

Two shot dead in Tank
F.P. Report
TANK: Ex Nazim Habibullah Mehsud, brother of former Inspector General Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Salahuddin Mehsud was shot-dead by unknown gunmen here Friday. According to police, Habibullah Mehsud was going to his village from Tank city when his vehicle was ambushed by unknown gunmen near Pathrail village.

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PTI leader arrested

LAHORE (INP): Lahore police arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Nishtar Town senior vice president Asif Jutt in a morning raid on his house in Township on Friday. The police took Asif Jutt to the Township police station. His family claimed that the police did not have an arrest warrant for the arrest of Asif Jutt. "The arrest of workers on political grounds is not good."

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with Beat Reporters.

Sindh PA dissolved as governor signs summary

KARACHI (Agencies): Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Friday 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.

"The summary of dissolution of Sindh Provincial Assembly has been signed," the governor tweeted. After the dissolution of the PA, the Sindh cabinet has also been dissolved while CM Murad will continue holding his post till a caretaker successor is not appointed. While confirming the development, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab took to X — formerly known as Twitter — said the Sindh governor has dissolved the provincial assembly on the advice of the chief minister. "[The] summary has been approved & notification is being issued shortly."

It is pertinent to mention here that the first session of the provincial assembly was held on August 13, 2018, and its five-year constitution term will end on August 12, 2023 (today). "The Sindh CM has signed the summary for dissolution of the provincial assembly and left for the Governor House [for his assent]," according to official sources.

Consultations between the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and opposition parties over the appointment of a caretaker chief minister are currently underway. The well-informed sources said that the ruling party of Sindh is mulling to propose the name of Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar for the slot of interim CM.

Earlier, reports about appointing Muntaz Ali Shah as the caretaker chief executive were also surfaced in the media. However, the opposition had floated the names of Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui and Younus Dagha for the slot. During a consultative meeting, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) had discussed the name of Dr Safdar Ali Abbasi for the coveted slot.

Once the provincial assembly is dissolved, the government will require a caretaker setup, irrespective of whether or not the governor approves the summary undersigned by the chief minister. The

assembly will stand dissolved in the next 48 hours as per the Constitution even if the governor does not approve it.

Contrary to the practice in other countries, the Constitution of Pakistan stipulates that a caretaker government will have to be sworn in till a new government is elected by the people. Article 224 of the Constitution explains the process of appointment of a caretaker government at the centre and provinces. Until the formation of a caretaker government, Murad will continue his duties as the CM albeit for a few days.

It is only incumbent Sindh Assembly Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani, out of all elected representatives, who will hold his position until the newly-elected lawmakers take an oath and elect his replacement. For the formation of a caretaker government, CM Murad will write to the leader of the opposition in the Sindh Assembly, within 48 hours of the dissolution of the assembly, seeking three names for the caretaker chief minister and will suggest three names himself. If an impasse, between the two leaders, lasts for three days, then the speaker will form a committee comprising six members of the outgoing assembly with equal representation from the treasury and the opposition.

To the committee, the CM and the leader of the opposition will forward two nominees each. The committee then will have three days to evolve consensus on one name. If that fails as well then the names of the nominees will be referred to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for a final decision within two days. The selected nominee will perform his/her duties as the interim CM until the formation of a new government in the province. The caretaker chief executive also has the power to induct his own cabinet. Following the placement of a caretaker chief minister, the ECP is bound to carry out general elections in the province within 90 days. The electoral body can hold polls within 22 to 45 days because constitutionally it requires at least 22 days to scrutinise the nomination papers of the candidates. The candidates will be given 29 to 30 days to run the election campaign.

PHC orders submission of record in 3MPO arrest

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Fazal Subhan and Justice Shahid Khan directed submission of record regarding arrest of former Federal Minister Murad Saeed father under section 3 of Maintenance of Public order (3MPO), on Friday.

The counsel for petitioner Alam Khan Adenzai advocate argued that Saeed Khan father of former federal minister was arrested under 3MPO on 5th August despite his apolitical role in the family for political victimization.

The counsel argued that court ordered competent authorities for submission of record in this regard but no veil which has caused delay in court proceedings. However, Justice Fazal Subhan observed that it is last chance for submission of reply otherwise court will decide the case on next hearing fixed on 15th August.

Meanwhile, PHC has redirected government to provide record of cases registered against former Member National Assembly Mujahid Ali Khan till 15th August and adjourned further hearing. The counsel for petitioner Alam Khan Adenzai and Shah Faisal Ottmankhel advocates requested for provision of record while added that former MNA wants to appear before court but it is fear of his arrest by police.

The counsel argued that on previous hearing court has ordered submission of record but to no veil. However, Additional Advocate General Danyal Asad Chamkani informed that comments had submitted before PHC last day. Although, PHC observed that reply isn't available on court's file while redirected submission of record and adjourned further hearing till 15th August.

Health of PM's wife worsens

LAHORE (INP): Health of First Lady Nusrat Shehbaz, wife of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, deteriorated at a Lahore hospital on Friday.

Nusrat Shehbaz has been under treatment at Ittefaq Hospital for the last three days. The prime minister has arrived in Lahore from Islamabad on an emergency basis to visit Nusrat Shehbaz. The two sons of the prime minister, Hamza Shehbaz and Suleiman Shehbaz, are also present in the hospital.

Two terrorists killed in Kech operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted a successful intelligence based operation against terrorists in Mazaband Range area of District Kech, Balochistan on 10-11 August 2023.

During the operation, 2x terrorists were sent to hell and 1x terrorist got injured besides recovery of a large cache of arms and ammunition. The killed Terrorists were involved in targeting of innocent civilians and law enforcement agencies. Security Forces of Pakistan remain committed towards eliminating menace of terrorism and thwart nefarious designs of the enemies of Pakistan at all costs.

The Frontier Post

Decision on caretaker PM likely today

PM says no restriction on Nawaz after completing 5-year disqualification

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed the hope that the decision on name of caretaker prime minister would be finalised by Saturday.

The prime minister, in a farewell interaction with the PM beat reporters here, said he would meet the heads of coalition parties on Friday night to discuss the matter which would follow his meeting with Leader of the Opposition Raja Riaz on Friday or Saturday.

He explained that in case of their inability to evolve consensus on a single name, the matter would be referred to the parliamentary committee with a mandate to dispose it of within three days. In case of no agreement at that committee level, the matter would be taken up by the Election Commission who would have to take the final decision within two days.

Responding to a question about the letter written by President Arif Alvi to him and the opposition leader to finalise the name by August 12, the prime minister said the procedure was very clear in the constitution. He said the 16 months of his stint were the most difficult time of his 38-year political career. However, consequent to the teamwork and efforts of all the stakeholders made the government achieve success on different fronts.

He said the government machinery worked round the clock during the floods and Rs100 billion was disbursed by the previous government, besides the ones distributed by the provinces and the relevant departments. He said the agreement with the IMF was a great challenge that was surmounted by the team's efforts otherwise, the country could have faced chaos.

Recounting his government's success at the diplomatic front, the prime

minister said they had improved the ties with friendly countries which were strained during the previous government through baseless allegations. He said the inflation had touched 12.55 which was just 3.5% during the Nawaz Sharif's tenure.

He said the government had to spend \$2 billion to import wheat following the reduced production. Without naming the news story about the cipher, the prime minister said, "What happened yesterday has exposed everything." He said the oil prices were not in the government's control; however, they passed on the impact whenever there was any decline. He told the newsmen that the government had put in place a mechanism in the form of Special Investment Facilitation Council which was a vision for country's progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also said there was no restriction on Pakistan Muslim League-N supremo Nawaz Sharif to contest the election as he had completed his five-year disqualification period.

"As far as Nawaz Sharif is concerned, that law is in the field now under which the maximum disqualification period is five years. There is no restriction on Nawaz Sharif as he has completed his five-year disqualification," the prime minister said in an interview with a private television channel (Samaa News). He said the new law promulgated by the Parliament had overruled the previous law which the Supreme Court has not yet annulled.

"Inshallah, I am sure that he will return by next month... He will face the law. The nation will receive him warmly... He will run the election campaign and all of us will be with him," he stated. Commenting about the Supreme Court's decision on the

Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023, the prime minister said the legislature had all the powers of lawmaking.

"This is the first time in the history. I have not seen it happening anywhere in the world that legislation is stopped in anticipation," he remarked and said the legislation was the job of Parliament, not the Supreme Court. Regarding the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief, he said the court would decide his fate as he had no role in that regard. However, he said the NAB-Niazi nexus victimised him and his family, Nawaz Sharif and his daughter, and sister of Asif Ali Zardari when they were also denied bail.

Contrarily, the PTI government obtained stay orders in the cases of the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit), wheat and sugar scandals. He told the interviewer that inflation touched 12.5% during the previous government which stood at just 3.5% during Nawaz Sharif's tenure. Prime Minister Shehbaz said his government reduced oil prices based on international rates after regular reviews, but had to increase them due to global market fluctuations.

He said the government spent Rs 40-50 billion for distributing free flour during Ramadan to support the poor. Additionally, it also provided cross-subsidy to those consuming up to 200 units of electricity per month. However, he said, it was unrealistic to expect economic growth amidst incidents like the one on May 9, which was treason against Pakistan, the Pakistan Army, and the Chief of the Army Staff." To a question, he said the controversy over the appointment of the army chief was not a positive tradition. In other countries, such appointments were not publicized.

(Continued on Back Page)

KP CM stresses on civil servants to work tirelessly for people's welfare

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan here Friday stressed on public servants to work tirelessly for resolution of people's problems and their welfare.

Addressing the completion of 33rd Senior Management Course (SMC) ceremony as a chief guest here at National Institute of Management (NIM), the caretaker chief minister said that great responsibilities rest on public servants by adopting highest standards of professionalism, management skills and work with utmost dedication imperative for swift resolution of people's problems and welfare of masses.

Congratulating the 34 passed out officers of the SMC, the chief minister said that public servants and officers could not afford leniency in dispensation of official duties. He directed them to decide cases swiftly on merit and treat general public politely.

He said Pakistan had been created



after a lot of sacrifices by our forefathers and the country's problems could be addressed by taking guidance from the teachings of the father of the nation, Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said Pakistan could achieve all heights of success if the entire nation strictly acts on the guiding principles of unity, faith and discipline of the great Quaid.

The Chief Minister said the civil servants must rise above political and ethnic affiliations for effective implementation of the constitution, rule of law and achievement of economic development goals. He said civil servants should modify their attitudes, skills and knowledge to tackle the modern management challenges, peoples issues and ensure good gov-

ernance. Later, certificates were distributed among the officers upon successful completion of the course. The chief minister laid foundation stones of different projects in the institute and planted sapling. The chief minister handed Rs50 million cheque for different development projects to NIM authorities.

Besides others, the function was attended by Director General NIM Captain Retd Usman Gul, Chief Instructor Tariq Bakhtair, Lt Gen Retd Muntaz Gul and senior officials of NIM, Peshawar. Upon arrival, the caretaker chief Azam Khan was welcomed by the Director General NIM, Captain Retd Usman Gul and other senior officers of the institute.

Pak's remittances drop by 19% to \$2b in July

KARACHI (Agencies): Remittances to Pakistan have dropped by 19.3% year-on-year to \$2 billion in the first month of the current fiscal year, according to data released by the central bank on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the remittance inflows have also witnessed a reduction of 7.3% on a month-on-month basis. The News reported. The country, in July, received \$2.2 billion in remittances from Pakistanis living abroad. Last month, the remittance inflow was mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$486.7 million), United Arab Emirates (\$315.1 million), the United Kingdom (\$305.7 million), and the United States of America (\$238.1 million), respectively.

Analysts said they expected a decline in remittances in July, while was likely to see more inflow following Eid ul Adha in June, as Pakistani expatriates sent more cash home to buy sacrificial animals. Additionally, it appears that remittance inflows were switched to the grey market because the exchange rate for dollars there was better.

"In my view as this was the month after Eid ul Adha, therefore flows were dry. Some Pakistanis are using unofficial channels for the transfer of money," said Samiullah Tariq, the head of research at Pak-Kuwait Investment Company.

"Persistent devaluation is discouraging investment by overseas Pakistanis," Tariq added. The release of the remittances statistics came after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last month approved a new \$3 billion bailout for the faltering economy of the nation, which was dangerously near to defaulting on its debt. The governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmad, at the monetary policy briefing last month said that the SBP is making sure it will abide by the requirement that the average difference between the interbank and open market exchange rate does not exceed 1.25%, as well as any other conditions outlined in the agreement with the IMF.

"The level to which the remittances have dropped is worrisome. There is certainly an element of grey channels offering higher rates,"

said Fahad Rauf, the head of research at Ismail Iqbal Securities. "SBP has also proposed certain changes in incentive schemes to attract more remittances like increasing the reimbursement rate to Saudi Riyal 30/\$100 which is a 50% increase," Rauf said. He believes the SBP's efforts and the narrow gap between the official US dollar rate and grey channels would be critical in determining remittances trajectory.

The SBP, in its latest monetary policy statement, expects the current account deficit to be in the range of 0.5 to 1.5% of gross domestic product in fiscal year 2024. This assessment takes into account the impact of evolving domestic and global economic conditions. The SBP expects that the current outlook for global commodity prices along with moderate domestic economic recovery will keep the imports range-bound.

"On the financing side, the prospects of multilateral and bilateral inflows have considerably improved after the IMF stand-by arrangement," it said.

Nawaz returns to London after Europe tour

LONDON (Agencies): Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif returned to London on Thursday after concluding his tour of Europe. Nawaz Sharif had left London for Dubai on June 24 where he held important meetings with top leadership of his party. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari also held meeting with Nawaz Sharif in Dubai.

The PML-N leader left for Italy from Dubai on July 28. He also visited Switzerland and Germany after completing his visit to Italy. According to sources, Nawaz Sharif is expected to meet several political figures at his London residence in the next few days. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with other top PML-N leaders will also travel to London to meet Nawaz Sharif. Sources also informed that Nawaz Sharif will return to Pakistan next month.

SC strikes down review of judgements law

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a unanimous verdict on Friday, the apex court ruled that the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 was "unconstitutional", dampening the hopes of ex-PM Nawaz Sharif and Jahangir Tareen who were seeking to challenge their lifetime disqualifications.

Both Nawaz and Tareen were disqualified under Article 62 of the Constitution by the SC. Had the verdict today been in favour of the petitions, both leaders would have gotten an opportunity to challenge their disqualifications, keeping in view their political ambitions amid the upcoming general elections in the country following the completion of the tenure of the National Assembly.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar had heard multiple petitions challenging the law, enacted in late May. Ghulam Mohiuddin, Zaman Khan Vardak, the Jurists Foundation, through its CEO Riaz Hanif Rahi, and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had challenged the vires of the act.

Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan had asked the court — during earlier hearings of the case — to dismiss the pleas, explaining that it broadens the court's jurisdiction and does not curb its powers. However, PTI lawyer Ali Zafar, on behalf of the party's Secretary General Omar Ayub, had maintained that a

change in the apex's powers could not be made through legislation alone and required a constitutional amendment.

On June 19 after six hearings — from June 7 to June 19 — the bench reserved its verdict. The CJP today read out the decision in the presence of the AGP, petitioners, and a large number of lawyers. "The Supreme Court Review Act is against the Constitution," CJP Bandial said, adding that the verdict was passed unanimously.

The detailed 87-page long order struck down the Act as null and void and of no legal consequence. It said the Act is "repugnant to and ultra vires the Constitution [...] being beyond the legislative competence of the Parliament." Addressing the questions surrounding the maintainability of the petitions, the order stated: "Article 184 of the 1973 Constitution confers original jurisdiction on the Supreme Court."

It further pointed out that "since the independence of the judiciary is a recognized salient feature of the 1973 Constitution and provisions of the 2023 Act prima facie appear to affect such independence, the instant Petitions raise questions of public importance within the contemplation of Article 184(3) of the Constitution." "Further, any intrusion by any organ of the State in the independence of judiciary affects every citizen of the country and is therefore a question of great public importance," it added. Moreover, the order said that the argument raised to the effect that the petition-

ers ought to have approached the high court under Article 199, was "misconceived".

"This court has the unique constitutional mandate under Article 184(3) to directly entertain matters related to enforcement of fundamental rights which raise questions of public importance," the order said. The order added that questions of public importance concerning the enforcement of fundamental rights can directly be raised by the Supreme Court.

Adding that the protection of fundamental rights was a duty of the judiciary, the order stated: "The 2023 Act is an intrusion in the basic and fundamental feature of the Constitution namely the independence of the judiciary directly and undisputedly affects fundamental rights of citizens." The order also brushed aside the AGP's argument that no appeal or review is available against a judgment or order passed by this Court under Article 184(3), and the 2023 Act addressed such "mischief". Termining this argument "flawed", the order stated that considering the process followed by the court in passing such orders, "nothing was farther than the truth."

The order further stated: "Parliament cannot legislate regarding any matter relating to jurisdiction and powers of the Supreme Court." Moreover, the bench in its order contended that "any legislation ... under the garb of 'enlargement of [the] jurisdiction of the Supreme Court', is indisputably an intrusion in the independence of the judiciary."



PESHAWAR: President of Ahle Sunnat Waljamat Maulana Mufti Najeeb Ullah Farooqi distributing sweets to celebrate passage of Namos-e-Sahaba Bill. — F.P. photo

Excise Police seized 216 kg hashish

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In various operations, the Excise Department recovered 216 kg of hashish, 2500 heroin filled tokens, 365 grams of ice and succeeded in arresting 04 drug smugglers on Friday, says a spokesman of the Excise Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here.

The first operation was conducted by SHO Thana Excise Mardan wherein an attempt to smuggle large quantities of drugs to Punjab near Motorway Mardan failed. The Excise Police also recovered 180000 grams (180 kg) hashish from motor vehicles.

Another action was taken by Excise Intelligence Bureau EIB-1 in Peshawar and during operation on Peshawar Motorway H Gol Chowk towards Islamabad, 36 kg hashish was recovered.

After the recovery the Accused smuggler was arrested and a case has been registered with further investigation underway, the spokesman said.

Likewise, the third operation was conducted by the Special Squad Narcotics Control Wing with the main operative of the group that supplied drugs to the students and youth of educational institutions was arrested.

A total of 2500 heroin-filled tokens recovered from a drug dealer named Shah Khalid and further investigation and action started against other accused of the group. The accused was smuggling huge amounts of heroin-laden tokens from Jamrud to Peshawar, the Excise spokesman said.

In another operation Excise Police Station Abbottabad Hazara has recovered 365 grams of ice, two suspects arrested and the action was taken at Osmanabad Road Abbottabad with a case has been registered in Hazara Excise Police Station for further investigation and legal action.

Over 1.2m children vaccinated against polio

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In the first three days of the polio vaccination campaign in high-risk districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, health workers have administered polio drops to 1,286,202 children. The health department has set a target of vaccinating more than 2.4 million children in these districts against the crippling disease.

According to media reports, so far, the campaign has been successful in reaching most children in the target areas. However, there have been some cases of parents refusing to allow their children to be vaccinated.

In total, 11,595 parents and guardians have refused to administer polio vaccination to their children. The highest number of refusal cases was reported from Bannu (6,086), followed by Charsadda (933), Hangu (200), Kohat (890), Nowshera (694), North Waziristan (2,738), Dir Lower (1), Haripur (25), Mardan (2), and Swabi (26).

The health department said that so far 131,427 children have missed the vaccination which would be covered during the follow-up. The department has also set a target of vaccinating more than 800,000 children in Peshawar while

giving IPV shots.

The polio vaccination campaign is a critical part of efforts to eradicate the disease from Pakistan. Polio is a highly contagious disease that can cause paralysis and death. It is especially dangerous for children under the age of five. The polio vaccination campaign is essential to protect children from this devastating disease. The health department is urging parents and guardians to ensure that their children are vaccinated against polio. Polio vaccination is safe and effective. It is the best way to protect your child from this deadly disease.

Hot and humid weather with isolated rain likely

F.P. Report

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

However, isolated rain-thunderstorm associated with gusty winds is likely to occur over Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Battagram, Kohistan, Torghar, Shangla, Chitral, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mardan, Swabi and Kohat districts.

During the last 24 hours, hot, humid and partly cloudy weather occurred in most districts of the province, however rain-thunderstorm with gusty winds occurred at scattered places in Chitral, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Mardan, Peshawar, Buner, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber and Bannu districts.

Rain recorded (in mm): Kakul 19, Takht Bhai 13, Buner & Malam Jabba 09 (each), Bannu 08, Pashat Bajaur 06, Dir & Kalam 04 (each), Timergara, Khaar Bajaur, Saidu Sharif & Mamad Gut 03 (each), Mirkhani & Balakot

01(each), Tirah & Peshawar (Airport & City) Trace. The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 38/27, Chitral 36/18, Timergara 37/22, Dir 33/17, Mirkhani 38/15, Kalam 28/09, Drosh 37/22, Saidu Sharif 35/18, Pattan 38/25, Malam Jabba 23/14, Takht Bhai 37/23, Kakul 31/18, Balakot 36/23, Parachinar 27/15, Bannu 41/20, Cherat 32/19, D.I. Khan 41/27. The highest temperature recorded in the province was 41°C in Dera Ismail Khan and Bannu each.

Upgradation of old Bannu Road nearing completion

PESHAWAR (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) has been working on the dualization and up-gradation of 83 kilometer Old Bannu Road in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province which is nearing completion.

An official of NHA told APP on Friday that the project was part of Indus Highway and the first package of the project, 40 kilometer Donmail-Khurram portion was awarded to the Frontier Works Organization (FWO) at the bid price of Rs 7.132 billion. The work on the project was started in February 2018 and so far, about 68.75 percent of physical

progress has been achieved mainly due to lack of funds availability, the official added.

He said its second package, the 35 km Khurram-Karpa portion costing Rs 5.927 billion was awarded to the FWO. Its work was started in February 2018 and so far about 67.15 percent of physical progress has been achieved. The third package of Old Bannu road, 8 kilometer Gaandi Chowk-Sarai Naurang section was awarded to M/s NCC-IKAN-HRPL joint venture at the bid price of Rs 0.718 billion. Work on the package also started in February 2018 and it has already been accomplished.

Governor distributes wheelchairs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Friday distributed wheelchairs among 30 disabled students of eleven universities of the province under Prime Minister's Electric Wheelchair Scheme.

The wheelchair distribution ceremony among others was attended by Chairman Higher Education Commission, Professor Mukhtar Ahmad, Vice Chancellors of various universities, Secretary Higher Education, Aneela Durrani and students.

Addressing the ceremony, KP Governor praised courage and spirit of disabled students and said that it is responsibility of each and every society member to facilitate them in their education journey.

He said these girl and female students should be granted fee exemption by universities besides creating employment opportunities for them. He said that provision of electric wheelchairs would also instill and increase confidence in these students. Haji Ghulam Ali also praised dedication and commitment of parents that provided help to their children adding it is support of parents that enabled these disabled students to overcome difficulties and challenges in life. He also highlighted vision and efforts of Higher Education Commission to further improve education standard and to address problems of universities.

Tarbela Dam filled to maximum level

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The mega water reservoir of Tarbela was filled to its maximum level of 1550 feet above on Friday, resulting in 5.809 million acre-feet (MAF) of water in the Dam, which is a good sign for agriculture and hydel power generation in Pakistan in the days to come.

Tarbela Dam is considered an iconic project for the contribution it has been making towards the development of Pakistan by releasing the stored water for agriculture and mitigating floods and providing low-cost hydel electricity to the National Grid.

Tarbela Reservoir has a live water storage capacity of 5, 809 MAF. Besides and is the biggest electricity generating facility in Pakistan with an installed capacity of 4888 megawatts (MW), which will further increase to 6418 MW after the completion of the Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project.

As per the hydrological data, the water inflow in Kabul at Nowshera was 40900 cusecs and outflow 40900 cusecs, at Khairabad Bridge, the water inflow was 222700 cusecs and outflow 222700 cusecs, in Jhelum at Mangla, the inflow was 31500 cusecs and outflow was 10000 cusecs, in Chenab at Marala, the inflow was 83200 cusecs and outflow was 54300 cusecs.

Police of merged areas end polio duty boycott



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: After a successful round of dialogue between police officers from the settled areas and merged districts, the police in merged areas have assured to end their boycott and join the security duties with the polio teams.

Police sources informed on Friday that officers of different ranks from the merged district held a meeting with IGP KP, Akhtar Hayat Khan, CCPO, Ashfaq Anwar and others and discussed various issues.

At the meeting police officers from the merged

districts informed the KP police chief regarding issues of service structure, appointment of children of the police martyrs in police force and pension of the former Khassadar Force of the merged districts.

The police officers of the merged districts also requested the IGP KP to constitute a committee for forwarding recommendation regarding appointments of kin of the forces' martyrs and other issues of police recommended before the merger of tribal districts, to the provincial government for action.

The IGP KP on the occasion

constituted a committee under the headship of Additional Inspector General Headquarters to meet the demands of police of merged districts. He said the committee would compile the data of the children of the police martyrs and send it to the provincial government for further action. He said the committee will also take up other issues of the force. The IGP said that steps have been taken to address the issues of service structure and promotions of the merged areas' police force adding that very soon a notification in this regard would be issued.

Early consensus on position of interim's PM demanded

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Amun Taraqqi Party (ATP) chairman Muhammad Faiq Shah stressed that a consensus candidate for the position of caretaker prime minister is crucial to avoid raising questions on fair and transparent elections. The ATP chairman said deadlock on finalizing the name of interim prime minister should be removed immediately and to initiate measures for holding timely elections and address issues of inflation-stricken people on priority grounds.

Shah in a statement here on Friday said the situation is going from bad to worse with each passing. He said

the political polarization has brought stagnation everywhere.

Faiq said democracy values and culture were crushed down under feet. He said laws only passed for personal interests and politics but never made legislation for welfare and better for the poor masses.

The party leader noticed people have compelled on suicide and starvation owing the rising price-hike. He added earning livelihoods for poor families has not only made it difficult but impossible.

Shah said the right to live was snatched from people. He maintained conspicuous silence of governments and local administrations further

ther added to miseries of poor masses. The ATP chairman said this 16-month long assembly would be remembered as 'anti-democracy and anti-people'.

By making the assembly a bill-producing factory, he said the recently past NA/rulers had passed 121 bills in a day. They put 'innocent workers' behind the bars, increased the prices of electricity and flour as well. He said the rulers had come to power to lift people out of poverty but they did otherwise and made people's lives miserable. In the last week, he said the rulers not only exploited the law but also put their political opponents in jail.



PESHAWAR: Bishop Hinok Hasmat and others cutting the cake of August 14. — F.P. photo

ICP's historic role during Pakistan Movement impresses students

PESHAWAR (APP): Islamia College Peshawar (ICP), which saw independence movement, here Friday attracted a substantial number of students of different educational institutions on occasion of independence day's celebrations and paid glowing tributes to its rich services for Pakistan.

Impressed by the ICP's students historic role in mobilization of denizens of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Pakistan, the students visited different sections including Khyber Union, a debating society of the college established in pre-partition era and highly praised its great services in awakening of people for Pakistan.

Malaika Bibi, Anaya and Ibrahim Khan, a fifth, 3rd and KG grades and others students told APP that they came here to pay tributes to ICP's students and faculty members on occasion of Pakistan's 76th independence day to be celebrated with great national enthusiasm on August 14.

The students were highly impressed by its tall beautiful domes, lush-green lawns and majestic architecture. Declaring ICP's identity of Peshawar, the students said that the history of the Pakistan Movement could not be completed without mentioning the role of ICP.

Holding a torch of education for 110 years, ICP that was beautifully

illuminated with national flag hoisting, had provided a unique platform to KP's people to compete with other communities in education, civil service, economy and politics during the colonial era. Being a beautiful combination of Aligarh Movement of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Deoband School of Thoughts, ICP is a mere testimony to the greatness of its Founder, Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan.

"The idea to establish a college clicked in the minds of Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan, leader of Muslim League, and Sir George Roos-Keppel, the then Chief Commissioner of NWFP (now KP) in early 1909 when they met the Pathan students during their visit to the Muslim University Aligarh," writes ex-principal ICP, Prof G.D. Khilji in his memoirs. The students requested them either to construct a Frontier hostel at Aligarh or a college may be built for them in then NWFP (now KP). As a token, the students raised around sixty rupees and gave them to Roos Keppel to form a Frontier Hostel fund or any other project.

Later, Keppel passed the money on to Nawab Sahib. It was April 12, 1911 when philanthropists Ghulam Haider Khan, Habibullah Khan, Khushal Khan, Sethi Karim Bakhsh and Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum gath-

ered at the residence of Abdul Karim Khan Indrabai in Peshawar.

Haji Karim Bakhsh Sethi offered to build a mosque, Rahim Shah Kakakhel promised to construct a hostel and Abdul Karim Khan donated Rs 10,000. Sethi Karim Bakhsh Rs.50,000 and Nawab of Dir promised Rs100,000 for the college fund. Later, a 10-member ad-hoc college committee under the chairmanship of Colonel Muhammad Aslam Khan was set up on May 29, 1911 to table proposals for establishment of the college.

Leading Khans and Ulema were invited and seven resolutions including one to title the college as 'Darul Ulum-i-Islamia Suba-i-Sarhad' were unanimously passed. A committee was constituted to select a suitable site for the college. The proposal of a college at Wazir Bagh was rejected by Ross Keppel as he wanted to spare the place for recreation. Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum in consultation with Ross Keppel had selected the existing place for ICP. On October 1, 1913, ICP was opened with 26 students on roll and Sahibzada Khurshid was the first student who got admission and later became the Governor of then NWFP and Tipping (1913-17) was its first Principal.

"Like students of Aligarh movement who were in the vanguard of the independence movement in India,

so were the students of Islamia College, Peshawar for creation of Pakistan," said Muhammad Younas Khan, Chairman, Department of Pakistan Studies, ICP while talking to APP. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had an immense love for people of KP, ICP and visited this college in 1936, 1945 and 1948 as first Governor General of Pakistan.

In 1945, Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had received a rousing welcome at ICP where students and Muslim Students Federation (MSF) presented him Rs 8,000 as fund for Pakistan Movement. "They assured him to present 8,000 committed educated workers when he came again to this great alma-mater." Younas said, "KP people had shown an immense love for Quaid-i-Azam and that is why Muslim League secured maximum seats in the 1946 election and after that historic victory nobody could stop the independence movement from this province."

In July 1947 Referendum, Muslim League clinched landslide victory in KP by securing over 200,000 votes and its people announced to become part of Pakistan," he said. "The spirit and enthusiasm of people was historic when Quaid e Azam came to Peshawar as first governor general of Pakistan on April 12, 1948.

Peshawarities had decorated their houses, markets, vehicles and bazaars with national flags looking festive.

The great Quaid presented glowing tributes to the services of its students towards making Pakistan in these words. 'I am indeed very happy to be present here today and to have the privilege of addressing students of this great Darul Uloom, who are the future builders of Pakistan.' He reminded the students, 'we have achieved the national goal of Pakistan and now it is our collective responsibility to work hard in our respective professions with a high-level of dedication, commitment and sincerity to make it one of the greatest countries of the world.'

He advised students to develop a sound sense of discipline, character, solid academic background and devote themselves towards studies. 'Remember your government is like your own garden. Your garden flourishes by the way you look after it and the efforts that you put towards its improvement. Similarly, your government can only flourish by your patriotic, honest and constructive efforts to improve it,' he told students.

Following a gap of one year, the Government had established University of Peshawar near ICP in 1949 in line with the Quaid's vision and later two more universities UET

and Agriculture University were formed besides Pakistan Forest Institute. Younas said the great Quaid also addressed a Grand Tribal Jira at Governor House, Peshawar on April 17, 1948 and highly praised strong commitment, patriotism and support of tribesmen for Pakistan. He laid great emphasis on education and social economic development of tribesmen.

The love of Quaid-i-Azam, who became an honorary member of Khyber Union debating society of the college set up in 1936, can be judged from his "Will" written on May 30, 1939 in Bombay in which he declared ICP, Muslim University Aligarh and Sindh Madrasahat Islam, Karachi as among the inheritor of his property. Later, Quaid Trust paid Rs10,811,600 in different installments to ICP and was spent on construction of Quaid-i-Azam College of Commerce, University of Peshawar, construction of Jinnah residential quarters for employees, Jinnah College for Women and newly constructed Takbeer block at ICP. The college's clock tower, which now becomes the pride symbol of Peshawar, has for long figured on the back of Rs 1000 Currency note. ICP has now attained a status of a public sector university where students from kindergarten to PhD level are quenching their thirst for education.



In brief

Bridegroom kills three nephews F.P. Report

MIRAN SHAH: Three young-age boys were killed and two others injured when their uncle fired at them during his marriage ceremony in Chota Dattakhel Barkili area of North Waziristan, the other day. Police said the accused bridegroom started indiscriminate firing on his nephews during his marriage rituals, killing three of the children and injuring two others. The deceased children aged from 8 to 14, the police said. The injured children were shifted to Doaba Hospital, Hangu. Relatives of the accused told police that mental condition of the accused was not stable. However, he succeeded in fleeing the area after the killing spree. Police have started a search for the accused after registering a case of triple murder against him.

Marriage hall sealed

SARGODHA (INP): The health department sealed a marriage hall in Sargodha on Friday after dengue larvae were found on its premises. A team of health officials conducted a raid on the marriage hall, located in the city's Saddar area, and found larvae in several containers of water. The team also found mosquito breeding grounds in the hall's drains. The health officials sealed the hall and registered a case against the owner, Muhammad Tariq. They also advised the people to take precautionary measures against dengue, such as using mosquito nets and fogging their homes. The health department has appealed to the people to keep their surroundings clean and free of mosquito breeding grounds. They have also urged the people to report any suspected cases of dengue to the nearest health facility.

Every citizen has equal rights F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Amir Fida Paracha has said that all citizens living in the country are equally entitled to the fruits of the state and Quid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Pakistan has to be a safe country for minorities. The 1973 Constitution guarantees equal rights to minorities in Pakistan. Minorities played a special role in the establishment of Pakistan and their sacrifices cannot be forgotten. He said Islam lays special emphasis on equal and just treatment of the disadvantaged and the minorities. MD (PBM) Fida Baracha has acknowledged the role played by minorities in the development of country. He expressed these views while addressing by the Sikh community organized a function at Gurdwara Panja Sahib at Hasan Abdal in attock to pay homage to the services and sacrifices rendered by the religious minorities for the country in connection with the National Minorities Day. On this occasion, Sardar Ravinder Singh Jaggi Divisional vice president of minorities wing PPP, District President of People's Party Sardar Ashar Hayat Khan, Provincial Assembly candidate Sardar Zulfiqar Hayat Khan, Chaudhry Iftikhar, Sardar Satnam Singh, Pal Gul, Sardar Omdar Singh, Jabran Masih and others were also present. Amir Fida Paracha speaking on this occasion said that People's Party has always talked about giving equal rights to the people living in this country. Every entitled person can get medical treatment up to One Million per year from Pakistan Baitul Mal without any discrimination.



HYDERABAD: Vendor selling flags and other stuff related to Independent Day at Jail Road.

Implementation of RTI Act demanded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The action committee of the "Timergara Hospital Protect Movement" has demanded of the relevant authorities to provide it with all required information regarding the facility as per the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The demand was made during a press conference held at the Timergara press club here the other day. The committee's members Imran Takur of the ANP, Shuiab Ahmad of the JP, Shahab Ahmad of the PPP, Kalimullah and Ziaul Haq of the PTI, social activist Akbar Khan and JI Youth leader Usman complained that neither the hospital management nor the district administration wanted to share and provide the required information to the committee despite the lapse of its due period. They said the committee would soon move the RTI commission and the court as well if the required information were not provided soon.

They said that there was a need for improvement in the District Headquarters

Hospital Timergara, for which they needed proper information. They said the denial of citizens' right to information as per the law reflected the administration's apathy. They said that according to the law, citizens had the right to obtain correct information regarding the government department and its spending.

The committee members said that an application was submitted to the District Headquarters Hospital Timergara in which information regarding human, physical, financial, technical resources, management of the hospital and its services were sought. "After the fixed period of ten days, more time was requested but we were not provided with the information yet", Akbar Khan said, adding it was an irresponsible and deliberate attempt to deviate from duties.

He said the committee then under the Provincial Government's Human Rights Protection Act, 2014, submitted an application to the Deputy Commissioner, and it was brought to his knowledge that a state institution in his administration was denying

the right to information.

The committee members said that they had the support of the political elites and parties of the district as well as the support of other socio-political workers in the district. They demanded of the concerned authorities to take notice of the matter and provide them with all required information under the law for the best public interest as they believed the DHQ hospital had become a hub of issues which needed early resolution.

Youth killed: A youth identified as Samad Khan 20 s/o Arshad Khan was killed when he sustained head injury while jumping into a water pond at the Osakai hill in the jurisdiction of Ouch police station here on Friday, residents said. They said the youth wanted to take a bath in the pond and as he jumped into the pond he was hit by a hidden rock and died on the spot.

Meanwhile a 5-year old child Hashir s/o Jehangir, a resident of Samarbagh was electrocuted while playing with electric wires at home. The child was taken to the THQ Samarbagh but was declared dead.

Koki Khel tribe ends protest in Jamrud

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: After notifying the repatriation scheme of Koki Khel Temporary Displaced Persons (TDPs) to their villages in Rajgal, Tirah Valley, residents of Jamrud concluded their agitation at Bab-e-Khyber last day.

According to the notification issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Khyber office, the second phase of safe return of the TDPs to Rajgal will begin on September 16, 01, 2023 till October 30, 2023. In the same way, the third phase of repatriation will start on May, 01, 2024 and will complete on September 30, 2024.

To avoid any inconvenience necessary arrangements will be made for the return of the TDPs, the notification stated. Tribesmen of Koki Khel expressed their delight over the publicizing of the TDPs repatriation plan and said the government accepted their log lasting demand of a safe return to their homes in Rajgal, Tirah Valley for that they had set up 33 days protest camp at Bab-e-Khyber. It is important to say that almost 87218 TDPs will return to their home towns in the second and third phase of repatriation to Tirah Valley.

Man held for raping 7-year girl

CHICHAWATNI (INP): Police on Friday arrested a suspected involved in raping a seven-year-old girl. The family of victim girl hailing from suburbs of Chichawatni had lodged a complaint with police after which it arrested the suspect.

Police said that DNA report of the accused awaited after which proceeding on case would be made. Family of rape victim girl also alleged the culprit of pressuring for reconciliation. Meanwhile, Khushab police detained an accused involved in gang rape of a girl.

Ex- MNA's husband killed

HANGU (INP): Husband of former Member National Assembly (MNA) Khurshid Begum was killed in a road accident here on Friday, police said.

According to details, a car got out of control due to over speeding and rammed into a tree in Dar Samandar area of Hangu. As result of accident, husband of former MNA Khurshid Begum was killed on the spot. The body was shifted to local hospital for post-mortem.

One killed in road accident

FAISALABAD (INP): A loaded truck overturned near Khurrianwala which left a peddler dead on the spot on Friday.

Rescue-1122 sources said that a truck loaded with maize was overturned on a peddler some 3-km away from Khurrianwala towards Jarranwala road.

Safety wall near Garam Chashma to safe people

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: This year, due to torrential rains, floods in various rain drains of Chitral blocked the water channel in many places, which caused large-scale destruction wherein Garam Chashma is a dangerous junction on the road, needed to construct a safety wall to ensure safety to nearby people.

The construction of the safety wall is to protect the road and the surrounding population from the ravages of floods, but it was broken due to severe floods. In the same place, the river flows on one side, while the rainwater drain from above also floods and causes destruction. This drain gets so high that the water reaches the bridge, badly needing a protective wall to be constructed.

The protective wall on the river side that has been damaged by floods will

also be rebuilt when the water level recedes, an official of the NHA told media men. The construction of this protective wall will not only protect the houses, cultivated land and shops on the banks of the river, but this road of Garam Chashma will also be saved from further destruction, which is the only means of communication for 50,000 people, besides the university on the same road.

Hundreds of male and female students of Chitral pass in buses, their lives will no longer be in danger after the construction of the safety wall. The people of the area are very happy for the construction of this protective wall and are thankful to the NHA officials. Similarly, the students of Chitral University are also expressing happiness over it.

Locals say that during the construction of the Booni road, the contractor

had thrown huge stones and all the debris into the river, due to which the Mastuj river blocked the course of the Latkoh river at the confluence where the two rivers meet. Throwing of the big stones and debris came in the water of Mastuj river and settled in front of Latkoh river and the water of Latkoh river collected at this confluence and the entire power plant was submerged in water which is still in ruins and people are deprived of electricity.

The local people also demand to ensure the safety of people's life and property by constructing protective walls on the road side towards the river where there is a weak point. It should be noted that Chitral is a tourist district and thousands of tourists come here every year, but due to the bad condition of the roads, these tourists often face difficulties.

Students demand provision of facilities

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The students of Chandka Medical College in Larkana staged a protest in front of the press club by the All Students Federation for the provision of facilities. Addressing the protesters on this occasion, the workers of the student union Osama Nazir, Farman Ali Khoso, Saeed Ahmed Chandio and others said that the students of the universities throughout Sindh are deep in problems, but the administration there is different when they raise their voices.

They are trying to harass the students in various ways and usually the students protesting for their rights are given show-cause notices, restitution and suspension orders by the administration, which is a complete abuse and injustice, he said. Appealing to the Chief Minister, Provincial Minister for Universities and Board and Secretary including the attached officers, they said that harassment of students

in Chandka Medical College Larkana should be stopped and the issued show cause notices, restitution and suspension orders should be canceled immediately. By removing the lack of necessary facilities to the students, the corruption of the administration should be taken notice of so that the students can continue their education.

Meanwhile, the head of Jamiat Ulema Pakistan and National Unity Council of Pakistan, Dr. Abul Khair Muhammad Zubair, has said that there is no such thing as government in Sindh, lawlessness and nepotism is going on while addressing a press conference in Larkana.

The general elections are near in the country, that is why we are in the form of delegations, first in Punjab, then in Balochistan, while at this time we have reached Sindh on an organizational visit, while the PDMA government has ended, which government has imposed on the people as much as possible. The

atrocities he committed prove that he was the worst government in the history of Pakistan. He further said that the law and order situation in Sindh has become worse due to which people have been forced to migrate from Ghokki and Dharki to such an extent that innocent children are being kidnapped for ransom.

This is not the first time that a politician has been incompetent, many politicians have been incompetent before, this is the first government which was not following the decisions of the judiciary. Within the day, 52 bills have been passed by the National Assembly without any rule regulation, most of the bills included in them were not included in the agenda. But for the reasons that are visible, the government may be 90 years old, but we hope that the caretaker government will be interested in holding general and transparent elections while showing neutrality. We are in contact with other politicians in this regard.

Meeting on social interaction held

F.P. Report

DIR LOWER: Under the provincial government's policy "Interaction with Civil Society", here on Friday adhering to the directives of Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Iftikhar Ahmad, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief & Human Rights) Tariq Hussain hold a meeting regarding "Awareness Raising Campaign Against Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants and Child Protection Concerns" with District Public Prosecutor, Wajid Ali, Child Protection Officer Muhammad Tayyab.

The District Public Prosecutor and Child Protection Officer briefed the forum regarding provision of laws. The stakeholders, representatives of the civil societies shared their views and suggestions. The chair directed that for better cooperation WhatsApp group may be created and launch an awareness campaign by quoting the relevant sections of law.

The meeting was also attended by the District Officer Social Welfare, representatives of District Youth Officer and police, Akbar Khan Lala (human

right Activist, Ibrash Pasha (human right activist), representative of DEWA Organization Asad, representative of the bazaar and hotel unions.

Blind murder case traced: Two weeks ago, Balambat police station traced the blind murder and arrested the killers. Important revelations are expected from the arrested accused. The reason for the murder was that Zulf Shah Hussain wanted to marry the victim's wife, according to the details of Balambat police station.

In Lower Dir, SP Investigation Zahoar Khan, DSP Circle Syed Rahim Khan, while holding a press conference along with SHO Balambat Mehboob Shah, said that on July 27, unknown suspects attacked Usman Khan, son of Dilawar Khan, at Jim Dherai Maidan on Odigram Bypass Killed and escaped from the incident, on which the police started investigation by registering a case on the complaint. He said that the deceased Usman Khan son of Dilawar Khan from Jam Dherai Maidan, Zulf Shah Hussain son of Khan Zareen from Kotkay Maidan wanted to marry the wife of the deceased, so

he paid seven lakh rupees.

Planned the murder of the deceased Usman Khan and the alleged accused are Shahabuddin son of Awl Khan from Dhand Dher Ala Dhand District Malakand Hal District Swabi District Muhammad Azam son of Amir Badshah from Barikot Shringal Dir Bala, Nader Khan son of Rahim from Khandar Chapriyal Matta District Charsadda and He referred to Jabeen son of Aminullah fr Jan Bhatti Brawl Dir Bala Khush Muqam Rabat Lower Dir who killed the deceased Usman Khan for a few rupees. 100,000 rupees and the motorcycle and Suzuki used in the incident have been recovered, while the arrest of the accused Shah Hussain son of Khan Zarin from Kotkay Maidan will be ensured soon. The police officers said that many important revelations are expected from the arrested accused on this occasion. The police presented the four arrested accused before the media while SP Investigation Zahoar Khan announced to award certificates of appreciation and cash prizes to the police personnel for their excellent performance.

Qatar charity supported 31 individuals

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Small scale businesses which include electrician, general store and household level poultry forms have been established for the poor and needy people through provision of required toolkits, equipments and poultry birds in remote areas of Charsadda and Nowshera. Qatar Charity strives to increase people's income

through small businesses at the local level so that people can have sustainable livelihoods and live a better life. During distribution event Mr. Sajjad Khan, Coordinator Peshawar KP said that Qatar Charity is working on various development projects especially in Charsadda, Nowshera and Peshawar districts. He further added that Qatar Charity will continue to help deserving families.

Community leaders thanked Qatar Charity and donors for the distribution of packages to deserving small scale entrepreneurs in remote areas. Government officials acknowledged Qatar Charity's efforts in sustainable livelihood projects, clean drinking water projects, construction and development of schools, health, education and mosques, among other projects.

Frequent visits to salt factories directed

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Karak deputy commissioner Ahmad Zeb has asked the officials of his administration and Food Safety and Halal Food Authority to pay frequent visits to the salt factories and outlets and seal those units involved in manufacturing non-iodised salt.

He issued these directions while chairing a meeting of district iodine deficiency disorder at his office on Friday. Among others, district police officer Sajjad Ahmad, additional DC Malik Mehmood Ahmad and officials of line departments were in attendance.

Nutrient International (NI) Salt Iodisation

Programme provincial chief Sadiq Hussain and zonal chief Mussawer Atta briefed the meeting about the usefulness of iodised salt. Highlighting the importance of regular intake of the commodity, they said that there was the dire need to educate people especially women about the usefulness of iodised salt.

The experts said that the use of iodised salt in daily diet also helped to overcome various diseases and disorders in human beings including goiter, dwarfism, miscarriages, mental retardation and physical growth.

Declaring iodine deficiency a major public health problem in the country, they urged the need for true implementation of rel-

evant laws regarding production and sale of non-iodised salt. The deputy commissioner asked the price magistrates and FS&HFA officials to initiate stern legal action against shopkeepers if they were found involved in selling non-iodised salt at their outlets.

The district administration will approach religious scholars and clerics through the district khat-e-teb to seek their help for mass awareness about the usefulness of iodised salt", he maintained. He also directed the officials of the education department to conduct awareness activities about the usefulness of the commodity in schools.

Two die in motorcycles' collision

F.P. Report

CHIRAL: At two people were killed and another injured when two motorcycles collided head on in Sayyed Abad area of Lower Chitral on Friday.

Rescue 1122 said, information regarding collision of the motorcycles was received and the team after reaching the site, shifted three injured of the mishap to the DHQ hospital.

It said that two of the injured died at the hospital due to their severe wounds. The injured was later shifted to THQ Hospital Drosch. The dead belonged to the Gung area of Lower Chitral, the rescue officials said. The bikes collided due to over speeding on bumpy road.

NHA to rebuild damaged safety wall in Chitral: Heavy rains and floods have caused widespread damage in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A safety wall that was built to

protect the road and surrounding population from the ravages of floods has been damaged.

According to the media reports, the wall is located at Garam Chashma, a dangerous junction on the road. The NHA has said that the wall will be rebuilt when the water level recedes. The destruction caused by the floods is extensive. Houses, cultivated land, and shops have been damaged. The road at Garam Chashma is the only means of communication for 50,000 people. Hundreds of students also travel on this road.

The construction of the safety wall will protect the road and the people who use it. Locals say that the contractor who built the Booni road threw huge stones and debris into the river. This debris blocked the course of the Latkoh river and caused a power plant to be submerged in water. The locals are demanding that protective

walls be built on the road side towards the river to ensure the safety of people's life and property. Chitral is a tourist district and thousands of tourists come here every year. The bad condition of the roads often poses a danger to tourists.

Man drowns in Haro River

ATTOCK (INP): A man drowned in River Haro of Attock in an attempt to save his drowning child. The child was saved by rescue divers.

According to details, a child fell into River Haro in Attock and in attempt to save his son, his father Mehtab Qureshi jumped into the river. The father drowned in the deep water of the river while son was saved by rescue diver. The body was also pulled out later. The body and rescue child were shifted to local hospital.



Saturday, August 12, 2023

Tropical storm weakens after leaving scattered damage in SK

SEOUL (AP): Flights and trains resumed and power was mostly restored after a tropical storm blew through South Korea, which was preparing a pop concert for 40,000 Scouts whose global Jamboree was disrupted by the weather.

Much of Khanun's damage was concentrated in the country's southern and eastern regions, where several cities and towns saw 30 to 40 centimeters (12 to 16 inches) of rain. Dozens of houses and buildings were damaged, roads were closed and at least one death was reported. Khanun had weakened by the time it arrived in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, and it blew into North Korea as a tropical depression.

South Korean officials lifted a nationwide alert over the storm and were channeling much of their administrative resources into throwing a K-pop concert at a Seoul soccer stadium as the closing event of the World Scout Jamboree. The event had been held at a coastal campsite before Khanun forced a mass relocation efforts to house the Scouts in university dormitories, government and corporate training centers and hotels in the greater Seoul region and nearby areas.

No major storm damage has been reported in Seoul, where rain was continuing through the morning. In the nearby port city of Incheon, workers responded to flooded homes and collapsed walls. In the southern inland city of Daegu, a 67-year-old



man found near a bloated stream was later pronounced dead and workers were still searching for another person who was swept into a stream while using a wheelchair. In Gangwon province, a mountainous region on the east coast that was drenched with some of Khanun's heaviest rain, emergency workers in the seaside cities of Gangneung and Sokcho waded across rivers of brown, thigh-high water covering what used to be streets.

Nearly 16,000 people, mostly in southern regions, had been forced to evacuate from the storm but around 9,700 have returned home, according to the Ministry of the Interior and

Safety. The storm damaged or destroyed at least 64 roads and damaged around 50 homes and buildings. Power was restored to most of the 46,484 homes that lost electricity, the ministry said. Authorities were continuing to restrict access to nearly 700 motorways as rain continued to fall, but there weren't any cancellations in commercial flights scheduled. North Korea's state media had no immediate reports about damage caused by the storm. State media has previously described nationwide efforts to strengthen the monitoring of roads, railways, bridges and coastlines, and to employ measures to protect factory machines and crops.

Panama flagged tanker catches fire

DUBAI (Reuters): A Panama-flagged tanker called White Pearl has caught fire near Assaluyeh on Iran's Gulf coast, Iranian state media reported, adding that all crew members were safe. "Twenty-two of the ship's crew have been rescued by Iranian rescue teams after the ship's captain requested assistance from the port authorities," state TV quoted a local ports official as saying.

The official said that the tanker, carrying 40,000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas, had experienced "a problem in the engine room due to a fire." Panama's vessel registry, the world's largest, has withdrawn its flag from 136 ships linked to Iran's state oil company in the last four years, the country's maritime authority said in January.

Yemeni mily commander, 3 killed in attack

SANAA (AP): A suspected al-Qaida attack in southern Yemen killed a military commander and three soldiers from a secessionist group, according to the group's leader, security officials, and an eyewitness. Commander Abd al-Latif al-Sayyid and the three soldiers from the Security Belt Forces, a fighting group loyal to Yemen's secessionist Southern Transitional Council, were killed in an explosion while traveling in a convoy through southern Abyan province, three security officials and the witness said.

They blamed al-Qaida's branch in Yemen - known as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula - for the attack but provided no further details. All spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. In a obituary statement issued by the head of the secessionist council, Aydarous al-Zubaidi said the separatist force was mourning the loss of al-Sayyid and the three fighters "who were touched by the hands of treachery and terrorism." The Southern Transitional Council is backed by the United Arab Emirates and controls most of Yemen's south. It is at odds with the internationally recognized government, and has repeatedly called for the south Arabian country to be split into two states, as it was between 1967 and 1990.

Al-Qaida did not immediately claim responsibility for attack but the militant group is active in Abyan province and regularly carries out ambushes against Yemeni forces. Al-Qaida's branch in Yemen is seen as one of the more dangerous branches of the terror network. Earlier this month, security officials told The Associated Press that al-Qaida militants killed five troops from the Southern Armed Forces, a large force loyal to the Southern Transitional Council. And last month, suspected al-Qaida militants clashed with forces of the secessionist council in the province of Shabwa. At least two troops and one militant were killed. Yemen's ruinous civil war began in 2014 when the Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized the capital of Sanaa and much of northern Yemen and forced the government into exile.

Iran moves Americans to house arrest

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran has moved five Americans from jail to house arrest, officials and family members said, in the first step of a delicate deal that would unfreeze billions of dollars in Iranian funds and allow the prisoners to leave the Islamic republic. The progress on the prisoners -- one of them detained for nearly eight years -- comes after quiet, exhaustive diplomacy between the longtime adversaries whose separate talks on restoring a nuclear deal broke down.

"My belief is that this is the beginning of the end of their nightmare, and the nightmare that their families have experienced," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters. Sources familiar with the negotiations said the next step would be the transfer of \$6 billion in Iranian oil revenue frozen in South Korea to a special account in Qatar which Iran could access only for humanitarian purchases such as food and medicine. Iran described the deal as a prisoner swap, with the state-run IRNA agency quoting Tehran's mission to the United Nations as saying that each country will be "granting amnesty and releasing five prisoners." If all goes as planned, the American prisoners could leave Iran sometime in September, one source said on condition of anonymity.

Four of the prisoners -- Siamak Namazi, Emad Sharqi, Morad Tahbaz and another who preferred to remain anonymous -- were taken out of Tehran's notorious Evin prison, a day after President Joe Biden's administration informed their families of the deal. The four were escorted to a hotel where they will remain held under guard, a lawyer for one of the prisoners said. Sources said that a fifth American, a woman, is also part of the discussions and had already been moved in recent weeks to house arrest. "While this is a positive change, we will not rest until Siamak and others are back home; we continue to count the days until this can happen," Babak Namazi, Siamak's brother, said in a statement. At the center of discussions has been the unblocking of the \$6 billion that Iran earned selling oil to South Korea. Seoul blocked the funds to comply with US sanctions imposed under former president Donald Trump that hit the Iranian economy hard. While stressing that the arrangement was not final, sources said the funds would be converted from won to euros and administered by Qatar, which played a key mediatory role. No funds would be transferred directly to Iran.

Blinken made clear that the money already belonged to Iran and said, "Iran

will not be receiving any sanctions relief." "Iran's own funds would be used and transferred to restricted accounts such that the monies can only be used for humanitarian purposes," he said. Iranian state media said the prisoners would only be released once the money was deposited. Former president Barack Obama faced heated criticism from his Republican opponents for sending \$400 million in cash -- also funds belonging to Iran -- as he secured the release of a previous batch of prisoners while concluding a landmark nuclear accord with Tehran in 2015.

Republicans quickly assailed Biden for the latest deal, saying it would ease budgetary pressure on Iran. Senator Tom Cotton, known for his hawkish views on Iran, accused Biden of a "craven act of appeasement (that) will only embolden the ayatollahs to take more hostages." There was no indication the prisoner deal would spur movement on restoring the nuclear accord, from which Trump pulled out. Biden has bluntly dismissed prospects of reviving the 2015 agreement in the wake of a crackdown by Iran's clerical leaders and mass protests led by women.

The United States has repeatedly negotiated with adversaries to free American prisoners, whose plights can draw wide public attention. The Biden administration has brokered prisoner swaps with Russia despite refusing most high-level contact with Moscow since its invasion of Ukraine. All five US citizens in the deal are of Iranian descent. Iran does not recognize dual nationality and has had hostile relations with the United States since the 1979 Islamic revolution toppled the pro-Western shah. Namazi, a businessman, was arrested in October 2015. He was accused of spying on what his family calls laughable evidence, such as past affiliations with US think tanks. His father, former UNICEF official Baqer Namazi, was himself arrested as he went to help his son but was finally allowed to leave last year as his health deteriorated.

Tahbaz, who promoted wildlife preservation in Iran, was arrested alongside fellow environmentalists in January 2018 and sentenced to 10 years for "conspiring with America." Tahbaz is a triple national who also holds a British passport. He was briefly freed to house arrest last year during a deal with Britain that led to the freedom of two other UK nationals including aid worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe. Sharqi is a venture capitalist who was also sentenced to 10 years on spying charges.

Hezbollah member buried after deadly clashes over munitions truck

BEIRUT (AFP): Lebanon's Hezbollah movement buried one of its members who was killed a day earlier when a truck carrying ammunition belonging to the Iran-backed group overturned near Beirut, sparking clashes. Hundreds turned out for the funeral of Ahmad Ali Kassas in Beirut's southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold, an AFP photographer said, adding that heavy gunfire rang out during the procession.

The office of Lebanon's Defence Minister Maurice Slim said a bullet hit the minister's car as it passed through a district near the area, without harming him. Ruling out an assassination attempt, a military source and a security source told AFP on condition of

anonymity that Slim's vehicle was hit by "a stray bullet" whose origin was unidentified. The Lebanese army said it seized munitions from a Hezbollah truck that had overturned in the town of Kahale near Beirut, leading to deadly clashes between Christian residents and members of the powerful Shiite Muslim group. The violence erupted after the accident in the town located in the mountains east of the Lebanese capital, on the road linking it to the Bekaa Valley bordering Syria. Kahale mayor Abboud Abi Khalil told AFP that residents had surrounded the truck demanding to know what was inside, before Hezbollah members escorting it opened fire and killed one of them.

Hezbollah said one of its members was shot and later died of his wounds. "A number of armed men... present in the area gathered and attacked" those escorting the truck, a Hezbollah statement said. "They began by throwing rocks, and then opened fire," the group added. Hezbollah supporters posted pictures on social media showing Kassas dressed in military fatigues in Syria, where Hezbollah has been fighting on the side of President Bashar al-Assad in the country's civil war that erupted in 2011. The army confirmed in a statement that two people had been killed and said ammunition had been seized from the truck. "The cargo of the truck has

been transported to a military centre, and an investigation has been opened by the competent judicial authorities," it added.

The army said its troops had removed the truck at dawn and reopened the Beirut-Damascus road which Kahale residents had blocked in protest. Hezbollah is the only Lebanese faction that kept its weapons after the end of the 1975-1990 civil war. It is considered a "terrorist" organisation by many Western governments. In August 2021, angry residents of a mainly Druze village in southern Lebanon stopped a truck carrying a rocket launcher used by Hezbollah in an attack on Israel, accusing the Shiite movement of endangering civilian lives.

Despite 'weak' accord, Amazon summit bolsters call for rich to pay up

BELEM, Brazil (Reuters): Amazon rainforest nations emerged from a summit this week with a stronger hand to play at upcoming United Nations climate talks, despite the meeting's lackluster final agreement, according to environmental groups. In a joint statement issued, the Amazon countries dashed expectations for a shared 2030 target to eliminate deforestation, with the accord lacking specific plans to tackle illegal gold mining or provisions for ending oil drilling in the region.

But they united around a demand for rich countries to pay for forest conservation, acknowledging an historic responsibility for climate change - a call joined by other rainforest peers, including Indonesia, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo and others in a second accord.

"It's not Brazil that needs money. It's not Colombia that needs money. It's not Venezuela. It's nature that industrial development polluted over 200 years," Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva told reporters at the close of the summit. "So (developed nations) now need to pay their part to restore a part of what they destroyed."

Lula will take that message on the road this year at the G20, United Nations General Assembly and UN COP28 climate summit. The Brazilian nonprofit Amazon Environmental Research Institute (Ipam) said the declaration fell short by leaving out a hard target to end deforestation, but it was still important to show a united front among rainforest nations. "Being united gives strength in negotiations," said André Guimarães, Ipam's execu-

tive director, in a statement.

Marcio Astrini, head of the nonprofit Climate Observatory, called the declaration "very weak." But he also applauded the symbolism of the eight Amazon countries meeting together for the first time in 14 years and joining their voices with the world's other major rainforests. Lula in particular left the summit as a stronger voice for this bloc, Astrini said. Although he could not convince Bolivia and Venezuela to match Brazil's commitment to ending deforestation by 2030, his public efforts are a powerful signal to rich countries, which he has pressed for financial contributions, Astrini added.

Rainforest nations have a stronger unified voice after the meeting, at least on paper, said Luis Roman,

a representative of non-profit WWF Peru. Now much will hinge on follow-up meetings to discuss implementing the priorities laid out in declarations, such as proposals for funding conservation, he said. Colombia's Environment Minister Susana Muhamad said in a statement after the meeting that the alliance's foreign ministers must come together and make "concrete plans." Rainforest nations thus far have focused on past funding commitments. The final joint statement demanded that developed countries make good on a promise to deliver \$100 billion annually in climate financing to poorer nations, after missing their 2020 deadline. They also called for rich nations to meet a pledge to provide \$200 billion per year in biodiversity conservation funding by 2030.

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Six Western nations marked the 15th anniversary of Russia's takeover of 20% of Georgia's territory by demanding that Moscow return the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions. A joint statement by the six members of the UN Security Council - the United States, United Kingdom, France, Albania, Japan and Malta - said Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 "marked a more aggressive trend" in its policy toward its neighbors, something being witnessed today in Ukraine.

The statement, following closed council consultations on Georgia, said the six countries "are resolute" in reaffirming the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity "within its internationally recognized borders." In August 2008, Russia fought a brief war with Georgia, which had made a botched attempt to regain control over the breakaway province of South Ossetia. Moscow then recognized the independence of South Ossetia and another breakaway Georgian province,

Abkhazia, and set up military bases there. The statement, read by Albanian Ambassador Ferit Hoxha outside the Security Council surrounded by diplomats from the five other countries, condemned Russia's "brutal invasion" and continued occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and its "steps toward annexation of these Georgian regions." The Western nations also reiterated their condemnation of Moscow for "continuous provocations which go in parallel with the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine."

They pointed to Russia's continued military drills in Georgia's territory, sea and airspace as well as its erection of barbed wire fences and other barriers, its unlawful detentions and abductions of local people, discrimination against ethnic Georgians, and deliberate damage to Georgian cultural heritage. The six countries said the Russia-Georgia conflict should be resolved peacefully based on international law, including the UN Charter, which

requires every country's territorial integrity be recognized, "also noting the context of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine." Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyansky, called the Western statement "hypocrisy" in a tweet, saying Georgia lost territory because of a "reckless gamble." Russia resumed direct flights with Georgia in May, and Polyansky said Moscow's ties with the country "are gradually improving, enabling tourist and economic exchanges."

"But the Russophobic West is not happy and trying to drive the wedge between us at any price," he said. "This statement is a clear illustration of this." Polyansky called the situation "especially sickening and hypocritical" knowing that Ukraine turned "anti-Russia" in 2014, when Moscow annexed Crimea. He said Ukraine "is being sacrificed right now by the US and its allies for Western geopolitical interests in a futile NATO proxy war against Russia until the last Ukrainian."

ECOWAS leaders say all options open in Niger, including 'use of force'

ABUJA (Agencies): West African heads of state have said all options including the use of force remained on the table to restore constitutional order in Niger after the July 26 coup, and ordered the activation of its standby force. The remarks came as the 15-member Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met in Nigeria's Abuja for an emergency summit to discuss responses to last month's military takeover in Niger, after the coup leaders defied their earlier threat to use force to restore democracy.

In closing remarks, the bloc pledged to enforce sanctions and travel bans on those preventing the return to power of democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum. "No option is taken off the table, including the use of force as a last resort," said Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu, the ECOWAS chair, at the end of the summit. "We remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting Niger in the journey towards peaceful democratic stability," he said. "I hope that through our collective effort we can bring about a peaceful resolution as a roadmap to restoring stability and democracy in Niger. All is not lost yet." Since the July 26 overthrow of Niger's democratic leadership, the coup plotters have refused to relin-

quish power and release detained Bazoum, ignoring an August 6 deadline from ECOWAS to reinstate him.

The meeting in Abuja began hours after Niger's coup leaders appointed a new interim government. Mahamane Roufai Laouali, cited as "secretary general of the government", named 21 ministers, without specifying any further government plans. After Tinubu spoke, an official communique was read out which included a resolution asking the bloc's defence chiefs to "activate the ECOWAS Standby Force with all its elements immediately". Another resolution spoke of ordering "the deployment of the ECOWAS Standby Force to restore constitutional order in the Republic of Niger", immediately followed by another that spoke of restoring such order "through peaceful means".

ECOWAS defence chiefs last week drew up plans for possible military intervention in Niger, which the heads of state discussed during summit. The summit communique gave no indication of when or under what circumstances a deployment within Niger might take place. It is unclear if there were any representatives from Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, whose military heads of state have sided with Niger, at the summit.

However, the presidents of Mauritania - a founding ECOWAS member which withdrew from the bloc in December 2000 - and Burundi were in attendance, according to Al Jazeera's Ahmed Idris, reporting from Abuja. Idris said a source close to one of the mediation missions sent to Niger told Al Jazeera that the coup leaders want sanctions eased to aid the flow of medicine and food supplies and restoration of electricity. But it remains unclear if ECOWAS will accede to any such demands as the bloc continues to seek Bazoum's reinstatement.

"If the coup is allowed to succeed, it could dent the image of ECOWAS and make it look weak ... and that could pose a serious threat to democracy, something that leaders here are eager to avoid," Idris said. Bazoum's party has said the detained leader and his family are being held at the presidential residence without electricity or running water and had gone days without fresh food. This led to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres call Bazoum's "his immediate, unconditional release and his reinstatement as Head of State," a UN spokesperson said. Military intervention is something ECOWAS officials have said would be a last resort. The bloc also said it would enforce all

measures, in particular, "border closures, travel bans, and assets freeze, on all persons or groups of individuals whose actions hinder all peace efforts in ensuring the smooth and complete restoration of constitutional order".

Earlier, Sadeeq Garba Shehu, a security analyst and adjunct professor at the Marshall European Centre for Security Studies, said the ball was in ECOWAS's court after the coup leaders "called the bluff" on the bloc's seven-day deadline. "It's a very decisive moment for ECOWAS and its leaders," he told Al Jazeera from Abuja. Pressing ahead with the option of the use of force "is a position that is fraught with dangers and uncertainties", Shehu said. "First, will there be acceptance by all the members to put their money where their mouth is? How many of the ECOWAS members are ready to do that? How many are ready to finance that?" Shehu added, noting that West African leaders had to also consider domestic pressures from their countries' own populations. But ECOWAS could still stick to its decision to see a democratic government in place in Niamey, Idris said.

"A lot is at stake because the way things are, people are really concerned about the spate of coups in

West Africa, five in less than three years ... in Burkina Faso and Mali, democratic timelines have been shifted several times and now we have Niger," he said. "The situation in those countries has emboldened the coup leaders in Niger ... and could encourage ambitious soldiers [elsewhere] to take up arms and depose democratic governments." Former Nigerian central bank Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi met coup leaders in the Nigerien capital, Niamey, offering a glimmer of hope for dialogue after previous ECOWAS missions were spurned. And after a meeting with Nigerian President and ECOWAS Chair Bola Tinubu, Sanusi told Nigerian press in Abuja that "interventions are ongoing and will continue".

"This is a time for public diplomacy. It's not a matter that we leave to governments. All Nigerians, all Nigeriens need to be involved to find a solution that works for Africa, for Niger, for Nigeria and for humanity," he said. A former emir of the northern Nigerian city of Kano, Sanusi is also a leader of the Nigerian order of the Tijaniyah, a Sufi Muslim sect with origins in Algeria but with a large following across West Africa, including Niger. He did not respond to Al Jazeera's requests for comment on the

mission to Niamey.

Any escalation would further destabilise West Africa's Sahel region, one of the world's poorest, where long-running violence from armed groups has displaced millions and stoked a hunger crisis. Niger had recently fared better than its neighbours Mali and Burkina Faso in stemming the violence. It also became an increasingly important Western ally for fighting armed groups after coups in the other two countries between 2020 and 2022, led to strained relations with traditional partners. ECOWAS, the UN and Western countries have been putting pressure on the coup leaders to stand down, while military governments in neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso have said any military intervention in Niger would be seen as a declaration of war on them. In Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou, resident Issouf Ouedraogo felt it made no sense for his country's new leaders to support the Niger coup because the contexts were different. "Burkina was in a situation of degradation and acute insecurity," he said in reference to the frustrations that stoked two coups there last year. "Niger, on the other hand, was in a stable situation," he noted.

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Whether Nawaz’ comeback is essential for the country?

PRIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif has recently claimed that former Prime Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif will return to the country next month after more than three years of self-exile in London. During an interview with Geo TV, Shehbaz noted that his elder brother and three times Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif will shortly come back to Pakistan to face the law and lead the party campaign for the next general election. According to the Premier, his mentor will neither wear a hat nor use a bucket out of cowardness and fear, but face the cases with courage and lead the party with pride.

Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Supremo and former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is in self exile in the UK since November 2019, after the PTI government released Nawaz from prison and allowed his travel to London for treatment of his deteriorating health. Nawaz stepped down as the Prime Minister after the Supreme Court disqualified him for life for concealing assets in the aftermath of the Panama Papers leaks. He was further convicted in the Al-Azizia and the Aveinfeild Apartment references filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) during the last days of government. Interestingly, Shehbaz himself paved the way for Nawaz's travel by submitting a fifty rupees stamp paper guaranteeing return of his elder brother within four weeks after completion of the treatment that did not happen over the past four years. The court declared him deserter in absentia, while Nawaz was also wanted in multiple cases pending trials in different courts in the country. The PML-N led coalition government had made concerted efforts to pave the way for a dignified return of its top leader but unfortunately, certain legal complications along with an all time high risk of stern opposition from the current Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandial, proved to be the biggest hurdle in this regard during the tenure of the coalition government over the past sixteen months.

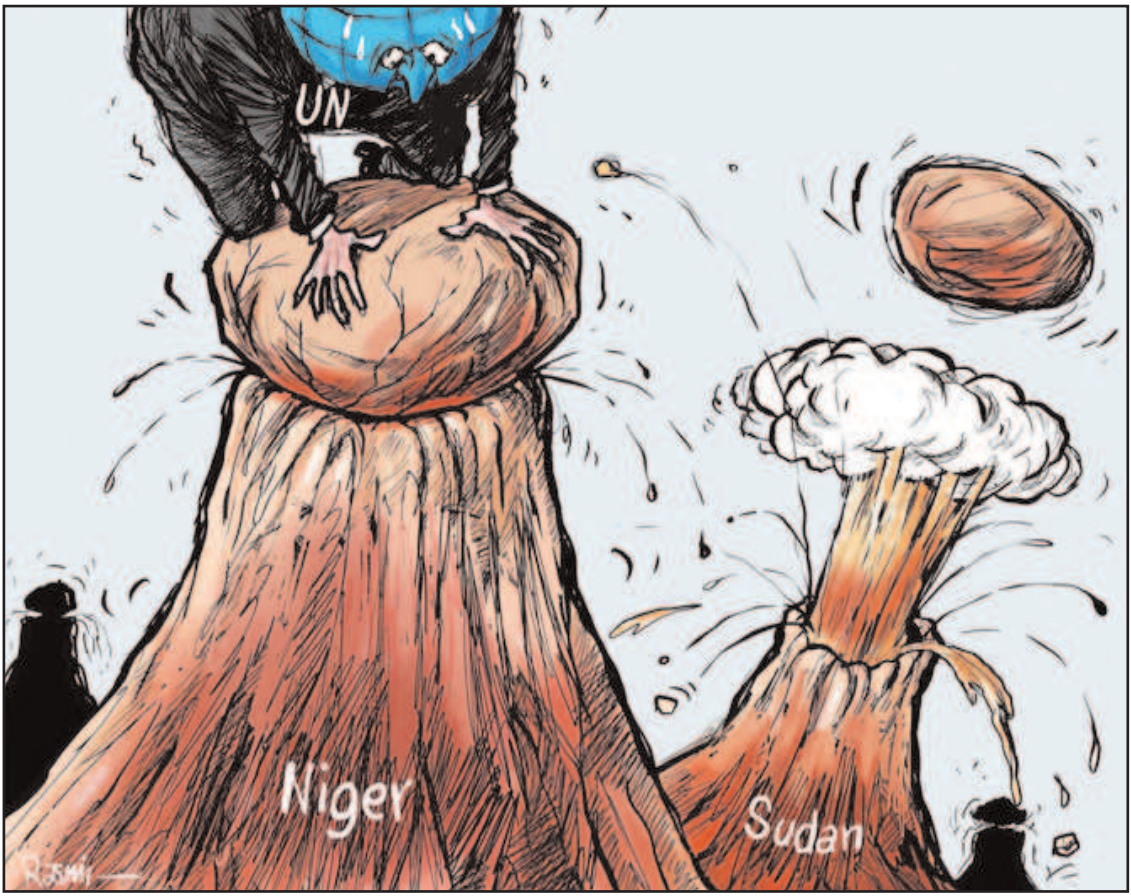
Historically, the PML-N senior leadership and party workers believe that their political mentor was unjustly punished by the top judiciary and Nawaz had been ousted from the country's premiership for the consecutive third time prematurely. Thus political pandits owe it their moral duty to throne Nawaz Sharif for an additional term and PML-N had particularly worked out on that strategy to make it happen by undertaking special legislation including adoption of amendments in NAB ordinance, and electoral laws that empowered the ECP to fix the lifelong disqualification term for the lawmakers upto five years. Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif had been given relief by the Accountability court in several cases after the coalition government took control of the government in April last year.

In fact, Shehbaz had proved his loyalty with his elder brother despite recurrent attempts from the bureaucracy by offering him the top slot of the party as well as the country multiple times in the past. As of now, Shehbaz is still endeavoring hard to consolidate Sharifs' political legacy under the patronship of Nawaz and for that purpose all constitutional, judicial and legislative hurdles had been removed by the coalition government before quitting the office ahead of the crucial elections in the country.

Unfortunately, Pakistan is currently embattled with serious economic, security and political challenges, and people are fed up by the worsening inflation, lawlessness and persistent political unrest that continuously stims out from the ongoing tussle between the two major parties in the country. Surely, Nawaz, Imran or Zardaris, are not the sole owners of Pakistan who would have to rule the country in turns, while the public act as audience during their fixed match for government/power. The current day Pakistan does not afford family rule, in which important portfolios are always divided among the siblings, and close relatives like dynasty heirlooms. Nawaz's return makes no difference for ordinary Pakistanis who have been in hot water over the past two years due to the terrible policies of successive governments. Pakistan and Pakistanis must come out of the fake heroism of certain political leaders by choosing talented and highly educated youths as their future leaders who steer the country out of the current crises and move the nation toward progress, growth and prosperity.

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How al-Bashir and Putin pressed the self-destruct button

Tafi Mhaka

WHEN in 2003, a rebellion erupted in Sudan's Darfur region, triggered by decades of oppression and neglect of African communities, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir resorted to local armed Arab groups to suppress it. Known as the Janjaweed, they soon became a formidable force which managed to put an end to the revolt, earning al-Bashir's trust and largesse.

A decade later, when Ukrainians rebelled against the diktats of Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to punish them by illegally annexing Ukraine's Crimean peninsula and starting a conflict in the eastern part of the country. To mask his invasion, he had one of his cronies, Yevgeny Prigozhin, create a mercenary force to send across the border into Ukraine. The force, which came to be known as Wagner, proved quite effective and became a trusted military tool for Putin to use in his foreign policy adventures. Both al-Bashir and Putin perhaps thought that resorting to mercenaries was a smart move in their pursuit of power consolidation. But their violent creations inevitably turned against them, demonstrating just how dangerous playing a mercenary game can be, even for seasoned dictators. It would not be an understatement to say that al-Bashir's decision to rely on mercenaries to crush the uprising in Darfur eventually led to his political demise.

The Janjaweed - along with the Sudanese army - engaged in a wide variety of war crimes against Darfuris which earned al-Bashir an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court. Fearing what could happen to him if he were to lose power, the Sudanese president pursued policies which he thought would ensure the stability of his regime. Having survived a coup in 1990, al-Bashir was naturally suspicious of his own army. So in 2013, he decided to turn the Janjaweed militia into an official force, renaming it the Rapid Support Forces and installing one of its commanders, Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemedti, as its head. The force was direct-

ly attached to the presidency. The decision to legalise the Janjaweed militia and support Hemedti's rise to the higher echelons of the armed forces was part of a calculated plan to fragment the military sector and "coup-proof" al-Bashir's regime.

In return for his loyalty, al-Bashir allowed Hemedti to take over precious gold mines in Darfur and start amassing abundant personal wealth. In the following years, the RSF expanded its operations abroad as its forces were sent to fight in Libya and Yemen. This gave Hemedti the opportunity to establish new sources of revenue, forge ties with regional powers, and, ironically, bolster his independence from his complacent principal. Al-Bashir's fraught and reckless balancing act between various military structures did not preserve his regime for long. In December 2018, thousands of people took the streets across Sudan, demanding his resignation. The Sudanese president could no longer appease the military elites, which in April 2019, moved against him. Hemedti - who al-Bashir used to call "my protector" - faced a choice between standing by his wildly unpopular benefactor and siding with the Sudanese military; he threw his lot in with the latter. By empowering the RSF, al-Bashir not only sealed his own fate but also of the whole country. In the following years, power-hungry Hemedti and the military elite undermined the civilian protest movement and its attempts to transition the country to democracy. After carrying out a coup against the provisional civilian government, tensions between the RSF and the army escalated and in April, war broke out between them.

Thousands of civilians have been killed, civilian infrastructure has been devastated, homes have been looted and some four million people have been displaced, with over 800,000 people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. There are also worrying reports of genocide in Darfur, as the RSF and allied Arab militias target African communities. The months-long conflict is, without doubt, a disaster of

monumental proportions, which could lead to the collapse of the Sudanese state. All of Sudan is now paying the price of al-Bashir's folly. Watching from Moscow the events in Sudan in 2019, Putin likely did not consider that there may be parallels between the RSF and Wagner to consider, and lessons to learn. By then, the Russian president had used his mercenaries to wreak havoc not just in Ukraine, but also in Syria, Libya and the Central African Republic.

In the process, Prigozhin's wealth and business empire grew exponentially, and so did his appetite for power - much like Hemedti's. When Putin decided to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine - to the shock of a significant part of the political elite in Moscow - Prigozhin loyally stood by him, sending his experienced mercenaries to fight some of the bloodiest battles. But as the war did not progress according to plan and tensions between commanders intensified, Prigozhin started attacking the military leadership, especially Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov. The open feud continued for months, with the Wagner founder blaming the army chiefs for war setbacks and accusing them of sabotaging his forces. Putin stood on the sidelines of this escalating dispute and did nothing, as usual, trying to stay above intra-elite infighting in order to blame it for whatever failures take place.

But Putin underestimated Prigozhin's political ambitions and greed, and his silence laid the groundwork for a deadly national crisis in Russia. On June 24, Wagner mercenaries launched a short-lived mutiny against Russia's top military leadership, staging the most formidable threat to Putin's 23-year rule. Wagner fighters easily managed to take control of the southern city of Rostov-on-Don, and a Wagner convoy reached within 200km (124 miles) of Moscow in an attempt to remove Shoigu and Gerasimov. Several army helicopters were shot down, killing their crew members. Meanwhile, some Rostov residents

were seen cheering on the defiant mercenaries.

Although Prigozhin eventually called off the armed rebellion after he had negotiated a deal with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Putin's meticulously crafted "tough guy" image had already been crushed in an open and embarrassing manner. While Prigozhin and his mercenaries departed from Russia, they left behind an even more divided military and security apparatuses. Prigozhin had apparently gained the implicit support or sympathies of senior army officials. General Sergei Surovikin, for example, who led the Russian war effort in Ukraine, allegedly had advanced knowledge of the mutiny. Wagner's rebellion validated the growing anger within ranks and file, but also among the general population, against decision-makers at the top. And while Putin tried once again to stay above the fray, sooner or later, it would be too hard for him to deny that his decision-making is ultimately responsible for major failures. Russia did not descend into civil war as Sudan did due to Wagner's rebellion, but it did shake the regime to its core.

The rebellion exposed Putin as a weak, indecisive and compromised president, who does not dare to punish rebellious loyalists. Despite calling Prigozhin a traitor, the Russian president met with him and other Wagner leaders five days after the abandoned rebellion. On July 27, a relaxed and smiling Prigozhin was seen socialising with delegates on the sidelines of the Russia-Africa Summit in Saint Petersburg. All this has brought into question Putin's firm hold on power ahead of the presidential elections in 2024, when he will seek to extend his rule for yet another six years. Like al-Bashir, he may eventually lose control over military and security structures and his loyalists may turn against him. These mercenary games should serve as a cautionary tale for other leaders with plans to outsource government responsibilities to murderous collaborators like Hemedti and Prigozhin. A private militia is a certain recipe for self-destruction.

Aljazeera

The Global South is growing in political potency

Andrew Hammond

THE concept of the Global South dates back to the late 1960s but use of the term has grown significantly in the past few decades, including in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Politically, many developing countries in the Global South do not perceive the conflict in Ukraine in the same stark moral terms as much of the West. Therefore many remain publicly unaligned, with a few key exceptions, including Singapore which has imposed sanctions on Russia.

For many countries in Africa, Asia the Middle East and Latin America, a decision to remain neutral in the conflict has significant appeal. A wide number of them depend heavily on trade, aid, investment and/or weaponry both from Western powers and from China, if not also from Russia itself. One of the economic consequences of Moscow's invasion, and the pandemic, has been the stunting of growth in many of these developing nations. It is in this highly dynamic context that moves are afoot to bring about a greater organizational identity to the Global South. Certainly, there have long been forums available, such as the G77, a coalition of well over 100 developing countries that is designed to promote collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the UN.

However, following the start of the war in Ukraine, efforts are also being expedited to expand the prestigious BRICS club (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as well. The group's latest summit is due to take place in the second half of August in South Africa, and the five-nation bloc plans to announce an expansion following about 22 formal requests for membership, and 20 informal ones, in recent times from other developing countries. These reportedly include Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Cuba and Kazakhstan. While the existing members of BRICS appear to be in alignment on the group's expansion in principle, there are in fact competing agendas around this core issue within the bloc. India, for example, wants strict rules on how and when other nations could move closer to the group, without formally enlarging it. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is reportedly cautious, too, given the possibility of alienating the US and EU. Of the five member nations, China is the one most in favor of a potentially rapid expansion of the bloc, partly for geopolitical reasons. Its goal is for an enlarged BRICS that becomes a Beijing-friendly hub, with China the leader of the bigger grouping.

While the origins of some other recently established emerging-market forums, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, are based primarily in defense and security, economics drove the formation of BRICS. This reflects the fact that its five members now account for about a quarter of global gross domestic product, and more than 15 percent of world trade. Yet while the bloc was originally assembled to develop its economic potential, political cooperation has also come to the fore. This growing political bent is exemplified by South Africa's presidency of the club of

emerging-market powers this year, with an emphasis on expansion which, it is presumed, will allow members to better promote their interests abroad, strengthening positions that are sometimes ignored by their Western counterparts. This underlines the hunger of BRICS members to become even bigger political players, raising fears in some quarters that the bloc could, ultimately, become a unified anti-Western alliance. However, this is most unlikely in the immediate future, not least because of the differing views of China and India, including over border issues, which can adversely affect relations between the two. This has been one driver of the so-called anti-China Quad grouping, comprising India, the US, Japan and Australia.

At the same time that BRICS members are stepping up political cooperation, there is growing skepticism about the relevance of the group as an economic club, given the diverging long-term economic trajectories of the five nations. The generally robust economic performances of China and India over the past decade contrasts with disappointing results in Brazil, Russia and South Africa. The result is that the group is now unevenly balanced; China's expected output of \$19 trillion dollars in 2023 will be about 50 times that of South Africa, for example. Yet with BRICS nations already accounting for about a quarter of global GDP, up by more than 10 percentage points from about decade ago, their overall combined growth is already having a major global effect, despite their individually diverging fortunes.

Data shows that since around 2020, BRICS members as a whole have contributed more to global GDP than the G7 industrialized nations, in terms of purchasing power parity. The five developing countries are projected to further extend this lead over their seven industrialized counterparts over the rest of this decade. Moreover, World Bank research, for example, shows that for the first time in about two centuries, overall global income inequality between countries appears to be declining. This is being driven by BRICS, and specifically by the collective economic growth and very large populations of India and China. At the same time, however, there is an opposing force, which is the growing income inequality within many countries. This has assumed growing political salience, helping to fuel the rise of populist, nationalist politicians, including Brazil's former president, Jair Bolsonaro. These countervailing pressures are pushing against each other. While the net global trend for the past two centuries has been toward greater overall income inequality, there has been growing evidence over the past two and a half decades that the "positive effect" of improved income equality between countries, spurred on by China and India, is superseding the "negative effect" of increasing inequality within nations.

While the coherence of BRICS as an economic club is therefore increasingly questioned, its members have helped drive a historic, sustained movement toward greater global income equality. However, this fragile process could yet go into reverse, post-pandemic, especially if growth in China and India plateaus significantly.

Michelle Obama could be America’s next President

Tim Stanley

A SOURCE says that in conversation with a foreign politician, it emerged that their government assumes Joe Biden will not be the Democratic nominee in 2024. Joe will pull out before the first primaries; it will be too late for a grassroots candidate to enter the fray; an establishment stooge will be crowned at the convention. And the name of that lucky winner? Michelle Obama. It's a wild scenario, but if it does happen, please remember that you read it here first.

This anecdote confirms what I've heard from UK sources, too: when governments engage with Biden they feel they are dealing with the face of an administration but not always the person in charge. Were the Democrats to drop him from their presidential ticket, the world would understand. The race is tied, which is too close for comfort; Biden is unpopular; he is ageing

before our very eyes (the latest gaffe is that he called the Grand Canyon one of the "nine wonders of the world" - built, if you know your history, by the Phoenixians). Doubts about his capabilities are enhanced by the grim alternative should he expire in office. The charmless Kamala Harris is one of those deeply average people who, unaware that her limited knowledge isn't the sum of human understanding, talks to everyone as if they were simpletons. Her latest pearl was to inform an audience that "community banks are in the community" - a revelation to those who thought they were in the Grand Canyon.

We face a rematch between two unpopular nominees, Biden v Trump, which nobody really wants. So why not ask/force one of them to retire? Assuming it will never, ever be Trump - thanks to various legal troubles, his own choice is now between the White House or prison - it would be logical

to persuade Joe to do the decent thing, or else dump him without letting him know. One can imagine a "Good Bye, Lenin" scenario wherein Biden is relocated to a mock-up of the Oval Office and is told he is still president. Nancy Pelosi could be wheeled in from time-to-time to ask if he's any closer to ending the Great Depression.

Swapping-out Biden would pose big challenges. There are deadlines for filing to run in primaries - Nevada, for example, is as close as October - and a Democratic convention hasn't been properly fixed since 1968. Is Joe happy to be told what to do? Has he ever operated an independent agenda? A Michelle Obama replacement would suggest he's always been Barack's third term, a conspiracy theory endorsed by Barack Obama in a 2021 interview. He said: "Joe and the administration are essentially finishing the

job" begun by Obama and paused by Trump, noting that "ninety per cent of the folks" who worked for him are now back at their desks. This was an exaggeration, but not by much. The figure of Obama people working for Biden, among his top 100 aides, was closer to 75 per cent.

The Biden presidency has its own character; he's spent more money and pushed the cultural issues harder. Obama was more cautious for fear of being labelled a radical. Nevertheless, journalists often joke that Obama is running the country from his iPhone, and a recent, much-read interview between reporter David Samuels and historian David Garrow highlighted a curious detail: Obama still lives in central Washington DC, violating the historical agreement that ex-presidents should move away. Samuels notes that Obama has openly lobbied on internet censor-

ship and gun control, and suggests that he lingered in DC society to serve as a potent symbol of the legitimate political order that had been stolen by Trump (never forget how many liberals said 2016 was a fix).

The interview is most famous for Garrow's claims that, as a young man, Obama fantasised about gay sex, but more pertinent is the suggestion that Obama is the guiding hand in Biden-era foreign policy. "It's turtles all the way down," argues Samuels. "There are obviously large parts of White House policymaking that belong to Barack Obama because they are staffed by his people, who worked for him and no doubt report back to him." He concludes: "personnel is policy," adding that the arrangement is "spooky" because it operates "outside the constitutional framework."

So, a court coup to replace Biden with the next Obama available, far from being revolutionary, would reinforce

the line of political continuity that stretches from 2008-2024, with only Trump's election as a temporary aberration (Michelle has revealed that his amusing inauguration caused her to "sob uncontrollably"). Mrs Obama has always polled well. She has published two best-selling books of biography and womanly wisdom. She has served in the White House. She is known by everyone but, unlike Trump, has retained some of the enigma of privacy. She has denied that she has any intention of running for the presidency, but that's usually a sure-fire sign that someone is interested. As for the suggestion that her overnight nomination would be too fantastical, too Hollywood - has our sense of the "possible" not been radically expanded by Donald Trump? Mrs Obama's opponent would be spending much of the election cycle in court. There is no "normal" anymore in US politics.

The Telegraph

The murders of Indigenous activists mark the death of the planet

IN January 2022, Breiner David Cucuñame, a 14-year-old Indigenous Colombian activist, was shot dead in Colombia's south-western department of Cauca. He was killed in the company of his father, during a routine unarmed patrol of Indigenous lands for the purpose of deterring incursions by militant groups. While the killing made headlines on account of Cucuñame's young age, it was pretty much business as usual in the South American nation.

As of September 2021, 611 environmental defenders had already been assassinated in Colombia since the signing of the so-called "peace deal" in 2016, according to the Colombian Institute of Studies for Development and Peace (Indepaz). Of those 611 people, 332 were Indigenous. And yet this snapshot of bloodshed in Colombia is but part of a larger, sinister global picture. Last year, the London-based NGO Global Witness released a report documenting no fewer than 1,733 murdered environmental and land-defence activists in the decade since 2012, amounting to one murder approximately every two days. Even so, the NGO emphasised that its figures were "almost certainly an underestimate". In 2021 alone, as per the Global Witness report, 200 land and environmental defenders were killed worldwide - nearly four per week. Significantly, more than 40 percent of the documented killings were of Indigenous people, who account for no more than five percent of the global population. Many were involved in defending their lands from exploitation by predatory industries ranging from mining and agribusiness to logging, oil and hydropower.

As we mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on August 9, then, it's worth reflecting on what such trends mean for the

very future of the world. It is lamentably far from shocking that, in an international landscape governed by corporate capitalist pillage, Indigenous environmental activists are disproportionately targeted. After all, the Indigenous track record of harmonious coexistence with nature stands in the way of "development" (read: planetary destruction). Indeed, the proverbial frog in the pot of boiling water is often invoked to illustrate the contemporary arrangement of climate change, environmental collapse and public indifference. If we cast the global capitalist elite rather than lowly humans in the role of the pot-bound amphibian, we end up with a potentially even more apt illustration: a frog turning up the flame under its own pot while maniacally eliminating anyone who tries to interfere. According to Global Witness, more than half of the lethal attacks on environmental defenders in 2021 took place in Mexico, Colombia and Brazil. Mexico led the way with 54 recorded killings, almost half of them Indigenous people. Around two-thirds of these murders were carried out in the northern Mexican state of Sonora and the southern state of Oaxaca.

Having taken up accidental residence myself in the tiny Oaxacan coastal village of Zipolite at the start of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, I can attest to the general cheapness of human life and the impunity that reigns on the domestic panorama - a state of affairs that has more than a little to do with Mexico's bloody United States-backed drug war that officially kicked off in 2006. Of the various murders that took place in and around Zipolite during my stay, there was never so much as a remote public expectation that the perpetrators might be identified and prosecuted. Rather, the acts were broadly

written off as "things between narco", and life went on, hushed, as usual. But it is precisely this sort of violent context that has been highlighted by researchers like Dawn Paley - author of *Drug War Capitalism* - as facilitating extractive industries by fuelling displacement and intimidating land defenders. In Brazil, meanwhile, the recent presidential stint of far-right Jair Bolsonaro (2019-22) did wonders in advancing planetary self-combustion and adding fuel to the frog's fire, if you will. For Bolsonaro, deforestation of the Amazon was an almost organic enterprise, and he went about dismantling safeguards for Indigenous land rights and hollowing out Indigenous protection agencies. The Global Witness report puts Brazil in the lead for total documented killings of environmental defenders, with 342 lethal attacks between 2012 and 2021. One-third of the victims were Indigenous people or Afro-descendants and 85 percent of these crimes transpired within the Brazilian Amazon.

Under Bolsonaro, the report noted, the "blurring of Brazilian agribusiness and state-sponsored terror on Indigenous land" had worsened "significantly". It is not only Latin America where Indigenous activists are under fire, however. In the Philippines, for example - another territory that incidentally endured centuries of pillage and other shenanigans by Europe and the United States - Global Witness found that, of the 270 land defenders killed between 2012 and 2021, more than 40 percent were Indigenous. To be sure, this year's global heatwaves only underscore the gravity of our profit-driven demise. They also, perhaps, put a novel spin on the term "scorched earth" - which traditionally

denotes, *inter alia*, a certain US-backed Cold War policy of terrorising Indigenous communities in Central America in order to help make the world safe for capitalism.

If there was anyone who could connect the Latin American dots between the current environmental apocalypse and legacies of imperial meddling, regional militarisation, crushing inequality and neoliberal conquest, it was Honduran activist Berta Cáceres, a tireless campaigner for Indigenous land rights. And guess what: Cáceres was murdered in 2016, once her opposition to the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam project on Indigenous Lenca territory could apparently no longer be tolerated by the powers that be. Her killing took place seven years after the US-facilitated coup against Honduran President Manuel Zelaya had left the country definitively "open for business", as per the slogan of the post-coup regime. As Nina Lakhani recounts in her book *Who Killed Berta Cáceres?* Dams, Death Squads, and an Indigenous Defender's Battle for the Planet, the coup paved the way for unchecked extractivism, as dam concessions along with "mines, tourist developments, biofuel projects and logging concessions were rushed through Congress with no consultation, environmental impact studies or oversight, many destined for Indigenous lands". August 9, it seems, would be a fine day to remember Cáceres - and to keep connecting the dots. On its website, the United Nations begins its tribute to the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples with the observation: "We need Indigenous communities for a better world." And as capitalism's war on the environment and its defenders continues to rage, we need Indigenous communities more than ever - if, that is, we want to have any world at all.

Giorgia Meloni risks going the way of Liz Truss if she keeps defying the market

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard

GIORGIA Meloni is doing a passably good imitation of a neo-Marxist Corbynista. If anybody still thought that Italy's far-right populist government cleaves to the free market, they have had a rude re-education this week. It is hard to know which is worse: an unconstitutional and retroactive windfall tax on banks, in the middle of a credit crunch, enthusiastically applauded by the entire Italian left; or deranged price controls on airlines that defy the laws of supply and demand and smack of "the Soviet Union in 1927" - in the words of Ryanair boss, Eddie Wilson.

"Financial markets are now on the alert that this government is not as market-friendly as they thought," said Lorenzo Codogno, ex-chief economist at the Italian treasury and now at LC Macro. "I am getting a lot of calls asking who could be next: will it be the construction sector, who knows? The damage is done," he said. These antics come after a protracted debate on whether 5G mobile towers pose a genotoxic danger to human health if they exceed Italy's archaic limit of six watts per metre, long since dismissed as junk science even by the high priests of the precautionary principle in Brussels.

Italy has banned Uber. The Meloni coalition is preparing a ban on lab-grown meat, to accompany Italy's longstanding ban on banned GMO crops and animal feed. The march of biotech Luddism is driving the country's scientists and researchers to near despair. Giorgia Meloni's immediate reflex earlier this year was to impose an effective ban on ChatGPT. The regulator alleged that OpenAI had no legal basis for collection and storage of personal data used to train its algorithms. It later rowed back partially

with a compromise, but the message has stuck.

Stefano da Empoli, head of Italy's Institute for Competitiveness, said Italy was already an AI laggard: it now carries an added stigma as a country tagged as "unfriendly towards innovation", with cascading effects on investment and future start ups. There is of course a complex trade-off between protecting society and letting rip on technology. But Italy's fear of change in the 21st Century seems very far removed from the irrepressible inventiveness of the Renaissance city states. Meloni has enjoyed a long honeymoon since Fratelli d'Italia took power in October. The Italian economy has been outperforming Germany, a rare sorpasso since the launch of monetary union and the end of lira devaluations. The benign view is that Italy has achieved an "internal devaluation" within the euro after the gruelling austerity of the Lost Decade, and is therefore fundamentally competitive again.

Robin Brooks from the Institute of International Finance says recent strength is mostly a "sugar rush" fed by transfers from the EU's 800bn recovery fund, unlikely to have much lasting effect on an economy still only half-reformed. A "super-bonus" tax credit worth 110pc for home insulation and energy efficiency has led to a construction boom. This will help Italy defend against the next gas crisis this winter. But the scheme has been riddled with corruption and has pushed the budget deficit to 8pc of GDP. If that can't buy growth, nothing can. The economy is coming back down to earth with a thud. Output shrank by 0.3pc in the second quarter as the lagged effect of rising interest rates finally hit. Data from the Bank of Italy

shows that credit to firms have contracted precipitously over the last four months, a further reason why the latest raid on banks is so destructive.

The 40pc windfall tax announced on Monday - out of the blue, opposed by the finance minister, and based on a spurious comparison with a depressed revenue base in 2021 - set off a banking crash on the Milan bourse. The government has since retreated enough to stem the equity rout, but not enough to allay reawakened fears of Italian political risk at a treacherous moment in the global credit cycle. "It has undermined the credibility of the government," said Dr Codogno. Italian banks are profitable on a flow-basis but are underwater on holdings of Italian government bonds, though they do not have to crystallise these losses under mark-to-market rules. They have been heavily reliant on ultra-cheap loans (TLTROs) from the European Central Bank, which are now being wound down. The eurozone is in a deep industrial recession and the ECB says net loan demand has collapsed to record lows.

"This windfall tax is now going to amplify the credit crunch," said Professor Marcello Minenna from La Sapienza University in Rome. "The risk spread of Italian bonds over German Bunds is stable so far but it could be a troubling Autumn. I don't understand why they are doing this."

The bank raid was orchestrated by Lega strongman Matteo Salvini, aiming to fund a bail-out of mortgage holders with floating-rate debt. Lorenzo Bini-Smaghi, chairman of Société Générale, called it a rescue for "speculators" who had made a bad bet on the lure of cheaper floating rates. "Socialising losses is an

Growing protest movement is a wake-up call for all Israelis

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

IN the US, pro-Israeli democracy activists this week asked House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries to meet with protest leaders during his current visit to Israel to better assess the gravity of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's judicial overhaul. Protests sparked by the Netanyahu government's actions are gaining momentum. People are gathering every day to demand the prime minister step down. The protests, meanwhile, seem to have awakened a new consciousness. Israelis are beginning to sense the danger posed by the settler movement. This is no longer seen as a movement on the fringes, but is perceived by a large faction of Israelis as a clear and present danger, threatening the state and the basic foundations of democracy.

The protesters' view today is that the fight is between the state of Israel and the settler regime. We are still far away from a large-scale popular movement inside Israel to end its occupation of Palestine. However, we might be witnessing the planting of the seeds for such a movement. Hence, it is time to push the envelope, and this is why the protests should be encouraged. The protests' potential extends beyond removing Netanyahu or his extremist allies Itamar Ben-Gvir and

Bezael Smotrich; it is about a change in the Israeli psyche. Many Israelis are coming to the realization that the settler regime is threatening to take over their country. The settler system can no longer be confined to the West Bank. It is no longer a phenomenon that can be ignored while people enjoy living in a modern state in cities such as Tel Aviv. It is haunting them in their homes. The country is becoming divided along pro and anti-Netanyahu lines. An American friend who is witnessing the turmoil told me that pro-Netanyahu fanatics are blocking the entrance of anti-Netanyahu neighborhoods and kibbutzim. He described the situation as "unstable" and "worrying," and added that many of his relatives living in Israel are contemplating moving to Europe or the US.

Israelis are beginning to see that they created a monster that is coming back to haunt them. It is no longer an issue concerning only the Palestinians, their freedom, or their dignity, but one that is also affecting the Israeli identity. Also, the Israelis are starting to realize that they are losing international respect. We are starting to talk about Israeli terrorism. The US described the Israeli settler attack in which a Palestinian teenager was killed as terrorism. The last thing

Israelis want is the stigma of terrorism. Americans are starting to criticize Israel and highlighting Palestinian rights. US Democrat senators Tim Kaine and Chris Van Hollen issued a statement saying that any normalization with Saudi Arabia should be tied to Palestine's right to statehood, echoing the Kingdom's long-term demands. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee lobby group can no longer bring US lawmakers to visit a fantasyland where they see that everything is nice and dandy, and meet hand-picked Palestinians who repeat the AIPAC fairy tale about Israel. No, now Americans are seeing the ugly truth that people such as Ben-Gvir and Smotrich have no shame in spelling out their dangerous objectives.

The protests in Israel and their evolving narrative mark the beginning of a change in the Israeli mindset. Israelis are starting to look in the mirror and ask themselves, who are we? Are we a democracy, or an authoritarian theocracy? As Israelis face this wake-up call, it is time to open the discussion about occupation, and to raise awareness that democracy cannot be sustained in the presence of occupation. Democracy is inherently inclusive and cannot be exclusive to only the Jewish citi-

zens of Israel. That is why the public discourse in Israel, as well as in the US, should focus on how the settler movement, not Hamas or Iran, is the biggest existential threat to the country. It is important to highlight that the activities the new government is engaging in - the settlements, the provocative visits to the Haram Al-Sharif that are compromising the status quo in East Jerusalem - will make any peace talks with the Islamic world impossible. Do Israelis want that? Do they want animosity with the entire Muslim world? Do they want to be accused of terrorism? These are the questions that should be circulated in the Israeli public discourse. The settlers do not care if Israel becomes a ghetto. However, mainstream Israelis do not want to live in a ghetto; they want to be accepted and normalized. This is where the link between the occupation and the settler threat to the state of Israel is hitting the Israeli psyche. It is a very good turn of events for the Palestinians and for a potential solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Now is the time to relaunch the Arab peace initiative, and to present it as a solution for Israel. It should not be presented solely as a plan that will allow Israelis to live side by side with Palestinians in peace, but as one that will allow Israelis to live in peace in general.

New beginnings, old problems: Why France is failing in Africa

FRANCE'S relations in Africa have been strained. The setback in Niger jeopardizes the country's entire positioning in West Africa, both militarily and politically. Unfortunately, for French President Emmanuel Macron, this is not the only place where his administration is facing failure. We might even dare to ask: Is France about to lose North Africa as well? Indeed, relations between France and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya have been extremely tense.

One significant focus for Macron has been resetting relations with Algeria. The upcoming official visit of Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune to France is intended to mark a new beginning. Regrettably, Macron has not been able to achieve this so far. This has already come at the cost of excellent relations with Morocco. In his efforts to improve ties with Algiers, the French leader has shifted his historical stance on the Western Sahara, straining his relationship with Morocco. For many, he ended up losing Morocco without gaining Algeria.

This might pinpoint the exact problem with French foreign policy. While seeking a complete reset and departure from the old colonialist perception of France, the policy has not been adequately formulated in terms of military, security and economic strategy. As a result, to most African countries within France's sphere of influence, it appears to be a weak and unappealing offering. The main issue is that despite uttering words of regret for colonialism, France continues to lecture, rather than engage in meaningful relationships. Furthermore, the balance of power has shifted, largely due to Europe's unmet energy and raw materials needs. This sentiment might be gleaned from Tebboune's statement that his state visit to France is "still maintained," but depends on the Elysee Palace's schedule, emphasizing that a

Khaled Abou Zahr

"state visit has conditions" and "is not a tourist visit." The visit, initially scheduled for early May, was postponed to June due to concerns among Algerians that it might be overshadowed by the May 1 demonstrations over highly contested pension reforms in France.

However, the Algerian leader has yet to make the visit, which is intended to solidify improved relations between the two countries following numerous diplomatic crises. Instead, he traveled to Russia in June, where he received a grand reception from Russian President Vladimir Putin. Algiers and Moscow have maintained privileged relations for a long time. Tebboune said: "Our visit to Russia yielded concrete results," adding that state visits to China, Italy, and Portugal have also been successful. This illustrates that the approach of giving lessons could have worked in the past when France faced little competition in Africa and North Africa. However, in the present day, it must contend with China and Russia. Make no mistake, significant strides have been made by both countries in recent years. While grappling with the Ukrainian conflict, Russia has been able to strengthen its relations and establish military agreements with many African countries. Meanwhile, China has presented pragmatic and constructive solutions for infrastructure development and trade partnerships. In essence, they are offering a better deal.

It is also no coincidence that a robust communication and activist campaign has emerged in both Africa and France, aimed at breaking away from France's previous colonialist role. This places even more pressure on Macron. Declarations of a new chapter or reset can't merely be superficial, but must possess genuine substance. No one denies the horrendous impact of French colonialism, especially in Algeria, which earned the moniker "Country of the Million

Martyrs" due to the loss of life and immense sacrifices made by Algerians during their struggle for independence from French rule. This term acknowledges the countless individuals who died or suffered as a consequence of the violence, repression and conflicts that characterized Algeria's fight for freedom. In this context, Algerian political forces are determined to assert their new position south of the Mediterranean, and to truly reset and rebalance relations with France and the West at large.

However, there is a specific reason this anti-colonial sentiment is spreading: France and the West are weakening on the international stage, and this serves as a rallying point. This weakening is also prompting a different discourse domestically, as the recent protests show. The progressive left's agendas are intensifying pressure by advocating a break from institutional aspects of the old world order. Indeed, France, like the West, is grappling with uncertainty. This might be the most pressing issue, as the debate revolves around the country's own identity. This agenda is championed by the progressive left, which leverages France's colonial past to draw parallels with what it perceives as continuing oppression. All of this comes at a time when Europe and the West have less influence over the world's fate and are even threatened by a new global order.

Tense relations between France and Italy on Libya reveal this state of doubt. The key issue is not positive bilateral relations with their African counterparts, but a fight to access energy. This highlights European weaknesses at a time of alternatives for trade and security partnerships. Indeed, China is offering a much better long-term partnership than Europe. Can Macron reverse the tide? Can he reset relations with Algeria? This depends on what he can deliver, underscoring the need for a comprehensive reset of an overarching strategic foreign policy that should be inscribed with the EU.

China-Russia joint patrol crucial for regional peace and stability

THE third joint naval patrol between China and Russia, which is said to have reached international waters close to Alaska last week, has riled up the US media, which has dubbed the mission "highly provocative". The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported that 11 Chinese and Russian ships approached the Aleutian Islands but later departed without entering US territorial waters. A P-8 maritime patrol plane and four US destroyers followed the combined naval forces of China and Russia, according to the report.

China made the declaration of joint patrol earlier, which is a prudent action to avoid misjudgment, demonstrating transparency and confidence. On July 26, China's Ministry of National Defense declared that, in accordance with an annual cooperation schedule between the Chinese and Russian militaries, the two countries' navies would hold a joint naval patrol in West and North Pacific waters. Despite China's clarification that the operation is not targeted against any third party and has nothing to do with the current international and regional situation, the US has become overtly concerned about the Russia-US voyage, given the proximity of the Bering Sea to Alaska. However, it reveals the US' double standard in that it frequently deploys warships and aircrafts to the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait for so-called freedom of navigation operations but does not accept other nations' military presence close to them.

It is ironic that US warships frequently violate Chinese territorial waters in the South China Sea under the name of freedom of navigation, but becomes alarmed when China and Russia exercise their legal patrol in international waters without intruding into the US waters. Unsurprisingly, the US won't consider it "freedom of navigation" if the Chinese or Russian navy passes via the Panama Canal or the Caribbean Sea. So, under what legal framework do they consider the South China Sea operations of their warships to be free navigation? The China-Russia joint patrol has not intruded on America's waters. So how can it be considered "provocation" or "aggression"? However, Brent Sadler, a senior research scientist at the Heritage Foundation, ridiculously referred to it as "highly provocative". What gives the US the right to criticize China and Russia, who have been conducting the patrol in accordance with international law?

The latest China-Russia joint patrol came amid rising tensions in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific area, where the US has increased combat preparedness, rallied allies and partners, and repeatedly stoked unrest and instability over the past few years to alter the status quo. Even though NATO's eastward expansion has already resulted in the Ukraine crisis, Japan's decision to create NATO's first liaison office in Asia last month sparked widespread concerns about NATO's future expansion into the Asia-Pacific area.

The Bering Sea and other international seas in the North Pacific are crucial because they can be used as gateways to the Arctic. Similarly, the Arctic shipping routes could become important passages for civilian ships to conduct economic activities as a result of climate change. The China-Russia joint patrol is an encouraging development that contributes to preserving regional stability and security along these crucial

Kamal Uddin Majumder

strategic corridors in the Asia-Pacific, which the US wishes to control due to its hegemonic intentions. From a military perspective, the China-Russia joint sea patrol in West and North Pacific waters is of vital significance for both countries. The level of strategic mutual confidence between them is reflected in the latest naval patrol, which significantly strengthened the long-standing friendship between the two militaries. It demonstrated how firmly China and Russia are cooperating militarily. Russia and China are both aware of the growing military alliance akin to NATO in the Asia-Pacific area, which poses a severe threat to regional peace. The combined patrol shows that China and Russia remain the region's pillars of peace and stability. The two nations' shared concern for the strategic stability of the region, as well as their capabilities to uphold peace and security in the region were all reflected in their joint patrol.

Most importantly, the joint patrol also makes it very evident to the US that the world is moving toward multipolarity and that in the years to come, US hegemonic interests will be subject to increasing scrutiny and challenges. As long as China and Russia work strategically together and take on obstacles together, they can provide effective deterrence, put together a joint force to handle particular issues, fend off attempts to repress the two nations and restrain US international wrongdoing. In sum, it is expected that despite Biden's efforts to ease tensions with Beijing, China and Russia's strategic cooperation must be maintained, and such joint patrols should be conducted more regularly in a normalized manner in order to withstand escalating US-led provocations in the area.

The China Daily



Weekly inflation up by 0.69pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.69 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on August 10, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 273.43 points as compared to 271.56 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 30.82 percent. The weekly SPI with

the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.76 percent and went up to 279.66 points from last week's 277.55 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 0.68 percent, 0.75 percent, 0.77 and 0.57 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 29 (56.87 percent) items increased, 05 (9.80 percent) items decreased and 17 (33.33%) items remained stable. The

items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included vegetable ghee 1 kg (1.59 percent), lpg (0.79 percent), cooking oil (0.78 percent), mustard oil (0.48 percent) and vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.10 percent).

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included chillies powder (3.72 percent), powdered milk (3.65 percent), pulse mash (3.13 percent), garlic (2.39 percent), sugar (2.30 percent), chicken (2.27 percent), salt (1.84 percent), eggs (1.74 percent) and electricity for Q1 (1.75 percent).

The commodities that witnessed a decrease in

price on a Year-on-Year (YOY) basis, included onions (28.77 percent), electricity for q1 (16.63 percent), pulse masoor (16.04 percent) and vegetable ghee 1 kg (1.93 percent).

On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices included wheat flour (131.81 percent), cigarettes (109.57 percent), gas charges for q1 (108.38 percent), tea lipton (95.19 percent), rice basmati broken (84.09 percent), chillies powder (72.94 percent), rice irri-6/9 (72.74 percent), sugar (67.90 percent), chicken (65.87), gur (58.93 percent), gents sponge chapal (58.05 percent), potatoes (57.02 percent) and tomatoes (53.66 percent).

Govt provides Rs 2,953mln for agro-based SMEs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has provided Rs 2,953 million for the modernization of agro-based Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in order to enhance farm output and encourage agricultural sector value addition for enhancing farm income as well as profit maximization.

The amount was disbursed among 177 borrowers under Prime Minister Kissan Package for dairy, livestock food processing, fruit, and vegetable packaging across the country, said an official in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

Talking to APP here on Friday he said that the government has also pro-

vided Rs1,057 million for mark-up subsidy and a risk-sharing scheme for farm mechanization to enhance per-acre farm income in the country.

The amount was disbursed among 507 borrowers by the end of the last fiscal year.

"Meanwhile, the government has disbursed Rs12,817 million under Prime Minister Youth Agriculture Loan Scheme in order to encourage youth towards agriculture entrepreneurship as well as promote the agriculture and livestock sector in the country, he added."

The official said that over 24,776 applications were approved and out of that 23,857 applications were disbursed, adding that an amount of

Rs14,917 million was approved and Rs12,817 million disbursed among the applicants.

The government, he said under the Kissan Package had provided Rs3,830.9 million in interest-free loans by June to landless farmers, which were badly affected due to torrential rains and flash floods last year.

He said adding that by the month of June 2023, interest-free loans were provided to about 35,405 landless farmers in order to revive the agriculture sector in flood-hit areas across the country, the official added.

"The government has introduced a multi-billion rupee Kissan Package to revive the agriculture sector and enhance the per-acre

output of major and minor crops, aiming to achieve sustainable agricultural growth and economic development," he added.

"Moreover, the government disbursed Rs12,817 million under Prime Minister Youth Business and Agriculture Scheme to 23,857 farmers, which provides financial assistance and support to young farmers in agriculture entrepreneurship," he added. The official further said that recognizing the importance of farm mechanization, the government had provided Rs1,056 million to 507 farmers under the markup and risk scheme, he said adding that the initiative aimed to enhance productivity and efficiency in the agriculture sector.



ISLAMABAD: MOU signed between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation and Miracle Saltworks Collective Inc. for Export Quality Pink Rock Salt Crushing & Packaging facility.

SECP registers 2,220 companies in July

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,220 new companies in July 2023, a 25% increase from the previous year.

The total capitalization for these companies was Rs. 3.3 billion. The total number of registered companies in the country rose to 197,828. About 57% of Pakistan's companies are private limited companies, 41% single-member companies, and 2% not-for-profit associations, trade organizations, and LLPs. 99.7% are registered online, and three foreign companies have established business in

Pakistan. 86 foreign applicants have registered from overseas, said a press release issued here on Friday.

The information technology sector took the lead with incorporation of 316 companies, trading with 309, services with 260, real estate development & construction with 252, food & beverages with 96, tourism with 91, education with 90, corporate agricultural farming with 70, ecommerce with 64, textile with 57, marketing & advertisement with 48, transport with 45, engineering with 42, healthcare with 41, pharmaceutical 36, mining &

quarrying with 35, power generation with 30, lodging with 28, communications with 26, chemical with 24, cosmetics & toiletries 21, auto & allied and broadcasting & telecasting with 20 each, paper & board with 19, cables & electrical goods with 12, and 168 companies were registered in other sectors.

SECP integration with FBR and provincial departments led to 2123 NTN registrations, 69 EOBI, 40 PESSI/SESSI, and 51 excise and taxation departments, registering 2123 companies. Foreign investment has been reported in 42 new com-

panies, having foreign investors from Afghanistan, Canada, China, Djibouti, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Kuwait, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, UAE, UK, US and Vietnam. Major chunk of investment was received from China with 16 companies, Singapore and UAE with 3 each, Afghanistan, Iran, US and Vietnam with 02 each, and in 12 companies from other countries.

SECP's WhatsApp facility handles name availability and incorporation queries, with 1,305 responses and a 96% satisfaction rate in the month.

Haleeb say Mazboot Pakistan- a CSR initiative by Haleeb Foods Ltd

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Haleeb Foods Ltd, has launched the "Haleeb Say Mazboot Pakistan" initiative to combat malnutrition among underprivileged children. As part of this CSR effort, Haleeb will distribute vitamin A & D enriched milk to disadvantaged children on Independence Day. The initiative aims to improve the children's nutrition and overall health.

Beyond milk distribution, Haleeb will initiate an awareness campaign highlighting the crucial role of proper nutrition in child development. The campaign intends to foster community involvement in addressing malnutrition. The initiative reflects Haleeb's long-term commitment to children's well-being.

Awareness session on ‘Strategic Export Control Division’ held

SIALKOT (APP): An awareness session on 'Strategic Export Control Division' was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Friday.

The session was attended by SCCI President Abdu Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir, Deputy Director Strategic Export Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aown Arshad Gillani, Assistant Director Strategic Export Control Division Mussawir Ali Mirza and the business community.

Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir said Sialkot made footballs, hockey sticks, cricket gears and boxing gloves were used in international games, including Olympics and the World Cup.

Most International Cricket Batsmen prefer bats manufactured in Sialkot. "The inheritance of skilled craftsmanship in manufacturing surgical instruments forms a history spanning over a

century that has enabled us to manufacture premium quality surgical instruments which are exported over to over 140 countries around the world and are used by Medics, Surgeons, Beauticians and Dentists with complete trust," he said.

In leather products and textile sportswear, Sialkot enjoyed a competitive edge over other countries in quality and style, he added. On this occasion, Deputy Director Strategic Export Control Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aown Arshad Gillani briefed the participants about the Pakistan's Export Control Policy, Pakistan's International Obligations, Strategic Export Control Act, Strategic Export Control Division, Export Control (Licensing and Enforcement) Rules, Control Lists, Policy Guidelines on Strategic Export Controls, Internal Compliance Programme Guidelines and Outreach and Capacity Building.

Redefining Corporate Wellness

Healthx Pakistan and K-Electric partner for Preventative Healthcare Management

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Healthx Pakistan, a prominent multinational healthcare management company, has recently unveiled a strategic partnership with K-Electric, the country's premier energy company. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in corporate wellness and aims to alleviate disease burden and enhance the health outcomes of KE employees.

Healthx's signature Disease Management Program, a cornerstone of this partnership, is designed to spearhead positive health outcomes for KE by offering state-of-the-art, evidence-based, 24/7 primary healthcare services to their high-risk employees.

Under this program, dedicated internationally trained in-house healthcare practitioners from Healthx will diligently screen and proactively attend to the wellbeing of these employees in a hybrid 'phygital' model, ensuring continuous, data driven monitoring via both on the ground and digital interventions. Emphasizing on evidence-based medicine, this



unparalleled level of care not only boosts employee satisfaction and enhances their clinical outcomes but also effectively curtails costs of healthcare expenditures through preventive measures. The result is a holistic, cost effective and proactive approach to employee health and wellness, laying the groundwork for a thriving future.

Khaqan Sikander, the CEO of Healthx, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, "Cultivating a healthier tomorrow is not just a vision; it's a shared responsibility. Our partnership with K-Electric marks a defining moment in the healthcare industry,

the era of reactive, cost inefficient care is gone, the time for data driven, preventative & cost-efficient care is here. K electric is a pioneer in employee health & well-being in many respects and we are thrilled to embark on this exciting and transformative journey with them."

Muhammad Rizwan Dalia, Chief People Officer at K-Electric, emphasized the significance of the partnership, saying, "K-Electric embarked on a preventive healthcare model few years back for its employees through periodic health assessments. This not only resulted in a healthier and more

engaged work force, it also allowed us to identify high risk employees requiring more attention and follow ups. We are glad to have found a partner in the shape of Healthx who share our vision and can take our wellness to the next level."

"

Healthx Pakistan is a proud partner of the Trudoc International Group, a multinational healthcare management company with operations in over 64 countries and a customer ecosystem of 1.2 million+ paid members & 6,700 corporate clients across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

K-Electric, a leading energy company in Pakistan, has been serving its customers for more than 100 years, playing a pivotal role in the country's power sector. With a robust distribution network and a strong commitment to sustainability and customer service, K-Electric has pioneered the industry. For more information about this transformative partnership and its implications for corporate health management, please contact Healthx Pakistan at 021-38282433.

Markets struggle again as US inflation fails to sooth rate worries

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets mostly fell Friday as a below-forecast US inflation reading boosted hopes the Federal Reserve will hold interest rates next month but did little to dispel fears it could hike later in the year. A highly anticipated report showed July consumer prices rose more than the previous month but less than feared, giving the US central bank room to take a lighter touch with monetary policy after more than a year of tightening.

The data also showed closely watched core inflation was easing, while jobless claims came in higher than expected, adding to optimism as the Fed uses the strength of the labour market as a guide in its decision-making.

However, while there is a broad expectation that policymakers will hold off on lifting borrowing costs at next month's meeting, analysts said there was still a chance they could do so later in the year. Debate is also focused on how long rates will stay elevated, and some officials are keeping their options open as they try to bring inflation down.

San Francisco Fed boss Mary Daly told Yahoo! Finance that the latest reading "came in largely as expected, and that is good news". But she added: "It is not a data point that says victory is ours. There's still more work to do. And the Fed is fully committed to resolutely bringing inflation back down to its two percent target." And National

Australia Bank's Tapas Strickland said: "The data should reinforce the widely held view that the Fed could skip a hike at the next meeting in September, but also keeps alive the possibility of a further possible hike later in the year given the tightness in the labour market."

Others pointed out that there were still big data points to come before the next policy decision, including on jobs and inflation. SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes said: "The case for another rate hike could still be made, especially on higher energy and food pass-throughs."

Wall Street provided a positive but largely tepid lead, having suffered a late retreat from the morning's CPI-fuelled rally, with

observers suggesting a pull-back was also expected after a healthy first half of 2023. Asia struggled once again. Hong Kong and Shanghai fell further, even as e-commerce titan Alibaba surged in response to an earnings report showing a forecast-busting rise in first-quarter revenue. Sydney, Singapore, Manila and Jakarta also fell, though Seoul, Wellington and Taipei eked out gains. Tokyo was closed for a public holiday.

Investors are keeping tabs on China, hoping leaders will provide some concrete measures to boost the torpid economy after more grim figures released this week on trade and inflation reinforced the view that the post-Covid recovery had run out of steam.

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dawlance is the leading producer of home-appliances in Pakistan and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Arcelik - the 2nd largest manufacturer of electronics in Europe. Due to its strict adherence to global best-practices for a sustainable future, Dawlance has recently won the prestigious 'Environmental Excellence Award' from the 'National Forum of Environment and Health (NFEH).

Dawlance products promise over 50% energy-savings, to mitigate the impact of the rising costs of energy. This award also recognizes Dawlance's consistent efforts and campaigns to spread public-awareness about the importance of energy-conservation, for protecting the Earth's environment. Thus, millions of consumers are inspired to make smarter, more eco-friendly choices, while using electrical products and technologies.

The coveted award was presented to Dawlance in a formal ceremony, by the Secretary of Energy, Government of Sindh - Mr. Abu Bakar along with the Consul General of United Arab Emirates at Karachi - Mr. Bakheet Ateeq Al Remethei. The honorable guests appreciat-



ed the Dawlance management team, including: Nomanullah Khan, Syed Shabih Haider, Summaya Khaliq and Syed Safwan Abdullah for promoting global best-practices for eco-friendly operations, to preserve the environment for the future generations.

The Chief Executive Officer of Dawlance - Umar Ahsan Khan thanked NFEH for this honor and stated that: "Dawlance is committed to its policy: "Progress today, Preserve tomorrow. It ensures the wellbeing of the Pakistani nation and promises a sustainable future for the planet. We have a vision for elevating the quality of life for our customers, employees, dealers' and the

masses in general."

Arcelik - the parent company of Dawlance invests heavily on research for technological leadership, to fulfill the evolving needs of many diverse consumer-segments. It produces a wide range of high-quality innovative products like: Refrigerators, air-conditioners, microwave ovens, washing machines, steam-irons, Air-Fryers, etc. Arcelik's products have won many global awards for performance and reliability, while the company also sponsors many initiatives for environmental sustainability and socio-economic development, to ensure a healthy and progressive future for the

whole world.

Dawlance has 3 large factories in Pakistan and it is also exporting various technology-products to other parts of the world. Arcelik is owned by 'Koc Holding' - the largest (Fortune-500) holding company in Turkey, with 92,500 employees, 60 years of history, 20 R&D Centres and 23 manufacturing facilities in 9 countries, while its products are sold in over 150 countries. Since Pakistan and Turkey are fostering deeper socio-economic ties as brotherly Islamic nations, Koc Holding is also committed to expand its investments in Pakistan, already worth over 35 billion Dollars.



In brief

Basketball girls competition held

FAISALABAD (APP): A basketball girls competition was held at Crescent Sports Complex, in connection with Jashn-e-Azadi celebrations, here on Friday. Faisalabad-A team won the trophy by beating Faisalabad-B team by 32-04 points. The winning team was given a cash prize of Rs 10,000 and a trophy while the runner-up received Rs 7,000 and trophy. The event was arranged by the district sports department.

Asia Cup tickets to go on sale

LAHORE (APP): By Sohail Ali The tickets for the Pakistan leg of the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023 will go on sale from tomorrow, Saturday. The tickets will be available at pcb.bookme.pk. The ticket prices have been set at affordable rates keeping in view the return of the Asia Cup in Pakistan after 15 years so the fans can watch the Pakistan and Asian cricket stars in action up close. In the first phase, the prices for the VIP and Premium enclosures at the Multan Cricket Stadium and Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium will be unveiled. On the 76th Independence Day, the prices for the First Class and General enclosures will be announced. These announcements will be made through the Pakistan Cricket Board's official social media channels. The details of the Sri Lanka leg tickets will be announced in due course.

Kane's move from Spurs to Bayern 'imminent'

LONDON (Agencies): England captain Harry Kane is set to have a medical at Bayern Munich after being given permission to travel to Germany by Tottenham. Bayern and Spurs agreed a deal worth more than 100m euros (£86.4m) for the 30-year-old on Thursday. The decision to move was then left up to Kane, who is Tottenham's all-time top scorer with 280 goals in 435 appearances. Spurs boss Ange Postecoglou confirmed on Friday the deal is "imminent". Kane had one year left on his contract and was unlikely to stay with the club. Providing there are no unexpected issues, Kane's move will be completed in time to start the Bundesliga season next week. It was felt the striker wanted a decision around his future made before the season began, but it has taken Bayern most of the summer to reach a point where Spurs chairman Daniel Levy was prepared to do a deal. Kane had initially been linked with a move to Manchester United this summer, but it was unclear whether Levy would have been willing to sell him to another Premier League club. He could have run down the final year of his contract before leaving on a free transfer in 2024. Manchester City's attempt to sign Kane in 2021 prompted the England striker to delay his return for pre-season training, but he played on Tottenham's recent pre-season tour of Australia and South East Asia while negotiations with Bayern continued and last appeared on Sunday against Shakhtar Donetsk. Spurs will face Brentford in their first match of the season on Sunday while Bayern begin their campaign against RB Leipzig in the German Super Cup on Saturday. Kane has won the Premier League Golden Boot three times - in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2020-21 - and with 213 goals from 320 games in the English top-flight he needs just 48 more to break Alan Shearer's Premier League scoring record. A move to Germany could kill off that prospect.

Pakistan thrash China to finish fifth in Asian Champions Trophy



CHENNAI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan hockey team concluded their Asian Hockey Champions Trophy journey at fifth position after handing China a thumping 6-1 defeat on Friday.

The Green Shirts started the game on high as they quickly took a 4-0 lead in the first quarter.

Although, China, showed some grit and managed to score their

solitary goal in the third quarter but the green-shirts eventually pulled them back and scored two more goals to hand them a heavy defeat by a margin of five goals.

Pakistan's Mohammad Ammad and Mohammad Sufyan both scored two goals each, while Hanan Shahid and Abdul Rana each scored one goal.

China's Benhai Chen scored the only goal of the

match in the 35th minute through a penalty corner.

This was the first time that the Green Shirts failed to qualify for the semi-finals of the Asian Hockey Champions Trophy since its inception in 2011.

The national team was knocked out of the Asian Champions Trophy, after facing a daunting 0-4 defeat at the hands of arch-rivals India on Wednesday.

Pakistan's only victory in the Asian Champions Trophy came against China, which finished at the bottom of the table with one point only.

Prior to that game, Pakistan was winless in the Asian Champions Trophy, as they drew against Japan (3-3), and defending champions South Korea (1-1), while, they were handed a 3-1 defeat at the hands of Malaysia in their first game.

Pakistan ended up with the same points as Japan and South Korea, however, it failed to qualify due to goal difference, as the other two teams progressed to the next round.

South Korea will face Malaysia in the first semi-final today, meanwhile, India will face Japan in the second semi-final on the same day.

Pakistan previously won the tournament in 2012 and 2013, while they shared the trophy with India in 2018 as the final was forfeited due to persistent rain. Meanwhile, India have won the title in 2011 and 2016.

Azadi Hockey Cup from Aug 15

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 2nd Edition of Mari Petroleum Azadi Hockey Cup Organized by MPCPL and supervised by the Pakistan Hockey Federation, would be held from August 15 to August 20 at Lt. Gen. Ashfaq Nadeem Hockey Stadium, Rawalpindi.

The tournament would feature departmental teams, including Mari Petroleum (the host team), WAPDA, Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Police, and Punjab Rangers. The event would be conducted following FIH and PHF rules, with technical officials and umpires appointed by the Pakistan Hockey Federation overseeing the matches, said a press release.

Pride of Performance awardee Olympian Nasir Ali, who secured gold medals in the 1984 Olympics and the 1982 World Cup, has been appointed Tournament Director for the Mari Petroleum Azadi Hockey Cup. Furthermore, Shuja Iqbal Raja (Rawalpindi) and Major R. Tariq Ahmed (Rawalpindi) have been

appointed as Assistant Tournament Directors. Colonel R. Muhammad Yameen Khan (Mari Petroleum) will fulfill the role of Organizing Secretary, while Dr. Ahsan Tanveer (Islamabad) has been designated Deputy Organizing Secretary.

Zulfiqar Baig (Rawalpindi) would serve as the event media coordinator, and Muhammad Hafeez (Islamabad) will assume the role of assistant media coordinator.

The position of chief coordinator has been entrusted to Lt.

Col. R. Mohammad Asif Naz Khokhar (Lahore).

Heading the jury of appeal is Olympian Hanif Khan (Karachi), an ex-captain of the national hockey team, as well as a gold medalist from the 1984 Olympics and the 1982 World Cup. Accompanying him were former international Hockey Player World Cup Gold medalist, Rana Muhammad Shafiq (Toba Tek Singh), and Rai Usman Akbar (Lahore), who will both serve as members.

The Mari Petroleum Azadi Hockey Cup

Technical Officials Panel includes the following appointed individuals: Haji Naeem (Rawalpindi), Tariq Butt (Lahore), Syed Zia Hussain Bukhari (Rawalpindi), Asif Baig (Islamabad), Akhtar Ali (Hyderabad), Yasir Lodhi (CASCO), Mohammad Yasin (Rawalpindi), Rafique Rehman (Rawalpindi), Murtaza Bhatti (Rawalpindi), Tahir Sharif Gujjar (Whari), Hamza Tufail (Peshawar), Asif Shahzad (Islamabad), Naveed Ahmed (Islamabad), and Gulam Khokhar (Islamabad).

Empires Panel: Anwar Hussain (Army), Yasir Khurshid International (Railways), Haroon Rashid International (Peshawar), Ameer Hamza (Air Force), Waqas Ahmed Butt (WAPDA), Asad Abbas (Army), Wasim (Army), Fahad Ali Khan (Karachi), Irfan Tahir (Bahawalpur), Zahid Ali (Larkana), Rizwan Khan (Karachi), and Malik Safdar (Islamabad).

The scheduled briefing meeting for the tournament is set to take place on August 14 at Rawalpindi.

Six matches played in Hazara Region Azadi Cup Squash C'ship

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The Hazara Region Azadi Cup Squash Championship continued on second day Friday with seven matches of senior and open categories played here at the Jan Sher Khan Squash Complex.

The championship has been organised by the Regional Squash Association and the Regional Sports Department. In the first match, Saim Tariq exhibited his skills by securing a resounding victory against Abdullah Qadir by three to zero. Likewise, Abu Bakar also showcased his talent and defeated Jazib Tariq with a score of three to zero.

Likewise, Haris and Saaim Tariq emerged as victors in their matches against Ismail and Rohan respectively with the scores of three to zero. Abdullah Naser defeated Ahmed Ali in a closely contested match with the score of three to two, while Bilal overwhelmed his opponent Faizan with a score of three to zero.

The match between Matiab and Bilal Hussain was a thrilling encounter, in which Matiab emerged victorious with a score of two to one.

PM Shehbaz Sharif orders inquiry into PHF matters

LAHORE (NNI): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to investigate the irregularities of the elections of Pakistan's Hockey Federation and other matters.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has taken notice of irregularities in various matters, including the elections of the Pakistan Hockey Federation. He has directed for a thorough investigation into these matters and has also instructed for a reference to be sent to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

Last month, on July 19, a special committee chaired by Khawaja Asif convened to discuss the PHF matters. Following the meeting, recommendations were formulated to address the irregularities and were subsequently forwarded to the Prime Minister.

In light of these recommendations, the Prime Minister has ordered transparent conduct of the PHF elections, ensuring a fair process. He has also directed a comprehensive review of the Hockey Clubs and the Electoral College.

The Pakistan Sports

Board will implement the Prime Minister's directives.

It is evident that the state of national sport hockey is dire, and recently, the performance of the Pakistan team in the Asian Champions Trophy held in India was notably inadequate. The team was eliminated from the event in the initial rounds itself.

In this aforementioned event, Pakistan secured a sole victory in the match against China, while facing defeats against Malaysia and India and managing draws against Japan and Korea.

PCB confirms team management for Afghanistan series and ACC Asia Cup

PESHAWAR (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board Thursday confirms the support staff of the Pakistan men's team for the forthcoming three One-Day Internationals against Afghanistan in Sri Lanka from August 22-26 and ACC Asia Cup to be held in Pakistan and Sri Lanka from August 30 to September 17, 2023.

Pakistan men's team will

play the opening match of the ACC Asia Cup in Multan on August 30 against Nepal.

Player support personnel: Rehan-ul-Haq (team manager), Mickey Arthur (Director - Pakistan men's team), Grant Bradburn (head coach), Andrew Puttick (batting coach), Morne Morkel (bowling coach), Aftab Khan (fielding coach), Abdul Rehman (assistant coach), Dr Sohail

Saleem (team doctor), Driks Saaiman (strength and conditioning coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Ahsan Iftikhar Nagi (media manager), Lt Col Usman Anwari (Retd) (security manager), Ammar Ahsan (digital content producer, only for Asia Cup), Maqbool Ahmad Babri (psychologist), Talha Ejaz (analyst) and Malang Ali (masseur).

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BD appoints Shakib as ODI captain for Asia Cup and World Cup

DHAKA (AP): The Bangladesh Cricket Board on Friday named Shakib Al Hasan as its captain for the upcoming Asia Cup and World Cup.

The allrounder will replace Tamim Iqbal, who resigned from the captaincy because of uncertainty around his fitness. Shakib is now the captain for Bangladesh in all three formats of cricket after being earlier appointed as ODI skipper.

"Shakib is the easiest choice as the captain for his experience and influence," BCB president Nazmul Hassan said. "So he was our obvious choice."

Vice-captain Liton Das and all-

rounder Mehidy Hasan were also candidates but the BCB felt Shakib was best equipped for dealing with the pressure of a big tournament like the World Cup.

"Pressure is a big factor. You can't compare the World Cup pressure and pressure in a bilateral series. Shakib is a performer and he knows how to handle the pressure in crucial tournament and moment. At this moment there is no one better than him," Nazmul added.

Shakib also captained Bangladesh in the ODI format from 2009-11, including the 2011 World Cup.

He was the deputy to frequently-injured Mashrafe

Bin Mortaza from 2015-17 and led three more ODIs.

Shakib has so far led Bangladesh in 19 tests and 39 T20s. The last of his 52 ODIs as captain was in 2017.

Tamim has already been ruled out of the Asia Cup that starts on Aug. 30. But he is expected to be fit in time for the ODI series against New Zealand that starts on Sept. 21 and the ODI World Cup that follows.

Tamim's resignation as captain came less than a month after he suddenly retired from international cricket but reversed the decision in 28 hours following a meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Sweden topple Japan to book Spain semi-final



AUCKLAND (Agencies): Sweden produced a magnificent performance to book a semi-final date with Spain and leave Japan's Women's World Cup dreams in tatters.

Japan were seen as title contenders after gliding through the group stage and defeating Norway in the last 16. Here, they fell behind to Amanda Ilestedt's goal before Manchester City midfielder Filippa Angeldahl doubled Sweden's lead from the penalty spot.

Japan were then awarded a controversial spot-kick, but Riko Ueki's 76th-minute attempt hit the bar, before West Ham's Honoka Hayashi pulled a goal back in the 87th minute. That lifeline came moments after Aoba Fujino hit the woodwork from a free-kick, but Sweden saw the game out to make it into the last four.

New Arsenal defender

Ilestedt has emerged as one of the players of the tournament, and she now has four goals. This time she struck from the edge of the six-yard box in the 32nd minute after Japan failed to clear.

Goalkeeper Ayaka Yamashita kept Japan in the contest when she tipped an attempt by Sweden captain Kosovare Asllani onto the post, while Stina Blackstenius had earlier missed a glorious chance when the game was goalless.

There looked to be no coming back for Japan when Angeldahl doubled the lead after the video assistant referee (VAR) spotted a handball by Japan's Liverpool midfielder Fuka Nagano.

Japan had shone at this World Cup, scoring 14 times in their previous four matches. But they struggled to test goalkeeper

Zecira Musovic often enough at Eden Park as Sweden moved to within one win of a first World Cup final since 2003, when they lost to Germany in the final in the United States.

Sweden turn on the style Sweden needed a last-minute winner to defeat South Africa in their opening game, while they trailed the United States 3-2 on penalties before eliminating the four-time world champions in the first knockout round.

They have shown hunger and desire to reach back-to-back World Cup semi-finals and will fancy their chances against Spain back at Eden Park next Tuesday.

Peter Gerhardsson's players were riding the crest of a wave after eliminating the USA and they successfully stifled a Japan side who had been scoring goals for fun. Japan only

came alive in the closing stages and, even after Hayashi scored, Sweden negotiated the 10 minutes of additional time.

After playing 120 minutes against the USA five days earlier, the Swedes once again ran themselves into the ground to deservedly book a semi-final spot.

One step too far

Japan have shown they can counter-attack and cut through opposition defences at pace throughout the tournament. Yet this was one step too far for the Nadeshiko. They looked a pale imitation of the side that had reached the quarter-finals in style, and got their first attempt on goal in the 63rd minute.

Despite a strong ending, hopes of reaching a third World Cup final in their most recent four attempts were extinguished by an impressive Sweden. Japan have been great entertainers at this tournament and many of their players were inconsolable at the full-time whistle.

The exit of the 2011 world champions means there will be a new World Cup winner. Despite disappointment at going out, Japan boss Futoshi Ikeda concentrated on positives after the match.

"I saw my players grow at this World Cup," he said. "The younger players have to use this experience and take it into the Olympics and other tournaments. "Going forward we have to grow from this."

Swiatek wins after lengthy rain delays in Montreal

MONTREAL (Agencies): World number one Iga Swiatek beat Czech player Karolina Muchova at the Canadian Open after lengthy rain delays left the players waiting more than nine hours to complete the match.

The Polish top seed won 6-1 4-6 6-4 in a repeat of the French Open final.

Meanwhile, world number seven Coco Gauff cruised past Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova 6-3 6-0. American Gauff will face compatriot and doubles partner Jessica Pegula in the quarter-finals in Montreal. Pegula swept past Italy's Jasmine Paolini 6-4 6-0 to secure her place in the last eight.

The American got the job done before the rain arrived, which disrupted play for most of the day and causing several matches to be postponed. World number two Aryna Sabalenka's



match against Liudmila Samsonova was moved to Friday, as well as the tie between Petra Kvitova and Belinda Bencic.

"For sure, it was a pretty extraordinary day," said Swiatek, who beat Muchova at Roland Garros in June to land her third title this year. "I don't think I've had such a situation in my career so there is the opportunity to learn something new and see what I'm capable of. Even though we played this match, like, three times. "You have to find energy,

even though we've been here since 9am."

Swiatek saved several break points to take the opening set before Muchova frustrated the four-time Grand Slam champion when she levelled just before the rain halted proceedings. On their return, Swiatek secured an early break before the rain reappeared and forced them off again. The break was most of the day, but Swiatek kept her concentration to prevail.

She will face American qualifier Danielle Collins, who beat Canadian Leylah Fernandez 6-2 6-3, in the next round. World number three Elena Rybakina also advanced to the quarter-finals with a 6-3 6-3 victory over American Sloane Stephens and will now face Russian Daria Kasatkina, who beat the Czech Republic's Marie Bouzkova 6-3 6-4.



In brief

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) issued 2-day power suspension programme for Friday and Saturday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Friday From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Rawalpindi City Circle, Medina Colony, Chakra Feeders, On Saturday from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Rawalpindi City Circle, Gulzar Quaid, Gangal, Airport, Khanna Road, Bajnyal, New Milpur, P&T Wini, CWO, Jhangli, Gollra, EME Complex Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Kohala, Mount, Islamabad Feed Mill, Jhata Hatial, Basali, Pind Jatla, Lab. I & II, Industrial, Reliance Weaving Mill, Bhal, Jarrar Comp Feeders, Attock Circle, Air University, PM College Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Daulatala, Dera Muslim Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Sarai Alamgir, Fatehpur, Shukrila, Mandi Bhalwal, Military College, Shamsabad, Garmala, Sanghui, Chotala, Borain, F-2 Chippord, Industrial, Dorabddal feeders and surrounding areas.

IRSA releases 328,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 328,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 382,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1549.00 feet and was 151.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 228,100 cusecs and 198,700 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1237.60 feet, which was 187.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 35,400 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 183,200, 235,400, 246,200 and 189,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 45,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 45,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. Back

CTP issue traffic plan

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) here on Friday issued a traffic plan to facilitate commuters and the general public on Independence Day (August 14) to be celebrated on Monday. According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Tamoor Khan, 34 special pickets would be erected in the city and on entry points of Murree to thwart one-wheeling on the eve of August 14 and strict action would be taken against one-wheelers. The traffic plan was made and announced to facilitate the citizens, he added. He said the extra force of traffic wardens would be deployed on all the roads and in Murree to handle the traffic load on August 14. Over 800 traffic officials would be on special duty on Aug 14 while on Sunday night maximum office staff of CTP Headquarters would also be deployed on field duties to regulate traffic on city roads, he added. He said CTO also constituted six special squads comprising wardens to curb one-wheeling and car stunts by the youngsters.



ISLAMABAD: An attractive, eye catching view of thick hovering clouds over Faisal Mosque in Federal Capital.

Jashan-i-Azadi stalls attract youngsters, children

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the countdown has started for the celebration of Independence Day, falling on August 14, a large number of stalls displaying national flags, bunting, flag-coloured dresses and other accessories are set up at the main avenues, markets and streets of the capital city to attract buyers.

Several patriotic youngsters especially children can be seen around these stalls daily for buying flags, bunting, badges and Jashan-i-Azadi dresses to finalize their preparations. While to keep the interest of kids intact in these celebrations, the flag-coloured toys are also on display for the attraction.

Ahmad Shah, who is a government employee, said, "The stalls carrying green and white coloured Jashan-i-Azadi accessories set up at different nook and corners have not only added a charm to the beauty of the capital but reviving a patriotic spirit among the citizens".

"I have visited different

Jashan-i-Azadi stalls with my children today to buy them flags, buntings and other stuff of their interest, taking advantage of the pleasant weather", he said while talking to APP.

The capital has worn a green and white look with several Jashan-i-Azadi stalls as well as decorated vehicles with flags plying on different roads.

Nasira Jehan, a working woman said, "We should not only make our children buy flags, bunting and other accessories to celebrate this day but educate them about the historical struggle of our national heroes and workers of Pakistan Movement for the creation of Pakistan and how they can contribute to make this country a better place". She said the idea of tree plantation on August 14 will make this day more purposeful and contribute to reducing environmental hazards being faced by the country. Ameen Khan, a roadside stall holder said, "The occasion of Independence Day allows

us to earn a handsome amount through selling flag-coloured items. Most of our customers are youth and children who buy these things to decorate their vehicles and homes."

This year, vendors like me are expecting good sales as youth looks enthusiastic to prepare for Independence Day celebrations and then posting selfies on social media, he said.

Every year on Independence Day, youth and children show more excitement toward celebrating this important occasion and their motivation comes through the variety of stalls displaying unique items to attract them.

"I bought buntings and flags to decorate my home and car as well as shirt, pin badge, glasses and mask to wear on the Independence Day while my little sister has just bought a toy", Shahan, a nine-year-old said. "I have not shown my stuff to my friends so that I can have a unique look on the day and no one can imitate", he said.

Medical colleges asked to avoid offering unrecognized postgraduate program

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has directed all medical and dental Institutions or universities to register with the council under section 25 of the PM&DC Act for offering postgraduate programmes.

In a letter written to these institutions on the directions of the Council, the Registrar PM&DC has strictly refrained all the colleges and universities, not to advertise or offer any unrecognized postgraduate medical and dental program.

"In case of non-compliance to the intimation, the PM&DC will initiate disciplinary proceedings under section 35(i) of PM&DC Act 2022 which states Section 35 which says whoever runs or establishes or endorses any institution or advertises admissions in an institution for imparting education in medicine or dentistry, which is not recognized under sections 21, 22, 25, 26 or 29 or in respect of which recognition has been withdrawn under section 33, shall be guilty of an offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years, but shall not be less than a year, or with fine which may extend to twenty million rupees, but shall not be

less than ten million rupees, or with both and shall also be liable to the closure of such institution," read the letter.

According to PM&DC, all medical and dental practitioners intending to acquire postgraduate medical or dental qualifications in Pakistan have been informed to take admissions in PM&DC's recognized postgraduate programs only.

The PM&DC will register only those PG qualifications which are duly inspected and recognized by the council and are included in the 2nd schedule of the PM&DC Act 2022, the letter added.

It added, the PM&DC had set standards of excellence and continues to work towards implementing them in every medical and dental institute across Pakistan for both undergraduate and postgraduate education. The council will continue working towards the targets and will raise the standard of medical and dental education and licensing in Pakistan while continuing to discipline individuals and organizations who do not meet the benchmarks of excellence set by PM&DC.

The list of recognized postgraduate qualifications and DAIs are available on the PM&DC website www.pmdc.pk.

Dualization, upgradation of Old Bannu Road nearing completion

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) has been working on the dualization and up-gradation of 83 kilometer Old Bannu Road in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province which is nearing completion. An official of NHA told APP on Friday that the project was part of Indus Highway and the first package of the project, 40 kilometer Domail-Khurrum portion was awarded to the Frontier Works Organization (FWO) at the bid price of Rs 7,132 billion. The work on the project was started in February 2018 and so far, about 68.75 percent of physical progress has been achieved mainly due to lack of funds availability, the official added.

He said its second pack-

age, the 35 km Khurram-Karpa portion costing Rs 5,927 billion was awarded to the FWO. Its work was started in February 2018 and so far about 67.15 percent of physical progress has been achieved.

The third package of Old Bannu road, 8 kilometer Gaandi Chowk-Sarai Naurang section was awarded to M/s NCC-IKAN-HRPL joint venture at the bid price of Rs 0.718 billion. Work on the package also started in February 2018 and it has already been accomplished. He further said that the existing road was single carriage-way which was being dualized and improved. He said the project would provide the heavy traffic movement on Indus Highway (N-55) with an alternate route thus

sharing the traffic burden with Indus Highway.

The NHA official said that infrastructure development in the less developed areas would contribute to their economic uplift through accelerated trade activities. Indus Highway is 1,264 km long that runs along the Indus River connecting the port city of Karachi with Kohat and Peshawar via D.G.Khan and D.I.Khan. The highway being the second largest road connection after Grand Trunk Road, provides an alternate north-south link while traversing 491 km in Sindh, 360 km in Punjab and 396 km in KPK by connecting Rajanpur, D.G.Khan, D.I.Khan, Bannu, Kohat and Peshawar.

ANF seizes 78 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover over 78 kg drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He said, 5 kg heroin and 6 kg hashish were recovered from secret cavities of a car intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. Two suspects, residents of Khyber and Peshawar, were arrested during the operation.

In an operation, 21 kg heroin was recovered from a house near Masri Khan Chowk Peshawar. During the operation, the accused resident of Peshawar was also arrested.

The spokesman said, 300 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a local drug dealer near Baidri Chowk Mansehra.

In fourth operation conducted in Sialkot, heroin was recovered from a parcel booked at a courier office. 5 kg heroin hidden in surgical items was being smuggled to Canada.

He informed that in fifth operation, 30 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Sri-Lanka bound passenger arrested at Multan Airport. The accused resident of Lahore was going on Flight No G-9559.

ANF recovered 19.2 kg opium and 20.4 kg hashish from a Honda car intercepted near Gojra Interchange while during the operation, an accused resident of Swat was arrested.

The spokesman said that in seventh operation at a courier office at Jinnah International Airport Karachi, 800 grams Ice drug concealed in flag sticks was recovered. The parcel was booked for Qatar.

In eighth operation, 4 kg heroin and 1 kg Ice drug were recovered from a bus intercepted near Vinder area in Hub. During the operation, two accused residents of Turbat were also arrested. Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Raja appreciates minorities for services to country

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the significant commemoration of National Minorities Day, celebrated annually on the 11th of August, Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf has extended heartfelt tribute and profound appreciation to all Pakistani Minorities for their exceptional contributions and unwavering dedication towards the cherished homeland.

He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering commitment to ensuring the full realization of rights for out fellow citizens,

in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, notably within Articles 36.

The speaker emphatically emphasized that Pakistan embraced every resident within its borders, standing firmly against any form of discrimination based on caste, creed, color, or religion. This sentiment echoes the resounding words of Quaid-e-Azam on the historic day of August 11, 1947, when he fervently declared, "We embark on this journey without dis-

tinctions, where every community, caste, and creed are treated equally. We begin with the fundamental belief that we are all citizens, equal citizens of one nation."

On this solemn occasion of National Minorities Day, the speaker renewed the nation's commitment to construct a harmonious, progressive, and inclusive Pakistan, firmly grounded in the foundational principles laid down by the nation's visionary father, Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

PMD forecast rain from Aug 13 till Aug 16

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Independence Day seems to be rainy as Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Friday forecast rain-wind-thundershower at various parts of the country from August 13 (night) till August 16.

According to the synoptic situation, moderate monsoon currents from Arabian Sea were penetrating in upper parts of the country. A westerly wave was also likely to enter in various parts of the country on August 13.

Under the influence of these systems, rain/wind-thundershower with few moderate to heavy falls is expected in Kashmir,

(Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur), Gilgit Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar), Murree, Galliyat, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Hafizabad, Gujranwala,

Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhupura, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Buner, Mansehra, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera from August 13 (evening/night) to August 16 with occasional gaps.

Rain/wind-thundershower is also expected in Kurram, Lakki Marwat, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Karak, Waziristan, Mianwali, Sargodha, Khushab, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang and Bhakkar from August 14-16 with occasional gaps.

While in Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Musa Khel, Barkhan, Zhob, Kalat, Khuzdar on August 15 and 16. About the impacts, the PMD said that moderate to heavy falls might increase the water flows in local Nullahs/streams of Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Manshera, Abbottabad, Rawalpindi/Islamabad

from August 14-16.

Moderate to heavy rains may cause urban flooding in low lying areas of Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Lahore on August 14 and 15 and may trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Murree, Galliyat, Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the wet spell.

The farmers are advised to manage their activities keeping in view the weather forecast while the tourists and travelers are advised to remain extra cautious to avoid any untoward situation during the wet spell. Wind-thunderstorm may damage loose structures like electric poles, solar panels etc.

The general public is advised to stay at safe places during wind-storm/lightning/heavy rains. All concerned authorities are advised to remain alert and to take necessary precautionary measure during the forecast period.

Radio Pakistan airing special programmes in connection with Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Radio Pakistan has been airing a series of special programmes in connection with the Independence Day celebrations to highlight the progress made by the country in different fields since its inception. The programmes also aim at sensitizing the young generation about the rationale behind the creation of Pakistan, and promoting patriotism and national harmony.

The programmes include talk-shows, interviews, reports, documentaries, quiz competitions and excerpts from the speeches of the Founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other eminent leaders of the Independence Movement.

Through these programmes, the news and current affairs and programme wings are highlighting the history of Pakistan, important events, achievements and noted contributions by various personalities in different fields over the past 75 years.

Radio Pakistan is airing different programmes on the subject from all its stations and units across the country. Radio shows will be held as part of the Independence Day celebrations.

Azadi Melas in connection with the Independence Day celebrations are also going to be held all over the country in Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Pashto, Saraiki, Brahvi, Hindko, Balti, Shina and Pahari languages.

Thematic dramas on patriotism,

social harmony and national integrity are being broadcast on weekly basis, and it will continue till August this year.

Special Mushaira will also be aired on 14th August, where eminent poets will present their masterpieces to pay tribute to the nation and its heroes.

On August 14, Radio Pakistan Lahore will broadcast a 20 minutes special documentary titled "Constitutional Development of Pakistan from 1947 to 1973" at 4.05 p.m., while Radio Pakistan Islamabad will air a special documentary regarding Pakistan's achievements in the field of sports during past 76 years.

A 30-minute musical programme based on famous national songs will be aired by Radio Pakistan at 3.30 p.m.

Radio Pakistan's English Channel will broadcast a speech competition between university students in connection with Independence Day celebrations.

Radio Pakistan Multan, Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, D I Khan and Sargodha will air a special quiz competition in youth programme Hum Naujawan on August 14.

Besides, the Radio Pakistan will cover live the flag hoisting ceremonies both at Islamabad and provincial capitals.

In the programme Subh Pakistan, messages of the president, prime minister, Senate chairman and National Assembly speaker will be broadcast.



ISLAMABAD: The longest flag was displayed during the rally, organized by the Tajir Etnad Group in connection with Independence Day.

Food aid provided to 200 families

KABUL (Agenices): The Natural Disaster Management Department in Paktia has reported that over 200 families severely impacted by the floods have received vital assistance within the province. Nisar Ahmad Nijat, the Director of the Natural Disaster Management Department in Paktia, said that the distribution of essential food supplies, encompassing wheat, rice, and other provisions, has been distributed to these families.

1 dead, 45 injured

KABUL (Agenices): Tragedy struck in northern Afghanistan's Kunduz province as a mini-bus overturned, claiming the life of one individual and leaving 45 others injured. Dr Ahmad Noor Omarzai, a medical professional at a local hospital, provided this information, underscoring the gravity of the incident. The road accident occurred in Imam Sahib District on a Wednesday evening. As a result, a child lost their life while 45 others, including women and children, sustained injuries, according to a health official.

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

Muttaqi calls China’s policy towards Afghanistan ‘positive’



KABUL (Agenices): Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in a meeting with the outgoing ambassador of China in Kabul, Wang Yu, has said that Beijing’s foreign policy towards Afghanistan in the past two years has been positive.

Abdul Qahar Balkhi, a spokesman for foreign ministry, said in a statement on Friday that the meeting focused on Afghanistan-China relations over the last two years, China’s investment in Afghanistan and expansion of relations between the two countries in the future.

Muttaqi appreciated diplomatic tenure of the Chinese ambassador in Kabul, particularly for keeping the mission active during political developments. He also called China’s foreign policy towards Afghanistan during this period positive and expressed hope for further enhancement, the statement said.

The Chinese envoy thanked Muttaqi for providing all facilities during his mission. He also highlighted the expansion of Afghanistan-China bilateral relations over the last two years, adding that China remains committed to maintaining high-level diplomatic relations, according to the statement.

Acting agriculture minister: Most of the budget will be used for self-sufficiency

NANGARHAR (Agenices): Acting minister of agriculture and livestock in a visit to eastern provinces has said that the ministry has sufficient funds to strengthen the agricultural sector this year, and most of the budget will be used to implement basic projects aimed at self-sufficiency.



During the trip, Ataullah Omari also met with local officials and a number of farmers and gardeners of Laghman, Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan provinces and promised to address their problems.

“We want to talk and work closely with farmers in the areas of refined seeds, livestock development and agricultural and dairy products and marketing,” Omari said.

The acting minister added that he has also talked about the creation of new water canals and the prevention of land grabbing investment and develop the agricultural sector.

Violence prone casualties almost zero in Afghanistan



KABUL (Pajhwok): Emergency Hospital Country Director Stefano Sozza has said the number of people arriving at emergency facilities with violent injuries in Afghanistan has dropped almost to zero in 2023. In a statement he said the decline in the number of emergency patients in violence was due to improved security situation but added “While the number of people arriving at Emergency’s facilities with violent injuries is decreasing, the number of those who die because they cannot access treatment is rising,” he said.

“At our hospital in Kabul for example, we managed 29 mass casualties in 2022, totalling more than 380 patients. In 2023, we have managed only two, and from March 2023 to date none,” Sozza said.

He added that Emergency had widened admission criteria at its Surgical Centres, in particular in the Lashkar-Gah hospital, to include civilian trauma cases. This runs parallel to a clear change in the security conditions in the country. All of EMERGENCY’s services are completely free, creating a lifeline in a country

where OCHA projects nearly 30 million need urgent humanitarian assistance to survive. As part of the organisation’s efforts to increase the long-term sustainability of its care, EMERGENCY prioritises training local colleagues: more than 97 per cent of EMERGENCY’s staff in the country are Afghan. EMERGENCY’s active residency programmes include surgery, anaesthesia, gynaecology and paediatrics. “In a country already struggling with very serious economic and humanitarian crises, denying girls education means depriving Afghanistan of future resources that could strengthen the economy, public health and stability,” says Sozza. “In the same way, prohibiting employment in NGOs reduces the possibility for vulnerable segments of the population to be reached and to have their needs and rights recognised. Our women colleagues continue to work with us, but we believe it is nevertheless essential that the authorities reconsider these decisions to allow women to continue contributing to the development of their country.”

Baradar meets head of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey

KABUL (Agenices): First Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar met with Nail Olpak, President of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) of Turkey and a number of Turkish businessmen in Istanbul on Friday.



Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs said in a statement that in addition to the economic and commercial issues, there were comprehensive discussions about the opportunities for investment.

The meeting was attended also by heads and representatives of companies which work in building infrastructures, mining, mechanization of agriculture, electricity generation, building railways, production of foodstuffs and medicines, trade, telecommunications and in the tourism sector, at the regional and global level and have work experience and a long history of investment, according to the statement.

Baradar assured the Afghan and Turkish businessmen that security prevails across Afghanistan and there is better opportunity for investment.

He said that the Islamic Emirate has provided facilities for investment in mining, agriculture, electricity generation, infrastructure, industry, telecommunications, trade and other fields and provides full support to investors.

80% of female Afghan journalists had to stop work since August 2021: RSF

KABUL (TOLOnews): Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in a new report titled “Afghan journalism still resisting after two years of Taliban persecution” said that more than 80% of Afghanistan’s women journalists have had to stop working since 15 August 2021.

“And of the roughly 12,000 journalists – male and female – that Afghanistan had in 2021, more than two thirds have abandoned the profession,” the report cited. The report detailed the challenges to Afghan media in the past two years. “Latest examples: at the beginning of August, the local authorities in

Nangarhar province closed the premises of Hamisha Bahar television and radio under Sharia law, thereby depriving the radio stations Nen – which was housed there and used the same technical means of broadcasting – and Jawanan – which had a transmitter there for local radio broadcasting –, of their ability to broadcast,” the report reads. “The problems which exist should be solved, otherwise this situation will force other media outlets to stop their operations,” said Masror Lutfi, the head of the Afghanistan National Journalists Union (ANJU).

Meanwhile, some journalists voiced concerns about the restrictions in access to information over the past two years. “We have faced many restrictions and we could not find information on time,” said Mustafa, a journalist. “Unfortunately, the journalists cannot receive on-time information” said Habibullah, a journalist. This comes as the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) claimed that the ministry has not closed any media organizations over the last year. The Deputy Minister of Information and Culture in charge of publication, Mahajir Farahi, said that the interim government supports journalists and media.

Herat City residents complain drinking water shortage

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): The residents of Herat City, the capital of western Herat province, have complained against the shortage of drinking water and asked local officials to address this serious issue. Atiqullah, the resident of Herat City’s 7th Municipality District, told Pajhwok Afghan News: “Now they have access to tap water two to three hours while in the past they had up to 15 hours access to tap water.” He complained the Water Supply Department collected its charges prior while it was failed to supply adequate

water to the residents. He said: “Tap water are not available for more than three hours these days, water comes during the night and we must remained awake, sometimes we bring drinking water from Mosques.” Mohammad Younis, the resident of 3rd Municipality District, also complained against the shortage of drinking water and said the duration of water supply was not more than three hours in 24 hours. He said other residents faced similar issue and asked local officials to address their problem.

Some residents also complained against the waste of water by some people. Abdul Razaq, the resident of Herat City, said people should be careful when it comes to the use of drinking water, it should not be used for cleaning and irrigation purpose. Gharib Shah Haidari, Herat City Water Supply General Director, said water in their well had declined by 40 percent. “The ground water level dropped by 40 percent while the water in our well dropped by up to 120 metres,” he said. Herat University

Teacher Ahmad Wahid, said: “Ground water is a blessing bestowed to the humanity and we should carefully used them.” He added everyone in Herat is concerned about the unnecessary use of drinking water and people themselves should prevent this trend. Clean drinking water shortage issue in Herat City surfaced at times when according to experts if digging deep wells and unnecessary use of drinking water is not stopped then around two million people in Herat will faced with water shortage.





LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the participants of 118th Senior Management Course and 33rd National Management Course, at the National School of Public Policy.

Zelensky fires ‘corrupt’ military commissars

KYIV (Agencies): As the Russia-Ukraine war intensifies with Moscow gradually securing gains in the eastern part of the neighbouring country, President Volodymyr Zelensky Friday dismissed some top military officials over corruption charges, saying "the system should be headed by those who know about the war".

Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on social media: "We are dismissing all regional military commissars," the decision he took after meeting with senior military leadership. He added: "This system should be run by people who know exactly what war is and why cynicism and bribery at a time of war is high treason."

Amid the Russia-Ukraine war, Kyiv has been mandating his people to launch an assault against Moscow's advance to recapture the lost territory under its counter-offensive. The action reflects Ukraine's efforts to clamp down on graft and corruption as part of sweeping reforms requested by Western institutions like the European Union(EU), which Ukraine hopes to join. "During the inspection of the territorial recruitment centres, law enforcement agencies exposed cases of corruption," the presidency

said in a separate statement. It further noted that Ukraine's general mobilisation was a key area in which inspectors had uncovered instances of foul play. These "pose a threat to Ukraine's national security and undermine confidence in state institutions," the statement added.

"Ukraine's security council recommended that the head of the army select replacements who have battlefield experience and were vetted by Ukraine's intelligence services," it underlined. Separately, Russia said Friday that it got better in its fighting positions around northeast Ukraine, as Kyiv's troops struggle ahead with their counteroffensive in other areas. Moscow also launched a volley of hypersonic missiles at western Ukraine in an attack that killed one in a part of the country that has largely been spared from Russia.

According to Moscow's defence ministry, Russian units had "continued offensive operations on a wide front and improved the tactical situation" in Vilshana and Pershotravnevo to the east of Kupiansk. The situation around Kupiansk was "difficult, given the power of the enemy group, but controlled", said Sergiy Cherevaty, spokesman for

Ukraine's eastern forces. Ukrainian officials in Kupiansk urged residents Thursday in 37 settlements wedged between the town and Russian lines to evacuate the area.

"Residents could evacuate to Kharkiv, some 90 kilometres (55 miles) west, where they would have the option to move to safer regions," they said. Russia's drive in Kupiansk has sought to draw Ukrainian forces away from Kyiv's own counteroffensive. Officials said they had downed a drone aimed at the capital, the latest in a string of attacks on the city in recent days.

A Ukrainian drone was destroyed over the western outskirts of Moscow, the defence ministry said, adding there was no damage or casualties as a result of the incident. "An attempt by the Kyiv regime to carry out a terrorist attack using an unmanned aerial vehicle on a facility in Moscow was thwarted," the defence ministry said, indicating no casualties.

Largely spared in the early part of the conflict, the capital has seen a surge in attacks in recent months. Russia said Thursday, it thwarted two drones headed for Moscow, a day after two others were destroyed on approach.

PTI worried about Imran's safety, health condition

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Core Committee expressed great concern over the authorities concerned non-serious attitude pertaining to PTI Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan's safety and wellbeing, who was kept in a terrible condition in Attock Jail, vowing that no compromise would be made on his health and safety come what may.

The PTI core committee in its meeting voiced strong apprehension the delay in allowing PTI Chairman to provide home-made food and water. They demanded that the former prime minister should be transferred from Attock to Adiala Jail instantly. The PTI core committee expressed its non-satisfaction over the non-serious behavior of the rulers regarding the health and safety of PTI Chairman despite the fact multiple assassination attempts were made on him.

The participants stated that they could not allow risking the health and safety of Imran Khan in the guise of being imprisoned as a result of a controversial and biased court verdict. They stated that as per rules and jail manual, PTI Chairman was entitled as a former prime minister to be provided with quality and safe food along with a security guard. PTI core committee urged the court should take immediate notice of the situation and allow providing him food and water from home, besides issuing order of his immediate transfer of PTI Chairman from Attock to Adiala Jail.

Shandana abduction: Petition filed in IHC

ISLAMABAD (INP): A petition has been filed against the alleged abduction of Shandana Gulzar, a former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member of the National Assembly (MNA) in the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The petitioner Sabahat Gulzar Khan claimed that the unlawful kidnapping of her daughter, Shandana Gulzar was purportedly carried out by personnel from the Islamabad police. The Islamabad Inspector General (IG), Bani Gala Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), and the Station House Officer (SHO) have all been named as parties.

On Friday, Justice Babar Sattar heard the petition during which legal representative Sher Afzal Marwat presented the petitioner's stance on behalf of Shandana Gulzar. Advocate Sher Afzal Marwat asserted that Shandana Gulzar, a former MNA of the PTI, was allegedly forcefully abducted by individuals donning Islamabad police uniforms. The incident purportedly took place on Wednesday at approximately 5 pm, when, as claimed, she was accosted at gunpoint.

Hawaii fire death toll hits 55, expected to rise

HUWAI (Agencies): Death toll from Hawaii wildfire in Maui's Lahaina town killed at least 55 people leaving 80% of the town decimated 55, according to Governor Josh Green, making it the deadliest wildfire in US history in which hundreds of firefighters are on the ground to contain the fire.

The blaze started on Hawaii's Maui island Tuesday and was fanned by winds from a nearby hurricane. According to the authorities, the blaze moved so quickly that many could not get time to escape, trapped in the streets or throwing themselves into the ocean. "What we've seen today has been catastrophic... likely the largest natural disaster in Hawaii state history," Governor Green said. "In 1960 we had 61 fatalities when a large wave came through Big Island," he said earlier in the day, referring to a tragedy that struck a year after Hawaii became the 50th US state.

Maui County officials said just after 9:00pm Thursday (0700 GMT Friday) that fatalities stood at 55, and firefighters were still battling the blaze in the town that served as the Hawaiian kingdom's capital in the early 19th century. "This time, it's very likely that our death totals will significantly exceed that," the Governor noted. "It really looks like somebody came along and just bombed the whole town. It's completely devastated," said Canadian Brandon Wilson, who had travelled to Hawaii. "It was really hard to see," he said. "You feel so bad for people. They lost their homes, their lives, their livelihoods."

The fires follow other extreme weather events in North America this summer, with record-breaking wildfires still burning across Canada and

a major heat wave baking the US southwest. Europe and parts of Asia have also endured soaring temperatures, with major fires and floods wreaking havoc. The burned skeletons of trees still stand, rising above the ashes of the buildings to which they once offered shelter.

Green said 80% of the town was gone. "Buildings that we've all enjoyed and celebrated together for decades, for generations, are completely destroyed," he said. Thousands have been left homeless and Green said a massive operation was swinging into action to find accommodation. "We are going to need to house thousands of people," he told a press conference. "That will mean reaching out to all of our hotels and those in the community to ask people to rent extra rooms at their property."

President Joe Biden on Thursday declared the fires a "major disaster" and unlocked federal aid for relief efforts, with rebuilding expected to take years. US Coast Guard commander Aja Kirksey told CNN around 100 people were believed to have jumped into the water in a desperate effort to flee the fast-moving flames as they tore through Lahaina. Kirksey said helicopter pilots struggled to see because of dense smoke, but that a Coast Guard vessel had been able to rescue more than 50 people from the water.

"It was a really rapidly developing scene and pretty harrowing for the victims that had to jump into the water," she added. For resident Kekoa Lansford, the horror was far from over. "We still get dead bodies in the water floating and on the seawall," Lansford told CBS News. "We have been pulling people out... We're try-

ing to save people's lives, and I feel like we are not getting the help we need."

Green said around 1,700 buildings were believed to have been affected by the blaze. "With lives lost and properties decimated, we are grieving with each other during this insoluble time," Maui Mayor Richard Bissen said. "In the days ahead, we will be stronger as a... community," he added, "as we rebuild with resilience and aloha." Thousands of people have already been evacuated from Maui, with 1,400 people waiting at the main airport in Kahului overnight, hoping to get out. Maui County has asked visitors to leave "as soon as possible," and organised buses to move evacuees from shelters to the airport. The island hosts around a third of all the visitors who holiday in the state, and their dollars are vital for the local economy.

At the airport in Kahului, Lorraina Peterson said she had been stuck for days without food or power, and was now looking at a lengthy wait for a flight. "I don't know if we'll be able to get a hotel room, or we'll have to sleep here on the floor," she said. With a hurricane passing to the south of Hawaii, high winds fueled flames that consumed dry vegetation. Thomas Smith, a professor with the London School of Economics, said that while wildfires are not uncommon in Hawaii, the blazes this year "are burning a greater area than usual, and the fire behaviour is extreme, with fast spread rates and large flames." As global temperatures rise over time, heat waves are projected to become more frequent, with increased dryness due to changing rainfall patterns creating ideal conditions for bush or forest fires.

‘SC ruling will not affect Nawaz’s bid to contest polls’

I S L A M A B A D (Agencies): Former law minister Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday termed the Supreme Court (SC) ruling on the "very unfortunate", but said that it would not affect former premier Nawaz Sharif's prospects of returning to electoral politics anytime soon.

Speaking to media after a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial struck down the new law, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senator termed the timing of the verdict "important". He said that the Constitution had laid down rules of the game for all state organs which was also called trichotomy of powers.

"Courts interfere in the Parliament's jurisdiction

again and again and give verdicts that put a curb on its supremacy [...] this is not a good tradition," he lamented. He maintained that this has happened in the past and "it weakens the state's institutions and not strengthens them". Tarar added that the timing of the verdict was also painful for him as the verdict was announced after the dissolution of the National Assembly. Therefore, new legislation couldn't be done in light of the apex court's directives.

"The law was enacted on the demand of bar councils which were of the view that the scope of the review was so narrow that it would be an injustice to many people," he added. He further explained that the judgements law had made it mandatory for the top court to form a bench

larger than the one that gave the original verdict.

"Another good thing was that it provided an option to change the lawyer," he said. After the SC's verdict, it was widely believed that the doors on Nawaz Sharif's electoral politics had been closed. "This will not affect the prospects of Nawaz Sharif's return to electoral politics as his lifetime disqualification was undone by an amendment to Election Act 2017," he clarified.

The disqualification clause in Article 62 of the Constitution was amended and now the disqualification would not be more than five years. Tarar asserted that it would be against the fundamental rights to bar anyone from seeking votes and going to people.

IHC reserves verdict about shifting of Imran to Adiala Jail

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday reserved its judgment, observing that it would pass an appropriate order in an appeal of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman seeking his shifting from the District Jail Attock to the Central Jail Adiala.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq reserved the verdict after hearing arguments from respondents in the said case. During the course of proceedings, the chief justice remarked that the petitioner was of the view that the trial court had sent him to the Adiala Jail but he was lodged in the Attock Jail.

Assistant Advocate General Punjab Rao Shaukat produced the notification regarding shifting of the convict to the Attock Jail, saying reasons were mentioned about the action. To the court's query, he said that a lawyer of PTI chairman had already met him on August 7 to take his signatures on the power of attorney and other documents.

The court questioned whether a lawyer could meet his client only for his taking signatures on document. Rejecting the requests to visit the prisoner could fall under contempt of court, he added. Rao Shaukat said the jail administration had permitted the lawyer to visit Imran Khan on August 7, but they reached late on August 8 and 9.

The petitioner's counsel Sher Afzal Marawat argued that the lawyers were being humiliated in the matter of meeting their client. The chief justice observed that the PTI chief was a former prime minister and leader of a big political party, and at the same time he was convicted, and "we have to move while keeping in mind all of this together".

He said the court was viewing the matter deeply so such thing wouldn't happen again. The PTI chairman should be provided facilities as per the rules, he added. The chief justice said the court would pass an order pertaining to the

provision of facilities to the PTI chief in prison and the permission to meet his lawyers. After this, the court reserved its verdict.

SC's verdict contradictory to law: Irfan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Attorney General Irfan Qadir has termed the apex court's judgment in the Supreme Court (Review of Judgments and Orders) Act 2023 as contradictory to law and constitution. Talking to a private TV channel amid apex court's verdict on Friday, he said that no clause included in Act was against constitution.

Irfan Qadir said that the chief justice can't constitute bench in the said case and the bench should have been formed in consultation of senior members. The Supreme Court's holds no importance, neither it would be acceptable, he added.

87 from Sindh, 23 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, eight from Balochistan, four from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and one each from Gilgit Baltistan and Islamabad. Likewise 59 nurses and frontline health workers from across Pakistan would also be honoured with Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (posthumously) for their services and saving lives of people without caring about their lives during the corona pandemic.

The prime minister, in a statement, paid tributes to the doctors and frontline health workers who served the corona patients risking their own lives. "These sons and daughters of the soil embraced martyrdom from this deadly pandemic while fulfilling their responsibilities" and the whole nation would remain indebted to them, he added. PM Shehbaz also paid tributes to the family members of the martyred doctors and health workers, saying that they were pride of the nation.

India proposes sweeping overhaul of British-era laws

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India's government unveiled new punishments for mob lynchings and crimes against women on Friday in a proposal for the country's biggest criminal justice overhaul since the British colonial era.

India's Penal Code and other statutes governing the police and courts were introduced in the 19th century, while the country was governed by the British crown. Sweeping changes to the laws would remove archaic references to the British monarchy and other "signs of our slavery", Home Minister Amit Shah told parliament Friday.

"These laws were made to strengthen the colonial rule, to protect colonial rulers, and the intention was to punish and not give justice," he told lawmakers while introducing bills for

the reforms. "We are going to change this and the spirit of these new laws will be to protect the constitutional rights of our citizens."

New provisions in the laws would impose the death penalty on perpetrators of mob lynchings and minimum sentences of 20 years for gang rape. The bills also introduce community service provisions for petty crimes to ease the chronic backlog of criminal cases in Indian courts, which have millions of pending cases. Fixed timelines would be imposed for trials and criminal investigations in a country where both can drag on for years without result.

The bills have been referred to a parliamentary committee for further deliberation but could be passed before the current legislature dissolves ahead of general

elections next May. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist government has sought to remove lingering symbols of colonial rule from India's history books, urban landscape and political institutions. It has renovated the capital New Delhi's parliamentary precinct, originally designed by the British, to replace old colonial-era structures.

Last year Modi inaugurated a statue of Subhas Chandra Bose, an independence hero venerated for taking up arms against the British, but controversial for his collaboration with Nazi Germany's war machine.

The unveiling ceremony took place just hours before Britain announced the death of Queen Elizabeth II, and the statue itself replaces one of Britain's King George V torn down nearly half a century ago.

Report on cipher put a stamp on Khan's truthfulness: Raoo

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI Central Information Secretary Raooof Hasan congratulated the entire nation on the completion of the tenure of the callous, criminal and fascist government imposed on the nation through foreign conspiracy, hoping that elections would be held on the constitutionally mandated timeframe to bring PTI Chairman Imran back to power again.

In a video message, PTI CIS said that an American company, The Intercept, has made the cipher public, which solidified the former

prime minister's claims and put a stamp on his truthfulness. Raooof Hasan stated that although the ministers of the PDM government were constantly changing their stance regarding the existence and veracity of the cipher and even they blamed Imran Khan for its release.

However, he stated that despite all their tricks, the truth has come out today that verily the cipher was a reality, which was the story of the conversation that took place between Pakistani Ambassador Asad Majeed and the

American officer Donald Lu in Washington DC. Raooof Hasan stated that in this conversation, Donald Lu expressed reservations about the then prime minister Imran Khan's visit to Russia.

Moreover, he said that in this conversation, it was said that if Imran Khan was ousted through a no-confidence vote, the situation in Pakistan would be improved; adding that the international news report put a stamp on truthfulness of Imran Khan, who stood triumphant today.

From the freedom struggle to this day, they have contributed meaningfully to building the country. From defence to education to health to social service, there is no walk of life where our non-Muslim brothers and sisters have not played their role in the socio-economic development of the country," he added.

The Day, he said also drew the attention to Quid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's historic speech at the floor of the legislative assembly where he laid down the rules of engagement for the citizens with the newly created state of Pakistan. "The very idea of Pakistan is incomplete without our non-Muslim citizens. The 'white' colour of our flag symbolizes their place in the body politic of Pakistan," he added. PM Shehbaz said from Jogendranath Mandal, Pakistan's first law minister

Decision on caretaker PM likely today

to Dr. Maira Phailbus to Dr Ruth Pfau to Justice Dorab Patel, the list of our Pakistani non-Muslim personalities of eminence was long whose contributions to public service continued to be celebrated.

He said interfaith harmony was a marked feature of the national identity. Pakistan is a strong advocate of pluralism, and diversity. "Our Constitution guarantees the provision of social, political, religious and economic rights to all citizens without any discrimination of caste, creed and colour," he said adding "I am happy to state that the empowerment of our minority communities has taken the center-stage of public policy, as successive governments have allocated resources and implemented policies aimed at their mainstreaming and empowerment".

The prime minister urged all seg-

ments of society to forge unity in their ranks. He said nothing was more powerful than the spirit of togetherness in a nation, for it powered its imagination and strengthened its resolve to overcome the odds. "Unity, faith and discipline", the Quaid's motto, shows us the way forward to navigate the challenges," he added.

PM decides to award 'Tamgha-i-Imtiaz' to doctors & health workers martyred during COVID-19: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif decided to award 'Tamgha-i-Imtiaz' (posthumously) to the doctors and health workers who were martyred while providing medical treatment and care to the patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was decided that Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (posthumously) would be awarded to 81 doctors from Punjab,

(Continued from Page 1)

The prime minister brushed aside PTI chief's claim of any conspiracy by the United States in the cipher as that time Pakistan's ambassador, in the National Security Committee, had explained that there was no conspiracy to topple the government. Coming to the approval of census, the prime minister said the government convened the meeting of the Council of Common Interests within few days of the completion of census. As per the CCI decision, the election would be held under the new census, he added. Reiterating his desire for elections as early as possible, the prime minister said the Election Commission had the mandate to hold the polls. After the elections, whatsoever the government was formed, they should put the politics of accusations and mudslinging to rest which also strained the foreign relations, he added.

Shehbaz pays tribute to minorities for their contribution in nation-