve our previous performances and achievements," Coles had

said at the time. "We have a lot of potential in the team, and I look forward to helping the players give their best and achieve success on the international stage."

In the end, he would oversee no games during this second stint. He did enjoy a relatively successful time on the pitch when he was first appointed in 2017. Pakistan won nearly half of their ODIs - 7 in 16 - including a famous come-from-behind series win against West Indies. They also won 15 of 32 T20Is before Coles quit because of "family commitments".

The PCB said in a statement that it would "like to extend its gratitude to Mark Coles for his brief stint with the women's side and wishes him well in his future endeavors."

Sports competitions to be held

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Student Olympic Association (PSOA) would be organizing sports competitions at the grass root level in several cities of the country as to mark the Independence Day (August 14th). According to President PSOA Maqbool Arain the competitions would be held on August 14 and their preparations have begun. The competitions include throwball, futsal, football, rope skipping, taekwondo, kung-fu, netball, badminton, tug-of-war, archery and catch ball.

He said the players can participate in four categories in these competitions. Players can participate in four age categories including U-12, U-14, U-17 and U-19, he said.

Arain said instructions have been issued to all institutions, provincial and regional associations associated with PSOA in this regard, to organize sports competitions on August 14 on the occasion of Independence Day.

Jashan-e-Azadi Kabaddi matches

FAISALABAD (APP): The District Administration has released schedule for the series of Kabaddi matches to celebrate Jashan-e-Azadi 2023 in a most befitting manner. According to a spokesman of the local administration, 9 matches would be played between Kabaddi teams from August 11 to September 06, 2023 in various parts of Faisalabad district.

He said that the opening match would be played at Chak 5-JB Kamal Pur on August 11 followed by other matches at Chak 208/R-B on August 13-14, at Chak 75 Lohkay on August 18, at Chak 8-JB Punj Garain on August 20, at Chak 52-JB Mullan Pur on August 25, at Sports Stadium of Chak 188/R-B Nallaywala on August 27, at Chak 51-JB Sajjadan on August 30 and Yaum-e-Difa Kabaddi Match at Sports Stadium Chak 209/R-B on September 06, 2023.

He said that cash prizes and Jashan-e-Azadi trophies would also be awarded to the position holder teams. All playgrounds would be decorated with national flags and colorful bunting whereas national anthem and other national songs would be played before commencement of Kabaddi match, he added.

LAHORE (APP): Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said that Pakistan has been blessed with a plenty of talented youth and they are playing key role in the progress of the beloved motherland.

He said this while addressing a ceremony organized on the eve of International Youth Day under the banner of Youth Affairs and Sports Department Punjab here at Nishtar Park Sports Complex E-Library on Thursday. A large number of students from various colleges and universities were also present on this occasion. Addressing the ceremony, Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz said the Punjab government is taking several effective measures to empower youth in every field of life. "Youth Affairs Department Punjab is aiming to make the E-Rozgar

Project a success. Talented youth of the province is being imparted technical skills in various relevant fields through e-Rozgar Programme".

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz further said that Youth Affairs Department Punjab is giving great significance to participation of youth in E-Rozgar Programme. "The potential young male and female students of the province should take part in the maximum number of e-Rozgar Programme courses to make their future bright," he added.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Shahid Zaman in his address appreciated the holding of the International Youth Day ceremony. "This kinds of programmes and lectures played a key role in motivating the youth of the country. We need to convert these lectures into practical

measures," he added.

Shahid Zaman further said that the Youth Affairs Department is planning to organize these useful workshops on a regular basis on various subjects such as cultural and e-commerce to provide equal opportunities to all youngsters belonging to multiple fields. "As many as 51,000 talented male and female youngsters are earning respectable livelihood after taking training from e-Rozgar Programme". He said that E-Library is playing an important role for providing valuable guidance to youth of the province who are earning Rs 3.6 billion through freelancing. "There are 20 E-Libraries functioning in different districts of the province. We are planning to establish E-Libraries in all tehsils of the province". Motivational speaker Mohammad Ali highlighted different features of Emotional Intelligence in his address.

World Junior Squash Champion Hamza Khan visits China Window

PESHAWAR (APP): New Junior World Squash Champion Hamza Khan has said that he has turned down the offer to play from America, he can't imagine representing any other country, Pakistan has honored him and he will always be there for Pakistan.

"I will try to regain the lost glory of Pakistan in the world of squash," he said. He expressed these views on the occasion of visiting China Window, a Chinese Cultural Center established in Peshawar here on Thursday.

Hamza Khan visited various galleries of China Window, signed the friendship wall and recorded his comments in the guest book. Hamza Khan said in a media interview that he had gone to Melbourne determined to win even though he was nervous in the semi-finals.

It was a tight contest and he was beaten on the last point of the last game, but in the final he did not face much difficulty against the Egyptian player. On the 76th Independence Day, he has gifted his victory.

Hamza Khan said that he represents the Pakistan Army and Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir in meeting him has given him a new passion and desire to play in the future and crown the rule of Pakistan's squash game by becoming a Senior Champion.

Hamza Khan also appreciated all possible support from Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar, President of Pakistan Squash Federation. He said that although he belongs to the squash family, he is happy that he belongs to the seven World Squash

Championships.

The champion is from Nawa Kali, the village of the players. Hamza Khan described the Chinese Cultural Center China Window as Mini China and said that he was very happy to visit the Pak-China Friendship Center and felt like he had come to China.

Although he has gone to China to play the Junior Asian Squash Championship, he may not be able to participate in the Asian Games this time, but he wishes to participate in the squash competitions held in China as well.

Hamza Khan expressed his belief that sportspersons will also contribute to Pakistan-China friendship and will play their full positive and constructive role to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.



In brief

Operation against beggars

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon directed all Assistant Commissioners in the capital to take stern action against beggars, encroachments and profiteers in the federal capital. According to the spokesperson, the Assistant Commissioners inspected 125 sites and imposed fine of Rs. 11000, sealed three shops, sent three profiteers behind the bar whereas registered FIR against one person. During the operation, the Assistant Commissioners arrested 54 professional baggers and took action against illegal clinic and sheesha cafes. They also ordered arrests of three persons for encroachments and ordered to register FIR against one person and also confiscated 6 kg polythene bags. The Assistant Commissioners also took action against illegal petrol filling agencies and illegal LPG filing stations while ordering to seal 2 illegal filling stations and arrested one person. The spokesperson said that the operation against encroachments, profiteering and professional baggers is continued on daily basis.

SP Potohar holds 'Khuli Kutcheri'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Superintendent of Police (SP) Potohar, Muhammad Waqas Khan on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani held a 'Khuli Kutcheri' here on Thursday in Police Lines Headquarters to address grievances of the people. According to a Police spokesman, Police Officers under Punjab's open door policy are holding 'Khuli Kutcheries' to provide relief to the citizens. He informed that the SP issued directives to the officers concerned to take action and submit a report on the complaint submitted by the citizens in 'Khuli Kutcheri'. The SP on the occasion said, the 'Khuli Kutcheries' were being held to provide the citizens immediate relief and addressed their complaints besides it also helped improve standards of policing. The SP issued orders to the officers concerned to complete inquiries and send reports within given time frame. He said, all-out efforts were being made to ensure dispensation of speedy justice purely on merit to the people and improve service delivery standard. The spokesman informed that the SPs were holding 'Khuli Kutcheries' here to provide relief to the citizens.

Police conduct search operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have conducted search operations in Mumtaz City, Nara, Bauer, Thalian, Gawala Colony, and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Naseerabad, Kahuta, Dhamial and Rawat Police Stations, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Rawalpindi district police, women police and other law enforcement agencies under the supervision of senior police officers participated in the search operations. He said that Rawalpindi district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Faisal Saleem conducted search operations and inspected 147 houses, 72 shops, and 12 tenants besides checking 235 persons. The supremacy of the law would be ensured and the crackdown against the lawbreakers would continue, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displaying National flags along Islamabad Expressway to attract the customers as the nation starts preparations to celebrate Independence Day in befitting manners.

HEC launches Innovative Quality Assurance Framework

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC), has launched the revamped Quality Assurance Framework, "Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (PSG-2023) in line with the commission's vision 2025.

With this Pakistan has taken a significant step forward in its pursuit of academic excellence with the official launch of the Revamped Quality Assurance (QA) Framework for Higher Education. A launching ceremony was held here in collaboration and support of the British Council Pakistan, bringing together esteemed dignitaries, education experts, and stakeholders from across the country. The Revamped QA Framework represents a paradigm shift in how higher education quality is assessed, maintained, and enhanced. Crafted through collaboration with international experts, the framework aligns with global best practices while addressing the unique needs of the Pakistani education landscape.

The framework introduces a comprehensive review mechanism based on 16 Institutional Quality Standards. Down the road, the Framework has the

capacity to classify the Institutions into categorization based on their performance. The major categories accordingly are four colours – Green (most effective), Blue (progressive), Yellow (average), and Grey (unclassified) – determining their funding and customized policy interventions. The Institutional Quality Standards cover several key themes including, Academic Quality and Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Academia-Industry and External Linkage, Technology Infrastructure and Enhancement, Corporate Governance, Audit & Finance, Community Service and Engagement, and Graduate Quality and Employability. Institutions will undergo external accreditation reviews by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and Accreditation Councils, along with internal self-assessment processes.

This multi-faceted approach ensures a holistic evaluation of institutional quality. The Revamped QA Framework aligns with international benchmarks, enhancing the recognition and reputation of Pakistani institutions on the global

stage. It promotes collaboration, quality enhancement, and academic integrity.

The launch ceremony witnessed the presence of high-ranking officials, including the former Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Chairman Higher Education Commission, Country Director, British Council Pakistan, Vice Chancellors, Deans and senior University and other government officials.

Former Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the government's commitment to elevating higher education standards in the country. Distinguished speakers, including Speakers Vicki Stott, Chief Executive, and Christopher Bland QAA-UK (virtual participation), highlighted the transformative changes brought about by the framework and its potential to reshape the higher education landscape.

Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, expressed his enthusiasm for the new framework, stating, "The Revamped QA Framework is a testament to our dedication to providing quality higher education.

CPO visits different city areas to check traffic situation

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani here on Thursday visited different city areas and checked the traffic situation on the roads.

According to a Police spokesman, the CPO also gave instructions to the traffic officers and wardens on duty. Effective measures should be ensured for the convenience of the citizens, the CPO said adding, traffic officials should perform their duty diligently at their duty points. In case of traffic congestion in any area, the Wardens should make more efforts to regulate traffic flow, he added.

Senior traffic officers should also remain in the field to check duty points and brief the field staff, he said. Violation of traffic rules should be dealt without discrimination and additional personnel should be deployed at major roads and intersections to save citizens from inconvenience, the CPO directed.

Effective strategies should be devised to ensure traffic flow during school and office closing timing, the CPO said and informed that negligence in duty would not be tolerated under any circumstances. "We all have to work for the convenience of the citizens," he said.

Ministry seeks applications for annual Urs of Moinuddin Chishti

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has opened its doors to fervent Pakistani pilgrims, encouraging them to seize the opportunity and apply for participation in the annual Urs of the revered Sufi saint, Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti, held in Ajmer Sharif, India.

The Ministry's Spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt on Thursday informed that pilgrims could submit their applications through the dedicated Ziyarat form until August 31, 2023. He said the Urs ceremonies, a cherished tradition among followers, were set to grace the holy city of Ajmer Sharif from January 13 to 23, 2024. Devotees from Pakistan and beyond would have the privilege to engage in this spiritually uplifting event, he added.

PUC urges religious scholars to advocate minority rights in Friday sermons

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), in a unified call to action on Thursday, fervently appealed to religious scholars across the nation to use their Friday sermons as a platform to shed light on the rights of minorities in accordance with Islamic principles.

The prominent leaders of the PUC, including Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and esteemed scholars such as Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Tahir Hassan, Maulana Qasim Qasimi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hamid Sabri, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pitafi, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasimi, Maulana Muhammad Islam Siddiqui, and others, have come together to emphasize the importance of upholding the rights of minorities.

It, highlighting the diversity that enriches the cherished homeland of Pakistan, where people of various faiths coexist harmoniously, informed that August 11, is observed as a day dedicated to championing the rights of non-Muslims. It emphasized that this day serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of ensuring equal rights for every individual, regardless of their religious beliefs.

The PUC advocated for a thoughtful discourse within Friday sermons on

August 11, encouraging Ulema and Mashaykh to delve into the teachings of the Quran, Sunnah, and the Constitution, in order to shed light on the rights of non-Muslims and minorities in Pakistan.

It underlined that Pakistan's Constitution is firmly rooted in the principles of the Quran and Sunnah, underscoring the importance of honor and respect for all citizens, guided by the principles of Taqwa. Reverently referring to Allah Almighty as the "Lord of the Worlds" and Hazrat Muhammad as the "Mercy for the Worlds" in the Holy Quran, the PUC emphasized that these attributes serve as guiding principles for the treatment of minorities. It underscored that it is not only the duty of Muslim-majority nations to protect the rights of non-Muslim minorities within their borders, but it is equally vital for Muslims living as minorities in non-Muslim countries to have their rights safeguarded.

It concluded by urging the entire populace to recognize that every Pakistani citizen, irrespective of their background, enjoys equal rights and protections under the Constitution, laws, and regulations of the nation.

As the PUC has taken this noble stance to advocate for the rights of minorities, it called upon the collective conscience of the nation to embrace the spirit of unity, tolerance, and compassion that is intrinsic to Islam's teachings.

Patriotic fever grips residents of twin cities as independence day approaches

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the independence day approaches, patriotic fever has gripped the nation and preparations are in full swing to celebrate the day in a befitting manner with traditional zeal and enthusiasm. Residents of the twin cities are gearing up to celebrate the 77th Independence Day or 76 birth anniversary of their beloved country with great enthusiasm. The markets are filled with customers purchasing garments and bangles in the national flag color are being sold like hot cakes. Vendors have set up special stalls to sell Independence Day paraphernalia and they are more than satisfied over an increase in income as children have been thronging to buy the independence day related stuff.

Adnan Arshad, a resident of G-9/4 told APP that he had come to G-9 Markaz (Karachi Company) for

purchasing national flag-coloured garments for his son and daughter. He said his children have also purchased toys with green and white colours.

Akmal Hussain, a employee of a local bank who was seen purchasing green and white coloured garments at Aabpara market, said it was a special day and his family always celebrated the day with great enthusiasm.

The buildings and high-ways of the twin cities are being decorated with national flags, bunting and lights as the day of independence comes close. Residents of twin cities, like the people all over the country, are hoisting national flags on their vehicles and rooftops of residential houses to express their jubilation on the historic occasion.

On the road sides, stalls of national flags, bunting, caps, and children clothes

and toys doused in green and white colours have been setup at shops in every nook and corner of the country.

The day of August 14 will dawn with special prayers and a 31 gun salute in the federal capital and 21 gun salute at all provincial capitals. Special prayers will be offered in mosques at dawn for peace, solidarity and prosperity of the country. Different public and private departments will hold special functions and activities with the focus on acknowledging the contribution of leaders of the Pakistan Movement and sacrifices of national heroes.

Radio Pakistan and Pakistan Television will highlight the services of Pakistan Movement heroes' on the day and pay tributes to their extraordinary contributions for making Pakistan a reality.

Traffic police renews commitment to ensure safe road environment

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Division) has reinforced commitment to maintain traffic discipline and ensure safe road environment in the city through implementation on laws.

Police officials from traffic wing in the light of directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer organized 'Police Darbar' at traffic headquarters which was attended by all officials including Chief Traffic Officer Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, SP (Traffic) Ch. Abid Hussain, Zonal DSPs and jawan from the force.

Chief Traffic Officer directed policemen to ensure courteous attitude

with citizens and ensure implementation on traffic laws without any discrimination. On the occasion, the officers and jawans shared their professional as well as personal issues and they also gave suggestions to improve the performance of the department.

Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad listened to the problems and assured to resolve them. While addressing the officers and cops in Police Darbar, Chief Traffic Officer said that Islamabad Capital Police has become the role model for other law enforcement agencies due to its performance and service to citizens.

He said that its personnel are working day and

night to serve the citizens and performing duties in tough weather conditions. He urged the traffic cops to demonstrate polite attitude during interactions with citizens especially those coming from other districts. He said courteous behavior brings laurel and appreciation which is key to boost the morale of the force.

Along with good behavior, Chief Traffic Officer said that implementation on traffic rules should be ensured without any discrimination. He said that a minor mistake can affect the reputation of the department while a single good deed is enough to raise the standard of the department to new heights.



ISLAMABAD: A security guard on the way during rain that experienced the Federal Capital.

National Minority Day would be observed today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Minorities Day would be observed on Friday (August 11) in the federal capital and across the country with the aim to highlight their religious and socio-economic rights.

The declaration to mark National Minorities Day was adopted as part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to help and secure those belonging to religious, linguistic, national or ethnic minority groups.

Pakistan being the Islamic state and its Constitution guarantees the rights of minorities as white color in our flag also represents the minorities.

The Muslim population in Illegally Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is brutally treated by Indian security forces. Over one hundred thousand Kashmiris have been martyred so far.

The purpose of observing the Day is to highlight the message of Father of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who had pronounced equal rights to all citizens of Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan declared 11 August as the National Minority Day in 2009. It has always been the endeavor of the government to safeguard the fundamental rights, safety, security, honors, life, liberty and prosperity of

minorities in line with the historic speech of the founder of the nation Q u a i d - e - A z a m Mohammad Ali Jinnah at the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947.

Nonetheless, the National Minorities Day not only expresses gratitude for the contributions, made by these religious communities, but also professes that future development of Pakistan hinges crucially on their efforts.

On this occasion, different events and seminars would be held all over the country and in this regard, Shaheed Bhutto Foundation would also organize "National Minority Day".

'PML-N leadership hopes to see Nawaz Sharif back in politics'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Mian Javed Latif on Thursday said that without Mian Nawaz Sharif it is impossible to turn around the country back to the path of prosperity and economic growth. He said the PDM-led government under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif tried its best to make a prosperous Pakistan during its 15 months' time.

"Mian Nawaz Sharif will come back to Pakistan in mid-September to participate in the elections and lead the country towards an affluent path after winning the elections", said Javed Latif.

Addressing a press conference, he said the former PTI's government had plundered the country during three and half year tenure with the enormous support of an institution however the PDM government led by Shehbaz Sharif tried hard to improve the economy and foreign relations.

He said people sitting in institutes, the general public and CPEC opponents have realized that a prosperous Pakistan

is impossible without Nawaz Sharif's coming back on the political spectrum.

Today, the nation is facing the results of a conspiracy hatched against Nawaz Sharif in 2015 because all characters of the 2017 elections were part of an international conspiracy, said Javed Latif.

He said the comparison of Nawaz Sharif and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with the chairman of PTI is unjustified because he enjoys the blessings of Pakistan's enemy powers whereas the previous two PMs were opposed by them for making Pakistan stronger.

"Today, people from other institutes blocking Nawaz Sharif's return to the country but now the people of Pakistan will decide their leader through vote and choose their leader", added Javed Latif.

He said, people from other institutes kept trying to minus Nawaz Sharif since 1990 but they failed however if a similar attempt is made again, this would be a huge loss to the country and such elections would not be acceptable to PML-N.

Seasonal ailments increased

KABUL (TOLOnews): Ministry of Public Health said that seasonal ailments that occur as a result of hot and cold weather have increased among children. Spokesman for Public Health Ministry said that in the past seven months, nearly 200,000 children have suffered from various seasonal illnesses in the country. 'Almost 60,000 cases of acute diarrhea and 4,000 cases of malaria have been recorded in the eastern zone,' said Spokesman for Public Health Ministry.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 23, 1445 — Friday, August 11, 2023

New substation inaugurated

BALKH (Agencies): Chief Executive Officer of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, Alhaj Mullah Muhammad Hanif Hamza inaugurated the new Chamtal substation worth \$800,000 in Balkh province this week. The substation is expected to provide electricity to 5,000 families in total. Of these families, 1,200 are already being supplied with power and the remainder will be connected to the supply point in the near future.

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

US administration sent \$2.35b to Afghanistan post-collapse: SIGAR

KABUL (Khaama Press): Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, the US has appropriated over \$2.35 billion, the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report said.

'The US government has appropriated more than \$2.35 billion in 2022 and 2023 funding for Afghanistan reconstruction programming since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021,' the report said.

SIGAR's quarterly

report to the US Congress states, 'Taliban interference in humanitarian assistance is the main barrier to beneficiaries accessing aid in 2023 ... there were 110 access incidents related to Taliban interference in April 2023 alone.'

SIGAR released its findings last month, indicating that since 2021, the Taliban has received considerable taxpayer funds.

The SIGAR report also noted that the Biden administration had more funds available for projects in Taliban-controlled

Afghanistan.

However, the Taliban officials denied the interference in the aid process, saying that 'We deny the SIGAR report. The interim administration has no interference in the distribution of aid. We have accurate monitoring on the distribution of assistance to Afghanistan,' according to Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy.

The US Department of State earlier mentioned that the de facto authorities are interfering in the aid process.

AWCC celebrates its 25th anniversary

KABUL (Agencies): Afghanistan's leading cell phone and internet service provider, Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC), celebrated its 25th anniversary this week at an official ceremony hosted by the company's founder and chairman Dr Ehsanullah Bayat.

Established in 1998, AWCC was the first mobile phone company in the country and continues to provide world-class services to millions of people across Afghanistan.

Marking this milestone at an event in Kabul on Sunday, Bayat pointed out that the company is the leading network in Afghanistan and that its spirit has strengthened over the years because of its loyal customers.

'Our pioneering spirit has not only survived but has also become stronger because our customers have recognized this spirit, and with their loyalty to AWCC have made this network the most popular and the leading telecommunications network in Afghanistan,' Bayat said.

He emphasized that AWCC has been able to expand its activities in Afghanistan with the cooperation of the Islamic Emirate government, and in addition to rebuilding existing sites and building new sites, AWCC has also rolled out fast internet services to many remote areas.

'Let me thank the leadership of the government as with their cooperation we were able to expand our network and develop the company. Thanks to the honorable Minister of Communications and Information Technology that as a result of close cooperation with him, we were able to rebuild our sites and have sites in the areas where we did not have,' Bayat said.

At the ceremony, officials of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology hailed the efforts and achievements of AWCC over the past 25 years. The Acting Minister of Communications and Information Technology Najibullah Haqqani said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to the development and advancement of technology in Afghanistan.

'AWCC has come a long way and has achievements. We appreciate the efforts of the leadership of this company. Technology is a reality and an urgent necessity, but the Islamic Emirate is committed to fulfill this necessity and has been and will be committed to its development and expansion,' Haqqani said.

AWCC officials meanwhile said they are committed to providing telecommunication and internet services to people living in remote areas of Afghanistan.

IEA welcomes, supports investments in Afghanistan



KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi in a meeting with a group of restaurant representatives in Kabul city, said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan welcomes and supports all investments in the country.

According to a statement released by the Prime Minister's office, Allah Dad Yazdani, the owner of Qasr

Suleiman Wedding Hall, Seyed Abdul Halim, the manager of Barg Continental Restaurant, and Haji Sakhidat Rahimi, the owner of Bokhara Restaurant, shared their views on behalf of other entrepreneurs.

They talked about the significant growth of the hospitality industry in the country and said restaurants, especially in Kabul, have played a good role in highlighting the authentic

culture of the country for foreign visitors and have provided quality services and employment for hundreds of citizens of the country.

Representatives from Kabul's hotel industry have urged the Islamic Emirate's leadership to support the industry and enable them to deliver even better services to the local population.

The Deputy Prime Minister, for his part,

thanked the private sector, specifically the hospitality industry, for delivering quality services to the country's population and for their role in creating work opportunities.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan welcomes all investments in the country and will make every effort to assist investors within the means available, according to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Private sector plays role in uplift of Kabul city



KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Kabir in a meeting with the deputy mayor of Kabul Municipality highlighted the contribution of the private sector crucial in the urban development of Kabul city. According to a statement from the office of Mr. Kabir, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs met with Mawlawi Habib-ur-Rahman Mansoor, deputy mayor of Kabul city in of cultural and social affairs.

During the meeting, Mr. Mansoor stated that 25 intersections and a large number of flowerpots have been constructed in Kabul city in collaboration with the private sector over the past few months.

He stated that thousands of honest local and street representatives have been appointed, who have proven to be very positive in urban affairs and security. Approximately 12,000 saplings have been planted in collaboration with local residents in different regions of Kabul city this year, said the deputy mayor.

Hundreds of madrasas have also been established with public supporting around Kabul, with 200 to 800 students enrolled in each of these centers.

Mr. Mansoor went on to say that 20,000 acres of land in Kabul, including 140 local parks, have been recovered from usurpation, with the majority of the parks currently undergoing maintenance.

While praising the work of the Kabul municipality, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs stated that the relevant departments ought to take part in the development of Kabul city alongside the Kabul municipality.

He highlighted the importance of the private sector in the development of Kabul city and assured of the government's support for those working for the progress of the country's capital.

Deputy Prime Minister emphasized the need of collaboration between the municipality and local representatives for the city security and discipline, and he offered necessary directives to the Kabul municipality's officials.

Iran: US 'perpetuating' instability in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): A senior Iranian diplomat has accused the United States of deliberately perpetuating instability in Afghanistan with the aim of creating crises for neighboring countries.

In an interview with Iran's state news agency IRNA, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's special repre-

sentative for Afghanistan, said the United States has been sponsoring 'terrorist' groups in Afghanistan after it withdrew all its forces from the Central Asian country in 2021.

The United States is also taking steps to isolate Afghanistan from the global community by imposing sanctions on a number of

Taliban officials and freezing the nation's assets, Kazemi Qomi added.

The Iranian official highlighted that the United States does not want stability in Afghanistan, as it fears the potential for other countries to fill the void it left once the Central Asian country attains stability.

Afghan Ministry says internet service prices decreased

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said in an annual report that 98% of SIM cards from telecommunication networks have been registered in the country.

Officials of the ministry claimed that after the Islamic Emirate took over the country, the price of the internet decreased by 60%.' 'Currently in

Afghanistan, the process of distributing SIM cards has become legal between 97 and 98 percent, and an independent system has been created for the process,' said Najibullah Haqqani, the acting minister of communications and information technology.

Haqqani added that the revenue of the ministry has increased by 44% compared to last year.

'In 1400 and 1401 solar years, the income from ten percent credit cards increased by 44 percent. For example, last year the revenue was 3 billion Afghanis, now the revenue has reached 5.3 billion Afghanis,' said Haqqani.

According to Haqqani, the Ministry of Communications is seeking to buy internet services from Kazakhstan to reduce the

price of internet in the country.

Officials of the ministry have announced the creation of 39 new electronic and development systems in various departments of the ministry and in other government offices.

'In general, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has started the development of 39 systems, among which 23 systems have been completed and efforts are underway to complete 16 systems,' said Enayatullah Alokozai, spokesman for the ministry.

'Compared to the past, the number of active SIM cards has increased by one million. Previously, the number of SIM cards was 22 million, now it is 23 million,' said an official of the ministry. Officials of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology said that the ministry has plans to activate communications services in 279 other areas where there have never been internet services.

IOM resumes operations in Kabul following two-year suspension

KABUL (Khaama Press): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recently reestablished its presence in Kabul, marking a significant development two years after its closure.

The reopening of the office took place and is located at Kabul Airport, facilitating smoother operations. According to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, returning migrants arriving on inbound flights will now undergo a registration process upon their arrival in Kabul.

While the specifics are yet to be clarified, there is ongoing speculation about whether the IOM will extend financial assistance to the repatriating Afghan individuals.

The IOM's Kabul office had experienced substantial damage during the withdrawal of US troops. However, since then, considerable efforts have been made to restore the office to its functional state.

Amidst the suspension of aid organizations, another notable shift has emerged in the relief scenario within Afghanistan. The once-steady flow of financial assistance from the United Nations and various



aid organizations to Afghanistan has experienced a substantial decline.

Recent reports reveal that in 2023, these contributions have decreased by a staggering 1.4 billion dollars compared to the preceding period, underscoring a concerning deterioration in international finan-

cial support amid the ongoing upheavals.

While the resumption of the International Organization for Migration offers a promising outlook for aiding returnees, the simultaneous reduction in aid initiatives underscores the challenges still confronting the country.

Afghani surges 4.4% against US Dollar, says Central Bank

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan's central bank officials announced that the Afghani (AFN) had experienced a noteworthy strengthening of 4.4 percent against the US dollar over the last year. This positive development follows a substantial 10.4% decline in the value of Afghani during the previous year.

Hidayatullah Badri, serving as the acting head of the central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank, highlighted this progress while presenting the national accountability report. He revealed that bank customers nationwide can now withdraw up to \$600 weekly and \$2,000 monthly from their respective bank accounts.

Badri emphasized, 'The officials of Da Afghanistan Bank have adeptly upheld

the integrity of the Afghan currency by implementing prudent policies. The bank has been dedicated to enhancing banking services and is actively fostering the growth of Islamic banking within the country.'

According to reliable sources within the central bank, the average inflation rate within the country has notably decreased from 12% to a commendable 6%.

'Da Afghanistan Bank has effectively managed its operations within the constraints of limited currency reserves and successfully met the currency requirements of the market,' remarked Ahmad Javad

comprehensive evaluations of banking institutions, currency exchanges, and financial entities to standardise the banking sector. Ahmed Zahir Nasirzai, who heads the department responsible for non-banking financial institutions, announced a pivotal shift in exchange companies' operations.

'Exchange companies will now conduct their transactions for citizens through electronic systems, adhering to international standards,' Nasirzai stated.

Additionally, officials from Da Afghanistan Bank unveiled plans for an ongoing initiative to collect and replace worn-out banknotes throughout the country. This move responds to repeated grievances voiced by citizens regarding the

prevalence of worn and dilapidated banknotes circulating within the markets.

However, a recent evaluation of Afghanistan's central bank, financially supported by the United States, has revealed significant concerns. The assessment, conducted by a US watchdog, highlights the lack of autonomy that the bank maintains from the Taliban administration, along with insufficient measures to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

According to the latest quarterly report presented to the US Congress by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), critical deficiencies have been identified in the central bank's management, referred to as Da Afghanistan Bank.



Modi govt defeats no-trust motion in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Following a walkout by the opposition parties during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the Indian parliament, Lok Sabha, the opposition lawmakers' no-confidence motion was defeated by the government on Thursday.

Along with launching into a diatribe against the opposition parties, PM Modi promised to bring peace to the northeastern state of Manipur as soon as possible during his more than two-hour speech. "The federal and state governments are working round-the-clock to prosecute those responsible and restore peace to the state. The entire nation is behind the people of Manipur, I want to reassure them," Modi remarked.

Additionally, Modi criticised those who walked out, saying: "Those who don't trust democracy are always ready to make a comment but don't have the patience to hear (the rebuttal)," adding that they would "speak ill and run away, throw garbage and run away, spread lies and run away." "This is their game and the country can't expect much from them," he continued.

The no-confidence vote was dismissed by the government ahead of the vote as a headline-grabbing gimmick ahead of a general election next year. Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has a large majority in the 543-member lower house and is widely expected to win a third term in power. Its muscular appeals to India's Hindu majority have proven a winning formula, and Modi has already steered it to two landslide victories over Gandhi and his Congress party.

"I can understand the Congress party's problem," Modi said Thursday. "They have been launching the same failed product again and again, but the launch fails every time." Modi vows to bring back peace in Manipur Gandhi, 53, the son, grandson and great-grandson of three for-

mer Indian premiers, spearheaded the parliamentary attack on the government Wednesday, condemning what he said was Modi's inaction over the deadly Manipur violence.

In a speech to lawmakers, Gandhi had charged that Modi was "killing Mother India". The opposition leader was restored to parliament on Monday after the Supreme Court suspended his defamation conviction over past comments criticising Modi. Gandhi had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment in March in a case that critics flagged as an effort to stifle political opposition in the world's largest democracy.

Modi's party has been repeatedly accused by political opponents and rights groups of fomenting religious divisions for electoral purposes. At least 152 people have been killed in Manipur since May, according to government figures, after armed clashes broke out between the predominantly Hindu Meitei majority and the mainly Christian Kuki community. The state has fractured on ethnic lines, with rival militias setting up blockades to keep out members of the opposing group.

On Thursday, Modi called the violence "saddening" and said that "there will be peace in Manipur in the coming times". Tens of thousands of additional soldiers have been rushed from elsewhere to contain the violence, and a curfew and internet shutdown remain in force across Manipur. Human Rights Watch has accused BJP-led state authorities in Manipur of facilitating the conflict with "divisive policies that promote Hindu majoritarianism".

Modi faced a barrage of criticism from opponents for taking more than two months to speak about the conflict. He broke his silence in July after the publication of a graphic video showing a baying mob parading two Kuki women naked, saying that the incident had filled his heart with "pain and anger".

Importance of AI in health sector emphasized

F.P. Report

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi has emphasized the importance of artificial intelligence (AI) in the health sector, saying it could be used to provide better facilities to people.

Addressing the Instacare Future Health Forum 2023 in Lahore on Thursday, the president said AI was a great hope for the health and medicine sectors, and in the future, a medical graduate could use it to treat patients. He said AI could be used to store and access more data, which would help doctors make better diagnoses and provide more effective treatment. He also cited the example of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which Pakistan successfully used AI to save lives.

The president said Pakistan had a good collection of data, but it was important to learn the right questions to ask in order to get the right answers from AI. He added that knowledge was now free for everyone, and it was impossible for anyone to control it. President Alvi said Islam stressed the importance of working for the welfare of the community, and that AI should be used to facilitate human beings. He urged the development of AI-powered healthcare solutions that would be accessible to everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Earlier, the president gave away awards to individuals and institutions that had contributed to the development of technology and AI in the healthcare sector. Punjab Minister for Health and Social Welfare Dr Javed Akram also addressed the forum, and First Lady Begum Samina Alvi was present. The forum was attended by a large number of healthcare professionals, who discussed the latest trends in AI and its potential applications in the health sector.

Bushra Bibi meets her husband

ATTOCK (INP): The former first lady Bushra Bibi on Thursday met her husband in Attock Jail. The 70-year-old PTI chairman is currently in Attock Jail after the verdict in the Toshakhana case.

Bushra Bibi along with the team of PTI chairman's lawyers reached Attock Jail to meet him but was reportedly stopped by the police for 30 minutes. Later, the authorities allowed Bushra Bibi to meet her husband in jail. The meeting with the PTI chairman continued for an hour.

Earlier, security was alerted outside the Attock Jail after the arrival of the former prime minister's wife at the jail. PTI chairman's lawyer Naeem Haider Panjutha said that Bushra Bibi and the team would meet with PTI chairman as they have the orders of the Islamabad High Court.

Naeem Haider Panjutha said no one from the legal team resisted upon being stopped to meet the former prime minister.

15th NA passes 235 bills in its tenure

ISLAMABAD (INP): The 15th National Assembly of Pakistan has concluded its tenure, leaving behind a legacy of legislative productivity, executive oversight, and transformative leadership changes.

During its five-year term, the assembly passed a total of 235 bills, including 181 government bills and 360 private member bills. This is a significant achievement, as it surpasses the number of bills passed by the previous two assemblies. The assembly also played a vital role in ensuring the effective functioning of the government by conducting thousands of question hours and adopting 107 resolutions on a wide range of issues. These resolutions addressed a number of key concerns, such as governance, education, foreign affairs, health, and energy.

The assembly's tenure was also marked by significant leadership changes. In 2018, Imran Khan was elected prime minister, becoming the first cricketer to hold the office. He was succeeded by Shehbaz Sharif in 2022.



LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Instacare Future Health Forum 2023 on advancing healthcare with artificial intelligence and machine learning.

PM lauds bureaucracy for cooperation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed his gratitude to the bureaucracy for their support and guidance throughout the 16-month tenure, enabling the coalition government to sail through tough circumstances.

The prime minister, in his farewell interaction with the federal secretaries, said despite being hugely diverse, the 13-party coalition government ran the affairs smoothly with utmost cooperation and prudence, also setting an example of the practicability of the coalition government. He said during the 16 months, the bureaucracy also faced some difficult scenarios but the will to do something productive for the people of Pakistan paved the way.

The prime minister lamented the past practice of unnecessarily criticizing and victimising the competent officers which adversely impacted public service. Just like the politicians, the officers were also victimised and their families harassed. He said the civil service faced a severe blow during the devolution as due to the very reason, some of the youngsters also opted to join other services.

Mentioning systemic delays in the execution of 10,000MW solar energy project, Prime Minister Shehbaz called for establishing robust systems to ensure the smooth execution of projects. He said the incumbent government ensured the completion of various public welfare projects which had been halted by the previous government.

Recounting the achievements of his government, the prime minister said the signing of the IMF (International Monetary

Fund) agreement was a great success, otherwise, the situation could have been disastrous for the country. He said the credit for all the successes achieved by the government also went to the federal secretaries as they had been serving diligently during the challenging circumstances, particularly floods.

The prime minister said that his government played a constructive role to mend the ties with friendly countries which were undermined by the previous government through the "worst strategy". He said the previous government even hurled baseless allegations of corruption in the CPEC projects. He said the projects being funded by foreign grants were also impeded by the previous government as they never wanted the respective government to claim the credit.

The prime minister appreciated his Special Assistants Tariq Fatemi, AhadCheema and Jahanzeb Khan for their hard work and cooperation. Regarding his Press Secretary Abdul Akbar, the prime minister said he was very committed officer with a great personality. He also appreciated his Speech Writer Arshad Malik and Public Relations Officer Umar Faran as well as the official media team and expressed good wishes for them.

PM advises civil servants to collectively work for country's welfare: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday advised the civil servants especially those employed in the PM Office and PM House to work diligently for the betterment of the country.

Addressing a gathering of the luncheon given in honour of staff of the PM

Office and PM House, Shehbaz Sharif stressed the need to get united and put collective efforts to take the country towards sustainable development and stability. "We all should endeavour to free the country from all domestic and international loans and put it on strong footing," he added.

The prime minister said Allah Almighty had blessed the country with huge natural resources but the only thing that lacked was "the will to do". He said after rendering great sacrifices, Pakistan was formed for a certain cause. "We all have the duty to play our role in the development of the country and to fulfil the vision of the founder of Pakistan Quid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal," he added.

"We should also promise to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), and fulfil the vision of Quid-i-Azam and Allama Muhammad Iqbal to make Pakistan and prosperous and peaceful country." He thanked the staff for their assistance during his stay in the office of the Prime Minister.

"I thank you all for supporting and guiding me during my 16-month stay in the office. Either they are my personal secretaries, military secretary, drivers, cook, telephone operators, deputy secretaries, PSOs, or others, all did their duties with due diligence and guided me on various matters," he added. He said due to economic challenges, the cabinet members voluntarily withdrew from perks and privileges and most of them did not draw their salaries. On the occasion the prime minister also distributed certificates of encouragement among the staff of grades 1 to 16.

Flood sweeps away four people in Zhob

QUETTA (PPI): Four people were swept away in flash floods due to torrential rains in Zhob district of Balochistan, police said Thursday.

Due to heavy rains in the Mount Sulaiman range, a car was washed away in flash flood at Shirani area on Zhob-DI Khan Highway, resulting in the death of four people.

According to administration sources, two women and two children are among the dead. A man and a woman remained safe in the incident. The affected family belongs to Quetta. Traffic flow has been suspended in Shirani area between Quetta and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to flooding. The administration said that people should avoid traveling on the highway until it is cleared. On the other hand, according to the Met Department, rain was likely in Islamabad, Upper Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir today. Besides that, the coastal areas of Sindh could also receive rain.

Meanwhile, mild tremors of an earthquake were felt in the Zhob district of Balochistan and its surroundings on Thursday. The magnitude of the earthquake was recorded at 3.0 on the Richter scale. The quake was at a depth of 30km, according to the seismological centre.

A few days back, a quake of mild intensity hit several cities in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The quake hit Bajaur, Upper and Lower Dir, Chitral and Kurram areas. The magnitude of the earthquake was recorded at 5.8 on the Richter scale, with its epicentre located in the Hindu Kush mountain range at a depth of 196 kilometres beneath the surface. Earthquake tremors were also felt in other KP cities including Malakand, Khyber, Landi Kotal and Peshawar. The cities which were shaken by the quake in Punjab included Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Lahore, Kharian, Faisalabad and Hafizabad. However, no loss of life or property was reported.

Eight of family die in road crash

LAYYAH (INP): At least eight people were killed and six others were critically wounded in a road accident near Layyah in the wee hours of Thursday.

According to rescue authorities, the fatal incident occurred when a truck collided with a passenger van that was en route to Mian Channu. Tragically, eight individuals of the same family lost their lives on the scene, while six others suffered injuries. Promptly responding to the distress call, rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital, Chobara.

Earlier on May 31, at least six people had been killed while 30 others were injured when the passenger bus they were travelling in had turned turtle after skidding off a bridge in Khanewal.

According to rescue officials, the incident had taken place near Pull Rango. They had said the ill-fated bus was on its way from Lahore to Multan when it had met an accident. The driver of the vehicle had lost control while trying to avoid hitting a motorcycle, due to which the bus overturned, they had added.



QUETTA: Rescue workers and fire fighters gathered at the spot after blast at Moti Ram Road.

Court rejects bail petition of judge's wife in housemaid torture case

ISLAMABAD (INP): A local court on Thursday rejected bail petition, of civil judge's wife Soumia Asim in minor housemaid Rizwana torture case.

Judicial magistrate Shaista Kundi announced decision after hearing lawyers. Defence counsel Qazi Dastagir claimed in the court that the girl was not employed. "If she was not servant, why she was kept at the home," judge questioned. "She was brought for teaching and welfare," defence counsel said. "If she was admitted at school," judge asked. "She is 16 years of age thus not admitted in school,"

the lawyer replied. "A Quran teacher and a tutor were teaching her at home," defence lawyer said.

"The judge's family was being blackmailed for money," lawyer said. "A woman Zunaira, from the US was also sending money for the girl," he added. Prosecutor told the court that the girl's both arms and legs were injured, and a tooth was broken. Her ribs were broken and there are injuries on hind side of the girl's head," the lawyer said.

"The petitioner didn't call the police but the 15 received phone call from Sargodha hospital," the prosecutor fur-

ther said. "Rizwana have 17 wounds on her body, owing to these injuries the girl was referred from Sargodha to Lahore," lawyer said. "According to x-rays, her arms' bones were fractured," he further said.

DPO Sargodha had written a letter to Islamabad Police as the crime location was in Islamabad, government lawyer said. "There are some photos on record that show how the child was subjected to torture," the counsel said. "The girl was carried in arms to the bus. The bus driver in his statement said that the child was carried in arms in bus," prosecutor said.