

Khadija's remand extended

LAHORE (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Saturday extended the judicial remand of PTI activist Khadija Shah, and others in the Jinnah House attack case. Ms. Shah, Sanam Javed and others were presented before the ATC judge after their judicial remand expired today. The court while extending their judicial remand for 14 more days, ordered police to present the accused again on August 26.

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LAHORE: Leader of Opposition Raja Riaz Ahmad meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to finalize the name of Caretaker Prime Minister.

5-year term difficult: Sindh CM

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah said that his five year tenure was very difficult but the provincial government managed to survive despite all the hindrances. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, he said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) created many problems for the provincial government but still we survived and completed our five year tenure. "I'll remain the Chief Minister for next three days constitutionally till the appointment of caretaker CM," he said.

He added that the consultation process with the opposition has been started for the appointment of caretaker CM. The parliamentary committee would also be given three days and then the matter would land with the Election Commission if no consensus is made between the government and opposition. He was of the view that the appointment of caretaker chief minister was made with consensus in 2013 and 2018. According to Shah, undemocratic attitude was seen after 2018 when attempts were made to halt the speech of CM in Sindh Assembly.

Lashing out at the PTI, he said that the CM wasn't even informed when Prime Minister used to visit Karachi at that time. "The PTI Chairman had disowned the Sindh province during his tenure as prime minister," he said. He said that the relationship with the federal government improved significantly when Shehbaz Sharif became Prime Minister. "I am grateful to Shehbaz Sharif for his frequent visits to the province for the people of Sindh," CM said. The provincial government faced numerous challenges ranging from COVID-19 pandemic to devastating floods and successfully faced these challenges in cooperation with the party leadership, he added.

'Necessary to avoid political manoeuvring'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) senior leader Syed Khurshheed Ahmad Shah warned against manoeuvrings like that of 2018 and said that no political party should take any step that impairs national unity as the political environment seemed charged due to the electoral campaigns.

In a statement, the PPP leader said that National Assembly had been dissolved according to the Constitution and the law and the onus was now on the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to conduct free and fair elections while fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities.

"In 2018, few people, who were supposed to give justice, were involved in political maneuverings and destabilised the country, but now it is necessary to avoid such political manoeuvrings so that the country could be saved from economic and political polarisation," Shah said.

PM: Youth future builders of nation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Saturday congratulated youth on the International Youth Day and said new generation was future builder of the nation.

In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said more than sixty per cent of the population in Pakistan consisted of youth. Allah had bestowed upon Pakistan innumerable natural resources and young human population which were a source of strength for the country, he added.

The PM said unfortunately in the past no special attention was given to the progress of youth. But with the grace of Allah Almighty whenever people with their trust gave him the responsibility to serve, he used all his energies for the progress of youth, he added.

"In the last 15 months I provided youth with international standard education and sports facilities, international level professional training, large number of scholarships, endowment funds, laptops and easy loans," he remarked. He said, "Youth are our future, they are builders of our country and progress and prosperity of youth is the guarantee of progress of the country."

Balochistan governor dissolves assembly

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly was dissolved on Saturday after Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar signed the summary moved by Chief Minister Abdul Quddus Bizenjo for the dissolution of the provincial assembly.

"As advised by Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, the Chief Minister of Balochistan and in the exercise of the powers conferred upon me under Article 112(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973, I, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, Governor Balochistan hereby dissolve the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, this 12th day of August 2023 at 5pm," said the notification issued by the Governor House.

After the dissolution of the assembly, the provincial cabinet also stands dissolved. CM Bizenjo will continue to hold the office until the appointment of the caretaker chief minister. Now, CM Bizenjo and Leader of the Opposition in Balochistan Assembly Malik Sikandar will hold consultations regarding the appointment of an interim chief minister.

A day earlier, Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori signed the summary moved by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah for the dissolution of the provincial assembly just a day before the completion of its five years constitutional term. After the dissolution, the Sindh cabinet has also been dissolved while CM Murad will continue holding his post till a caretaker successor is not appointed.

Meanwhile, the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) assemblies were dissolved earlier this year in January after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan had issued orders for their dissolution in November last year.

On January 20, former KP chief secretary Azam Khan was appointed as the interim chief minister in the province after the provincial government reached an agreement with the opposition. Meanwhile, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi was sworn in as caretaker Punjab CM on January 22. On August 9, President Dr

Bilawal highlights youth role in development

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has termed the Pakistani youth as the guarantee of a better future for the country and said that now no power can stop Pakistan from progressing as the youth are determined to face every challenge and lead in every field.

In his message on International Youth Day, he said we are confident that for the development of a prosperous, strong, and progressive Pakistan, our young generation has the potential to lead in the field and on the front. "Pakistan is a fortunate country that more than 63 percent of its population is in

the age group of 15 to 33 years. Hence, Pakistan's greatest asset is our youth," he pointed out.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the PPP must not miss any opportunity to utilize the talents of the youth for the progress and prosperity of the country and to give them maximum opportunities in this regard. He reminded that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, during his tenure as Prime Minister, offered many jobs to the youth, before which the youth did not get jobs in such numbers, adding that Quaid-e-Awam Bhutto arranged for a large number of young people to get employment in friendly countries.

Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was famous

among the people that, "Benazir will come and will bring employment (for all)". "Pakistani youth, for the last time in the last three decades, got the most jobs and employment opportunities under the Awami government led by former President Asif Ali Zardari," he added.

He said that his party is fully aware of the problems and difficulties faced by today's youth, adding that provision of education and health facilities as well as employment opportunities to the youth is one of the top priorities of the PPP. He assured that the youth should not be disappointed, we will all work together and take efforts to ensure quality education and employment for the youth.

Pakistan's weekly inflation rises to 30.8%

ISLAMABAD (INP): The short-term inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), continues to rise with a year-on-year increase of 30.82 per cent for the week ending on Aug 10, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) official data showed. On a week-on-week basis, the short-term inflation, rose 0.69pc, and shows no signs of slowing down, causing concern for economists and consumers alike.

Of the 51 items in the SPI basket, prices of 29 goods soared, five dropped and 17 remained unchanged compared to the previous week. During the week under review, the items whose prices increased the most over the same week a year ago were: wheat flour (131.81pc), cigarettes (109.57pc), gas charges for Q1 (108.38pc), tea Lipton (95.19pc), rice basmati broken (84.09pc), chillies powder (72.94pc), rice Irrig-6/9 (72.74pc), sugar (67.90pc), chicken (65.87pc), gur (58.93pc), gents sponge chappal (58.05pc), potatoes (57.02pc) and tomatoes (53.66pc).

The biggest rise week-on-week was in the price of chillies powder (3.72pc), powdered milk (3.65pc), pulse mash (3.13pc), garlic (2.39pc), sugar (2.30pc), chicken (2.27pc), salt (1.84pc), and eggs (1.74pc).

Nation to celebrate Aug 14 with zeal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The nation will celebrate the 76th Independence Day on August 14 (Monday) with traditional zeal and enthusiasm through a number of activities to highlight the struggle of forefathers and national heroes for acquiring a separate homeland. Different public and private departments will hold special functions and activities, including seminars, discussion programmes, photographic exhibitions, painting, poetry, national songs and debate competitions with the focus on acknowledging the contribution of leaders of the Pakistan Movement and sacrifices of national heroes.

Similarly, private and public educational institutions will also hold different activities, including quiz and speech competitions, functions and sessions to educate the students about the historical struggle for the creation of Pakistan. Overseas Pakistanis living around the world will also celebrate the Independence Day with equal fervour and passion. They will also organize cultural events, flag hoisting ceremonies, and rallies to show their love and loyalty for the homeland.

The significance of Independence Day goes beyond the celebration of national pride and patriotism. It is a day to remember the struggles and sacrifices of forefathers who fought for our independence. It is also a reminder of the responsibility we as a nation have to preserve and protect our independence by working towards the progress and prosperity of our nation.

The Independence Day of Pakistan is a day of great historical significance and national pride. It serves as a reminder of the sacrifices made by forefathers for the independence of beloved homeland. The federal capital and all major and small cities have already turned into green and white colours with a large number of Jashan-i-Azadi stalls carrying dresses, flags, bunting, pin badges, toys and other decorative accessories to attract the youngsters and children.

Since the Independence Day celebrations have become a sort of a festival in the country, different brands, online retailers, eateries, cab-hailing services and even electronics companies are offering exciting discount offers, adding more charm to the festivity.

Anwaar Kakar nominated as Caretaker PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Leader of the Opposition Raja Riaz in the dissolved National Assembly on Saturday agreed to nominate Anwaar ul Haq Kakar as the Caretaker Prime Minister.

The decision was taken during a consultation meeting held in the PM House. The consultation process for the appointment of the caretaker prime minister was amicably completed, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister and the leader of the opposition jointly signed the advice for the appointment of the caretaker PM and sent it to the President of Pakistan, it was added. On the occasion, the prime minister thanked the leader of the opposition for his role in the parliament during the last 16 months and the cooperation extended in the consultation process.

Anwaarul Haq Kakar was elected as an independent senator from Balochistan province for a tenure of March 2018 to March 2024 in the general seat. He was also working as chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and as a member of the Business Advisory Committee, Finance and Revenue, Foreign Affairs and Science and Technology.

Kakar had co-launched a political party Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and also served as spokesman for the government of Balochistan. The consultation process for the nomination of the caretaker prime minister commenced after the president approved the dissolution of the National Assembly (NA)



on August 9, on the advice of the prime minister.

The prime minister's advice had sought dissolution of the assembly under Article 58(1) of the Constitution. On 11 August, the president also wrote a letter to the prime minister and the opposition leader of the outgoing Assembly to propose the name of a suitable person for the appointment of caretaker PM under Article 224 (1A) of the Constitution.

The outcome of Saturday's meeting thus paves the way for the transition of government to a caretaker set-up. The proposed caretaker prime minister is expected to take oath of his office soon after which he would announce his caretaker cabinet in a run-up to the next general elections.

Meanwhile, the President Arif Alvi has approved the appointment of Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar as Caretaker Prime Minister. The President approved the appointment under Article 224 (1A) of the Constitution. Senator Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar hails from Qilla Saifullah, Balochistan. He was elected to the Senate in 2018

and has been a very active politician.

He has worked as chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, and as a member of the Business Advisory Committee, Finance and Revenue, Foreign Affairs and Science and Technology. He also served as the spokesperson of the provincial government prior to his election to the upper house.

Anwar ul Haq Kakar is widely regarded as a great intellectual in the country. He holds a Master's degree in Political Science, Sociology and is an alumnus of the University of Balochistan. Kakar to take oath as Caretaker Prime Minister on August 14 The newly-appointed caretaker prime minister of Pakistan Anwaarul Haq Kakar Saturday decided to take oath on August 14. President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi will administer the oath of the new caretaker prime minister at the President's House on Independence Day. The oath ceremony will be held in the afternoon on Monday, August 14.

'Political turmoil': Maryam urges CIE to review its grading system

LAHORE (Agencies): Raising her voice for students, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz on Saturday urged the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) to review its grading system for this year, citing unprecedented political turmoil.

Taking to X, formerly known as Twitter, the PML-N leader expressed concerns over the unexpected results, saying, "It appears that the grading this year has produced unfair results which has led to severe

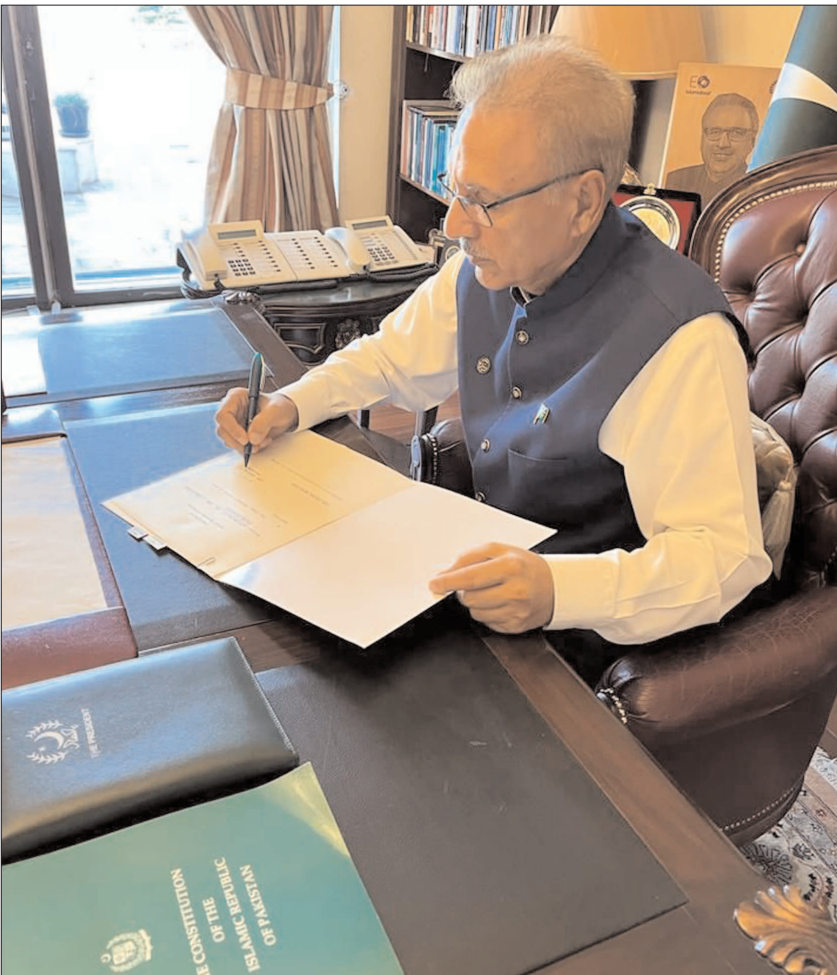
unrest & anxiety amongst the students. Expected A*s have ended up with Cs & Es."

On August 10, more than 45,000 students in Pakistan received their Cambridge International AS and A-Level results. In total, more than 118,000 entries were made for Cambridge International AS and A-levels in the June 2023 series in Pakistan, a rise of 10% since June 2022.

"Many hundreds have reached out voicing their dissatisfaction with the CIE grading this year," said the PML-N leader. Narrating

the miseries of the students, she said, "These students have worked incredibly hard, their university offers and future careers are dependent on the discretion that CIE exercises." Maryam maintained that it would be a welcome step if the CIE on grounds of fairness reviewed their grading system for this year.

The CIE should also consider the fact that Pakistani students sat their examination in times of unprecedented political turmoil where their security and safety were at risk, she added.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi signing the summary to approve the appointment of Anwar-ul-Haq as Caretaker Prime Minister.



LAHORE: The National flag of Pakistan displayed on the Wapad House building in celebration of August 14 Pakistan Day. —APP Photo

Drug peddler captured

KARACHI (PPI): Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested a drug peddler from Federal Urdu University.

According to SP Gulshan, Uzair Ahmed, accused Ibrahim was apprehended for supplying drugs to students at the Federal Urdu University.

It was further revealed that the suspect was found in possession of 2,100 grams of hashish at the time of his arrest, moreover, the arrest was made on Intelligence-based information.

Meanwhile, a case has been registered against the suspect under the Narcotics Act. The suspect was involved in supplying narcotics to university students, and information is being extracted from the arrested suspect's associates.

SP Uzair Ahmed further stated that a crackdown against drug dealers is underway, with heightened vigilance outside all educational institutions. The police is determined to ensure that the future of students remains untamished and unaffected.

Musical show to celebrate Independence Day

KARACHI (PPI): In connection with the Independence Day celebrations by Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, its Burns Road Town is organizing a musical show on Sunday at Main Fresco Chowk Burns Road.

The MQM-Pakistan central leaders will address the event for which a 40-feet wide and 20-feet long stage was prepared. On this occasion, a 50-pound cake will be cut along with hoisting the flag. The officials of MQM- Burns Road Town said that this would be a complete family program in which citizens can participate with their families.

Not a single bill of public interest approved in five years: Siraj

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jammāt-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq lashing out at the outgoing government has said that not a single bill of public interest was approved in last five years.

In a statement on Saturday, he said that the politicians need to provide details of what they did for

the masses during five years.

Sirajul Haq said that the PDM government dropped another petrol bomb on masses before leaving.

He said that the political leadership talks about economic crisis but was reluctant to tell that who was responsible for rusting the

country's system.

The JI chief said that no concentration was paid towards resolving issues of inflation, lawlessness and to free country of corrupt practices.

He said that the JI has always raised voice for rights of women in the country.

CTD arrests 21 on terror charges in Punjab

LAHORE (INP): The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) Punjab on Saturday claimed to have arrested 21 suspected terrorists allegedly belonging to banned organisations.

According to CTD spokesperson, the arrested terrorists include 9 commanders of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and

four belonging to the Islamic State.

Officials said explosive material, grenades and cash were also recovered from those arrested terrorists.

The terrorists were arrested from Narowal, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Muzaffargarh, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Layyah, Attock and Sahiwal, it added.

The officials claimed that the arrested men were preparing a dangerous plan.

The CTD officials said that during this week, 700 combing operations were conducted during which 49 suspects were taken into custody.

During the combing operations, more than 29,000 people were questioned, the officials added.

CM for action against drug mafia

LAHORE (APP): A meeting was held in the Chief Minister's Office here on Friday presided over by Caretaker CM Mohsin Naqvi and he issued a directive for a rigorous crackdown on sellers and users of narcotics.

He emphasized the need to bring the full force of the law upon the major drug syndicates, asserting that they should face actions.

During the meeting, the chief minister instructed

the law enforcement agencies to take decisive measures to eradicate drug peddling within schools and colleges.

Noting the gravity of the situation, the chief minister underscored the imperative of taking anti-narcotics mission seriously.

Mohsin Naqvi expressed his confidence that, through a collaborative effort involving the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and other relevant

institutions, a permanent solution to the drug issue can be achieved.

During the meeting, a unanimous decision was made to establish a dedicated center focused on rehabilitating drug addicts.

Provincial Ministers Dr Javed Akram and Dr Jamal Nasir, the chief secretary, inspector general of Police, additional chief secretary, the secretary health and other officers participated.

Sindh Governor hints at possible delay in elections

KARACHI (NNI): Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Saturday hinted at a possible delay in holding of general elections following the dissolution of national and provincial assemblies.

"It would not be a problem if elections are delayed due to constitutional requirements – the delimitation of constituencies as the Census 2023 was notified," Sindh Governor said in a statement.

Kamran Tessori reiterated that the next general elections should be held on time according to the

constitution and law, adding that all political parties were agreed on holding of elections on new census. Unmute

He also lauded the appointment of Anwarul Haq Kakar as caretaker prime minister (PM), hoping that the latter would carry out his duties effectively by taking all political parties into confidence.

The upcoming general elections in the country will likely be delayed as the Council of Common Interest (CCI) "unanimously" approved the 2023 census.

Outgoing Federal Ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Rana Sanaullah also hinted at possible delay in holding of general elections.

"I do believe that elections will be held in November. But you asked me if there is a possibility of delay: There is a possibility of a delay but not more than a couple of months on technical grounds," Khawaja Asif said.

When asked whether the approval of the 2023 census would result in an election delay, Khawaja Asif said: "I cannot speculate at the moment but it is

a possibility. I won't rule that out."

On the other hand, Rana Sanaullah said that the general elections would be held in the third week of February or the first week of March after new delimitations.

Sanaullah said that fresh delimitation is a constitutional requirement. "The general elections would be held in the third week of February or the first week of March after new delimitations." He added that the delimitation process would be completed in December 2023.

MQM-P sowing seeds of hatred once again: Waqar

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh chapter's General Secretary Senator Waqar Mehdi on Saturday said that MQM- Pakistan is once again sowing seeds of hatred.

In a reaction to MQM's press conference here on Saturday, he said that MQM-P and Jamaat-e-Islami were two sides of the same coin.

He said that PPP's provincial government gave jobs to the unemployed youth on merit and without any discrimination.

Mehdi said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari criticized Modi that made anxious to MQM-P.

He further said that the citizens of Karachi had recognized their friend and enemy.

FIA arrests wanted human trafficker from Lahore

LAHORE (PPI): Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Saturday claimed to have apprehended a high-profile criminal listed in the principles of federal appropriations law also known as Red Book.

The individual, identified as Shaukat Hussain, had been evading the authorities for an extended period, facing charges in connection with more than four cases of human trafficking.

The cases against Shaukat Hussain were registered from the years 2020 to 2023, reflecting the scope and duration of his illicit activities.

Operating under the guise of arranging trips for Umrah, the accused is alleged to have ensnared more than 30 victims, collecting substantial amounts of money from each.

According to FIA reports, the accused managed to accumulate Rs 2,700,000 through his deceitful schemes and went underground, evading the grasp of law enforcement.

The FIA's tireless efforts to bring the trafficker to justice involved several rigorous raids aimed at locating and apprehending the fugitive.

KSrelief distributes 26,400 parcels among flood-impacted families

ISLAMABAD (APP): The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) on Saturday unveiled the successful culmination of the initial stage of their ambitious food security endeavor for the year 2023-24 in Pakistan.

In an exemplary partnership with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the KSrelief has executed a laudable mission by disbursing a remarkable tally of 26,400 food parcels,

weighing a substantial 2,508 tons, said a press

release.

These invaluable provisions have been allocated to deserving individuals severely impacted by floods, spanning across 12 key districts including Jaffarabad, Usta Muhammad, and Sohbatpur in Baluchistan; Rajgal, Karak, Banu, and Upper Swat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; as well as Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab, Larkana and Umerkot in Sindh.

According to the KSrelief, this inaugural phase of the altruistic venture has yielded a momen-

tous positive influence on the lives of an impressive count of 184,800 beneficiaries dispersed across the nation. Each meticulously assembled food parcel, meticulously crafted to weigh 95 kgs, comprises essential sustenance such as 80kg of flour, 5 liters of cooking oil, 5kg of sugar, and 5kg of Daal Chana.

These provisions stood as a beacon of hope, ensuring that families can sustain themselves throughout the entire month, underscoring the true essence of benevolence and solidarity.

PTI condemns crackdown on workers

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Core Committee condemned the crackdown on party workers busy with preparation for Independence Day celebrations.

PTI core committee met to take up issues related to ex-PM Imran Khan's imprisonment and workers' woes. The core committee expressed disappointment over the delay in the court's verdict regarding the shifting of Imran Khan to Adiala jail from Attock and the provision of homemade food to him.

The committee expressed concern over the unnecessary and unjustified delay in hearing of Imran Khan's bail petition. They

strongly condemned the lack of seriousness towards the threats imposed to the health, safety and especially the life of Imran Khan.

The core committee, in the meeting, said that the former prime minister was booked under a controversial verdict in the country's worst day-to-day trial and in the light of these consecutive wrong decisions and controversial trials, the partiality of the Islamabad High Court Chief Justice has been exposed.

It was demanded that for fair judgement and the reputation of the court, Justice Amir Farooq should immediately disassociate himself from the cases related to Imran Khan and let the

unbiased judges make the decisions.

In the meeting, while reviewing the caretaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, the committee said that worst political distribution of positions was seen and this was acknowledged by the PDM itself. The dismissal of the 26-member cabinet was a very suspicious act and the Election Commission is also being pointed fingers at.

The commission will have to be answerable to the nation for that. Also the 'so-called' caretakers who actually flouted the constitution and the law for 206 days straight will also be held accountable before the nation.

Neelum Jhelum project restoration spurs power generation

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The hydel power generation has surged after the restoration of operationalization of Neelum Jhelum project.

Wapda's hydropower production has topped the 8,000MW mark on Friday.

During the peak hours, 8,158MW of electricity was generated from WAPDA hydropower plants.

This production of hydroelectricity is the

highest of the current year and when the indent of IRSA from Mangala Dam soars, the hydroelectricity generation will register further rise.

According to the data, 3,478MW of electricity was generated from Tarbela Dam during peak hours yesterday.

Tarbela 4th extension project generated 1410MW and Ghazi Barotha 1450MW while

798MW from Neelum Jhelum project and 305MW from Mangla Dam were supplied to the national grid.

About 717MW of electricity was generated from other hydropower plants of Wapda.

Wapda's hydropower is the cheapest electricity produced in Pakistan. The average production cost of Wapda hydropower unit is Rs3.51.



LAHORE: An artist busy in giving final touch on the painting for independence day at NCA. —APP Photo



Corrigendum

Request for Proposal Hiring of Consultancy Firm for Recruitment of Development Project Positions Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI)

It is hereby informed that the date of submission of tender documents, called through PPRA Website as well as print media, vide PID K No.293/23 dated 31.07.2023 in the following Newspapers has been extended upto 25.08.2023, at 11:00 hours;

1. The News, 2. Express Tribune, 3. Jang, 4. Express, 5. Baluchistan Express, 6. Frontier Post, 7. Aftab (Mul) Now Technical Bids, on the subject matter will be opened on 25.8.2023 at 11.30 am, at the same address.

Director (General Administration Department)
EOBI Head Office, 190/B/1, P.E.C.H.S Block # 2,
Near Blue Ribbon Bakery, Off Shara-e-Faisal, Karachi,

Tel No: 012-99225397
PID(K) 479/23



Governor KP visits Charsadda, inspects Darur Rahmat Medical Complex

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Saturday paid a visit to district Charsadda and was warmly received soon after his arrival at Darur Rahmat Medical Complex, Sheikh Kale Charsadda.

During his visit, the Governor inaugurated the Pakistan Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences in the hospital, also announced a donation of Rs 2 millions for the construction of the rehabilitation center block.

Governor also inaugurated a free eye medical check-up center for poor and indigent patients, and also hoisted the national flag in the premises of the hospital on the occasion of Independence Day.

Chairman of Chef International Dr. Dawood,

Dr. Sanaullah Jan, former Provincial Minister Amanullah Haqqani, medical staff, hospital administration members were also present on this occasion.

"I appreciate those who serve the suffering humanity from the heart. Service to humanity is the best reward in this world and the hereafter, Haji Ghulam Ali, the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said while commenting on this occasion.

During the visit, the Governor inspected various wards of the hospital and met with the patients, while the medical practitioner informed the patients about the treatment facilities in the wards.

In his address, the Governor said that he pays tribute to Dr. Dawood and his team for providing free medical services to the suf-

fering humanity. He also urged the philanthropists to contribute to the service of suffering humanity and the welfare organizations.

He said that he deeply appreciates those who serve the suffering humanity and will continue to fully cooperate with those who provide free medical facilities to the poor people of this province and city. Referring to Hadith Sharif, the Governor said that Allah Ta'ala helps his servant in his work as long as he helps his Muslim brother in his work.

He said that people who help others without any greed are always alive in history.

The Governor said that some of our colleagues made a proposal 23 years ago on which Prof. Dr. Dawood built the hospital

and God willing, his service will be remembered forever.

He also paid tribute to those who participated in this good work. The Governor also asked the benefactors, government and social workers to help the institutions serving the suffering humanity. Regarding Independence Day, the Governor said that Independence Day teaches us to move forward with unity and consensus, there is a long history of the sacrifices of our forefathers to achieve freedom and now as a nation, the protection and development of the Kingdom of God is our collective responsibility.

Later, the governor also planted a sapling in the green garden of the hospital as part of the plantation drive.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry presiding over a meeting in connection with celebrations of 76th Independence Day.

Four alleged culprits arrested F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Police arrested four alleged culprits including a facilitator while recovering weapons from their possession in the premises of Badbheir police station.

DSP Zia Ullah directed a crackdown against outlaw citizens while SHO Bada Bhier Nasir Fareed lead the police teams to arrest of alleged culprits in the premises.

The alleged culprit was identified as Fida Muhammad, Yar Muhammad, Baidar Zeb and Aurangzeb residents of suburbs of Bada Bahier police station. The alleged culprits admitted their involvement in crimes during interrogation.

Crackdown continued

PESHAWAR (APP): The Badaber Police Station Saturday cracked down on people involved in various crimes during the operation, the facilitators who gave shelter to the accused, including dangerous advertising suspects, were also arrested.

The arrested suspects are residents of the suburbs, who are also involved in possession of illegal weapons and smuggling, Police said. Police recovered weapons and several cartridges from the possession of the accused. Police will start investigation by registering a case against all the accused.

No threats to BRT

PESHAWAR (APP): There is no truth in the news of threats to Peshawar BRT, a spokesman of the Trans Peshawar said here Saturday.

Trans Peshawar has not received any threatening letter, the spokesman of the Trans Peshawar confirmed while talking to media men here. He said people and media are requested to avoid spreading fear and panic.

He said the safety of the passengers is the top most priority of the Trans Peshawar's management and BRT operations continue safely without any threat.

CS reviews preparation for ID's celebrations

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on Saturday reviewed preparations for the 76th Independence Day in a meeting held here at the Civil Secretariat.

Relevant administrative secretaries and other officials attended the meeting while commissioners and deputy commissioners joined through video link.

The Chief Secretary stated that Independence Day would be observed with great zeal and zeast this

year as well.

He asked authorities to display national flags on government buildings and illuminate them with colourful lights. Flag hoisting, rallies, sports events and other activities should be organized at divisional headquarters and districts across the province, he added.

Likewise, educational institutions should conduct speech competitions, national songs and tableaux in connection with independence.

The Chief Secretary also ordered to finalize fool-proof security arrangements and preparations for the special national day. He also stressed on highlighting Independence Day activities in newspapers, electronic and social media.

He elaborated that the essence of celebrating this day is to express love for the motherland, commitment to play a role in its development and prosperity, and to pay tribute to heroes of the freedom struggle.

Restoration of export cargo train demanded

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Standing Committee of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Railways and Dry-port demanded restoration of export cargo train from Peshawar to Karachi, pragmatic steps to fully functionalization of Azakhel Dry port, speeding up goods clearing process and lifting restriction on loose cargo. According to details, Chairman of SCCI's standing committee on Railways and Dryport Ziaul Haq Sarhadi chaired a meeting of the committee held here at the chamber's house on Saturday.

Meeting was attended by the Sarhad Chamber Standing Committee on Carpet Export Mazharul Haq. Besides, Additional Director, Transit Trade Directorate Custom House Peshawar Salman Wazir, Custom Station Torkham Appraisement Deputy Collector Mohib Khan, Pakistan Railways Commercial Inspector Siddique Tanoli, Anti-Narcotics Forces Assistant Director Shams Shaukat, members of business community including Muntaz Khan, Asmat Zeb, Shehryar, All Pakistan Customs Agents Association Karachi Vice Chairman Farooq Ahmad, Frontier Customs Agents Association Secretary Gen-

eral Mian Wahid Bacha and others were present in a large number in the meeting.

Ziaul Haq Sarhadi on the occasion apprised the business community reservations regarding lack of facilities at Azakhel Dryport. He said Azakhel Dryport was established on 28 acre lands with cost Rs 600 Million has lost its importance owing to lack of facilities. He added that the business community has faced great hardship because of dual checking and clearing goods consignments, de-stuffing and payment of demurrage charges and slow process of export cargo trucks.

Sarhadi demanded the resumption of export cargo trains from Peshawar to Karachi. He also called for revival of Goods in Transit to Afghanistan service. He went on to say that Pakistan Railways had played a pivotal role in both cargo and passenger traveling.

He, however, said service of passenger trains had been reduced from Peshawar while City Railway booking agency also closed in Peshawar, which was facilitating the passenger for travelling on trains from Peshawar to Karachi.

Similarly, he said the Railways Advisory Committee was established, which aimed at taking decisions

with consent of the business community, which was currently inactivated and demanding to restore it immediately to resolve the community issues on priority grounds.

The committee chairman demanded the clearing of export goods trucks under a one-window operation to speed the export process and avoid multiple checks by various departments, especially ANF, which sometimes conducted double checking. He called for abolishment of SRO-121 and allowing loose cargo.

On the occasion, the SCCI's standing committee on Carpet Export Mazhar ul Haq also spoke and apprised the meeting issues of the business community elaborately.

Participants during the meeting congratulated the newly appointed chairman FBR Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana, Member FBR Customs Ms Zeba Azhar Hai, Director General Transit Trade Karachi Wajid Ali and Chief Collector Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Saleem for taking charge of new responsibilities and hailed the government's decision, expressing hope that newly appointed high-officials would play important role in resolving business community issues.

Increase in prices of vegetables, fruits in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Increase in the prices of vegetables and fruits in Peshawar, the citizens are worried.

According to details, the price of ginger increased to 1100, while the price of garlic 380 and lemon 130 per kg remained unchanged. He said, Onion 60, tomato 100, green pepper 40, fresh bean 150, capsicum 180, okra 70 rupees sold per kg while the Potato 120, Kachalu 120, Cauliflower 120, Eggplant 100, Zucchini 80, Tenda 70.

However, among fruits, apples have reached 180 rupees, mango 250 and per kilo 300 rupees, and Grapes 310, peaches 170 and bananas 150 rupees per dozen sold.

The price of live chicken in the market will also reach 410 rupees per kg.

Social Welfare Deptt announce events

PESHAWAR (APP): Social Welfare Department has announced to hold two Independence Day events in center for special children G T Road and Rehabilitation Center Faqirabad.

Social welfare department has finalized all the necessary arrangements for two events. Events include various sports events, national songs competition, tableaux, musical chair and cake cutting.

Flag hoisting ceremony would be held on the occasion. Another function would also be held in Women Crisis Center Hayatabad and Panagah Pajaggi Road to mark Independence Day.

Arrangements continue to celebrate Independence Day

PESHAWAR (APP): Like other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, preparations are going on in connection with Independence Day all across Dir Lower.

The DistrictA Secretariat Balambat was decorated with national flags and banners. Under the supervision of Tehsil Municipal Officer Balambat Tariq Ayub, banners regarding Independence Day were put up at

various places in Balambat.

Apart from this, under the supervision of Tehsil Municipal Officer Khal, Pakistani flags and banners were put up in different places of Tehsil Khal regarding Independence Day, while in connection with the Independence Day, various public places of Adeenzai were under the supervision of Tehsil Municipal Officer Iqbal

Hassan.

Independence Day banners were placed on government buildings.

There is great excitement among the people of late regarding the Independence Day and dresses made of flags, badges, national flag and green crescent flags have become the center of public attention in various markets.

Grand ID celebration held in GCC&MS

PESHAWAR (APP): A grand ceremony was held in connection with the 76th Independence Day at Government College of Commerce and Management Sciences, Khar, Bajaur with Prof. Sahibzada Muhammad Ayub, Prof. Attaullah Khan and students spoke on the topic of patriotism.

Principal Prof. Bakht Munir, in his presidential address on the theme of Pakistan's independence and maintaining its independence, emphasized to the students that Pakistan is our country and it is part of our faith and honor to love it and to serve it by performing our duties well.

Students should be wary

of anti-national elements because anti-national elements are trying to harm this country by raising the sweetness of rights and emotional slogans on the poisonous pills of color, race, language and nationality. In the end, the program ended with a prayer and pledge for the stability and development of the country.



PESHAWAR: Chairman Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Muhammad Ibrahim Qasmi addressing parting meeting. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

National flags everywhere as IDay' preparations reach to climax in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Independence Day's preparations on Saturday reached to its climate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar where all bazaars and markets were flooded with national flags, posters and others decorative accessories looking festive.

Peshawar's oldest bazaars including Qissa Khwani, Karimpura, Mohalla Jhangi, Meena bazaar, Hashtnagri, Liaquat, Faqirabad and others were decorated with green and white colours of the national flags on occasion of the 76th independence day of Pakistan, which would be celebrated with national enthusiasm on Monday (Aug 14).

Like other provinces of Pakistan, the Jashin-e-Azadi fever has also gripped KP including the seven merged tribal districts where people of all ages decorated their houses, shops and vehicles with national flags to express immeasurable love for their homeland.

Great enthusiasm was being witnessed among youth, who were buying national flags, banners, stickers, models of historical buildings and portraits of the heroes of

Independence Movement besides made their vehicles green and white.

Balahisar Fort, Governor House, Peshawar Museum, Ghanta Ghar, University Peshawar, Civil Secretariat, Islamia College Peshawar, FC Headquarters, Peshawar Development Authority, State Life and Deans Trade Centre were artistically illuminated with colourful bunting, attracting people's attention at night.

National flags were hoisting on all government buildings in Peshawar where people decorated their vehicles with green and white colours to celebrate independence day in most befitting manner.

Qissa Khwani, the historic bazaar having about 2,500 old history and a centre of trade and business since then, was also made green and white where all markets and shops were jam-packed.

"Since my childhood, I regularly came with my father to paint my face with national flag by an expert artist at Peshawar to look different on Independence Day," Sidra Bibi, a resident of Wapda Town who was decorating her face and hands with green and white colours of Pakistani flag at

Qissa Khwani bazar told APP on Saturday.

Carrying plastic bag with plenty of national flags, stickers, models of Islamia College Peshawar and Minar e Pakistan, she was feeling happy after purchasing 400 badges, stickers and posters for brothers, sisters, relatives and schools fellows to celebrate independence day with great pomp and show.

Wearing green and white shirt with green bages, Sidra said Independence Day enhances spirit of patriotism and she will come again with family to watch flag hoisting ceremony at Peshawar amid national anthem by police bands on Aug 14.

Adnan Khan, a vendor shopkeeper of Pabbi selling decorative items for children including green toys, pressures horns, hats, masks, spectacles, bangles, flags, badges and models of historical buildings of Pakistan Movement at Mohalla Jhangi near Qisakhwani told APP that he rushed to Peshawar after seeing overwhelming response of youth and children in decorative toys and stuff on TV.

The energetic shopkeeper who sold out all stock

ahead of Independence day said that his father will come from Lahore tonight to bring more Jashin-e-Azadi stuff to earn maximum profit here, adding last year he had earned Rs50,000 against Rs75000 so far during this Jashn-e-Azadi.

The printers of Mohalla Jahangi Peshawar, a hub of printing, papers and graphic industries have also earned maximum profit after receiving heavy printing orders for Jashin-e-Azadi celebrations from all districts including seven merged tribal districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa these days.

Besides printing orders of national flags, posters, advertisements, graphics designing, promotional cards, stickers, badges, billboards, panaflex and souvenirs from government departments, private organizations, educational institutions and civil society, the Peshawar based printers, publishers and graphic designers have made roaring business during last two weeks where Jashn-e-Azadi materials were being sold like a hot cake.

To meet the pressing demands of hundreds of thousands of customers, most of the printers

engaged extra labourers that worked till late night to meet the placed orders. They have rolled out hundreds of thousands of national flags, posters, banners and decorative accessories since the start of this month while vendors made quick profits on the streets.

Sitting on a revolving chair with focused eyes on a computer giving final touches to flags, posters and pamphlets' designs ordered by different schools and colleges in connection with 76th Jashin-e-Azadi celebrations, the 25-years-old printer, A.S. Khattak was working against the clock to meet the set orders.

Unaware of Peshawari Kahwa placed on right side of his computer table in one room office at Mohallah Jhangi became cold, the Karak born Khattak, told APP that Jashin-e-Azadi has brought smile on cheeks of hundred of thousands of printers, publishers, advertisers and graphic designers after witnessing great boom in printing orders these days.

Terminating printing is a hard hitting business, he said that most of printers are overworked due to heavy orders for such big

occasions.

"Approximately 40,000 people including 3,000 printers, publishers and graphic designers were associated with this business in Peshawar and achieved big profits in last two weeks."

"The response of the general public especially youth and children on this Jashin Azadi was unprecedented. We have engaged six extra labourers, who worked till late night to meet the national flags, banners and badges demands of people."

He said many printers and publishers having a quality printing machines' setup and skilled labourers received heavy orders to the tune of Rs 4 million to Rs5 million for Jashin-e-Azadi this year.

Extra printing materials were brought Lahore, Karachi and Faisalabad to fulfill the customers pressing demands.

Anees, who is running a printing unit at Jahangi mohallah for last 12 years was feeling proud to employ 20 labourers and said that the printing industry carried great scope and would definitely encourage new talents if they wish to join the printing industry as

a profession.

"I am ready to provide an internship to students who want to adopt printing, designing and advertising as a career in my printing unit."

"KP printers and publishers mostly rely on Punjab for printing materials after closure of Charsadda and Mardan paper mills. The transportation and electricity cost has increased prices of finished goods," he said.

"Our main customers are educational institutions. The closure of schools, colleges and universities examinations due to COVID-19 in the past had adversely affected our business and Govt compensation package for such printers were required," he said.

Zafar Khan, President All Printers and Publishers Association KP told APP that Peshawar based printers and publishers have earned great profits in posters and national flags after a boom in Jashin e Azadi items was witnessed these days.

Substantial printing orders of national flags and green stickers/badges have been received from merged tribal districts including

South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand and Bajaur for Jashin-e-Azadi, he added.

Zafar said printers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had pinned high hopes on Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Rashakai being built under China Pakistan Economic Corridors (CPEC) and Economic Zones where establishment of printers and papers units would not only open up new vistas of investment and employment opportunities for youth.

The graphic designer and publisher at Fawara Chowk, Peshawar Cantt said after the 2018 elections, printers and publishers made substantial business during this Independence day celebrations.

They said great boom was witnessed in 3D printing and papers business on Independence day.

The printers expressed the hope that the printing industry would get upward economic boost during upcoming general election in the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and employment opportunities would be generated for skilled workforce.



In brief

1571 suspects held in Kohat F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat Police has arrested 1571 suspects and 64 proclaimed offenders in various conducted during month of July. According to police, 730 outlaws, five drug pushers and six Afghans. Police also recovered arms and ammunitions from possession of arrested persons. District Police Officer, Farhan Khan said that raids would be continues to clear area of anti-social elements and to strengthen peace and security in the district.

Case against Malik registered F.P. Report

MIRAN SHAH: A case has been registered against the tribal Malik for announcing a boycott of the Anti-Polio Campaign in North Waziristan, Police said. According to detail, Chief of Waziristan Malik Nasrullah announced boycott of Polio drops wherein Police took timely action by registering a case against Chief of Waziristan Malik Nasrallah in the complaint of SHO Razmak. The case includes provisions for disturbing public peace, threatening government institutions, Police said. Announcement of boycott of the Anti-Polio campaign is also a violation of Section 144. Hundreds of people were rounded up in Razmak despite Section 144. In provocative, offensive and hateful speech, the functioning of the state was challenged, Police registered in the FIR.

Body of youth found in drain

FAISALABAD (INP): The body of a 25-year-old youth was found in a drain in the area of Chak Jhumra police station in Faisalabad on Saturday. Some passersby saw the body in the drain near Chak No.165-RB and informed the police. The police arrived at the scene and took the body into custody. They also dispatched it to the mortuary for postmortem. The police have not yet identified the victim or determined the cause of death. However, they say that they are investigating the matter and hope to make arrests soon. The discovery of the body has shocked the residents of the area. They are demanding that the police find the killers and bring them to justice. The police have assured the residents that they are doing everything they can to solve the case. They have also appealed to the public for help in identifying the victim and providing any information that could lead to the arrest of the killers. This is the second such incident in Faisalabad in recent weeks. In the previous case, the body of a seven-year-old boy was found packed in a sack near a drain. The police are investigating both cases and believe that they may be linked. The authorities have urged the people of Faisalabad to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police. They have also assured the people that they are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for everyone.

Prayer leader shot dead

B A H A W A L P U R (INP): Armed men gunned down a prayer leader over property dispute and escaped the scene, police said on Saturday. According to details, the incident took place in Khairpur Daha area of Ahmedpur Sharqia in district Bahawalpur, where rivals sprayed bullets at opponent with whom they were in dispute over ownership of a piece of land.



HYDERABAD: An illuminated view of district Secretariat Shahbaz building decorated with colorful lights in preparations to celebrate Independence Day in befitting manners.

Two youths killed in different mishaps in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A passengers' coach driver identified as Azeemullah 55, a resident of Rahmanabad Talash was killed when the coach he was driving fell into a deep ravine at Rahmanabad Talash due to brake failure in the jurisdiction of Talash police station here the other day. He was taken to a nearby hospital but succumbed to injuries. Meanwhile the Rescue 1122 divers recovered the body of a youth Muhammad Azeem, 19 who was drowned in the Panjkora River at Akhagaram here on Friday. The deceased's body was shifted to the rural health center Khall from where it was handed over to the heirs.

District headquarters hospital services defended by MS: Medical superintendent of the district headquarters hospital Timergara Dr Ali Asghar has said that some vest interested elements were illegally interfering in the hospital affairs who would not be allowed to defame one of the province's major health care facilities. Talking to local journalists at Timergara, the MS said the DHQ hospital Timergara was included in the top ten best hospitals in the province. He alleged that a planned campaign against the hospital management was being run on social media.

Talking about the hospital services, the MS said the

CT Skin machine and laboratories had been made fully functional at day and night. He said that standard medicines were being provided to patients at the hospital emergency unit. He said that all relevant information had been provided to some activists under the RTI act but they wanted to unnecessarily interfere in the hospital affairs.

The MS said that four gynecologists were always available at the facility. He said the monthly progress report was being shared regularly with the provincial authorities and deputy commissioner Lower Dir. He said the negative propaganda from some elements adversely affected the service delivery which was not in the public interest.

Info's DRC resolved journalists dispute Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Department of Information and Public Relation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) has declared that grievances of journalist community should be dealt as per constitution of registered Nowshera Press Club (NPC) while stated that exiting cabinet will complete its tenure till December.

Department of Info& PRs DRC chairman Arshad Aziz Malik president Peshawar Press Club, senior member M. Riaz, Press Registrar Ansar Khilji and Assistant Press Registrar Sagib issued declared judgement in this regard following multiple hearings in which both parties appeared before the committee.

NPC Cabinet and general body welcomed DRC decision while committed for its implementation in its true spirit. DRC declared that current NPC cabinet possessing simple majority and would complete its tenure till December.

The judgement stated that election 2024 cabinet should be held under the supervision of 17 members committee to ensure transparency. Moreover, embezzlement both in funds and media colony should be dealt as per relevant laws of the land.

Army holds free medical camp

MITHI (INP): In a laudable effort to provide essential healthcare services and support to the underserved regions, the Pakistan Army organized a free medical camp coupled with a ration distribution initiative in the capital city of Tharparkar District, Mithi on Saturday. The medical camp – established at Posarko – a considerable distance from Mithi, saw the convergence of a dedicated team of military doctors and healthcare professionals. The camp catered to approximately 2,000 patients, extending medical consultations, distributing crucial medications, and notably offering specialized care to about 700 children.

The particular significance was the focus on maternal and child health, where military doctors provided specialized advice and examinations to ensure the well-being of mothers and children. Patients from Tharparkar were transported to the medical camp, facilitated by the cooperation of the District Health Officer (DHO) and the Basic Health Unit (BHU) in Mithi.

These health entities played a pivotal role in the coordination, ensuring that the health-related materials were efficiently procured and disseminated to those in need. District Health Officer (DHO) took a proactive role by providing essential health-related materials for the camp, collaborating with the Basic Health Unit (BHU) and the dedicated lady health workers.

The multifaceted efforts were further supported by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which contributed to the supply chain, facilitating the seamless distribution of goods.

Khyber tribesmen say 'no to terrorism'

F.P. Report

BARA: Pakhtuns are no more able to bear loss of militancy and they demand permanent peace in the area. It is obligatory on the state to motivate our children to prefer education rather than guns.

These views were expressed by the speakers including Senator Mushtaq Ahmad of Jamat-e-Islami (JI), provincial leader of Awami National party (ANP) Sardar Hussain Babak, Manzoor Ahmad Pashteen of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement, Sayasi Ittehad (Political Alliance), Bara Chief Shah Faisal Afridi, ex-parliamentarian of Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz (PML-N) Shahabuddin, Khan Wali Afridi, Farhad Advocate and others while addressing to mammoth public gathering held here at Khyber Square, Bara on Saturday.

They said that in the last two decades, Pakistan had spent 1.5 billion dollars on war against terrorism while more than eighty thousands people had lost their lives besides 3.3 million citizens, mostly Pakhtuns had been displaced and were taken



refuge in camps.

"Militancy not only destroyed our houses, mosques and hujras (male guest houses) but also deprived our one generation of education", they remarked. It was the responsibility of the state to provide protection to the people, they said, adding people wanted peace, not militancy or lawlessness.

They went on that peace was inevitable for economic progress and education therefore time had arrived to re-establish peace in the area and let the citizens of the merged tribal district and KP to serve their lives with calm and prosperity. Launching military operations and setting up of checkpoints could not resolve the issue of militancy but to bother the locals, they added and said the

Pakhtuns were fed up with target killing and suicide attacks and would not anybody to spill the blood of innocent people.

The speakers further added that they conveyed their misery to the Parliament and the Chief Justice but to in avail and therefore public awakening was necessary to say "No" to "Militancy" in the area. The Sayasi Ittehad, Bara had organized the protest, which was attended by hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life including members of the civil society organizations, students, lawyers, workers of political parties and ordinary people from across the district Khyber and KP. Holding white flags, the participants of the protest chanted slogans, demanding peace in Khyber and KP.

Preparation for August 14 celebration finalized

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Umer Farooq Warraich has said that 76th Independence Day will be celebrated with fervor and enthusiasm in the district on 14, August and in this connection, preparing are in full swings in the district.

While addressing a meeting held to review preparations and arrangements being made by the district administration and other government departments, DC said that flag hoisting ceremonies will be arranged by all government departments while a musical show, display of fireworks and sports competitions, tree plantation, floral exhibition and other programs will also be held on this occasion.

ADCR Intiaz Ali Baig,

ADCG Zulqarnain Abbas Awan, Chief Executive Officer Education Sohail Azhar Khan, District Emergency Officer 1122 Engineer Adnan Nawaz and district heads of other departments attended the meeting.

DC further said that National Flag would be hoisted at all official buildings and all buildings of all government offices and institution would be illuminated with colorful lights at night whereas musical show would be held and fireworks would also be displayed in Family Park at night of 13, August. He also said that central flag hoisting ceremony would be held at District Complex on 14 August while all departments would be arranged functions at offices on Independence Day.

DD Info congratulated:

Deputy Commissioner Umer Farooq Warraich presented souvenir of sword, pictorial album and banquet to Syed Ifthikhar Ali Shah on promotion as Director Information BPS-19 from Deputy Director BPS-18. DC lauded services of Syed Ifthikhar Ali Shah as District Information Officer Hafizabad and Deputy Director Information.

DC said that Syed Ifthikhar Ali Shah served in the district Hafizabad for long time and play positive role to aware people regarding steps taken by the government for welfare of the masses and he maintain ideal cooperation among journalists, district administration and district information office. DC also distributed commendation certificates among officials of Information Department Hafizabad.

International Minority Day observed

F.P. Report

BUNER: World Minority Day observed at Gurdwara Jangai area of tehsil Mandanr with zeal and enthusiasm. The day was observed with special cooperation of Assistant Commissioner Mandanr Maryam Bakhtawar while large number of minority community members participated in the event. Assistant Commissioner Mandanr appreciated religious harmony among residents of different beliefs in the area.

The minority community members including Sej Ram, Sanjeet, Sun Singh, tehsil minority member Ashok Kumar Mahlotra, Baldeep Kumar and Kishwar Kumar participated in the World Minority Day celebrations.

Tehsil Minority Member Ashok Kumar and Seer Ram said that it is place of pleasure that



minority community in Jangai area of Mandanr are celebrating World Minority Day with zeal and enthusiasm. They claimed that earlier they had observed the day at President House while it is first time that the community celebrating the event at their native village.

According to details, as many as 12 hundred families of minority community residing in different villages including Jangai,

Kowga, Peer Baba, Dewana Baba and Ghorghosto in Buner. The participants claimed that they living with peace and mutual cooperation with Muslim of the area. The minority community members presented bouquet of flowers to Assistant Commissioner Mandanr Maryam Bakhtawar on her arrival to the premises. AC assured her assistance to the community at every forum.

Baby monkeys, 8-month-old black bear recovered in raid at house in Malakand

MALAKAND (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department on Saturday recovered four wild animals, including a black bear and three monkeys, from a house in the Malakand district, officials said.

Range Officer Malakand Majid Khan told that the KP Wildlife Department raided a house in the district's Batkhela area where an eight-month-old black bear cub and three baby monkeys, just a few months old, were unlawfully kept. He said one person was arrested during the raid and a case was registered against

him under the province's wildlife laws. Khan added that the animals were kept for the purpose of sale.

The official further stated that the black bear was being shifted to the Peshawar Zoo while the monkeys would be moved to the Malakand Wildlife Safari Park. Under the law, the display and handling of wildlife in the name of awareness by any private person is barred in the province.

According to the Wildlife and Biodiversity (Protection, Preservation, Conservation, and Management) Act, 2015 of the KP government, "All

wild animals, free-ranging or captive, tamed or untamed, found within the territorial jurisdiction of the province shall be deemed to be the property of the government". "No person shall be in possession of any wild animal or exotic, dead or alive, trophy or meat specified in Second Schedule unless he is in possession of a valid Certificate or Licence," it notes. In a similar incident last month, 14 monkeys were recovered from a Karachi-bound bus and were later handed over to the management of Karachi Zoological Garden.

Teachers allegedly involved in rape case arrested

DG KHAN (INP): DG Khan Police claimed to have arrested two teachers of Ghazi University in an alleged rape case, here on Saturday.

According to the police sources, the video of a girl student named "S" in which she sought help from higher authorities to punish two teachers named Dr Zafar and

Dr Khalid Khattak as one of the teachers allegedly raped her and the other one was blackmailing her. She added that her friend took her to the teachers to request additional marks. Dr Zafar allegedly served drugged drinks and raped her.

She maintained that both teachers were allegedly extending life threats to her

and her sister, who was also a student at the University. Inspector General Punjab Police took notice of the viral video and instructed DPO DG Khan to arrest the outlaws and conduct an inquiry on merit. A case has been registered with Gudai Police Station after an application from the father of the girl student.



UN completes removal of oil from decaying tanker off Yemen

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The transfer of more than a million barrels of oil from an aging tanker moored off the coast of war-torn Yemen has been completed, avoiding an environmental disaster, the United Nations said.

In a statement, Farhan Haq, the deputy spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said the operation had prevented a "monumental environmental and humanitarian catastrophe." An international team began siphoning the oil from the dilapidated vessel known as FSO Safer on July 25. Almost all the oil is now aboard a replacement tanker called MOST Yemen.

Before the transfer, the Safer, which Yemen used as a floating storage and offloading facility, held four times as much oil as was spilled in the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster off Alaska, one of the world's worst ecological catastrophes, according to the UN. International organizations and rights groups warned for years of the potential for a spill or an explosion involving the tanker, which had not been maintained and has damaged pipes and seawater in its engine compartment.

"Today, we can say that the United Nations and a remarkably broad group of partners have succeeded in preventing the worst case scenario of a catastrophic oil spill in the Red Sea," David Gressly, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Yemen, said. It is moored 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from Yemen's western Red Sea ports of Hodeida and Ras Issa, a strategic area controlled by the Iran-backed Houthis rebels who are at war with the internationally recognized Yemeni government.

The warring sides blamed each other for blocking a salvage operation to remove the oil until a UN-led initiative succeeded in accessing the ship and raising money from international donors. The transfer marks a major milestone in a plan that needs additional funding to transport the oil



away and to move the Safer. The UN said a small amount of oil remains inside the Safer's hull and that the salvage team needs to install a secure system for mooring the replacement tanker in deep water.

"As much of the 1.14 million barrels has been extracted as possible," the UN statement said. "However, less than 2% of the original oil cargo remains mixed in with sediment that will be removed during the final cleaning of the Safer." Gressly told UN reporters at a video news conference from Yemen that during the cleaning phase a sea water wash will be applied "to extract as much liquid oil as possible," and the oil-mixed sediment will then be removed at another port. It is unclear how long this next phase will take.

The United States welcomed the news of the operation's success and called on other countries to contribute to see the job through to the end. "The UN urgently needs the international community and private sector's financial support to fill the remaining \$22 million funding gap needed to finish the job and address all remaining environmental threats," US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said. The tanker, a Japanese-made vessel built in the 1970s, was sold to the Yemeni government during the

1980s to store for export up to 3 million barrels pumped from oil fields in eastern Yemen's Marib province. The ship is 360 meters (1,181 feet) long with 34 storage tanks. Peter Berdowski, CEO of maritime services company Boskalis, said the Safer's former cargo was now inside a "modern double-hulled tanker." The UN contracted a Boskalis subsidiary, SMIT Salvage, to remove the oil.

He congratulated the company's salvage team for "carrying out the work under very challenging conditions in the Red Sea." Yemen's ruinous civil war began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital of Sanaa and much of northern Yemen and forced the government into exile. A Saudi-led coalition, including the UAE, intervened the following year to try to restore the internationally recognized government to power.

"In the midst of a conflict zone, remarkable things become possible. Many thought this was an impossible salvage operation," said Adam Steiner, chief of the UN Development Program, said during the UN news conference. Steiner, noting that some people had described the Safer tanker as a ticking time bomb, said, "I think it is fair to say that as of today, that ticking is no longer an immediate threat."

Lula says will ask Xi, Biden to invest more in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters): Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said his country is welcome to receiving investments from other nations to spur growth, as he unveiled a new "growth acceleration" plan with investments estimated at nearly \$350 billion.

Lula said in a speech he would ask his Chinese and US counterparts, Xi Jinping and Joe Biden, to invest more in Brazil. He added that European countries were also keen to invest in Latin America. "We must travel the world presenting our projects, trying to sell them," Lula said, adding he would tell the likes of Xi, Biden and leaders of the Arab world "we want more investments in Brazil." "I'll tell Biden the US has been investing for too long in wars, they also need to think about investing in Brazil."

Zimbabwe polls: What you need to know

HARARE (BBC): Zimbabwe heads to the polls in August against a backdrop of one of the world's highest rates of inflation and accusations of an intensifying crackdown on the opposition. Long-time president Robert Mugabe was deposed in 2017 but many say that little has changed.

In the run-up to the vote, questions linger over how free and fair the ballot will be in a country that is trying to rehabilitate its image. Zimbabweans will vote on 23 August to elect councillors, members of parliament, and a president. If there is no outright winner in the presidential contest, a run-off will be held six weeks later, on 2 October.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission has approved 11 candidates. This is sharply down on the 23 who contested the last election, in 2018, no doubt because each candidate now has to pay \$20,000 (£16,000), up from \$1,000 (£800). Mr Mnangagwa, 80, has led Zimbabwe since the military forced Robert Mugabe to resign in 2017, and then won a disputed election a year later. He was a long-time ally of Mugabe before the pair fell out.

Mr Chamisa, 45, came second in 2018, winning 44% of the vote. A 2020 court ruling stripped him of the leadership of the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and he subsequently lost access to party assets and state funding. He formed the CCC in 2022, remains hugely popular in urban areas and is the main face of the opposition. Other contenders include Douglas Mwonozora, the MDC's new leader and Elisabeth Valerio, the only female candidate.

She had been disqualified but successfully challenged the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's decision to reject her nomination papers. Zanu-PF has the advantage of incumbency, state power and access to state resources. The party, which has been in power since independence in 1980, also retains strong support in rural areas. However with the economy in such a mess, many people, especially those in urban areas and the youth, think it is time for a change.

Rural voters normally turn out in huge numbers, unlike urban and youth voters, which could work against the opposition. The government has also refused to allow Zimbabweans living abroad to vote - which could also work against Mr Chamisa. Polling so far has predicted different results, so it is hard to use that as a guide as to who may end up president. Furthermore, human rights activists say that in the past Zanu-PF has used various tactics to stay in power, including violence and intimidation, state-media blackouts and the negative coverage of the opposition. Zanu-PF has previously denied using dirty tricks against its opponents. The cost-of-living crisis continues to be at the core of voters' concerns, with the last three years having been some of the worst in a decade.

Hawaii wildfire death toll hits 67

HAWAII (Agencies): The death toll from wildfires on Hawaii's Maui has risen to 67 as search teams combed through the smouldering ruins of Lahaina town and officials sought determine to how the inferno spread so rapidly through the historic resort area with little warning.

Hawaii's attorney general said that she was opening a probe into how authorities responded to devastating wildfires that has left at least 67 people dead. "The Department of the Attorney General will be conducting a comprehensive review of critical decision-making and standing policies leading up to, during, and after the wildfires on Maui and Hawaii islands this week," the office of Attorney General Anne Lopez said in a statement.

The fires have become the deadliest natural disaster in Hawaii's history, surpassing that of a tsunami that killed 61 people on the Big Island of Hawaii in 1960, a year after Hawaii joined the United States. Fuelled by dry conditions, hot temperatures, and strong winds from a passing hurricane, at least three wildfires erupted on Maui this week, racing through parched brush covering the island.

Maui County officials said in an online statement that firefighters continued to battle the blaze, which was not yet fully contained. Residents of Lahaina were being allowed to return home for the first time to assess the damage. Officials have warned that search teams with cadaver dogs could still find more dead from the fire that torched 1,000 buildings and left thousands homeless and will likely require many years and billions of dollars to rebuild.

Al Jazeera's Shihab Rattansi, reporting from Maui, said there was a lengthy traffic jam as residents were allowed to return briefly to Lahaina to assess the damage from the fire. Information released by authorities also reported that victims of the fire had died while trying to flee the fast-moving blaze. "Another sign of the speed with which people were caught by this fire," Rattansi said. Three days after the disaster, it remained unclear whether some residents had received any warning before the fire engulfed their homes.

The island includes emergency sirens intended to warn of natural disasters and other threats, but they did not appear to have sounded during the fire. "I authorised a comprehensive review this morning to make sure that we know exactly what happened and when," Hawaii Governor Josh

Green told CNN, referring to the warning sirens.

Officials have not offered a detailed picture of precisely what notifications were sent out, and whether they were done via text message, email or phone calls. Maui County Fire Chief Bradford Ventura said at a press conference that the fire's speed made it "nearly impossible" for front-line responders to communicate with the emergency management officials who would typically provide real-time evacuation orders.

"They were basically self-evacuating with fairly little notice," he said, referring to residents of the neighbourhood where the fire initially struck. The Maui blazes are the latest wildfires that have struck this summer around the globe. Fires forced tens of thousands of people in Greece, Spain, Portugal and other parts of Europe to evacuate, while in western Canada, smoke from a series of severe fires blanketed a vast swath of the US Midwest and East Coast.

The disaster began unfolding just after midnight when a brush fire was reported in the town of Kula, roughly 56km (35 miles) from Lahaina. About five hours later that morning, power was knocked out in Lahaina, according to residents. By that afternoon, however, the situation had turned dire. At approximately 3:30pm local time (01:30 GMT), according to the county's updates, the Lahaina fire suddenly flared up. Some residents began evacuating while people, including hotel guests, on the town's west side were instructed to shelter in place.

In the ensuing hours, the county posted a series of evacuation orders on Facebook as the fire spread through the town. Some witnesses said they had little advance notice, describing their terror when the blaze consumed Lahaina in what seemed a matter of minutes. Several people were forced to leap into the Pacific Ocean to save themselves.

The Lahaina evacuation was complicated by its coastal location next to hills, meaning there were only two ways out, at best, said Andrew Rumbach, a specialist in climate and communities at the Urban Institute in Washington. "This is the nightmare scenario," said Rumbach, a former urban planning professor at the University of Hawaii. "A fast-moving fire in a densely populated place with difficult communications, and not a lot of good options in terms of evacuations."

Zuma won't return to prison due to overcrowding

J O H A N N E S B U R G

(BBC): South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has been spared from returning to prison, with officials saying this is to ease overcrowding. Zuma, who was sentenced to 15 months for contempt of court, surrendered himself to the authorities.

The 81-year-old had previously been freed on medical parole - in a move ruled illegal by the courts. Justice Minister Ronald Lamola said he had been given remission to address overcrowding in prisons. Zuma is one of more than 9,000 low-risk prisoners released under a scheme which began in April to make space in South Africa's jails, official say.

Mr Lamola said the decision had been taken by the prison authorities without any political interference, and that Zuma had not been given any special treatment. The remission process aims to alleviate strain on the system by releasing low-risk offend-

ers. A prisons department spokesperson told the BBC that South Africa's prison population was currently 47% higher than official capacity.

This was made worse by the fact that inmates allegedly set one prison on fire last week. This meant nearly 4,000 inmates were transported to other facilities where they didn't have beds. South Africa's Commissioner of Prisons Makgothi Thobakgale said Zuma had reported to the Estcourt Correctional Facility in his home province of KwaZulu-Natal and was "admitted" into the system, before being released an hour later.

Lobby group AfriForum has accused South Africa's prisons department of helping Zuma evade justice. South Africa's main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, has said it will legally challenge the remission granted to the former president. While the ruling African National Congress (ANC)

in KwaZulu-Natal has welcomed the decision and said it is in the best interest of the country. More broadly the reaction has also been mixed. Some South Africans say the government should focus on pressing issues such as frequent power outages, high crime rates, poverty and youth unemployment, while others say Zuma should go back to jail to serve the rest of his term.

Zuma's jailing in 2021 sparked protests and riots that left more than 350 people dead. He was sentenced after refusing to testify before a panel probing financial sleaze and cronyism under his presidency. He was however freed on medical parole just two months into his term. An appeals court last November found the release was illegally granted and ordered Zuma back to prison to finish his sentence. Last month, the constitutional court rejected an attempt to overturn this decision.

Niger coup: Fear and anger in Niamey as Ecowas threatens force

NIAMEY: Zara Kada serves up dishes of rice, fish and vegetables in plastic bowls to her customers sitting on wooden benches in the capital of Niger's capital, Niamey. This business is a lifeline for the widowed mother-of-seven but it's under threat as food prices have shot up after economic sanctions were imposed after the military seized power.

"Not only has the price of rice increased but also that of cooking oil. It's an increase of 2,500F CFA (\$4: £3) in just one week," she says standing by her small food stall. "This causes us problems because if I prepare the rice and I can't sell it, there will be no profits, only losses." Two weeks ago, Niger's army deposed the country's democratically elected President, Mohamed Bazoum, attracting widespread international condemnation. The Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) is determined to stop yet another military takeover in the region - the sixth in just three years. "We are drawing the line in the sand," Ecowas security chief Abdel Fatau Musah tells the BBC. "There is a

contagion and if we do not determinedly stop what has happened there, then which country is next?" he asks.

So Ecowas has reacted quickly, by cutting off financial transactions, electricity supplies and, in a move particularly painful for landlocked Niger, closed its land borders, blocking crucial imports. Now, after a second emergency summit on the crisis in Niger, regional heads of state have ordered the activation of a standby military force, ready to invade the country should the military continue their hold on power.

On the streets of Niamey, there is real anger at the way regional governments have reacted and the threat of military intervention. "The Niger soldiers are ready to face any aggression against our country of any kind. They should count on our support, the support of the population and its partners. We are ready," says Bana Ibrahim. The 46-year-old is one of the leaders of a so-called self-defence unit that has been set up in response to the Ecowas announcement.

Another member of the unit, Moudi Moussa,

agrees: "We are here to defend our country because the country is threatened by Ecowas mercenaries. I call them mercenaries in the pay of [French President Emmanuel] Macron. So we are here to protect our Niger and the people of Niger." While businesses like Ms Kada's have taken a hit since the coup, Ibrahim Souleymane's is picking up. In his cramped tailor's shop, he picks out white, blue and red pieces of cloth - the colours of the Russian tricolour.

"It was with the advent of the [General] Tchiani coup that I started sewing flags. Especially for Russia. People come to buy a lot of it because they use it to support our soldiers who have taken power," he says. Even though the flags of France, Niger's former colonial ruler, and Russia have the same colours, some people's feelings towards the two European powers couldn't be more different. "People buy it [Russian flag] because we are in conflict with France. For years, France has only caused us problems and the military wants to put an end to it," Mr Souleymane adds.

Cyprus is sending Syrian migrants back to Lebanon

NICOSIA (AP): The United Nations refugee agency said it was "extremely concerned" over the return of more than 100 Syrian nationals from Cyprus to Lebanon without being screened to determine whether they need legal protection and who may be deported back to their war-racked homeland.

The UNHCR office in Cyprus said deportations and transfers between states "without legal and procedural safeguards for persons who may be in need of international protection" are against international and European law.

Such transfers could result in people sent back to a country where "they may face the risk of persecution, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm," the agency told the Associated Press. The 109 migrants had all reached Cyprus aboard three separate boats between Jul. 29-Aug. 2 before being returned by boat under Cyprus police escort.

The Cyprus government said such returns are being lawfully carried out in line with a bilateral agreement the island nation and neigh-

boring Lebanon signed in 2004. According to senior Interior Ministry official Loizos Hadjivasilou, the agreement obligates Lebanon to prevent and stop illegal border crossings and illegal migration of individuals who depart from Lebanon.

Hadjivasilou told the Associated Press these individuals are returned to Lebanon, which is deemed safe and where they enjoy benefits afforded to the hundreds of thousands of refugees in the country. "Under these circumstances, we believe that they don't face any danger and their choice to set sail toward a European Union member country is being made for clearly economic reasons."

Lebanon hosts some 805,000 UN-registered Syrian refugees, but officials estimate the actual number is far higher, ranging between 1.5 and 2 million. An increasing number of would-be migrants - both refugees and Lebanese - have attempted to leave Lebanon by sea since the country fell into a crippling economic crisis over the past four years. About 90% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live below the extreme poverty line,

according to UNHCR. Hadjivasilou said in line with the bilateral agreement, Cypriot authorities don't process migrants' asylum claims because their arrival is "clearly a matter of illegal trespass."

"The Cyprus Republic is in no way implicated in pushbacks and never refuses assistance in case of a search and rescue operation to first and foremost protect human lives," Hadjivasilou said. Cypriot Interior Minister Constantinos Ioannou traveled to Lebanon last month for talks with caretaker Prime Minister Najib Azmi Mikati and other top officials to ensure that the bilateral agreement remains in effect and to bolster cooperation on stemming migrant arrivals. Lisa Abou Khaled, a spokesperson for the UNHCR office in Lebanon, told the Associated Press that most all 109 migrants that were returned from Cyprus were deported to Syria after being investigated by the Lebanese army.

Khaled said the UNHCR maintains that anyone who wishes to re-enter Lebanon and who may fear returning to their country of origin "should be readmitted so that their protection needs can be properly addressed."

Lebanon has stepped up Syrian refugee deportations in April, as anti-refugee sentiment in the crisis-hit country intensifies.

Lebanese authorities have pointed to a 2019 regulation allowing unauthorized refugees who entered the country after April of that year to be deported, but human rights groups argue that the forcible return of refugees to a country where they might face persecution or torture violates international law. Cyprus has in recent years sought EU help to cope with a large influx of migrants including from sub-Saharan Africa that have taxed the small country's limited resources.

The EU is co-financing the construction of a new reception center for migrants, with capacity for 1,000 people, while their asylum claims are being processed or initially turned down. Cypriot authorities see the agreement with Lebanon as a key legal barrier to potentially opening the floodgates for people smugglers to bring huge numbers of migrants to EU territory on the promise of better benefits. In recent months, Cyprus has seen a significant uptick in boat arrivals from Lebanon and Syria.

Attorney general appoints a special counsel in Hunter Biden probe

WASHINGTON (AP): Attorney General Merrick Garland appointed a special counsel in the Hunter Biden probe, a surprise move that intensifies the investigation into the president's son ahead of the 2024 election.

Garland noted the "extraordinary circumstances" of the matter as he named David Weiss, the US attorney in Delaware who had already been probing Hunter Biden's financial dealings, as special counsel after plea deal talks in the case broke down.

The sudden turn of events raises fresh questions about the case against Hunter Biden on tax evasion and a gun charge, deepening an investigation that was close to resolution just weeks ago. Weiss had asked to be named special counsel, gaining broad authority to investigate and report out his findings. It comes as the Justice Department has taken the unprecedented step of indicting former President Donald Trump, who's President Joe Biden's chief rival in next year's election, in two separate cases. It also puts questions about Biden's family at the forefront of the 2024 presiden-

tial election.

Speaking at the Justice Department, Garland said he expects the special counsel to work expeditiously in an "even-handed and urgent" manner. Garland said Weiss, who had been appointed by Trump as US attorney, told him this week the investigation had reached a stage in which he should continue as special counsel.

"Upon considering his request, as well as the extraordinary circumstances relating to this matter, I have concluded it is in the public interest to appoint him as special counsel," Garland said. The announcement of a special counsel is a significant development from the typically cautious Garland and provides Weiss with independence, authority and budget to pursue the investigation. It's not fully clear why the attorney general took the step in appointing a special counsel for the Hunter Biden case, but prosecutors in Delaware also announced that plea deal talks Weiss was pursuing in the tax evasion case had hit an impasse.

In a court filing, Weiss' team said charges would be

better filed in California or Washington. Though Garland has said Weiss always had the authority to file outside Delaware, the venue may have been a factor in his request to be named special counsel. Nevertheless, the announcement ensures the Justice Department's probes of Trump, and now of Biden's youngest son, who used drugs and whose personal entanglements have trailed his father's political career, will carry into election season.

The federal cases differ significantly: Trump has been indicted and is awaiting trial in two separate cases brought by special prosecutor Jack Smith. One is over Trump's refusal to turn over classified documents stored at his Mar-a-Lago estate. The other involves charges of fraud and conspiracy to overturn the 2020 election in the run up to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol. In the case of Hunter Biden, the president has not been accused or charged with any wrongdoing by prosecutors probing the affairs of his son.

Hunter Biden's attorney Chris Clark said little has changed about their under-

standing of the situation and the prosecutor's role. "Whether in Delaware, Washington, D.C., or anywhere else, we expect a fair resolution not infected by politics," Clark said in a statement.

President Biden has said repeatedly he does not talk with his son about business. Trump's team questioned the independence of the special counsel Weiss, who he himself had appointed. But a Trump spokesman said the prosecutor should move quickly, and anyone found with wrongdoing "should face the required consequences."

Mike Pence, another Republican rival for the presidency in 2024, told reporters at the Iowa State Fair that he welcomed the special counsel appointment — as he made his own dig at the Biden family. "To be honest with you, I can't relate to what his son was doing when he was vice president," said Pence, who served alongside Trump. "When I was vice president, my son was flying an F35 in the Marine Corps defending this country." Garland said Weiss will have "all the resources he requests" to probe the matter.

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Wake up Pakistanis before it's late

PAKISTAN'S central bank has recently informed that the country's foreign remittances fell 19.3% year on year to \$2 billion in the first month of the current fiscal year. The remittance inflows decreased by 7.3% month on month basis. The overseas Pakistanis sent \$2.2 billion in remittances to Pakistanis in July, mostly from Saudi Arabia (\$486.7 million), the United Arab Emirates (\$315.1 million), the United Kingdom (\$305.7 million), and the United States of America (\$238.1 million). According to reports, use of unofficial channels for money transfer, Eid factor and difference between official dollar rate and grey channel were the main reasons for a sharp decline in monthly remittances in the past month. The State Bank of Pakistan has proposed certain changes in incentive schemes to attract more remittance and investment from overseas Pakistanis to maintain a healthy flow of foreign remittances which play a crucial role in stabilization of the economy.

Pakistan has been embattled with chronic economic challenges, while multiple factors including low foreign reserves, depreciation of currency, skyrocketing inflation and an all time high political instability coupled with global energy crisis and worst effects of war in Ukraine pushed the South Asian economy on the brink of an economic collapse. During such a crucial period, monetary assistance from friendly nations and remittances sent by the overseas Pakistanis were of great importance for a trembling economy to satisfy its dearly needed oil imports and repayment of loans that was vital to escape a default risk. However, the recent 19% sharp decline in remittances plunged these figures to \$2.03 billion in July compared to the previous year \$ 2.51 billion for the same period, which is surely a big dent to the already dwindling economy.

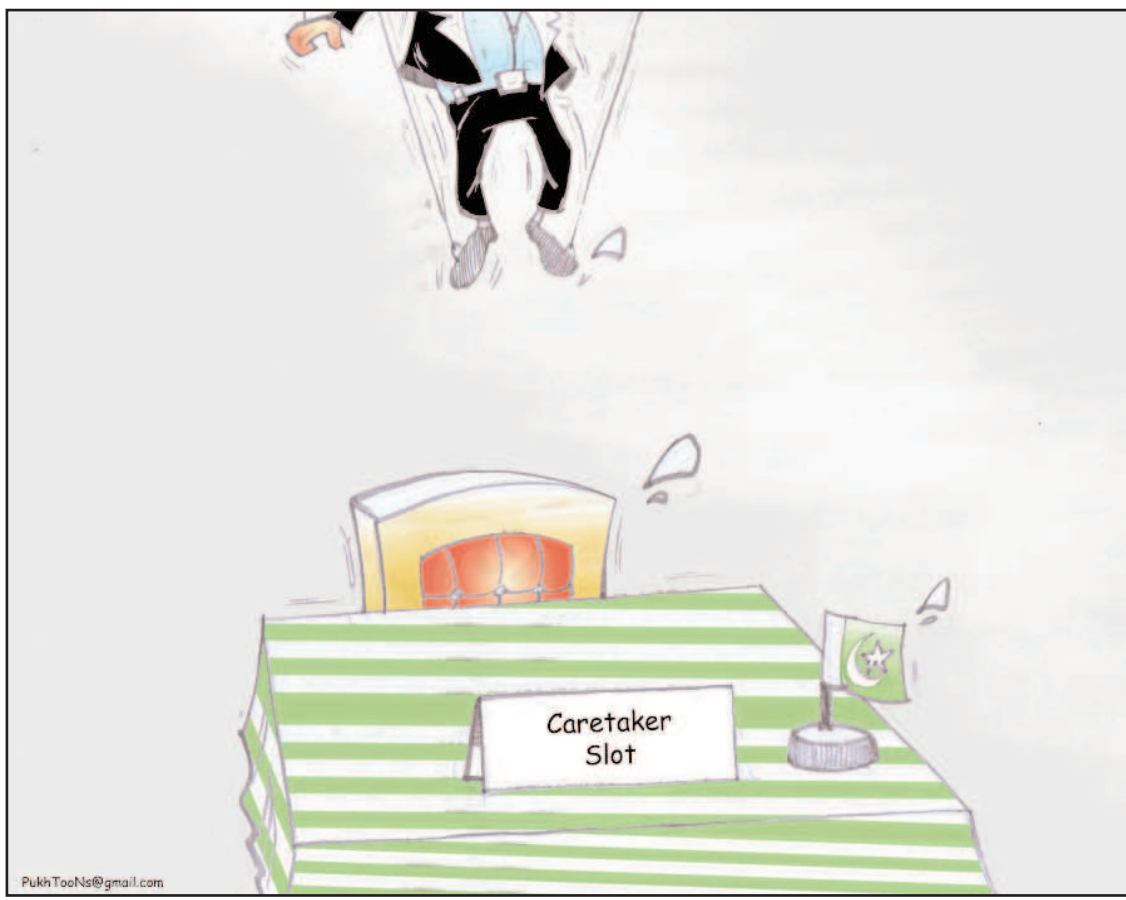
Remittances are an important source for foreign exchange and their steady growth and continuous supply not only helped Pakistan in maintaining an improved external economic outlook, support domestic consumption and to alleviate poverty from the country. There were record foreign remittances in the year 2020-2021 during the PTI era and money transferred by overseas Pakistanis touched to \$ 30 billion per annum but those figures gradually declined due to volatile currency exchange rate and overseas Pakistanis shattering confidence over the coalition government. Historically, domestic political tussle also played an important part in lowering foreign remittances as the PTI leadership called on its overseas supporters to short cut their remittances to hit hard on the PDM coalition government as they did in case of Pak-IMF deal through PTI governments in Punjab and the KP. The recent decline in the inflow of the overseas workers' remittances through the official channels has raised serious concerns regarding Pakistan's ability to sustain imports payments and timely fulfillment of foreign debt obligations. Apparently, reduction in inflows of foreign remittances is likely to jeopardize the recent improvement that had been seen in the national economy after approval of a \$3 billion standby arrangement with the IMF, while it will also badly affect the accumulation of foreign reserves and would increase dependence on foreign loans.

In fact, the issue of foreign remittances is of grave concern for the wellbeing and economic survival of the country. This bulk of money earns by our patriot Pakistani overseas workers through their flash and fluid, and directly reaches Pakistan without use of any begging bowl. Recently, Pakistani leaders traded their ego and national prestige with the global lender to receive \$3 billion support that is insignificant as compared to the foreign remittances which Pakistan receives on a regular basis.

Over the years, Persistent economic depletion, periodic economic slowdown and continued addiction of foreign loans is the unceasing dilemma of the Pakistani nation. It is a wake up call for Pakistanis and their so-called proclaimed national leaders, who must forget politics and resist their ego for the sake of the country and its people, who are currently living in hot water and every passing day adds to their miseries and depravedness. The global economic crisis had seriously hit all nations including the United States, the UK, China, France and others but domestic political unrest and corruption of the leaders are the fundamental issues that continuously undermines the recovery of certain economies like Pakistan. In the current scenario, charter of economy is the only way forward if Pakistani leaders can sit together to discuss current challenges and pursue a consensus policy to tackle the national issues on a permanent basis otherwise no single group can rescue the nation from this upheaval.

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Why should conservatives support Ukraine?

Marc A. Thiessen

“It is very simple,” Polish President Andrzej Duda told me last week. “Right now, Russian imperialism can be stopped cheaply, because American soldiers are not dying.” But if we don't put a halt to Russian aggression now, “there will be a very high price to be paid.”

During an hour-long conversation in the Presidential Palace here, Duda noted that Poles have experienced 600 years of Russian efforts to subjugate them and their neighbors. In the 18th century, Russia helped partition Poland, wiping it off the map for 123 years. In 1920, the Bolsheviks attacked “in the hope of spreading communism across the whole of Europe” but were stopped by Polish forces in the Battle of Warsaw. In 1939, the Soviets attacked again alongside Nazi Germany and “Stalin seized half of Poland, bringing it under Soviet occupation” - until Hitler turned on his Soviet allies. Then in 1945, the Red Army retook Poland and “pushed the German occupiers out only to replace them with their own occupation,” resulting in “an additional 44 years behind the Iron Curtain.”

Now, Duda says, we are witnessing a “resurgence of Russian imperialism” - starting with Moscow's 2008 invasion of Georgia, its 2014 attack on Ukraine, its full-scale invasion last year - and its “repeated threats directed at the Baltic states, Poland and all of Central Europe.” Vladimir Putin and his cronies “are dreaming of power of the czars and the restoration of czarist territory.” We must stop Russia's advance in Ukraine now “so that it does not come to pass, as it did in World War I and World War II, that American soldiers have to shed their blood and to lose their lives in Europe to restore peace and liberty to the world.”

When I pointed out that about one-third of House Republicans recently voted to cut off aid to Ukraine, Duda showed no concern. “This is because you have democracy and you are free not to be like-minded,” he told me with a smile. Indeed, Duda is facing an anti-Ukraine revolt of his own. The far-right Confederation coalition - which has promised to

“stop the Ukrainization of Poland” - is at 13 percent in the polls, making it the third-most-popular in Poland. If neither Duda's Law and Justice party nor the centrist opposition secures an outright majority in October's parliamentary elections, Confederation could become kingmaker in the new Parliament.

In other words, Duda's bold support for Ukraine is politically courageous. Unfortunately, in the United States, most of the leading Republican presidential candidates are not showing similar courage. Is

a country that brought us liberty.” Moreover, he said, while Poland prepared for this moment by diversifying its energy supplies, “Hungary is to a very large extent energy-dependent on Russia. The only nuclear power plant that they have was built back under communist times.... All their gas supplies come from Russia. Some would say this is a political mistake, and I agree.” With military support, humanitarian relief and taking in refugees, no nation has done more for Ukraine than Poland. “Just our military assistance to Ukraine

he noted that Poland's history with Ukraine includes “some very difficult moments” - such as the massacre of as many as 100,000 Poles by Ukrainian nationalists toward the end of World War II. Duda recently visited the region of western Ukraine where the massacres mainly took place with President Volodymyr Zelensky - and was greeted by shouts of “Thank you!” and “Long live Poland!” Despite these challenges, Poles “are helping Ukrainians because they understand the Russian threat,” Duda said. “We know that when the Russians come, they rape women, they kill people, they deport people to the East.... [We] know that the Russians must be stopped.”

Ultimately, he said, this requires Ukraine's admission into NATO. “I'm among those who hoped Ukraine would be given more than they actually got” at last month's NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, where the Biden administration scuttled efforts by the majority of allies to set a specific timetable for Kyiv's admission. “Of course,” Duda said, “we cannot accept a new country into NATO while there is still war going on in that country.... But I had hoped that we would be able to get an invitation extended to Ukraine to shut down any question of whether Ukraine will be a member of NATO sometime in the future.” He said he will push the Biden administration to make sure Ukraine gets that invitation at the alliance's 75th-anniversary summit next year in Washington. If it doesn't have NATO's mutual-defense protections, will Putin ever give up on his quest to conquer Ukraine? “It isn't a matter of whether Putin or other Russian leaders will stop wanting to rule Ukraine one day. They may want to rule the whole world,” Duda said. “The question is: Will we let them? ... I think we mustn't allow them. We must not tolerate the changing of borders in Europe by force.” He is right. It would be nice to hear the leading Republican presidential contenders speak with similar moral clarity - and for President Biden to finally back concrete efforts to bring Ukraine into NATO.

The Washington Post

“There are families in Poland who have had Ukrainian families living in their homes, sharing the same space, for a year and a half now.” And he noted that Poland's history with Ukraine includes "some very difficult moments" - such as the massacre of as many as 100,000 Poles by Ukrainian nationalists toward the end of World War II.

Duda worried what will happen to American support for Ukraine if Republicans win in 2024? “No,” he said, “I have no doubt that the United States understands perfectly the threat posed by Russian imperialism.” “And it is my profound belief that the United States also understands how important it is to make sure that democracy does not disappear from Central Europe. Everyone knows that where Russia is, there is no democracy.”

Right-wing governments in Poland and Italy seem to understand this and are strongly supportive of Ukraine. But Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has openly embraced Putin and questioned Ukraine's sovereignty. I asked Duda why he thinks Orban is so wrong on this issue. “We have different historical experience,” he said. “In many countries in Southern Europe, Russia brings very positive historical associations because she liberated them from occupation by the Ottoman Empire. In Poland, Russia was only an occupying force ... never

alone, we have sent more than \$2 billion,” he said. “Poland has given Ukraine almost our entire fleet of our MiG-29s. We have given Ukraine more than 300 tanks as well, including the most modern, state-of-the-art German Leopards.” This assistance benefits not just Ukraine but the United States as well. For example, Poland recently sent Ukraine Soviet-designed Mi-24 attack helicopters and is buying new US-made Black Hawks and Apaches to replace them - creating US jobs. Poland has also accepted more Ukrainian refugees than any other country, and an estimated 77 percent of Poles have been involved in helping these refugees in some way, including donating more than \$2 billion out of their own pockets.

Though the vast majority of Poles still welcome Ukrainians, “there is definitely a problem of war fatigue,” Duda said. “There are families in Poland who have had Ukrainian families living in their homes, sharing the same space, for a year and a half now.” And

Russo-Ukrainian war has bolstered Ukraine's nonstate alliance network

Erik E. Mueller

PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin and Russia have given Ukraine an excuse to provide a haven for organizations aimed at destroying the current Russian state and its allies in Chechnya and Belarus. Since 2014, militant groups from Russia, Belarus, Chechnya and elsewhere have established themselves as allies of Ukraine in its fight against Russia and its aligned forces.

These groups started forming during the 2014-2022 Donbas War, but more groups have formed and taken up arms alongside Kyiv's soldiers since the February 2022 Russian invasion. The formation of these groups in Ukraine and their actions against Russia's interests is blowback for Russian military activities in Chechnya and Ukraine, its backing of Alexander Lukashenko's government in Belarus, and Moscow's own governance at home.

Among the newer organizations are those with goals focused on Russia, Chechnya, and Belarus. There are the neo-Nazi and Russian ethnonationalist Russian Volunteer Corps (RVC) as well as the politically inclusive and democracy-promoting Freedom of Russia Legion (FRL). Both these groups seek to overthrow Putin's government. There is also the Separate Special Purposes Battalion (OBON), a Chechen separatist organization aimed at establishing an independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Additionally, there is the Belarussian Kastu? Kalino?ski Regiment (KKR) that seeks to topple Lukashenko's government in Minsk. Some have fought with Kyiv since before the February 2022 invasion. Among these groups are Chechen separatist outfits like the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion (DDB) and Sheikh Mansur Battalion (SMB) that have fought alongside Ukrainian forces against Russian separatists and their allies since 2014. Some of the newer groups consist of fighters who served as part of non-state groups during the Donbas War, with some fighters from the RVC and KKR having fought with far-right groups including the Ukrainian Azov Brigade.

Russia's backing of separatists in the Donbas from 2014-2022 is likely the inspiration for allowing these groups to organize, train, equip, fundraise, and fight alongside Ukrainian forces. These groups provide Ukraine with extra manpower to combat Russian-aligned forces. They also can serve as proxy forces to promote Ukrainian interests and fight its enemies abroad. Kyiv has already permitted RVC and FRL raids into Russian territory from Ukrainian territory. Both groups appear set to carry out further raids and attacks against Russian forces. It is possible that Ukraine might go on to allow the DDB, SMB, OBON, or other Chechen separatist allies to launch an armed campaign in Russian territory as well - something that may have already begun.

Russia's invasion as well as its past backing of groups in Ukraine are likely reasons why Kyiv does not seek to prevent these groups from carrying out armed action within Russian territory. Beyond Russia, should Belarus choose to send

troops to support Russia, Ukraine could allow the KKR and other Belarusian allies to carry out raids into Belarus. Many of Ukraine's nonstate allies see Russian defeat in the Russo-Ukrainian War as a rung on the ladder toward achieving their ultimate goals. For Russian groups like the RVC and FRL, the war could present an opportunity to organize armed opposition to directly engage in fighting Russia to overthrow Putin's government. For Chechen groups, the war could be a way to weaken Russia and reopen an opportunity for Chechnya to split away from Moscow and remove the government of Ramzan Kadyrov. For the KKR, the war may present an opportunity to weaken Lukashenko's grip on power by significantly impeding or ending Russia's capacity to continue providing support to his government in Belarus.

Allying with Ukraine also could provide these groups with overt support for their overall causes. For instance, last fall, Kyiv recognized Chechnya as a Russian-occupied territory (though it has refrained from recognizing anyone as the legitimate government of Grozny). In the future, it may more overtly back the projects of groups like the KKR and FRL that seek to overthrow the current governments and establish democratic futures in Belarus and Russia respectively. However, support for the objectives of other groups is unlikely. For instance, Kyiv is unlikely to back RVC's efforts to establish a Russian ethnostate. In this circumstance, Ukraine seems to have made an alliance based on a shared enemy rather than support for the RVC's ideological project. Backing these groups presents risks for Ukraine. For instance, the RVC appears to be working with and supporting other neo-Nazi groups like the Polish Volunteer Corps and the German Volunteer Corps, made up of Polish and German nationals respectively. They could collaborate with neo-Nazis from other countries like the United States. This may cause tensions between Kyiv and its allies, especially if these groups seek to use military training, combat experience, and weapons from their time in Ukraine to carry out violence at home.

Additionally, incursions from Ukraine into Russian territory may further escalate the conflict. Kyiv may also be blamed if its non-state allies commit war crimes or attacks that target civilians using weapons and equipment they obtained while fighting alongside Ukrainian forces regardless of how these tools came into their possession. Ukraine may be blamed whether or not it supported or had knowledge of such attacks in advance. Kyiv may also bear reputational costs due to its affiliation with extremist organizations - especially given that Moscow has justified the invasion with false claims that Ukraine is a neo-Nazi-dominated state. Though alignment with these groups presents clear benefits in the near term, Ukraine should be cautious since these groups could turn on it at any time should their interests no longer align with those of Kyiv.

The Moscow Times

Reform or rely on handouts: Lebanon's stark choice

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

LEBANON is facing one of the worst financial crises in the world. It is important to understand the underlying reasons behind the crisis in order to adequately address the country's financial meltdown and, ultimately, resolve it by tackling the root causes. How did a country once dubbed the "Switzerland of the Middle East" and whose capital Beirut was called the "Paris of the Middle East" - wind up in financial free-fall, becoming one of the most impoverished nations in the region?

The crisis did not happen over only a few years, but is the result of several decades of economic mismanagement. After the 1975-1990 civil war, the government began borrowing and accumulating debt without having a clear and credible path to pay off what it owed. Excessive borrowing continuously exceeded Lebanon's economic growth rate. As debt grew disproportionate

tionately to the rise in gross domestic product, and as the compounding impact of interest rates made the situation more dire, Lebanon had to spend more of its revenues servicing its debt. Almost half of its earnings on average were spent on interest payments. As a result, without structural reform, it was inevitable the government would default on its debt at some point. And that is what occurred in 2020, when Lebanon defaulted on a \$1.2 billion Eurobond - the first state default in the country's history. In addition, the Lebanese pound had been pegged to the dollar at 1,500 for more than two decades, making the country partially dependent on dollar reserves. In order to attract money and fund its spending, banks began offering very high interest rates for new deposits of dollars. That started in 1993 when the central bank, Banque du Liban, which was previously led by former Merrill Lynch banker Riad

Salameh, introduced the policy of “financial engineering,” offering very high returns to increase deposits of new dollars in banks.

This kind of policy might have been productive in the short term if the country quickly delivered major structural and economic reforms. But these were never carried out, and Lebanon's debt continued to surge, becoming one of the highest in the world. The government's debt-to-GDP ratio reached 178 percent by the end of 2019, making it the world's third most indebted country by this measurement. Furthermore, these factors led to fewer people being willing to deposit dollars in banks, and as foreign currency inflows slowed, the pound began to lose value. The trade deficit - much higher amounts of imports in comparison to exports - also contributed to the depreciation of the Lebanese pound. Instead of addressing the underlying

issues, the central bank continued to borrow more. A combination of several of these factors created a public panic, as more people rushed to withdraw their savings from banks; banks ran out of cash and shut their doors. In 2021, the Lebanese pound, officially pegged at 1,500 to the dollar, was trading at a street rate of about 23,000. Two years later, the figure was almost 100,000 to the dollar. With the economic situation worsening, Lebanese people have become increasingly disaffected with the political establishment, as they witness on a daily basis how financial mismanagement, lack of united leadership, corruption and currency devaluation have blighted their lives and living standards.

Hyperinflation and the plunging Lebanese pound have significantly affected people's purchasing power. A report by the humanitarian research group Reliefweb in

March 2023 said that “82 percent of the Lebanese population live in multidimensional poverty, while social assistance programs are almost nonexistent. Many households in the poorest areas of the country survive without electricity or heating; families lack food, which forces them to reduce their meals to two a day.” More than 1 million Lebanese children have dropped out of school since October 2019, according to the UN. And, for many people, access to electricity and the internet is becoming increasingly difficult. To compound an already volatile situation, the Beirut port blast in August 2020 - one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history - killed over 200 people and injured thousands, destroyed several neighborhoods in the capital, and resulted in billions of dollars of damage. Lebanon needs a completely different approach and a new beginning, which means Beirut cannot continue with the same

monetary and fiscal policies. The country has no other option but to deliver major structural reforms in its banking and financial system, as well as its political establishment. Ernesto Ramirez Rigo, head of the International Monetary Fund mission to Lebanon, warned that if the country's leaders fail to carry out reforms, and keep permitting the “disorderly adjustment” of the economy to persist, Lebanon will be left dependent on handouts from the international community. “Very little investment will come to the economy and to the new sectors that Lebanon needs to develop,” he said. In a nutshell, decades of economic mismanagement have brought the “Switzerland of the Middle East” to the brink of financial meltdown, impoverishment and economic collapse. Lebanon needs a fresh start, which means delivering major structural reforms in its banking and financial system, as well as its political establishment.

The coming BRICS currency diversification

Dan Steinbock

THE pressure toward the diversification of world currency reserves is longstanding. It intensified after 2008, but has escalated since 2022. It is a prime topic in the next BRICS Summit that's likely to further intensify the trend. In 2016, US Treasury Secretary Jack Lew cautioned that "the more we condition the use of the dollar and our financial system on adherence to US foreign policy, the more the risk of migration to other currencies and other financial systems in the medium-term grows."

Both the Trump and Biden administrations have ignored Lew's warning. One consequence has been the Global South's rising interest in the BRICS, which will have its next, highly-anticipated summit in South Africa in late August. A key topic in Johannesburg will be the BRICS quest to develop alternative payment systems to US dollar. In May - oddly, amid the US banking crisis - economist Paul Krugman attributed the "de-dollarization" brouhaha to crypto-cultists and Putin's sympathizers, as if the trend was nothing but a misguided anti-patriotic melee. However, as Krugman noted, much of world trade remains invoiced and settled in US dollars; many banks based outside the United States nonetheless offer dollar-denominated deposits; many non-US corporations borrow in dollars; central banks hold a large share of their reserves in dollar assets; and so on. The assumption was that, a bit like diamond, US dollar is forever. In reality, no dominant reserve currency has had an indefinite life-span.

What Krugman failed to understand is that it is precisely the current coercive monopoly of the US dollar - the world's disproportionate dependency on US dollar in trade invoicing and settlement, and the dollar reliance by non-US corporate and financial giants, and dollar's high share in central banks' reserves - that increasingly worries not just the Global South, but an increasing number of major economies in the West. When the dollar is weaponized by the US

foreign policy in the name of international community but without the broad support of international consensus, it puts trade invoicing and settlement, foreign corporates, financials and central bank reserves at risk. True, recently US Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen said there's still no alternative to the dollar-based monetary system. Then again, not so long ago, she also warned about a catastrophic scenario if Washington failed to agree on a (still another) new debt limit. Similarly, the British, too, touted the blessings of their sterling pound until 1914. But that primacy ended with the overstretch of the UK economy after 1945. The early 21st century has its unique characteristics, but it won't be that different.

How is the BRICS contributing to diversification? Thanks to its organizational flexibility, the bloc makes possible unilateral, bilateral and multilateral measures. Analytically, these range from gradual reforms to more unilateral individual measures. These, in turn, are driven by the original BRICS founder economies (Brazil, Russia, India and China), the new aspiring members and the coalition partners who share its vision and are considering membership as well. Some 22 countries have formally applied to join the group, while an equal number of states "have been informally asking about becoming BRICS members," according to Anil Sooklal, South Africa's ambassador-at-large responsible for ties with Asia and the BRICS. Reportedly, countries looking to join the bloc include Argentina, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Indeed, the rising number of populous and large emerging economies make possible the kind of "network effects" and "positive spillovers" that will be critical to launch the new critical infrastructure for the proposed alternative global financial system. However, what the BRICS offer is not simple de-dollarization. The goal is not to eliminate the dollar, which is typically the depiction by the critics and politi-

cal adversaries of the BRICS, particularly in the West. At the eve of the Ukraine conflict, Atlantic Council characterized Russia and China as "partners in de-dollarization." That, in turn, was portrayed as "an alternative to the US-dominated SWIFT" [the currently dominant payment system]. Touted widely in the West, the cooperation of Russia and China is understood as a de jure alliance, and de-dollarization as a ploy for dollar substitution.

The realities are a bit less scandalous and more nuanced. The BRICS have little to do with rogue states seeking covertly to subvert international order. Rather, like asset managers who seek to maintain appropriate diversification in their portfolios, the BRICS' strategic objective is diversify and recalibrate rather than simple de-dollarization. The skeptics say that the dollar has been buried many times before. Why should it die this time? But who says it would have to die. The more, the merrier. Most BRICS economies still rely significantly on the US dollar, whereas those that have been sanctioned by the US and/or its allies have significantly reduced their dollar reserves, often opting for gold instead. What the major BRIC economies seek for is a more diversified global currency regime. The present path is untenable. If it is not remedied gradually and over time, it will change through a major world crisis, disruptively. The BRICS goal is not to replace the dollar. Rather, it is to diversify the monetary system so that it would better reflect today's world economy.

In historical view, it's far from a new idea. John Maynard Keynes made a similar argument for the proposed supra-national currency *bancor* (the name was inspired by the French *banque*, "bank gold") in Bretton Woods in 1944. But the idea was torpedoed by the US negotiators, who wanted to replace the UK pound with the dollar as the world's major reserve currency. However, Keynes cautioned that the dollar primacy

would result in great uncertainty and volatility following the reconstruction and recovery of Western Europe and other major economies. That's what ensued in 1971, when President Nixon ended unilaterally the convertibility of the dollar to gold. Though introduced as a temporary measure, it made US dollar a permanently floating fiat money. As gold no longer offered a yardstick for value, the perception of value replaced value itself. The consequent price shock reverberated across the world. With the twin oil crises, it was followed by the quadrupling of oil prices, then runaway inflation and stagflation, and eventually record-high US interest rates and massive rearmament drives.

In geopolitics, the US has continued to lean on major Western economies and Japan, but in international economy it refused to renounce the exorbitant privilege. As a net consequence, the dollar monopoly contributed to asset bubbles in the 1980s, early '90s, early 2000s and finally in 2008. Amid the Great Recession, China's central bank governor Zhou Xiaochuan revived the idea and urged major Western economies to "reform the international monetary system." Great pledges were made in Brussels, Washington and Tokyo, but nothing much happened. Hence, the efforts at complementary development institutions and critical infrastructure, including the BRICS New Development Bank (NBD), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Bridge and Road Initiative (BRICS), and the quest for new currency arrangements. The BRICS do not want to subvert the world order. Rather, they seek to foster one vis-à-vis diversification. Nonetheless, global currency arrangements must not just the interests of Americans who account for 4.1 percent of the world population. It must also reflect the aspirations of the multipolar world economy in which global growth prospects are driven by the large emerging economies.

The China Daily

China and Russia have achieved naval success off Alaska

Tom Sharpe

TWO days ago, eleven Russian and Chinese warships came together off the coast of Alaska in the largest gathering of its kind yet seen. The US Navy sent four destroyers in their direction as a response. All these ships have now dispersed, seemingly with no up-close interaction. There have been similar occurrences previously.

Not too long ago I commanded the Royal Navy's standby warship tasked with responding to events such as this if they happened in UK waters (they did) and so I have been involved in similar occurrences. Basically there are two reasons why navies gather and operate together like this, both simple - to influence (task one) and to prepare to fight (task two).

Task one, Naval Influence, covers a vast range of activities that take place around the clock around the world and often unseen. Activities range from patrol vessels visiting ports in the Indo-Pacific, to frigates escorting Russian warships as they transit the Channel, to signalling the Argentinians that a nuclear-powered attack submarine is on its way, to sitting an aircraft carrier off someone's coast. There are many others but 'we have this and we're not afraid to use it' is the gist of it, a messaging activity that navies spend a lot of their time on. In this recent instance, the Chinese and Russian message to friend and foe alike was, 'we can operate together, far from home and with impunity'. Is that provocation in itself? Not really, and besides, it's the same message the Royal Navy's carrier strike group gave during its 2021 deployment to the Indo-Pacific, and the same message US warships send all the time.

Task two is more interesting - preparing for what happens when task one fails. Operating warships together is much harder than Hollywood would have you believe and needs constant practice. Gathering in one place in formation for a photo is one thing: learning how to fight together is something else entirely. The network required to make ships capable of fighting together extends well beyond the platforms themselves. Intelligence systems, logistics, communications, orders, rules of engagement, all require a high degree of commonality and understanding to work.

Nato ships have an advantage here as by and large they all operate using the same rule books but even then it can take days to get everyone on the same communications circuits and

operating from the same picture. The first week of the multinational maritime exercise held off Scotland twice a year is called the Integration Phase for a reason - and these are countries that operate warships together all the time. If you do work with someone where these things don't mesh as easily, things get complicated quickly. In 2007, HMS Ark Royal sailed from Portsmouth in company with two Chinese naval vessels; the guided missile destroyer Guangzhou and the supply ship Weishanhu. The aim was to conduct a search and rescue exercise. In the end, a formation photo is just about all we could manage. Totally different languages, doctrines and communications systems.

This latest meeting of the Chinese and Russian navies delivered both tasks. My assessment is 80/20 in favour of Influence - here we are talking about it, we have been influenced by the deployment. It will take a lot more practice for China and Russia to be able to fight together, but it's a start. The other thing this deployment has done is highlight the strategic importance of Alaska, this vast state purchased by the US from the Russians in 1898 for 7.2 million dollars and only 50 miles from Russian territory even today. Alaska gives the US its foothold in the High North, a part of the world where conflict at some point feels inevitable despite Nato's increasing strength there: every Arctic nation except Russia will soon be in Nato. It's rich in oil and gas and 29 per cent of Alaska is covered by glaciers. The Aleutian Islands, stretching some 1200 miles out to the west, are home to the Cobra Dane radar station, the US's first line of defence against ballistic missile attack. Though Alaska's population density is such that if it was Manhattan there would be just 16 people there, it is nonetheless one of the most populated places in the High North. Alaska matters.

The Aleutian islands are relevant here as the Chinese-Russian gathering took place near them rather than mainland Alaska. Legally, the implications are the same: as a practical matter they are not. If the Isles of Scilly stretched halfway across the Atlantic, our response to Russian warships operating there would be different to them anchoring in the Moray Firth. But what is the right response? The US Navy sent four destroyers this time - which has been met with general approval. The decision to send a single

coastguard cutter last September to intercept seven Russian and Chinese warships was not. The appropriate level of response is a hard one as it entirely depends on your philosophical stance. In 2016, conversations in the British Ministry of Defence around the Russian carrier Kuznetsov heading home through the Channel ranged from 'let it go - don't stoke their propaganda machine' to 'let's get everything out of the door and give them a show of strength'. Where you personally sit on this continuum will determine what you think is the right response. Often these philosophical debates resolve themselves when they meet the cold reality of available resources. In this case, the US Navy having four destroyers available for short notice retasking is impressive. Also, it's not all about navy vs navy - having the intelligence, surveillance apparatus and aircraft in place to detect and track ships and then message to say you are doing both, is just as important.

That the Russians and Chinese are increasing the regularity of these meet-ups is of note when one considers their strategic relationship more generally. Eyes are inevitably drawn to Taiwan when talk of conflict with China comes up but what does any of this mean in the High North or the Middle East, which offers scope for some disagreement between the two in recent months? Will this cooperation alter their discussions about Ukraine? As ever with joint exercises, conversations reach much deeper than just the ships. And when these questions are answered, will the US military change its posture in Alaska? There are nine US bases there but none belong to the Navy or Marines. The USN has two icebreakers. Russia has fifty-four. Should USN surface combatants operate there more often? Any such move will mean resources inevitably have to be taken from elsewhere, but to me this sort of practical discussion is more interesting than breathless talk of incursions and invasions. Surface warships meeting and operating with allies is as old as navies, as is exercising one's legal right to operate on the High Seas. Such deployments influence friends and deter adversaries, and then affords precious opportunities to learn how to fight together if that fails. My assessment is that Russia and China still have a way to go in this regard. More interesting will be to track what this means to their political relationship and what it means to US operating posture in that part of the world.

Prosecutor sought Trump twitter information in secret search warrant

Ken Bredemeier

JUSTICE Department special counsel Jack Smith obtained a secret search warrant last January for information from former US President Donald Trump's Twitter account, court records showed Wednesday. A judge fined the social media company \$350,000 for failing to quickly comply. Trump spent almost the entirety of his four-year term in the White House posting thousands of Twitter comments, although it was unclear exactly what information Smith was seeking with the search warrant.

The Twitter comments were already public, with Trump often using social media account to vilify his political opponents and others he disagreed with. He also alerted his supporters about political rallies, such as the one near the White House on January 6, 2021, just ahead of the riot at the US Capitol staged by his supporters trying to block lawmakers from certifying Democrat Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election. In a lead-up to the rally that day, Trump had used Twitter in December to urge supporters to come to Washington, saying, January 6 "will be wild."

Smith has twice indicted Trump. Last week in Washington the former president was accused of illegally conspiring to upend his reelection loss. Earlier in Florida, he was accused of hoarding highly classified national security documents at his Mar-a-

Lago estate and conspiring to keep from turning them over to federal investigators.

Trump has said he is innocent of all wrongdoing in the various criminal investigations he is facing and portrayed them as politically motivated. He is far and away leading national polls of Republicans for the party's 2024 presidential nomination. Obtaining data from Twitter, now renamed X, could have shown patterns about Trump's use of the account, whether others had access to it and whether he might have written draft statements that he left unposted. Trump was banned from Twitter after the January 6 rampage into the Capitol. But last November, new Twitter owner Elon Musk reinstated Trump's ability to post comments. Since then, however, Trump has yet to post comments on the platform, preferring to offer his views, often to assail Smith and others investigating him, on Truth Social, the social media site he co-owns. Twitter initially resisted complying with the January search warrant, resulting in a federal judge holding the company in contempt and fining it \$350,000.

A federal court of appeals in Washington upheld the fine last month, and on Wednesday released its opinion in the case. "Although Twitter ultimately complied with the warrant, the company did

not fully produce the requested information until three days after a court-ordered deadline," according to the 34-page opinion by a three-judge appellate court panel in Washington. "The district court thus held Twitter in contempt and imposed a \$350,000 sanction for its delay." Twitter's fight with Smith's prosecutors about disclosing details about Trump's Twitter postings stemmed from the prosecutors' request for a "nondisclosure order" that prohibited Twitter from alerting Trump about the warrant's existence. The appellate court noted that US District Judge Beryl Howell "found probable cause" to search the Twitter account for evidence of criminal offenses. Moreover, the district court found that there were "reasonable grounds to believe" that disclosing the warrant to former President Trump "would seriously jeopardize the ongoing investigation" by giving him "an opportunity to destroy evidence, change patterns of behavior, [or] notify confederates." Twitter argued the order violated Trump's constitutional right of free speech, but the appeals court upheld Howell's decision. It said that disclosing the warrant to Trump would have jeopardized Smith's ongoing criminal investigation. The appellate court said that the "whole point of the nondisclosure order was to avoid tipping off the former president about the warrant's existence."

VOA

After Brexit, desperate Tories needed a new crusade

Polly Toynbee

THE drumbeats get louder as the call of the wild pulses through the blood of the Conservative party again. The front page of the Telegraph on Thursday splashes, "Cabinet call on PM to ditch ECHR". On their headcount, a third of the British cabinet want to join Russia and Belarus as pariah states outside the European convention on human rights.

Downing Street says no, but others report the prime minister wavering. This is exactly how Brexit happened - and that's the spirit the Braverman tendency hopes to reprise, with all the nativism, the xenophobia, the British "sovereignty" phantasm and even talk of another referendum, which could slice the country into two broken halves. They imagine this could save their party, or at least their own seats, at the next election. Alarmingly, Steve Reed, the shadow justice secretary, tells me Labour's focus groups suggest that many at first back the idea, after years of bogus stories from the Tories and their press. Those human rights myths last for ever in the public memory. Remember Theresa May, as home secretary, claiming a Bolivian national's wish to stay with his cat prevented his deportation by upholding his human right to a family life? It concerned his permanent relationship with his partner, not his cat. Kenneth Clarke,

then justice secretary, protested the use of such "laughable and childlike" examples: he didn't last long in the job.

Showing how far the Tory party has travelled rightwards, Clarke was expelled from the party in 2019 for supporting attempts to avoid a no-deal Brexit, and May - of the "go home or face arrest" - is now treated as a "moderate". The disgusting rabble-rousing language of Lee Anderson, with his "Fuck off back to France" comment, is now the party's acceptable idiom - approved by the justice secretary, Alex Chalk, as no more than "salty". Chalk, remember, is the "moderate" replacing the thugish tones of Dominic Raab. Once people hear the consequences of leaving the ECHR or abolishing the Human Rights Act (which incorporates the ECHR into domestic law), they change their minds, says Reed, who is confident Labour will see off this threat. Keir Starmer's reputation is built on his work as a human rights lawyer, which explains the Tory hailstorm of attacks on "lefty lawyers" undermining the "will of the people" by upholding the law. What sways people? Concrete cases showing the good done by human rights legislation, says Reed, citing focus group research. It was through such legislation that justice for Hillsborough families was won. It's

how "do not resuscitate" orders attached to elderly patients without their consent were removed. The human rights of victims of John Worboys, the black-cab rapist, were upheld when the Met Police were challenged for failing to investigate properly.

Support for the ECHR gains traction when people see the practical importance of it. It was Winston Churchill who promoted the ECHR as a never-again protection against the horrors of the second world war, with Britain persuading others to join. Watching the illegal invasion of Ukraine, why side with Russia as the democratic world unites against this violation? If Britain quit the ECHR, it would lose whatever moral authority it wields in the world; it would be left speechless in the face of China's draconian treatment of the Uyghurs, Saudi Arabia's allegedly state-ordered murder of a journalist, or the Taliban's crushing of women. The EU withdrawal agreement depends on staying in the ECHR, so leaving would mean losing all cooperation on crime, terror and people smuggling, in a world where only international collaboration keeps people safe. In Northern Ireland, the consequences would be dire: the Good Friday agreement is contingent on belonging to the ECHR: withdrawing would breach an international agreement, its

terms guaranteed by Ireland and monitored by a caucus in the US congress. Any chance of a trade deal with the US would vanish. Those overwhelming arguments win the day - once they get a hearing. But we have learned the hard way from the Brexit referendum that reason and facts are easily blown away by the breathtaking mendacity and downright dishonesty of the right.

The Tories are divided on this, with Bob Neill, who chairs the justice committee, saying that leaving would be "a completely foolish idea and absolutely wrong". But No 10 is hardly vociferous in defence of human rights. David Cameron thought he could beat Brexiters, whom he called "fruitcakes", but he gave in time and again, putting that referendum into the manifesto to appease them. If Rishi Sunak does that, it's likely to stay as Tory policy after an election defeat, waiting for the day they return to power. This could indeed become the great election tool that Sunak seeks, but he may find its effect catastrophic. After Brexit, so many recognise the damage it has done that this could become the single issue that galvanises all those moderate Tories, all those middle-ground people and all on the left who balk at Labour's caution, to get out there and ensure Britain never again commits such an act of self-sabotage.

The Guardian

Emma Brockes

IT seems a long time ago, but there was a brief period, after Joe Biden's inauguration and before the 6 January hearings and the start of campaigning for next year's presidential election, when it was possible to avoid Donald Trump for days at a time. He was still there, obviously, wandering the corridors at Mar-a-Lago, Gloria Swanson-style, and posting screeds to Truth Social. But there was no real reason to think about him and, for that short period, he was returned to his essential state: just another person posting unhinged rants online.

This is not where Trump is now - in the US, at least. Thanks to a raft of legal actions, culminating earlier this month in the justice department's arraignment of the former president for allegedly trying to overturn the 2020 election result, Trump is not only front and centre every day, but in danger of ascending to a new position in the news cycle: political martyr and victim of a witch-hunt. Given the preposterousness of the events leading up to this moment - only recently, a jury found Trump liable for defamation and sexual abuse - it seems inevitable we should find ourselves here.

Trump, of course, is keenly aware of the potential in his superficially dire situation and has already leaned fully into it. In campaign stops across the US, and with the threat of jail hanging over him, he is doing the thing we know from experience to be the man's absolute forte: siphoning the heat and energy from any given charge against him and refracting it back on his enemies. "They want to silence me because I will never let them silence you," he told a crowd in New Hampshire on Tuesday. As the New York Times pointed out this week, his new campaign message for the 2024 election is: "I'm being indicted for you". (A woman at the New Hampshire event told the reporter, nonsensically but with heart: "What, am I next?") It is an exceedingly weird and insoluble problem. From experience we know that the only blows that land on Trump are either ridicule - recall his face when Obama mocked him, all those years ago, during the White House correspondents' dinner - or ignoring him. Of the two, only the latter really promises results. In the shocked days after Trump's election in 2016, I recall that Obama's moment of mockery

was singled out as an example of precisely the kind of leftwing self-indulgence that dislodged the first pebble in Trump's psychology, and ended in his run for the White House. It is a mistake to take the man seriously; indicting him on four criminal counts of allegedly attempting to overturn a democratic election is the very definition of taking someone seriously. And yet, in a functioning democracy, how on earth might one let this pass?

As such, the unfolding of the latest and most serious legal action against Trump highlights a stark divide between the political and judicial rationales for pursuing him. As has already been observed, Trump is on exceedingly thin ice with Moxila A Upadhyaya, the judge who set the terms of his conditions for release pending trial. In the last week, Trump posted what might be construed as vague threats in the direction of a prospective juror ("If you go after me, I'm coming after you!"), raising the possibility of a scenario in which he is yanked to jail and campaigns for the presidency from his cell. There is, in the current climate in the US, nothing pleasing about this image. In fact, with every pass-

ing day, and with a perversity no amount of exposure to Trump can ever quite normalise, Trump in jail seems like the worst possible outcome. Campaigning from a prison cell would lend Trump a righteousness exceeding even his present grandiose narrative, and widen the sweep of his supporters by offering them a wildly romantic and dramatic cause to join.

What remains so hard to grapple with is that in spite of the deadly seriousness of the events that got us here - it is easy to forget, sometimes, that people died on 6 January - as ever with Trump, one senses the wink behind every gesture.

When he tells supporters, as he did in March, "I am your retribution", his language is like a biblical script with Mel Gibson behind it, a hokey narrative that serves two purposes: it offers a genuine cause for aggrieved supporters to latch on to and, simultaneously, it extends an invitation to join him in a cosmic joke against everyone else. One imagines Trump in jail, his demeanour unchanged, which is to say that of an after-dinner host, smirking and shrugging and rolling his eyes as he says: "I'm like Jesus Christ at this point."



Malaysian team visits KCCI for B2B meetings

KARACHI (PPI): An 18-member Malaysian delegation led by Chairman Pakistan Malaysia Business Council Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazir bin Meraslam visited the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) to hold Business-to-Business meetings with their counterparts in Karachi.

Consul General of Malaysia Herman Hardynata Bin Ahmad, President KCCI Mohammed Tariq Yousuf, Senior Vice President Touseef Ahmed, Vice President Mohammad Haris Agar, Chairman Diplomatic Missions & Embassies Liaison Subcommittee Zia ul Arfeen, Former President Majyd Aziz, Managing Committee Members and businessmen mostly from food processing, commodities, cosmetics, chemicals and other sectors were also present on the occasion.

President KCCI Mohammed Tariq Yousuf, while warmly welcoming the members of members of Malaysian delegation,

hoped that today's B2B meeting with Malaysian businessmen would yield positive results in improving the existing trade ties between the two countries which have been on a descending note since quite some time now. "I hope that our Malaysian brothers and sisters will be able to find good partners and generate long term trade relations with Malaysia."

Highlighting various commodities and products being exported to Malaysia and some other countries, he said that most of these products have witnessed negative growth which needs to be given special attention so that the trade of all such commodities turn positive from negative growth.

He noted that Pakistan's exports to Malaysia declined to US\$299 million in 2023 as compared to US\$423 million in 2022 whereas the imports from Malaysia, during the same period, also depreciated to Rs1.51 billion to US\$1.02 billion.

He was of the opinion that Pakistan imports more and exports less to Malaysia but this can be tackled by exploring avenues for enhancing exports of rice, meat, spices, livestock, dairy products and confectionary items etc.

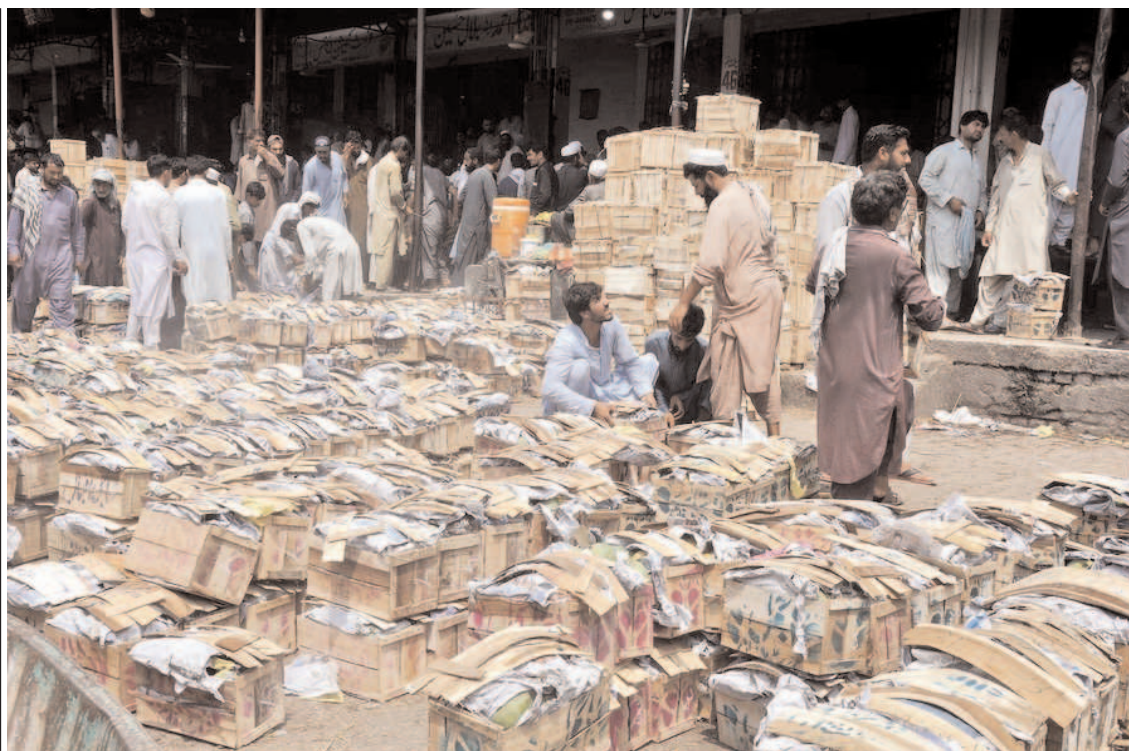
He stressed the need to effectively deal with all the trade barriers which have been hindering smooth trade between the two brotherly countries since long. "These trade barriers are responsible for keeping the trade volume limited even in presence of FTA which also needs to be upgraded."

He was fairly optimistic that trade between Pakistan and Malaysia could improve to a satisfactory level but it would require serious efforts and enhanced interactions between the business communities of the two countries.

Consul General of Malaysia Herman Hardynata Bin Ahmad, in his short remarks, appreciated Karachi Chamber for

organizing B2B meeting with Malaysia delegation which was here in Karachi to attend 1st International Food & Agriculture Exhibition. He hoped that today's meeting with the business community of Karachi Chamber would result in multiplying the existing trade volume between the two countries.

Former President KCCI Majyd Aziz, in his remarks, mentioned that due to foreign exchange crunch being faced by Pakistan, trade with several countries has been switched to barter trade wherein commodities were being exchanged. "Pakistan and Malaysia must also look into the possibility of having a similar barter agreement which would certainly help in advancing the existing trade volume", he said, adding that both brotherly countries can also look into the possibility of having currency swap agreement which would also prove favorable for both the economies.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers display fruit boxes at fruit and vegetable markets.

SECP warns public against investing in fraudulent schemes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has warned the public against investing in fraudulent schemes with unrealistic incentives and promises of profits.

In a press statement on Saturday, the SECP clarified that company registration does not authorize soliciting deposits or offering investment schemes.

It has been observed that a company, namely "M/s Anees Ahmed Enterprises (SMC-Private) Limited and AA Enterprises & Investments," is offering various fraudulent deposit/ investment schemes to the public by promising them unrealistic monthly returns through social media and digital pages.

The said company is using its registration status with SECP to win public confidence. The general public is once again informed that the "Certificate of Incorporation" of a company merely confirms its registration with SECP and does not allow the company to raise deposits or launch investment schemes.

The SECP hereby WARNS THE PUBLIC NOT TO deposit or invest funds with M/s Anees Ahmed Enterprises (SMC-Private) Limited, AA Enterprises & Investments, and AA Enterprises under any arrangement, as these entities are not allowed to accept deposits/ investments from anyone.

The SECP has initiated proceedings against Anees Ahmed and his entities, which include closing down their operations, disqualifying Mr. Anees Ahmed, imposing penalties, and referring the matter to relevant investigation authorities.

Gold falls on higher PPI data

CHICAGO (Xinhua/APP): Gold futures on the COMEX division of the New York Mercantile Exchange fell on Friday on slightly higher than expected rise in US producer price index (PPI).

The most active gold contract for December delivery fell 2.30 US dollars, or 0.12 percent, to close at 1,946.60 dollars per ounce.

The US Labor Department reported Friday that US PPI, a measure of inflation before hitting consumers, rose 0.3 percent in July month on month and 0.8 percent year on year, following a 0.2-percent year-on-year increase in June, the lowest annual rise since August 2020.

Market analysts hold that US wholesale prices rise in July still reflects an overall easing inflation trend.

Secretary Industries inaugurates TEVTA Job Fair

SIALKOT (APP): The Secretary Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skill Development Department Punjab Ehsan Bhutta inaugurated 'TEVTA Job Fair' at a local hotel at Paris Road, with the theme of 'Economic Empowerment for All', here on Saturday.

He said Sialkot and Gujranwala were lifeline of Pakistan's industries. He said with the growth of industries, the demand for skilled labour had increased. He said after matriculation, 70 per cent of youth did not get further education. However, they also fail to get any jobs for lack of any skills, he added.

The secretary said the Industries Department had launched formal courses called 'Summer Skills Programme for School and Higher Secondary School Students' this year. By widening the scope, steps were being taken to provide

normal education to special children, prisoners, beggars and people suffering from drug-addiction, he added.

Secretary Ehsan Bhutta said the aim of the 'Job Fair' was to offer internship in industries to children who have done technical courses, so that their skills could be improved and the market demand could be evaluated.

He said under the Punjab Employment Scheme of the Punjab Industries Corporation, Rs 10 lakh loan was being given on personal guarantee to the graduate students, getting diplomas from technical institutes at only 4pc markup. He hoped that more than 200 children would get jobs in industries from the 'Job Fair'.

Deputy Commissioner Sialkot Adnan Mehmood Awan said skills, provided by the institutions, and the skills required in the industries were a mismatch.

There was a need for institutions to provide skills to children keeping in mind the market needs, he added. He said that job fairs should be organised regularly. He directed the visitors to the job fair to focus on IT based e-commerce and freelancing.

President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Chairman AIR SIAL Limited Fazal Jilani and Director General OPS ii Aamir Aziz and representatives of more than 40 industries were also present.

The SCCI president appreciated the Technical & Vocational Education Training Authority (TEVTA) management for successfully organising the job fair. He also had a discussion with the industries secretary and TEVTA Chairperson Ehsan Bhutta on issues related to the industry.

Flag hoisting ceremony held at ICCI to celebrate 'Independence Day'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) organized a flag-hoisting and cake-cutting ceremony to celebrate the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan. A large number of the business community attended the ceremony, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, President of ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan was achieved after making great sacrifices and we have to work hard as a nation to make it a progressive and welfare state.

He said, "Pakistan has faced many ups and downs during the last 76 years and we have to work on the principles of unity, faith and discipline advocated by Quaid-e-Azam to make Pakistan a strong economy of the region."

He reiterated that the business community would fully support the government in its endeavours to put the economy on the path of sustainable growth.

He stressed for the elimination of extremism and terrorism to make Pakistan an attractive destination for investors. Senior Vice President of ICCI Faad Waheed said that we as a nation should promote Made in Pakistan.

He further said, "Promoting ease of doing business and creating a conducive environment is the key requirement to steer the economy out of current challenges."

Engineer Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said, "Pakistan is endowed with a lot of natural resources and urged the government to cooperate with the private sector in exploiting them in order to

transform the country into a rising economy."

Khalid Iqbal Malik, ICCI Group Leader said that the youth should be properly educated about the sacrifices, which were made for the creation of Pakistan.

He said that we should learn from past mistakes and make all possible efforts for a brighter future for Pakistan.

Former President of ICCI and Secretary General UBG Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan was created by making a lot of sacrifices and every person in the nation has to play a role in its better development.

He said, "The 76th Independence Day of Pakistan reminds us that we as a nation should work hard with honesty and dedication to make Pakistan a progressive and prosperous economy."

China's railway investment grows 7%

BEIJING (APP): China's fixed asset investment in railways hit 371.3 billion yuan (about 51.9 billion US dollars) in the first seven months of 2023, representing a 7 percent increase compared to the same period last year, data from the China State Railway Group Co., Ltd. showed.

The company revealed that in the previous month, the completion of renovation projects on some railways has both eased travel for passengers and boosted transport capacity and efficiency, particularly in the country's western region.

For instance, the upgrade project for the Xining-Golmud section of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway allowed 160 km/h bullet trains to operate, easing passengers' travel to Golmud and Delingha, hot travel spots in Qinghai Province in northwest China.

An upgrade project at the Lanzhou-Xining sec-

tion of the Lanzhou-Urumqi High-speed Railway allowed the operation of 250 km/h trains, cutting travel time between Lanzhou, capital of northwest China's Gansu Province, and Xining, capital of the neighboring Qinghai Province, to as short as 59 minutes.

The company said that construction work on multiple new railway projects has been progressing smoothly since the start of this year, and some key projects achieved milestones in the construction process.

In July, the nation's railways recorded 406 million passenger trips. During the month, 10,169 trains were operating daily, up 14.2 percent compared to the same period in 2019, according to the company.

Chinese lenders ramp up credit support for disaster-affected businesses: China's large state-owned commercial banks have

strengthened the credit support for business entities in disaster-stricken areas.

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China has ramped up efforts to support key groups such as small and micro-sized companies, planting and breeding enterprises, individual businesses, and rural households. Priority will be given to ensuring credit needs for stable agricultural production and water conservancy facilities for farmland in disaster-hit areas, said the Agricultural Bank of China.

The major state-owned commercial banks will also increase investment and financing support for transportation, municipal, and other fields, to help post-disaster reconstruction.

More efforts will be made to ensure cash operation and emergency allocation of disaster relief funds and enhance liquidity support for banks in disaster-stricken areas.

Empowering unsung heroes:

SLI donates for establishment of cafe run by trainees of KVTC

E.P. Report

KARACHI: The Karachi Vocational Training Centre (KVTC) and State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC) have collaborated to operation of Pakistan's first-ever café exclusively run by the differently able trainees of KVTC. The groundbreaking ceremony held at KVTC marked the commencement of an extraordinary project that will empower differently-abled individuals, showcasing the embodiment of their abilities.

The newly announced Café KHUDEE sponsored by State Life Insurance Corporation will serve as a remarkable space, where people can experience the true essence of empowerment, witnessed through the inspiring journey of individuals who have triumphed over challenges and defied stereotypes. With a strong commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, the café will provide equal opportunities to both genders, bridging the gap between differently-abled graduates of KVTC and mainstream society in Pakistan.

While giving the welcome note, Prof. Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah, Joint Secretary of KVTC and CEO of Dr. Essa

Laboratory & Diagnostic Centre said, "We are honored to welcome you all to this momentous occasion, celebrating the inauguration of Pakistan's first Café, a testament to inclusivity and empowerment. With immense gratitude, we extend our thanks to the State Life Insurance Corp. of Pakistan for their generous sponsorship. Together, let us pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future."

Shoaib Javed Hussain, Chairman of State Life Insurance commemorated the event and presented Sponsorship Cheque to Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, CEO of KVTC. At the event, Shoaib Javed said, "This collaboration reflects State Life's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and our mission to promote inclusivity within all sectors of society. By prioritizing partnerships with the unsung heroes of our community, SLIC is proud to support unique initiatives that create an ecosystem where the skills and talents of differently abled children and people are celebrated and come to life."

Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, CEO of KVTC, expressed his deep appreciation for the collaboration with State Life Insurance

and the vision behind Café KHUDEE. He remarked, "Today is a landmark day for KVTC, as we unite to celebrate the incredible potential of our differently-abled students. The Café KHUDEE project will be a transformative space where our trainees can showcase their talents, fostering a sense of independence and confidence as they embark on successful careers."

Senator Khan continued, "Our aim is to break down barriers and create an inclusive society that values diversity. This café will not only provide an exceptional culinary experience but will also serve as a platform for our graduates to integrate into mainstream society. It embodies our collective commitment to empowering our students to lead fulfilling, independent lives."

Dr. Akhtar Aziz, President of KVTC, delivered a thank-you note at the ceremony, "We extend heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, supporters, and the State Life Insurance Corp. of Pakistan for making this café project a reality. Your unwavering support empowers differently-abled trainees and brings us one step closer to a more inclusive society," he said.

The groundbreaking ceremony at KVTC was a testament to the power of col-

laboration and shared vision in uplifting local heroes and transforming lives. The Café KHUDEE initiative stands as a beacon of hope, symbolizing the remarkable potential within differently-abled individuals, now poised to shine brightly in Pakistan's mainstream society.

SLIC boilerplate: SLIC is the largest and the only AAA-rated Insurance Corporation in the country. As the leading insurer in Pakistan, SLIC extends the benefits of insurance to all sections of society and meets its commitment to policy holders and the nation. By ensuring the wellbeing and financial security of over 175 million Pakistanis, SLIC delivered the strongest business numbers in its history suggesting that it is the most successful State-owned enterprise in the country.

KVTC boilerplate: KVTC is a distinguished nonprofit vocational rehabilitation center in Karachi, Pakistan. Its mission revolves around empowering young individuals with special needs through comprehensive education, vocational skills training, and sports excellence. The school nurtures leadership abilities, shaping the future leaders of Pakistan under the banner "Qabil Hai Pakistan."

Stock markets end week mixed after US wholesale inflation rise

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Stock markets wavered the other day after US data showed bigger-than-expected rise in wholesale inflation and traders weighed the likelihood of more interest-rate hikes this year.

Wholesale prices in the United States picked up in July on a surge in services costs, according to government data released Friday.

The US markets ended the day mixed, with the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index falling 0.6 percent to end the week at 13,644.85.

While producer prices have come down rapidly since last year, progress has been slower in consumer inflation, leading to a mixed reaction in the financial markets.

"We had inflation data which came in higher than expected but the market was caught off guard because yesterday's (consumer) inflation data came

in lower than expected," Adam Sarhan from 50 Park Investments told AFP.

"So the market likes certainty and right now we are getting a lot of uncertainty with respect to inflation," he added.

European stocks ended the trading week firmly in the red, as did the Hang Seng and Shanghai composite indexes.

In Britain, better-than-expected growth data Friday increased the likelihood of more interest rates tightening by the Bank of England, briefly boosting the pound.

Gross domestic product grew 0.2 percent in the April to June period thanks to strong output in June and despite inflation remaining high, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

"Today's GDP data helps build on the idea that the UK could be on track for a soft-landing akin to that

currently being seen in the US," Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at Scope Markets, said.

"However, that soft-landing narrative also brings with it the potential for a more protracted period of tightening, with the Bank of England under no pressure to ease off on its current path of higher interest rates."

In the United States, consumer prices rose last month but by less than analysts expected, giving the Fed room to take a lighter touch with monetary policy after more than a year of rate hikes.

While there is a broad expectation that policymakers will hold off on lifting borrowing costs at next month's meeting, analysts say additional rate hikes this year are still on the table.

"The (inflation) data... keeps alive the possibility of a further possible hike

later in the year given the tightness in the labour market," said National Australia Bank's Tapas Strickland.

In Asian stock market trading, Hong Kong extended the week's losses Friday, even as e-commerce titan Alibaba surged on a forecast-busting rise in revenue.

Tokyo was closed for a public holiday.

Oil prices rose as the International Energy Agency hiked its forecast for global oil demand growth this year despite weakness in the Chinese economy.

"Oil prices have risen more than 20 percent since late June, buoyed by the actions of OPEC+ and the unilateral additional cuts by Saudi Arabia and Russia, both of which have been extended to September," Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at Oanda said in a statement.

SCCI hold ceremony to I-Day celebrations

SIALKOT (APP): A ceremony in connection with the 'Pakistan Independence Day' celebrations was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on the 76th Independence Day of Pakistan.

The session was arranged by SCCI Departmental Committee on Garrison HQ/ Cantonment Board Affairs, in collaboration with the Women

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) Sialkot. Committee head, Sheikh Zahid Hameed, chaired the session.

The event was attended by SCCI Vice President (VP) Amer Majeed Sheikh, WCCI Sialkot President Dr Mariam Nouman and members of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and the Women Chamber of

Commerce and Industry (WCCI) executive committee, and students of different schools, colleges and universities.

Dr Mariam Nouman, addressing the participants, said Aug 14 was the day when the nation remembers those who sacrificed their lives to protect independence of the country.

She said the day was

dawning with determination of Pakistani nation that the country would always stay on the map of the globe with the grace of Allah Almighty.

Amer Majeed Sheikh said the independent Pakistan was a blessing from Allah and now it is a responsibility of people of the country to make it strong and prosperous.

Abdul Shakoor Mirza



In brief

Army, Rangers to guard Asia Cricket Cup matches

LAHORE (PPI): The Punjab home department on Saturday approved the deployment of Pakistan Army and Rangers personnel to provide security during the Asia Cricket Cup matches, to be played between August 27 and September 6, as the sale of tickets for the mega event begins. Furthermore, helicopters will also hover over the stadiums to further beef up the security. Teams from Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka will participate in the tournament. All matches will be played in Lahore and Multan. On the other hand, online sale of tickets for matches of the event to be played in Pakistan will start today. In the first phase, tickets for the VIP and Premium enclosures of Lahore's Qaddafi Stadium and Multan Cricket Stadium will go on sale. On August 14, the country's 76th Independence Day, prices of tickets for the First Class and the General Enclosures will be announced. Tickets will also be available for both the stadiums' hospitality boxes for which people have been asked to dial 111227777.

Islamabad Green win Azadi Cup match

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Green downed Rawalpindi Green by 24 runs in the Women Azadi Cricket Cup at the Muslim Cricket ground, Saidpur Road, Rawalpindi. The match was organized by Shoaib Cricket Club as part of the Independence Day Celebrations. Islamabad team won the toss and elected to bat first. Islamabad scored 136 runs in the allotted 20 overs. Madhia Riyasat scored 52 runs while Sana Arooj scored 31 runs. For Rawalpindi Tanya Saeed bagged two wickets. In reply, Rawalpindi women were all out on 112 runs. Madhia was declared player of the match.

India beat West Indies by 9 wickets

LAUDERHILL (Agencies): India powered to an emphatic nine-wicket victory in their T20 international against the West Indies on Saturday thanks to a magnificent opening partnership from Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill as they levelled the five-match series at 2-2. West Indies set India a target of 179 to win, which looked challenging on a slow surface but the opening pair made short work of the task, rattling up 165 before Gill finally departed for 77 in the 16th over. Jaiswal, the 21-year-old left hander, ended unbeaten on 84 after some outstanding strokeplay, producing 11 fours and three sixes to the delight of the heavily pro-India crowd at the Broward County Stadium in South Florida. The series decided concludes at the USA's recognised international cricket venue on Sunday and India will now fancy their chances of a comeback from trailing 2-0. Shimron Hetmyer struck a lively 61 as West Indies recovered from a shaky start to reach 178-8. Arshdeep Singh had removed West Indies openers Kyle Mayers (17) and Brandon King (18) and fans bedecked in India's blue shirts, including supporters who had travelled from across the United States, were lapping it up as West Indies struggling to 57-4 with left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav picking up two wickets. But then Shai Hope steadied the innings with 45 from 29 balls before he holed out to Axar Patel off Yuzvendra Chahal.

Pakistan's Maria joins Saudi Arabia's Football Club

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan women's football team captain Maria Khan has been signed up by Saudi Arabia's Eastern Flames Football Club to support the Kingdom's national women's squad in the Saudi Women's Premier League this season, the club announced this week. The US-born Pakistani athlete, 31, was named the captain of the South Asian country's national women's team last year, leading her side at the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women Football Championship in Nepal. "Maria Khan has joined the ranks of the Eastern Flame FC," the club, also known as Shala Al-



Sharqiya, announced on messaging platform X. "The club's management contracted with the first foreign female professional to support the ranks of the [Saudi] women's football team in the Women's Premier League for this season."

According to the official website of Eastern Flames FC, it is the first Saudi women's football team, which was established in 2006 and has remained the champion of the Kingdom's Eastern Province in 2020 and 2021. Earlier this year, the Pakistan women's team also traveled to Saudi Arabia under Khan's captaincy to participate in a four-nation tournament that also featured Comoros and Mauritius. While the green shirts were declared the runners-up of the tournament, Khan's stunning free-kick equalizer that gave her country a 1-1 draw against Saudi Arabia was widely lauded on social media.

Ramiz, Waqar, Waseem included in Asia Cup 2023 commentary panel

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The star-studded commentary panel for the upcoming Asia Cup 2023 has been announced. The panel featured experienced commentators from different countries. Five from India, four from Pakistan, and one from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and New Zealand each will be included in the panel. Pakistan's Ramiz Raja — who made his return to the commentary box during Sri Lanka vs Pakistan Test series last month for the first time since September 2021 — is also included in the panel along with the legendary duo Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis. Former New Zealand all-rounder Scott Styris will also add a neutral voice to the panel. Ravi Shastri, Sanjay

Manjrekar, Russel Arnold, Gautam Gambhir, Irfan Pathan, Athar Ali Khan, Deep Dasgupta, and Bazid Khan are also included in the commentary panel. The PCB will host the Asian event jointly at home and in Sri Lanka. Hosts Pakistan will play the tournament's opener against Nepal who will be playing their first Asia Cup this time. This match will be played on August 30 in Multan.

3 Sep – Bangladesh v Afghanistan, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Pakistan
4 Sep – India v Nepal, Pallekele International Cricket stadium Kandy, Sri Lanka
5 Sep – Afghanistan v Sri Lanka, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Pakistan
6 Sep – A1 v B2 (Super-4), Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, Pakistan
9 Sep – B1 v B2 (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka
10 Sep – A1 v A2 (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka
12 Sep – A2 v B1 (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka
14 Sep – A1 v B1

Equal treatment assured for Pakistan at World Cup

LAHORE (Web Desk): Arindam Bagchi, the spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), on Saturday affirmed that Pakistan's cricket team would receive equal treatment alongside all other participating nations in the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, which is set to be hosted by India.

Despite historical rivalries, Bagchi underscored the principles of impartiality and parity that would be upheld for all competing teams.

Addressing recent speculations surrounding Pakistan's involvement in the imminent ICC World Cup hosted by India,

Bagchi asserted that they had taken note of the reports concerning Pakistan's cricket team's participation in the forthcoming ICC World Cup. He stated that it was important to clarify that Pakistan's cricket team would be accorded the same treatment as any other nation's team participating in the ICC World Cup.

This affirmation comes subsequent to the official confirmation of Pakistan's participation in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, following the requisite endorsement from the Government of Pakistan.

In a formal statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan reiterated its steadfast stance on preserving the autonomy of sports from political influences.

(Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka
15 Sep – A2 v B2, (Super-4), R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka
17 Sep – Final - 1 v 2, R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium (RPICS), Colombo, Sri Lanka
18 Sep – Reserve day for the final.

India defeat Malaysia to win Asian Hockey Champions Trophy



CHENNAI (Agencies): India has secured victory in the Asian Hockey Champions Trophy 2023 after they defeated Malaysia 4-3 in a seven-goal thriller in Chennai, India on Saturday.

The Blues continued their unbeaten run in the tournament and produced a staggering comeback in the final against Malaysia.

India had a great start as they got a penalty corner in the 9th minute of the game which was converted by Jugraj Singh.

Azrai Abu Kamal scored the first for his side just before the end of the first quarter and made it 1-1,

making sure that his team does not trail as they enter the second quarter.

The Malaysian played like warriors in the next quarter and pushed the home side against the wall by scoring two more goals, making it 3-1 in their favour.

Rahim Razie and Mohammad Aminuddin scored for the visitors in the second quarter in the minutes 18th and 28th respectively, giving their team an upper head against the Blues.

However, India did not want to disappoint their home supporters, and decided to charge against the Malaysian and scored two goals in the last minute

of the third quarter, with skipper Harmanpreet Singh and Gurjant Singh scoring for the home side and making it 3-3.

The last quarter was the toughest of all, both teams gave their all but it was India's Akashdeep Singh, who scored the winner for his side in the 56th minute and completed a historic comeback.

Harmanpreet ended the tournament as the top scorer with nine goals, four more than Pakistan's Mohammad Sufyan Khan who scored five.

India scored 29 goals in the tournament, the most a team managed to do so in the Asian event and with 16 penalty corner goals, they were also the team who managed to make the most of them.

Pakistan finished fifth in the tournament, they only managed to win two games in the event both were against China. They drew against Korea and Japan and lost against the finalists India and Malaysia.

Canadian Open Alcaraz and Medvedev both knocked out in Toronto

TORONTO (Agencies): World number one Carlos Alcaraz was beaten by Tommy Paul in the Canadian Open quarter-finals in Toronto.

Spaniard Alcaraz, 20, made a sluggish start and eventually lost 3-6 6-4 3-6 to American 12th seed Paul. In his first defeat since the French Open semi-finals in June, Wimbledon champion Alcaraz made 13 unforced errors and served six double faults.

Also on Friday, unseeded Alex de Minaur of Australia caused another

upset by knocking out Daniil Medvedev.

De Minaur fought hard to overcome the Russian second seed 7-6 (9-7) 7-5 and reach the semi-finals. Paul will take on Italian seventh seed Jannik Sinner for a place in Sunday's final, while De Minaur faces unseeded Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

"I realise that I didn't play well, these matches," said Alcaraz of his week in Toronto. "All I can do now is practise to be better. I have some weeks before

the US Open.

"I think I did well some things, but probably everything can be better. I always say you can be better in everything even if you've played your best matches in your career. "But right now, I have to improve a lot of things, getting more confidence in my game."

Alcaraz said he will now focus on the Western and Southern Open in Cincinnati, where he will be top seed, before beginning the defence of his US Open title in New York on 28 August.

England book semi-final with co-hosts Australia



SYDNEY: Alessia Russo celebrates after scoring her team's second goal with teammates during the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 Quarter Final match.

SYDNEY (Agencies): England set up a Women's World Cup semi-final with co-hosts Australia as they came from behind against a dangerous Colombia side. The European champions, favourites to go all the way in Australia, have not played their best football in the tournament but this was a much more rounded display in front of a hostile crowd in Sydney.

Largely composed in defence and hard-working in attack, the Lionesses were rewarded with two slices of luck which they capitalised on, after goalkeeper Mary Earps had been beaten by a quick-thinking lob in the first half.

Lauren Hemp poked in the equaliser, just seven minutes after Leicy Santos had caught out Earps, when Colombia goalkeeper Catalina Perez spilled a routine gather in the six-yard area under pressure from Alessia Russo.

Arsenal striker Russo, who had only scored once in four World Cup matches prior to Saturday's quarter-final, worked tirelessly out of possession, earning her opportunity when she pounced on a kind deflection to drill in England's second.

Earps was called into action later, tipping Lorena Durango Bedoya's effort over the bar, while England were put under further pressure by Colombia's talented attacking line-up, which included Real Madrid's teenage sensation Linda Caicedo.

The Lionesses, who had to deal with a crowd of

75,784 who were largely backing Colombia, face co-hosts Australia next on 16 August at 11:00 BST, live on BBC. It will be the Lionesses' third straight World Cup semi-final after defeats by the USA in 2019 and Japan in 2015.

'England grind out another win'

England have had to battle their way through the competition, needing 1-0 wins to creep past Haiti and Denmark in the group stages, before a penalty shootout victory over Nigeria in the last 16.

They were without suspended top-scorer Lauren James, who is serving a two-match ban following her red card against Nigeria, but England did enough in front of goal to seal victory in a tough encounter. Colombia, ranked 21 places lower than England, had already proven their worth in Australia, seeing off Euro 2022 finalists Germany in the group stages and progressing in style.

Their attacking line-up caused England problems and they pushed desperately late on for an equaliser, testing the Lionesses' back five. However, spearheaded by the centre-back trio of Millie Bright, Alex Greenwood and Jess Carter, England held their own against the physicality and tenacity of the Colombians. Stadium Australia was filled with yellow shirts in the stands - Colombia fans were on their feet waving scarves around their heads

following any advance over the halfway line and they whistled loudly when England were in possession.

This was by no means an easy victory but the resilience and grit that England have been forced to demonstrate so far in the tournament once again helped them over the line, deservedly so, on Saturday.

Russo shines as defence hold firm

Heading into the quarter-finals, England's Earps said "there was more to come from them", having not shown their best aside from an impressive 6-1 thrashing of China. So when the full-time whistle went in Sydney, several players fell to the floor in exhaustion and Sarina Wiegman gave a rousing team-talk afterwards - they had been in a gruelling battle.

Strong individual performances helped them. Russo barely put a foot wrong beside a wasted header in the first half and was rewarded for her endeavour when the ball bounced kindly for her to score. "I always try to work as hard as I can on the pitch," said Russo. "There is often sometimes a bit of luck in football."

"I was glad I took [the chance] when it came. I was in the right position and I was fortunate it went in the back of the net."

Hemp ran at defenders with pace and purpose and Lucy Bronze dealt with the tricky free of Caicedo for the majority of the match. England's immense

defence, which is starting to look more comfortable with a back three having now started three matches in a row with that formation, were well-organised and blocked shots when they needed to.

"These are big games and it has some physicality too - for them and for us. That's part of the game and we dealt with it really well," said Wiegman. "They got through it really well and got the win over the line. That was what we were trying to do and fortunately we did that."

Earps once again made a crucial save to make up for her slight error in conceding England's first goal from open play in the tournament. All-in-all, it was a positive performance to match a result which ensures England are just two matches away from glory. They will have to navigate another hostile crowd in Sydney in their semi-final but they were rarely fazed by it on this showing.

Australia beat France on penalties to reach last four

BRISBANE : Co-hosts Australia reached the Women's World Cup semi-finals for the first time as they beat France in an incredible penalty shootout at Brisbane Stadium.

Following a goalless 120 minutes, the Matildas triumphed 7-6 in a shoot-out which defied belief with its dramatic twists. Cortnee Vine scored the winning spot-kick for Australia, after Vicki Becho had struck the post for France.

Australia keeper Mackenzie Arnold made a total of four saves in the shoot-out - including twice from Kenza Dali, having moved off the line for the first stop, leading to a retake. Arnold herself had the opportunity to score the winning penalty as the fifth taker for Australia, after saving from Eve Perisset, but struck the post as nearly 50,000 Australians inside the stadium went through every emotion imaginable.

But it is the hosts who march on, reaching their first ever Women's World Cup semi-final. Australia will play England or Colombia at Stadium Australia in Sydney on 16



BRISBANE: Players of Australia celebrate their side's victory in the penalty shoot out after Cortnee Vine of Australia scores her team's tenth penalty

August at 11.00 BST.

Australia make history in Brisbane furnace

Australia were roared on by a capacity crowd who created a lively atmosphere at Brisbane Stadium, but having fallen at the quarter-final stage in three previous World Cups, initially they looked more cowed by the pressure than invigorated by it. But they grew into the game and should have led four minutes before the interval.

France keeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin - who looked a bag of nerves all evening - failed to command a loose ball in the box, allowing Van Egmond to nip in and square to Mary Fowler, who seemed certain to tuck the chance away. Peyraud-Magnin was only bailed out by covering defender Elisa de Almeida, whose last-gasp sliding block was one of the finest pieces of defending seen at this World Cup so far.

Those nerves from Peyraud-Magnin extended into the second half, as she miscued a clearance straight to Fowler shortly after the break and was again helped out by a defender blocking the resulting shot.

Australia manager Tony Gustavsson had said he would only start Sam Kerr if she was definitely fit to play the full match, and duly kept back the Matildas talisman to make an impact in the latter stages.

On 55 minutes, he pulled the Kerr lever, activating an ear-splitting roar from the home fans. The 29-year-old

Chelsea striker was immediately into the action, driving forwards to set up a move which resulted in Raso testing Peyraud-Magnin from range.

Australia, newly fired up, applied heavy pressure to the French goal but could not find a breakthrough in regulation time, making this the first in 31 Women's World Cup matches featuring Australia to be goalless after 90 minutes.

It was also goalless after 120 minutes - leading to a shoot-out which will go down in football history and Australian folklore.

They are the first hosts to reach the Women's World Cup semi-finals since USA in 2003 - and could be the first since the Americans in 1999 to triumph on home soil.

Renard's goalkeeper gamble nearly pays off

France had their own home World Cup spoiled in the quarter-finals four years ago as they lost to eventual champions the USA, and they revelled in the role of party poopers in the opening minutes. Kadi Diani was furious when she shot wide after eight minutes, convinced she was held back and fouled by Australia defender Alanna Kennedy. She had a point.

Their best first-half chance fell to defender Maelle Lakrar, brought into the starting XI in place of Chelsea's Perisset. Eugenie le Sommer dragged a shot across goal and Lakrar somehow squirted the ball over the top from three

yards.

Lakrar was also denied by Arnold, her snap shot on the turn following an uncleared corner well palmed away by the West Ham stopper. They failed to press home their advantage while they had it, allowing Australia to gain the ascendancy - especially following the introduction of Kerr.

There were shouts for a penalty with 10 minutes remaining as Lakrar grabbed a handful of Caitlin Foord's shirt, only for referee Maria Carvajal to wave them away. As nerves grew for both teams the play became scrappier, with France thinking they had an extra-time winner when Alanna Kennedy headed into her own net from a corner, only for it to be disallowed as Renard had fouled an opponent.

France had the clearest extra-time opportunities, Arnold making a great diving save from Becho's drive before Steph Catley hacked another effort off the line.

Ultimately penalties were required - with France manager Herve Renard dramatically sending on sub keeper Solene Durand in place of Peyraud-Magnin for the spot-kicks. Durand did her job, saving from both Catley and Clare Hunt - the latter with a phenomenal one-handed stop when a goal would have sent Australia through.

But subsequently Becko missed, Vine scored and France fell short, exiting at the last eight for the second successive World Cup.



In brief

Fake law enforcement official apprehended

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police claimed to have arrested a man pretending to be a law enforcement officer here on Saturday. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad police during snap checking held a man as named Azmat Rashed on suspicious behaviour. During the investigation, he posed himself as a law enforcement officer. A case has been registered against the fake officer in the Sadiqabad police station. SP Rawal appreciated the performance of the police team and said those who take the law into their hands do not deserve any concession. Meanwhile, Rawalpindi police have also arrested three illegal arms holders and recovered arms, ammunition from their possessions. Police have arrested all of them from different areas of the City. Moreover, separate cases have been registered against them and further investigation was in progress.

2,000 liter liquor confiscated

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested a drug pusher and recovered 2,000-liter liquor from his possession during a crackdown here Saturday. According to a police spokesman, Taxila police held liquor supplier Muhammad Ali and 2000 liters of liquor from his custody. Police have registered a case against him and started an investigation. SP Potohar appreciated the performance of the police team he said that the accused who poisoned the veins of the young generation cannot escape from the grip of the law, and the crackdown against drug and liquor suppliers will be continued without any discrimination, he added.

AIOU announces results

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results of 46 different educational programs, including ODL programs for the Autumn semester of 2022 and Face-to-Face programs for the Spring semester, 2023. According to AIOU, for Autumn 2022, results of BS Islamic Studies, Quran and Tafsir, Hadith and Hadith Science, Sharia, Serat, Deen, Library and Information Sciences, Pakistan Studies, Accounting and Finance, Gender and Women Studies, English Language and Literature, Urdu, Mass Communication and Arabic have been announced. Results of different face-to-face programs offered in the spring semester, 2023 include 1.5 and 2-year MBA (New Scheme), MSc (Hons) Livestock Management and Rural Development, MSc (Microbiology, Environmental Design, Botany) BS (Botany, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Environmental Science, Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics, Physics and Chemistry), MS (Community Health and Nutrition, Computer Science Course Code 7201, Management Sciences, Banking and Finance) MPhil (Urdu, Mass Communication, Agriculture Technology, Pakistani Languages, Mathematics, Educational Planning and Management, Teacher Education Course Code 6402, Distance and Non-Formal Education Course Code 6403), PhD (Pakistani Languages, Quran and Tafsir, Food and Nutrition, History) have also been announced.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister House is decorated with the lights in celebration of Independence Day. —APP Photo

Naqvi chairs meeting to review arrangements for Aug 14

MURREE (INP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday chaired a special meeting held at Government House in Murree to thoroughly review the arrangements for August 14 amidst arrival of tourists.

During the briefing, it was highlighted that an estimated 400,000 tourists are expected to visit Murree within the next 48 hours.

The comprehensive traffic management strategy for Independence Day was a focal point of discussion. The Commissioner of Rawalpindi presented details about the fireworks scheduled for the night between August 13 and 14, along with evening musical performances on August 14. To ensure the preservation of Murree's charm,

Mohsin Naqvi issued directives to take strict actions against any unauthorized constructions or encroachments within the district. Chief Minister also emphasized the need to expand the tourist area in the district. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman elaborated on plans intended to facilitate both tourists and residents in Murree.

With the influx of visitors expected on Independence Day, the caretaker chief minister stressed the importance of prearrangements. The meeting revealed that a spectacular firework display is set to grace the skies at Kashmir Point in Murree on the night of Independence Day. Furthermore, parks and various tourist spots will host firework shows and

musical performances.

Among the topics discussed were decisions concerning Murree's master plan, the enhancement of facilities, and the management of traffic flow. Attendees included Chief Secretary, Rawalpindi Commissioner, RPO, CPO, Deputy Commissioner, representatives from the Departments of Forests, Tourism, NHA, PHA, DG RDA, and other relevant officers.

The meeting was also participated by Provincial Information Minister Amir Mir, Additional Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary Home, the secretaries of Housing, Communication and Works, as well as Health department participated via video link.

Need to empower women

ISLAMABAD (APP): Potohar Organization for Development Organization (PODA) believes to empower women there was need to ensure their participation in electoral processes, so that they can play a vibrant role play in the progress and development of the country.

"To strengthen women's voice and agency in electoral processes, it is crucial to ensure women's participation, maximize it and remove hurdles which bar them to play their vibrant role play in the progress and development of the country", said Ms. Sameena Nazir, President-CEO Potohar Organization for Development Organization (PODA) on the occasion of the training of trainers held here on Saturday.

One-Day Training of Trainers for Building the Capacity of Rural Women Leaders to Promote Votes without Violence was organized here in a local hotel which was attended by 15 promising rural women leaders belonging to different tehsils of district Rawalpindi. Imparting knowledge and skills to enhance capacity building of rural women, at the initial stage PODA with the support of NDI aims to empower a batch of 240 women from four provinces across the country.

Ms. Nazir further elaborated that strengthening human rights knowledge of rural women leaders based on our constitutional rights envisioned in the constitution of Pakistan will support them to take on leadership role in politics.

"We need to tackle the issue of violence and its alarming severity by enhancing women's capacity to deal with it at all levels to encourage more women to participate in politics actively," Ms. Nazir said.

"It is an acknowledged fact that when more women are elected it is directly linked with better policy-making that favors communities and marginalized segments of the society at large," CEO-PODA said.

The trainers who imparted different sessions were, Ms. Sameena Nazir, Zafarullah Khan (Convener, Parliamentary Research Group) and Ms. Nabeela Aslam.

Sheikh Rashid calls coalition govt rule as darkest period

RAWALPINDI (PPI): Sheikh Rashid – the chief of his own faction of Muslim League – said on Saturday the name of the caretaker prime minister had been finalised, describing the ongoing talks as a drama staged for media consumption.

In a statement posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, the former interior minister said the 16-month tenure of the coalition government was the darkest period of Pakistan's history. The poor had been [economically] murdered and

were unable to buy food or pay children's fees, he said, adding that incidents of looting were common in the cities with a civil war-like situation, the AML head opined.

The Supreme Court's judgement had buried all the hopes of Nawaz Sharif returning to Pakistan, Rashid said and added that elections would have to be held within 90 days and the time had arrived for revenge.

He informed his readers that he would address the nation tonight at 11pm and

might also opt for another post on X, if required.

Again listing the current period as darkest in the history of Pakistan, the AML chief said his relatives and servants had gone missing after being picked up; however, the coalition government members would be defeated through the power of vote.

The coalition government had ruined the country and could not face the public, said Rashid, adding that they would understand their political stature on the polling day.

Police devise traffic plan for Independence Day celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): In preparation for the upcoming Independence Day celebrations, Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Division) has made a specialized traffic plan to ensure smooth traffic flow and safety across the city.

With the participation of 550 officers and personnel assigned to special duty, the police have taken measures to curb traffic violations and illegal entry into Islamabad.

Under the guidance of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer's directives, a dedicated traffic strategy has been devised. This plan includes the deployment of a substantial workforce, comprising 550 officers and personnel. Among these, Superintendent of Police (SP), four Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs), and 22 inspectors have been assigned duties.

To maintain order and security on the roads during the celebrations on August 13 and 14, special squads have been formed. These squads will be stationed at key locations throughout the city and equipped with roadblocks. The primary focus is to crack down on violations such as one-wheeling on motorcycles, vehicles with tinted windows, reckless driving, and those with noisy silencers.

Chief Traffic Officer, Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, has emphasized the importance of upholding traffic laws during this period. In particular, he has urged strict action against motorcyclists engaging in one-wheeling and those who alter their vehicles unlawfully. These directives extend to not only the riders but also mechanics who modify motorcycles against

legal regulations.

Dr. Mustafa Tanveer has extended an appeal to parents, urging them not to permit their children to use one-wheeled motorcycles. Legal measures will be taken against violators, and their motorcycles will be impounded at police stations, reinforcing the seriousness of the matter.

To keep citizens informed about the traffic situation, ICTP Radio FM 92.4 will provide real-time updates on the roads. This initiative aims to create awareness and facilitate smoother traffic movement during the celebrations.

As the nation prepares to celebrate its Independence Day, the Islamabad Capital Police's rigorous traffic plan demonstrates its commitment to ensuring the safety of citizens and maintaining order on the city's roads.

Photographic exhibition opens at PAC

RAWALPINDI (INP): To mark the 75th Independence Day of the country, a three-day exhibition of old photographs depicting Pakistan Movement opened at Punjab Council of the Arts (PAC) on Saturday.

More than 100 photographs have been displayed at the Umeed ka Safar exhibition including pictures showing the political struggle of Father of the Nation Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Mohammad Iqbal and other leaders. Photographs of the freedom movement, Muslim League and life of the Quaid from 1857 to 1947 have also been showcased.

In some photos, the Quaid is shown with Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru

and British officials. Other photographers show political leaders during rallies and public meetings.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Assistant Commissioner Ms. Qandeel Fatima Memon along with Director Waqar Ahmed. Dozens of people from different walks of life visited the exhibition.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Qandeel Fatima Memon said Pakistan was the interpretation of the dreams of the Muslims of the subcontinent. The photo exhibition shows the sacrifices our forefather rendered for the creation of Pakistan. Our young generation is very diligent and worthy. They have to protect Pakistan on ideological

grounds. Today we are breathing in a free atmosphere because of Quaid-i-Azam, she added.

Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad said the purpose of the exhibition was to highlight the sacrifices of our ancestors for Pakistan. "We will have to follow Quaid-e-Azam's guidelines for the progress of Pakistan. After gaining independence from British imperialism, the Quaid spent his life in making Pakistan a developed country, settling issues such as resettlement of refugees, distribution of assets, water problems and defence," he said.

The exhibition will continue till 14th of August 2023.



ISLAMABAD: Commuters take break to purchase national flag as the nation celebrates the Independence Day with evangelism across the country. —APP Photo

Kashmiris demand implementation of UN resolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary General of World Kashmir Awareness Forum (WKAFF), Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai, has said that Kashmiris demand the implementation of the UN resolution of August 13, 1948 that acknowledged their right to self-determination.

According to Kashmir media service, Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai in a statement issued in Washington said that Kashmiris in Jammu and Kashmir, the US and worldwide will observe the 75th anniversary of the unimplemented UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolution of August 13, 1948.

He said, that resolution states that "the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with

the will of the people."

He said, there was much in the resolution that was controversial between India and Pakistan but the proposal of a plebiscite was not.

"That is clear from the statement made on January 28, 1948 by Ambassador Fernand van Langenhove of Belgium as the President of the Security Council. He said that 'the documents at our disposal show agreement between the parties on the following points: the plebiscite must be conducted under conditions which will ensure complete impartiality; and the plebiscite will therefore be held under the aegis of the United Nations,'" he added.

Dr Fai reminded that the US, the UK, and France have traditionally been committed supporters of the plebiscite agreement as the only way to resolve

the Kashmir dispute.

They sponsored all of the Security Council resolutions which called for a plebiscite. Their commitment was indicated by a personal appeal made by America's President Harry Truman and Britain's Prime Minister Clement Atlee that differences over demilitarization be submitted to arbitration by the Plebiscite Administrator, a distinguished American war hero: Admiral Chester Nimitz. In addition, Senator Frank Graham of America visited the Subcontinent as the UN representative to negotiate the demilitarization of Kashmir prior to the plebiscite. India objected to American acting as a Plebiscite Administrator.

Dr Fai said, if this day could be observed in peace, it could have been a fitting tribute to the members of the UNCIP who had adopted the resolution unani-

mously. But the studied unconcern by the United Nations has given a sense of total impunity to India. It has also created the impression that the United Nations is invidiously selective about the application of the principles of human rights and democracy. He pointed out that frustration at India's intransigence and the world's hesitation to fulfill its commitment drove the people of Kashmir to be more assertive in their struggle.

He added that in the past 33 years of struggle, since 1990 alone, Kashmiris have suffered the loss of more than 100,000 civilians – men, women and children, and have borne the perpetration of countless atrocities by more than 900,000 Indian military and paramilitary forces concentrated in Kashmir as an army of occupation.

Dr Fai pointed out that India's

occupation of Kashmir has been left undisturbed by the international community, even though its validity has never been accepted. At no stage, however, have the people of Kashmir shown themselves to be reconciled to it.

Kashmir's record of opposition to its annexation by the Indian Union can by no standard be reckoned as less genuinely demonstrated than that of the countries of Eastern Europe under the dominance of the Soviet Union. But while the popular revolt in the countries of Eastern Europe was observed and reported by the international media, that in Kashmir has remained largely hidden from the world's view.

That is the reason that the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has said that 'news media in Kashmir is at the brink of extinction.'

Today, Dr Fai said, the consensus is that Kashmir conflict remains the underlying cause of the nuclear confrontation between the two neighboring countries. Without a just and lasting peace in Kashmir that vindicates self-determination, trying to reduce missile and nuclear arsenals in South Asia will be an exercise in futility.

"We still believe that Biden Administration despite its huge trade agreements with India can and should, lead the effort to achieve a fair and lasting settlement of the dispute – fair to the people most immediately involved and fair to its own commitments to democracy and human rights. By doing so, the US can strengthen the principles of a just world order. It will also earn the gratitude of generations in Kashmir, in Pakistan and even in India itself," he pointed out.

Woman commits suicide

CHARIKAR (Pajhwok): A woman has committed suicide by hanging herself to death in the Siagird district of central Parwan province, an official said on Saturday. In a statement, the police headquarters identified the woman as Roz Gul, daughter of Rasool Gul. She hailed the from Milikhel valley of the district. The woman's body was evacuated to the forensic department by security forces for an investigation. Her husband had been detained, police said.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Muharram 25, 1445 — Sunday, August 13, 2023

Efforts underway: Minister

KABUL (Agencies): Acting Refugees and Repatriation Minister Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani during a ceremony for the foundation stone of a mosque in Paktia province said that the ministry is working to complete remaining fundamental projects in coordination with the relevant organs across the country. Acting Refugees Minister Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani inaugurated the construction work on a replica of the Aqsa Mosque in the Showak district of Paktia province.

Darul Ifta issues Fatwa prohibiting Afghans from war abroad: Mujahid

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that the leader Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada has not issued any decree about war in Pakistan, but the Darul Ifta office of the Islamic Emirate issued a Fatwa which prohibits people from going to war abroad without orders of the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

He said that based on the Fatwa, sending people to war abroad should be based on orders of the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

"This is clear. This is the Sharia order, which has been given by the Darul Ifta of the Islamic Emirate not by Amirul Momineen (Islamic Emirate leader). The Darul Ifta has stated the Mujahideen (Islamic Emirate's troops) going out of the country for war is not Jihad and that in such situations the order of the Amir or permission of the Amir of the Muslims is compulsory," he said.

This comes as some media reported that the Islamic Emirate issued a decree which prohibits war in Pakistan. The report said that the senior members of the Islamic Emirate does not want the decree to be



leaked. Meanwhile, the head of Jamaat-i-Islami of Pakistan, Sirajul Haq, said on social media that the Fatwa (formal ruling or interpretation on a point of Islamic law) by the Islamic Emirate's leader, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, against terrorism in Pakistan is a welcomed step.

He said that peace in Pakistan is necessary for peace in Afghanistan.

Mufti Abdul Rauf, a religious cleric and a figure close to the Islamic Emirate, in a video clip said that the Afghan citizens are not responsible for war abroad.

The Jihad of other countries is not on the people of Afghanistan. The principle of this decision which the Taliban made abroad (in

Doha) is in line with Sharia. Even if the Ulema were thinking of something else, they should refer to the books, which I will mention for them. So there is no Jihad compulsory for individuals. And as there is not equal power, the Amir is exempt because the power is not equal (to other major countries) and Jihad is not compulsory for the Amir either.

"About Pakistan, I must say that the issues in Pakistan are internal including the political, economic and security crisis," said Wahid Faqiri, a political analyst.

Meanwhile, some Pakistani officials urged the Islamic Emirate leader to make public decree about prohibition of war in Pakistan.

Prolonged drought deepens humanitarian crisis

N A H R - E - S H A H I (Reuters): In parched brown hills in north Afghanistan, Abdul Hahad tears stalks of wheat out of the arid earth. In the third year of water shortages and high temperatures, his harvest is barely enough to support his family.

The 55-year-old farmer from Nahr-e-Shahi district in Balkh province used to plant two or even three wheat crops a year but in the last three years he has only been able to grow one. The yields from his nine acres of land are dwindling year by year.

"It's been three years since the drought started, wells and the river have almost dried up. We don't even have enough drinking water, you can see all our land has dried up," he said, as he sat near a pile of wheat beneath the sun in heat of 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Persistent drought across Afghanistan is taking its toll on farmers, its economy - a third of which is generated by agriculture - and food security.

Experts say the drought is exacerbated by climate change which leads to intensifying pressure on water resources. The Global Climate Risk Index says Afghanistan is the world's sixth most affected country by climate-related threats.

With little functioning irrigation, Afghanistan relies on snow melting in the mountains to keep its rivers flowing and fields watered during the summer.

But Najibullah Sadid, a water resources and environment expert and Research Associate at the Federal Waterways Engineering and Research Institute in Germany, said as temperatures rise, precipitation falls and with less snow, the summer melt is not feeding into rivers as much as it used to.

"In terms of food security you see that in a country like Afghanistan where more than 30% of GDP is coming from agriculture, then of course if this sector is impacted by climate change then the gross economy of the country is impacted by climate change," said Sadid.

Two years after the Taliban took over in Afghanistan as foreign troops withdrew, stretched water resources and the struggles of agriculture are one of their administration's top challenges.

With a sharp reduction this year in humanitarian aid and no foreign government formally recognising the Taliban, aid workers and diplomats say the level of development assistance to help with the problem is limited. The UN World Food Programme says 15.3 million people are facing acute food insecurity in the country of nearly 42 million people.

The Taliban administration is building a 280 km-long canal, which if completed could divert water for irrigation throughout northern provinces. But it is still years away from completion and neighbouring countries have raised concerns that it will unfairly divert their water.

Sitting with three of his eight grandchildren, Hahad described how his income has shrunk, forcing his family, like many in the village, to cut back on food beyond essentials like bread and fruit. "I used to be able to earn from 2.3 million afghanis to 2.5 million afghanis a year from my land. We used to grow wheat, melons, onions, eggplant, carrot and other things, but in the last three years I couldn't even make 100,000 afghanis," he said.

Ulema's role pivotal in strengthening Islamic system, says Deputy PM



KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister, in a meeting with a group of scholars and mujahideen of Jowzjan province, called the role of ulema in strengthening the foundations of the Islamic system important.

The press office of the Prime Minister in a state-

ment said: "In this meeting, the scholars and Mujahideen of Jawzjan shared information about the social, security, and economic issues of the people of Jawzjan, and about the issues of education, religious schools, and health departments"

The scholars asked the officials of the Islamic

Emirate to cooperate in order to address the challenges in the mentioned fields in the province.

Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi praised the role of scholars and Mujahideen in Jihad against the invaders and the establishment of the Islamic system and emphasized that the role of the scholars in con-

solidating the foundations of the Islamic system is very critical.

He called access to education, the creation of transportation routes, and access to health services among the first rights of the people and said: The Islamic Emirate is trying its best to address these problems.

IE confirms 16 foreigners in Afghan prisons

KABUL (Khaama Press): Office of Prisons Administration officials revealed on Sunday that there are presently 16 foreign nationals incarcerated in prisons across Afghanistan.

In the government's accountability program, Habiullah Badr, the Military Deputy of the Office of Prisons Administration, revealed five women among the foreign prisoners in Afghanistan.

He further said there are 16,000 prisoners nationwide, with 1,194 women.

Badr emphasized that the country currently holds

1,089 child prisoners, with this distressing number also encompassing 47 girls. This situation highlights a critical issue that requires immediate attention.

He said 250 military personnel from the Taliban forces had been incarcerated due to infractions ranging from breaches of government policies to involvement in traffic accidents. This significant number underscores the enforcement of discipline within the military ranks, ensuring adherence to regulations and maintaining order.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Yusuf Mestri, the Director General of the Office of Prisons Administration, has announced that Iran has extradited 1,230 Afghan citizens who were apprehended in drug-related cases back to Afghanistan.

He further mentioned that there are currently approximately 4,000 Afghans incarcerated in Iranian prisons due to various accusations. Through the efforts of the Taliban administration, the death sentences of 250 Afghan citizens have been commuted to imprisonment.

Deputy Premier Baradar woos Turkish investors



ATLANTA (Pajhwok): Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has met Nail Olpac, the head of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK), and other businessmen.

A statement from his office said the deputy prime minister the Turkish entrepreneurs in Istanbul on trade-related issues and investment opportunities in Afghanistan.

Baradar assured Afghan and Turkish businessmen of improved security in Afghanistan, saying the

ground had been paved for investments, according to the statement.

He said the Islamic Emirate supported businessmen and traders by providing them more facilities in areas of mining, agriculture, power generation, communications, trade and other sectors.

Comprehensive information was shared with participants on investment opportunities in Afghanistan and the facilities provided by the interim government.

The participants and representatives of companies

with the experience of doing business in Afghanistan evinced their interest in investing and grabbing the available opportunities.

The Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK), established in 1985, has the experience of successful investments in 152 countries of the world.

A number of Afghan businessmen also participated in that meeting.

Earlier, Baradar met Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs and other officials of the host country on issues of bilateral interest.

30% of booksellers stopped business

KABUL (TOLONews): The commission to assess the Problems of Booksellers said that at least 30 percent of booksellers have stopped their business due to lack of a good market.

Abdul Wodod Mukhtarzada, a member of the commission, told TOLONews that the booksellers are also complaining

about high taxes which are difficult to pay as their business has dropped.

"We used to sell more than 500 books and we had 200 librarians here but I can say now that their number has dropped significantly," he said.

TOLONews interviewed several booksellers and also expressed concern that

book reading culture has faded. "There are issues because of the lack of female students' presence in the universities. This issue also affects the book business," said Shariullah, a bookseller.

"You know that the market is down and the people lack the capacity to purchase books. Also there are

many types of taxes and the Kabul municipality sends their representatives," said Mansour Qazizada, a book-seller.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Culture said that efforts are underway to pardon the taxes of the libraries as a move to support the book markets in the country.

US releases statement from special C5+1 session on Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The US Department of State has issued a joint statement following the meeting of Special Representatives and Special Envoys for Afghanistan from the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the United States. This gathering took place within the framework of the C5+1 regional diplomatic platform.

Per the statement, the delegates convened in Astanan, Kazakhstan, on July 27th. They discussed the continuing need for all countries in the region and the broader international

community to support an inclusive, united, sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Afghanistan that is free of terrorism, respects the rights of its population, including women and girls, and is at peace with itself and its neighbours and emphasized preventing Afghanistan from becoming a terrorism base, affirmed enhancing cooperation against trafficking, arms trade, and illegal drugs.

They acknowledged that Afghanistan's dire humanitarian and economic situation demands a united international effort addressing all dimensions. This includes granting humanitarian access and respecting

International Humanitarian Law principles.

The participants "reiterated that the goal of a stable, economically viable and peaceful Afghanistan is only attainable if all Afghans, including women and girls, and persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, can fully, equally, and meaningfully participate in—and contribute to—the country's future; and highlighted the need for an inclusive process of dialogue on the country's political future that focuses on, among other things, the establishment of accountable and representative governing bodies," the statement

reads.

They also restated their commitment to upholding freedom of movement and underscored the significance of initiatives that enhance regional connectivity. This includes advancing energy infrastructure projects and expanding transportation networks that link Central Asia to South Asia via Afghanistan, thereby facilitating transit trade.

The group lauded the "significant decreases" in opium poppy cultivation in 2023. However, they voiced apprehension about the ongoing opiate exports and synthetic drug production in Afghanistan.

Manufacturing in Herat drops by 70% due to power shortages

HERAT (Agencies): Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines says manufacturing in its industrial town has decreased by 70 percent due to power shortages and that thousands of people have lost their jobs.

According to officials, a large part of Herat city, including its industrial town, is supplied by imported electricity from Iran, and for a week, the amount of energy imported from across the border has decreased by about 70 percent.

"Herat industrial town has 30 megawatts of electricity, of which approximately 70 megawatts of electricity has been cut from the substation of Herat industrial town by the Islamic Republic of Iran, and this problem continues all the time," said Hamidullah Khadim, head of Chamber of Industries and Mines in Herat.

Khadim added that they have discussed this problem with government officials many times, but nothing has been done to solve

the problem.

Factory owners meanwhile also complain about the shortage of electricity in this town. "About 60% to 70% of our production has decreased and what the market demands from us, unfortunately, we cannot deliver to our customers," said a factory owner in Herat.

Herat residents also complained about the shortage of electricity coming from Iran.

"The electricity is very weak, our electricity goes

out most of the time, especially in summer it causes children to get sick," said a resident.

Meanwhile, Herat's local administration noted that efforts are underway to solve the problem.

"The local administration of Herat has always tried to solve people's problems and we assure the nation that the electricity problem will be solved as soon as possible," said Nisar Ahmad Elyas, a spokesman for the Herat governor.

900 foreign tourists visit Afghanistan through Sher Khan Port last year

KABUL (Agencies): The officials of the Kunduz Department of Foreign Affairs reported the arrival of 900 foreign tourists from Europe, America, and Asian countries to the country through the Sher Khan Port last year.

In an interview with Bakhtar News Agency, Qari Obaidullah Abidi, deputy head of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Kunduz, said that in the past year, since the issuing of visas in the Department of Foreign Affairs, 900 foreigners have entered the country through Sher Khan Port.

Abidi added that up to 10 foreigners visited the Department of Foreign Affairs to get visas and then travel to their favorite provinces for tourism and entertainment.

Meanwhile, the director of tourism in the Information and Culture Department of the province, Mohammad



Shoaib Rahimi, said that last year, 60 foreign tourists came from America, Italy, Sweden, and the Czech Republic.

According to him, the purpose of the trip of these tourists was to visit the touristic and pilgrimage sites of the province.

Matiullah Rouhani, head of the tourism section at the department says that with the return of the Islamic Emirate, security is now stable in Afghanistan and there is no security problem for foreign tourists and they can visit Afghanistan without any fear.

In a conversation with Bakhtar Agency, two foreign tourists said that the security under the current administration of Afghanistan is reliable and that they can travel without any fear in a peaceful and safe atmosphere in this country.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy during his visit to Malaysia.

President directs EOBI to apologize retired guard

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Saturday directed the Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) to apologize a retired handicapped security guard for not allowing him to enter in its premises when he went there to pursue his pension benefits case.

Dr. Alvi said that being President of Pakistan, he apologized to the citizen and also asked EOBI to take a deep look at their unfriendly and anti-poor practices, said press release issued by President Secretariat Press Wing. The president gave these remarks while deciding upon a representation filed by EOBI against the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing the Chairman of EOBI to consider the case of Iftikhar Hussain (the complainant)

in the light of relevant rules and regulations.

The complainant was a security guard working with a private security agency and during his service, he met with an accident in 2008, had his leg fractured, and became disabled. He approached EOBI for pension but was declined payment of pension grant on the ground that his total insurable employment was less than 15 years and he was only entitled to the old-age grant. Feeling aggrieved, he approached Wafaqi Mohtasib, which directed EOBI to consider his case and EOBI then filed a representation with the president against mohtasib's decision.

In his decision, President Alvi expressed displeasure that the complainant, a simple labourer (security guard), had to spend years looking for justice, which

was shameful and reflected poorly on EOBI. "The complainant has also narrated that years were spent as his file was misplaced and only found after 'Sifarish'", he added.

He expressed dismay over the fact that the differently-abled guard was not granted audience by the concerned offices and was only allowed to enter the premises after the intervention of a retired officer. The president concluded that since EOBI's representative had assured during the hearing of the case that his grievance would be considered in accordance with the law, the order of the mohtasib was modified to the extent that instead of referring the matter to chairman EOBI, it might be placed before the adjudicating Authority of EOBI for disposal of the matter within 30 days.

Chief of Naval Staff visits Malaysia

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called-on Naval Leadership of Royal Malaysian Navy during an official visit to Malaysia. Upon arrival at Ministry of Defence, Chief of the Naval Staff was received by Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob and was presented Guard of Honour.

During meeting with Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy, matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed. The Naval Chief underscored the contribution of Pakistan Navy towards regional maritime peace and stability through its initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and participation in Combined Maritime Force. The Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy appreciated Pakistan Navy role in support of collaborative maritime security in the region and acknowledged significance of strong bilateral defence collaboration.

Later on Pakistani Naval Chief visited Malaysian National Defence College PUSPAHANAS. Chief of the Naval Staff was received by President of PUSPAHANAS and was presented Guard of Honour. Thereafter a detailed briefing was given to the Naval Chief on the training being imparted at the college. Chief of the Naval Staff also called-on DG National Hydrographic Center (NHC) and was briefed on the roles and capabilities of National Hydrographic Center. Admiral Niazi sought to enhance collaboration between Malaysian National Hydrographic and Hydrographic Services of Pakistan to learn from each other's experience.

Pakistan and Malaysia historically enjoy brotherly relations and the visit of Naval Chief will further augment and expand defence ties between the two countries in general and navies in particular.

Father torture to death his daughter

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A cruel person allegedly tortured to death his own minor daughter in Chamrang village of Garikaooora area here on Saturday. The slain minor girl was identified as Thania Gul.

Preliminary investigations conducted by the officials of Garikaopoora police station, revealed that the accused identified as Zahoor Muhammad had wedded second marriage after giving divorce to his first wife. After divorce, the accused's first wife also contracted her second marriage.

However, the police told that the second wife was also residing in her parents' home now-a-days after developing differences with her husband (the accused). The alleged killer had four children including the victim from his first wife, they added. The officilas told that father of the accused brought some edible items for his grandchildren to cook for themselves. As the accused had also not good relations with his father that was why he expressed his anger over his daughter that why she took the edible items from her grandfather. The accused was infuriated by the said act of his father which led him to torture to death his minor daughter Thania Gul, 12.

Home Dept plea okayed

KARACHI (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Saturday approved the Sindh Home Department's plea for withdrawal of terror suspects' treatment case against Dr Asim Hussain and others. The court giving approval to home department's plea ordered acquittal of all accused in the case.

The accused included PPP's Dr Asim Hussain and Abdul Qadir Patel, MQM's Anees Qaimkhani, former mayor Waseem Akhtar and Rauf Siddiqui and Usman Muazzim. It should be mentioned here that the home department had filed a petition in the trial court under section 497 of the Criminal Procedure Code for withdrawal of the case adding that the case lacking evidence against the accused. Earlier, investigation officer of the case had also recommended to declare the case as A-Class.

IHC issues notices to parties on appeal against PTI chairman's sentence

Court summons record of Toshakhana case against Imran

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Saturday issued notices to the parties on the PTI chairman's appeal against his sentence in the Toshakhana case and his request for the suspension of the sentence.

The court sought the complete record of the Toshakhana case against PTI Chairman and directed the Registrar's Office to fix the date of hearing of the PTI chairman's appeal for the suspension of his sentence in the Toshakhana case at the earliest. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri issued the order. According to the IHC order, PTI chairman's appeal is against the August 5 decision of the trial court. A trial was conducted against the PTI chairman on the complaint of the Election Commission of Pakistan. The trial court sentenced the PTI chairman to 3 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs100,000.

The court ordered that notices be issued to the parties and records of the case be summoned. It should be noted that PTI Chairman Imran Khan has requested to suspend the sentence and release him on bail. On August 5, a trial court in Islamabad had sentenced the former prime minister to three years in prison in the case. Following the verdict, the ECP disqualified Imran from contesting general elections for five years.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Saturday sought the complete record of the Toshakhana

case against PTI Chairman Imran Khan, who is currently incarcerated in Attock Jail after his conviction.

The order was issued by a division bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri on Imran's petition against his conviction in the said case. On August 5, a trial court in Islamabad had sentenced the former prime minister to three years in prison in the case. Following the verdict, the ECP disqualified Imran from contesting general elections for five years.

"He [Imran] cheated while providing information about gifts he obtained from Toshakhana which later proved to be false and inaccurate. His dishonesty has been established beyond doubt," the 30-page court order said. The police, already on standby in anticipation of a verdict in the hearing, and arrested him from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore just minutes after Additional District and Sessions Judge Humayun Dilawar announced the judgment.

Subsequently, Imran had filed a petition in the IHC through his lawyers against the trial court's August 5 verdict, saying that the said order was "liable to be set aside" as it was passed "with the pre-disposed mind". At the previous hearing, IHC's Justice Farooq had remarked that the court would issue notices first and decide the suspension only after hearing the respondents.

In a written order issued on

Saturday, the court issued a notice to the district election commissioner of Islamabad. "This appeal is directed against judgment dated 05.08.2023, whereby the appellant was tried in complaint filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan under section 190 of the Election Act, 2017, was convicted and awarded three (03) years imprisonment along with fine of Rs100,000. "Notice to the respondent. Office is directed to requisition the record of the learned Trial Court.

A day earlier, PTI lawyers expressed "serious apprehensions" over Imran's safety in Attock Jail. After his arrest on Aug 5, Imran was taken to Attock Jail where, according to his counsels, he was being provided "C-class facilities". They had also earlier filed a petition in the IHC seeking the PTI chief's transfer to Adiala jail, on which a verdict has been reserved. In a press conference on Friday, Naem Haider Panjottha Imran's advisor on legal affairs said the ex-premier was facing serious threats to his life and demanded immediate steps to provide him with home-made food and other facilities.

He claimed that PTI's legal team tried their best to meet Imran on Thursday but only his wife was allowed to meet him. He stressed that it was their legal right to meet the PTI chief as they needed his instructions regarding his various cases as well as signing the power of attorney to appear in court on his behalf.

Prisoner deal heralds Iran-US thaw, but no nuclear deal seen

WASHINGTON (AFP): Two and a half years into Joe Biden's presidency, and after exhaustive diplomacy with Iran's clerical leadership, his administration has reached a first deal -- to free five detained Americans. The delicate agreement heralds an easing of tensions between the long-time adversaries, and experts and diplomats believe it could bring further, quiet efforts to address concerns including Iran's nuclear work.

Few people, however, expect major agreements anytime soon, with the clock ticking to the 2024 US presidential election. "I think both sides have an interest in using this initial agreement as the gateway to get back to dialogue, but not necessarily to a deal," said Ali Vaez, the Iran project director at the International Crisis Group, which promotes conflict resolution. European-led talks collapsed last year on reviving a 2015 nuclear deal, which constrained Iran's contested program in return for promises of sanctions relief but was trashed by former president Donald Trump.

Biden himself, in a caught-on-camera encounter at a campaign stop late last year, said the nuclear deal was "dead" in all but name, at a time when the Islamic republic was putting down massive protests led by women. A source familiar with the negotiations said the prisoner agreement was separate from the nuclear issue. But he also said diplomacy has been effective in lowering the temperature with Iran,

pointing to the truce that has held unofficially for more than a year in war-ravaged Yemen, where Huthi rebels are backed by Iran. Attacks by Iranian-linked Shiite militias against US troops have also appeared to subside in Iraq, noted a diplomat from a US ally.

"The tensions are still very much there but the two governments are communicating, and that makes a difference," the diplomat said. US and Iranian officials reopened diplomacy in May in indirect meetings arranged by Oman, with some talks exploring measures to cap Iran's nuclear program that stop short of fully restoring the nuclear deal, according to diplomats. "I think the de-escalatory context already exists," said Vaez, who helped outside efforts to bridge gaps to reach the 2015 accord.

But he doubted the Biden administration has the appetite on a new nuclear deal with the election season opening. "Any substantive deal with Iran requires significant sanctions relief that will be extremely politically controversial in the US," he said. "On the Iranian side, given the proximity of US election, it doesn't make sense to them strategically to give away most of their leverage not knowing who the next US president is," he said, with Trump or another Republican likely to tear apart any new deal. Republicans have gone on the offensive over the prisoner deal, accusing Biden of enriching a hostile

regime.

In an agreement that Biden officials insist is not final, South Korea will unfreeze \$6 billion in Iranian oil revenue blocked over US sanctions, with the funds transferred to an account in Qatar for humanitarian purchases. In an initial step, Iran moved five US citizens, one of them arrested nearly eight years ago on spying charges he strongly denies, from prison to a guarded hotel.

Holly Dagres, a nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, agreed that the prisoner deal amounted to "a confidence-building measure and could revive talks over Iran's nuclear program." "But this also signals to Tehran that it can get relief from its hostage-taking model, which may prompt it to continue the status quo given that it can also sell oil due to weakly enforced sanctions," she said. She also questioned the timing of the agreement. September 16 marks one year since death in custody of Mahsa Amini, who had been arrested by the clerical state's morality police for not wearing the mandatory headscarf. Her death prompted mass demonstrations in one of the biggest challenges to the Islamic republic established after the overthrow of the pro-Western shah in 1979. "Doing a deal with the United States around such a sensitive period is, in essence, communicating to protesters that Washington doesn't care about their plight," Dagres said.

Russia downs 20 drones over Crimea

KYIV (AP): Russia thwarted an attack by 20 Ukrainian drones targeting Moscow-annexed Crimea overnight, the Russian Defense Ministry said Saturday. Fourteen drones were shot down by Russian air defenses and a further six were jammed electronically, the ministry said in a Telegram post. No casualties or damage were reported. Kyiv officials neither confirmed nor denied Ukraine's involvement in the attacks.

As videos circulated on Russian social media Saturday appearing to show smoke rising above a bridge linking Russia to Crimea, the annexed peninsula's Moscow-appointed governor, Sergei Aksyonov, reported that Russian air defense had also prevented an attack there by shooting down two Ukrainian missiles. The bridge was not damaged, he said, although traffic was briefly halted. An adviser to Aksyonov, Oleg Kryuchkov, claimed that "a smoke screen was put up by special services." Russia's Foreign Ministry "strongly condemned" the attempted attack on the Crimean bridge. The ministry said in a statement that such "barbaric actions" by the Armed Forces of Ukraine "will not go unanswered."

Shortly after reporting the downing of the two Ukrainian missiles, Aksyonov said Russian air defense had shot down another missile over the Kerch Strait. The bridge connecting Crimea and Russia across the Kerch Strait carries heavy significance for Moscow, both logistically and psychologi-

cally, as a key artery for military and civilian supplies and as an assertion of Kremlin control of the peninsula it illegally annexed in 2014. Last week, a Ukrainian sea drone hit a Russian tanker near the bridge, while an attack on the bridge last month killed a couple and seriously wounded their daughter, leaving a span of the roadway hanging perilously. The damage appeared to be less severe than that caused by an assault in October, but it again highlighted the bridge's vulnerability.

The attempted drone and missile attacks follow three consecutive days of drone attacks on the Russian capital, Moscow. Firing drones at Russia, after more than 17 months of war, has little apparent military value for Ukraine but the strategy has served to unsettle Russians and bring home to them the conflict's consequences. Drone attacks have increased in recent weeks both on Moscow and in Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 — a move that most of the world considered illegal. Elsewhere, Russia claimed Saturday it had regained control of the village of Urozhaine in Ukraine's easternmost Luhansk region in an overnight counterattack. A 73-year-old woman was killed early Saturday morning in Russian shelling of Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, according to regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov. Ukrainian interior affairs minister Ihor Klymenko said a police officer was killed and 12 people

wounded when a guided Russian aerial bomb hit the city of Orikhiv in Ukraine's partially occupied southern Zaporizhzhia region. Four of the wounded were also police officers, he said.

In the neighboring Kherson province, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said that two people were wounded in Russian attacks on Saturday. A 70-year-old was wounded when a shell hit a residential building in the village of Ponyativka, while a man, 72, was hurt when a drone dropped explosives on the village of Odradokamyanka. A 70-year-old man was wounded when a shell hit a residential building in the village of Ponyativka, while a man, 72, was hurt when a drone dropped explosives on the village of Odradokamyanka. A 70-year-old man was wounded when a shell hit a residential building in the village of Ponyativka, while a man, 72, was hurt when a drone dropped explosives on the village of Odradokamyanka. A 70-year-old man was wounded when a shell hit a residential building in the village of Ponyativka, while a man, 72, was hurt when a drone dropped explosives on the village of Odradokamyanka.

On Ukraine's Black Sea coast, the city of Odesa opened several beaches for the first time since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Odesa Gov. Oleh Kiper said that six beaches were open, but he stressed that accessing beaches during air raid alerts was forbidden. The strategic port and key hub for exporting grain has been subject to repeated missile and drone attacks — particularly since Moscow canceled a landmark grain deal last month amid Kyiv's grinding efforts to retake its occupied territories — while Russian mines have regularly washed up on the city's beaches.

Rally against Fukushima wastewater release plan

SEOUL (Agencies): Hundreds of South Korean activists have gathered in central Seoul to protest against Japan's plan to release treated radioactive water from the tsunami-wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean. Japan's Asahi Shimbun daily reported earlier this week that the country plans to start releasing the water into the ocean as early as late August, citing unidentified government sources.

"If it is discarded, radioactive substances contained in the contaminated water will eventually destroy the marine ecosystem," said Choi Kyoungsook of Korea Radiation Watch, an activist group that organised the protest on Saturday. "We are opposed... because we believe the sea is not just for the Japanese government, but for all of us and for mankind." Hundreds of protesters held up signs saying "Keep It Inland" and "Protect the Pacific Ocean!" while singing songs and listening to rally organisers.

Japan's nuclear regulator last month granted approval for plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings (TEPCO) to start releasing the water, which Japan and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said is safe but nearby countries fear may contaminate food. US President Joe Biden will meet Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol for a trilateral summit on August 18.