

Samsam quits PTI
LAHORE (PPI): PTI senior leader and former Punjab minister Syed Samsam Bukhari on Tuesday announced parting ways with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Jumping off the sinking PTI ship like other stalwarts, Bukhari condemned the May 9 vandalism before saying goodbye to the party. Bukhari maintained: "I don't believe in politics of violence as all institutions are ours and we have to work together."

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing a meeting on economy.

Trump accused of leading a 'criminal enterprise'

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Former US President Donald Trump has been charged with attempting to overturn his 2020 election defeat in the state of Georgia. It is the fourth criminal case brought against him in five months. Mr Trump, who is the leading Republican candidate for president in 2024, was indicted along with 18 other allies.

He denies all 13 charges against him, which include racketeering and election meddling. He has said they are politically motivated. Georgia prosecutor Fani Willis first launched an investigation in February 2021 into allegations of election meddling against Mr Trump and his associates. In a 98-page indictment made public late on Monday, prosecutors listed 41 charges against the 19 defendants.

Ms Willis announced she was giving defendants the opportunity to voluntarily surrender no later than noon on Friday 25 August. She said she plans to try all 19 accused together. The list of alleged co-conspirators includes former Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows and former White House lawyer John Eastman. Others include a former justice department official, Jeffrey Clark, and Sidney Powell and Jenna Ellis - two Trump lawyers who amplified unfounded claims of widespread voter fraud.

The indictment says the defendants "knowingly and willfully joined a conspiracy to unlawfully change the outcome of the election in favour of Trump". The indictment refers to the defendants as a "criminal organisation", accusing them of other crimes including influencing witnesses, computer trespass, theft and perjury. The most serious charge, violating the Racketeer Influenced



and Corrupt Organizations Act (Rico) Act, is punishable by a maximum of 20 years in prison.

The act - designed to help take down organised criminal syndicates like the mafia - helps prosecutors connect the dots between underlings who broke laws and those who gave them orders. In a statement, the Trump campaign described the district attorney as a "rabid partisan" who had filed "these bogus indictments" to interfere with the 2024 presidential race and "damage the dominant Trump campaign". "This latest co-ordinated strike by a biased prosecutor in an overwhelmingly Democrat jurisdiction not only betrays the trust of the American people, but also exposes the true motivation driving their fabricated accusations," said the statement.

He is the first former president in US history to face criminal charges. There was confusion earlier on Monday when a list of a criminal charges against Mr Trump appeared on a Fulton County website before the grand jury had voted to return an indictment. The filing said Mr Trump had been charged with racketeering, conspiracy to commit fraud and making false statements.

A spokesperson for Ms Willis said the document was "fictitious" but did not explain how it ended up on the court's website. Mr Trump and his allies seized on the apparent clerical error to claim the process was rigged. Earlier this month, Mr Trump was

charged by federal prosecutors in Washington DC with conspiring to overturn the 2020 election, which he lost to President Joe Biden, a Democrat.

That charge sheet devoted significant time to the Trump team's activities in Georgia. Mr Trump has pleaded not guilty in that case. Ms Willis' investigation focuses specifically on Georgia, a key battleground state for the US presidency that Mr Trump narrowly lost. In January 2021, Mr Trump was recorded on a phone call asking Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" 11,780 votes - the number he would have required to beat Mr Biden in that state.

The indictment outlines an alleged scheme to tamper with voting machines in one Georgia county and steal data. It also mentions an alleged scheme to submit false lists of electors, officials who make up the Electoral College that elects the president and vice-president.

Mr Raffensperger released a statement following the indictment, saying, "The most basic principles of a strong democracy are accountability and respect for the Constitution and rule of law. You either have it, or you don't."

There are key differences between state charges such as those in Georgia and federal ones. Significantly, if Mr Trump were to become president again in 2024, he would not have the power to pardon himself from state charges. Mr Trump also faces a New York state trial on 25 March next year involving a hush money payment to a porn star. And he is due to go on trial in Florida on 20 May on allegations related to his handling of classified documents found at his Mar-a-Lago residence after his presidency. In both cases Mr Trump also pleaded not guilty.

ATC dismisses bail petition of Imran in three cases

ISLAMABAD (PPI): An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Tuesday rejected the bail petitions of chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in three cases. ATC Islamabad judge Abul Hasnaat Zulqarnain announced the reserved verdict.

The court dismissed the bail petitions of PTI chairman due to his non-appearance. The plea demanding exemption from personal appearance was also rejected. Two cases were registered against PTI chairman in Khanna police station while one case was registered in Bara Kahu. The PTI chairman was earlier convicted in Toshakhana case and sent to the prison for three years. He was also disqualified from holding any office for five years.

Meanwhile, a district and sessions court in Islamabad has rejected incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's plea seeking an extension in interim bail in six cases related to the May 9 incidents.

The PTI chief arrest in a corruption case on May 9 this year triggered violent protests with the party supporters attacking defence and military installations in many parts of the country. Hundreds of PTI workers and leaders were arrested for their alleged involvement in the riots while the authorities had accused the former premier of being the mastermind of the violent protests.

Judge Muhammad Sohail announced the verdict on Tuesday saying that it would be convenient if the former prime minister, who was removed from power via a parliamentary vote last year, joined the investigation related to the cases. The six cases were registered against the incarcerated PTI chief in Karachi Company, Ramna, Kohsar, Tarnool and Secretariat police stations of the federal capital.

The judge said the bail PTI chief cannot be extended in light of the Supreme Court verdict. The ousted premier was put behind bars at Attock Jail earlier this month after a trial court in Islamabad sentenced him to three years in prison and imposed a Rs100,000 fine after he was found guilty of concealing proceeds of Toshakhana (state depository) gifts that he received from foreign dignitaries as the prime minister of the country from 2018 to 2022.

Subsequently, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified him for five years from holding public office following his conviction. Last week, a local court also cancelled the interim bail of the PTI chief in the illegal transfer of 190 million pounds in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Imran's wife Bushra Bibi's interim bail in the case was also disposed of. On August 12, an Anti-Terrorism Court dismissed interim bails of the PTI chief in 7 cases, including the Lahore Corps Commander's House attack. The special prosecutor, Farhad Ali Shah, had argued before the court that there was no scope in the law to accept the exemption application of the convicted accused.

President assures support for Pemra Amend Bill

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday assured media workers and the journalist community of his support for the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Amendment Bill 2023.

The president extended support while speaking to a delegation of representatives of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), and Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AE-MEND) at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The delegation included Afzal Butt, Arshad Ansari, Naz Afreen Saigol, Sarmad Ali, Shahab Zuberi, Shakeel Masud, Ijaz ul Haq, Kazim Khan, Ayaz Khan, and Azhar Abbas. President Alvi also appreciated the collective efforts of the media community for introducing amendments to the Pemra law, especially to protect the rights of media workers.

He said that the linking of government advertisements with the payment of dues to

electronic media employees would help address their issues while also discussing various aspects of the bill with the visiting delegation. He also added that the amendment bill had brought improvements to the existing media law. Asking the members of the delegation to volunteer to educate the youth about fake news and disinformation, President Alvi highlighted that teenagers were among the most vulnerable populations to the scourge of fake news, and they needed to be educated and sensitised about its implications.

He remarked that the media, especially senior journalists, should enhance linkages with academia and universities to guide and educate students about fake news and the new developments taking place in the field of journalism. The head of the state also urged the need to promote diversity of thought and opinions by promoting dialogue in society and free exchange of ideas.

He said that the dynamics of new forms of media, especially social media, should be understood, adding that it was the responsibility of media to educate the people on moral-

ity and the use of social media in a responsible and constructive manner. The delegation briefed the president about various provisions of the new bill that would benefit the journalist community as well as media employees while thanking Dr Alvi for his support and taking an interest in addressing the issues faced by the media community.

The bill said a parliamentary committee will be formed for the appointment of the Pemra chairman and the Ministry of Information will propose five names for the media regulatory body chief. The parliamentary body will comprise four National Assembly members and two members of the Senate with equal representation from the treasury and opposition benches.

The committee will send a name for the Pemra chief to the president for appointment, according to the amended law. If the parliamentary committee could not agree on the name within 30 days, then the information ministry panel will send the bill to the prime minister who will then propose a suitable name for the post and forward it to the president, as per the bill.

The Frontier Post

Five cops injured in blast

ATTOCK (APP): At least five policemen were injured when a blast occurred inside police station Attock Kurd on Tuesday. According to police a blast occurred at police station Attock Khurd, injuring five police personnel. Police said the nature of the blast was yet to be ascertained. DPO Attock along with a big force of police reached the site of the incident and started investigation from various angles.

Economic reform caretaker govt's top priority: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that the caretaker government would ensure continuity in the economic policies, besides further improving them.

He said that further enhancement of foreign investment under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was among the top priorities of the caretaker set-up. The prime minister chaired a meeting in which he was given a detailed briefing over the economic situation, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that work on the public welfare projects would continue and the government would ensure provision of international quality facilities in the health and education sectors. He also directed for expediting ongoing reforms in the power sector and strict implementation of measures for increasing tax revenues.

Prime Minister Kakar said that the caretaker government would concentrate on deregulation and responsible autonomy for further improvement of economy, and expressed the resolve to focus their energies on economic reforms during their tenure. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including the State Bank of Pakistan governor, secretaries of Finance Division and Power, and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) chairman.

It was briefed over the steps taken for bringing further improvement and stability in the economy. A detailed briefing was also given over the reforms in the power sector. The caretaker prime minister directed for submission of detailed reports regarding ongoing reforms in all sectors.

PM for road infrastructure in areas serving magnet for foreign investment: Caretaker Prime

Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that an efficient road infrastructure played a pivotal role in the development and progress of any country and stressed for laying of road infrastructure in those areas which could attract foreign investment.

The caretaker prime minister chaired a meeting to review the ongoing road infrastructure projects. The meeting was attended by relevant authorities, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The meeting was briefed in detail about the ongoing work on Pinjarra bridge on Quetta-Sukkar Highway and Sawar bridge on Quetta-Zhob Road. The work on Pinjarra bridge, which was damaged during the last year's flood, would commence next month.

A causeway was constructed after floods which restored the vehicular movement. The construction period of the new bridge with 15-meter height and 12-meter width, would take about nine months, it was further added. The prime minister directed for reducing the stipulated time period for the completion of new bridge.

The meeting was apprised that the reconstruction and rehabilitation work on 118-km long Quetta-Dhadar Road and 188-km Dhadar-Jacobabad Road would be undertaken anew which would not only help in fuel saving, but also reduce the vehicular pressure. It was also informed about the repair work on Sawar bridge. The repair work on the 282-meter long bridge was in the final stages while during the work, the traffic could not be diverted due to lack of alternate route.

The reconstruction work on the bridge would commence soon and its completion would take about six months. The caretaker PM observed that the National Highway Authority (NHA) was playing an efficient role in the maintenance and construction of roads.

He emphasized upon completion of road infrastructure in the Balochistan province and directed the reconstruction of Karachi to Chaman highway. He also asked for adoption of the out of the box approach to expedite construction work because it was the responsibility of the government to provide facilities to the masses. The prime minister directed the relevant authorities to expedite work on the ongoing projects on priority basis and sought briefing over the proposed projects. He also asked for improving the road network linking Balochistan with other provinces.

GB Governor calls on Caretaker PM: Governor Gilgit Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and congratulated him on assuming the charge of Caretaker PM.

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar thanked the GB Governor on extending best wishes to him. The GB Governor said selection of a caretaker prime minister from Balochistan province would strengthen the federation of Pakistan. He invited Caretaker PM Kakar to visit GB and address the Gilgit Baltistan Assembly.

He also briefed him about the ongoing development projects including the infrastructure projects, and progress on Karakoram University. He also invited him to inaugurate the projects to be completed in near future.

Governor Sindh calls on Caretaker PM: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. The governor congratulated the caretaker prime minister on assuming his office and expressed his best wishes, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During the meeting, Senator Sarfraz Bugti was also present. The prime minister thanked the Sindh governor for his good wishes.



ISLAMABAD: Afghan nationals holding a protest demonstration against Taliban government in Afghanistan.

Nawaz expected to return by 'mid-September'

LONDON (Agencies): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif is set to return to Pakistan by mid-September, media learnt on Tuesday. A Sharif family source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that Nawaz will leave for Pakistan from London "after a month". This would mean that the former prime minister will return to Pakistan in the middle of September.

The Sharif family's lawyers and political aides had advised the PML-N supreme to come to Pakistan immediately after ending his Europe and Middle East visit which started two months ago and ended last week when Nawaz reached London. However, some within the PML-N have advised Nawaz that it's better to arrive in mid-September.

"Nawaz Sharif's decision to return to Pakistan after ending nearly four years of exile is final and everything is in order," said the source who has been part of the negotiation and the arrangements.

Former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N Senior Vice President Maryam have been in

touch with Nawaz regularly about various ups and downs related to his Pakistan return. The source said Shehbaz, who has now stepped down as the premier of Pakistan, will be reaching London within a week to meet Nawaz.

PML-N stalwarts Rana Sanaullah, Khawaja Asif, Javed Latif, Saad Rafique, Parvez Rasheed, Irfan Siddiqui and many others are set to visit London over the next three weeks where discussions and planning will take place about Sharif's return. The source said that the PML-N is planning a mega welcome for Nawaz who came to the UK in November 2019 for medical treatment and decided to stay on after the permitted court time lapsed.

Hina Pervez Butt, the PML-N's leading social media activist and the former provincial lawmaker who is in London and has met Nawaz, said the party plans to bring out tens of thousands of people when the party supreme lands in Lahore. The source said that the recent apex court's verdict on the Supreme Court (Review of Judgements and Orders)

Act 2023 has no impact on Nawaz's cases.

Sharif family's lawyers have prepared a full legal defence of Nawaz in various cases and the legal and judicial engagement will start as soon as the former prime minister lands in Pakistan. Last week, Shabbaz told media that his elder brother will come to Pakistan in September. "As far as Nawaz Sharif's return is concerned the Supreme Court decision has no link with it."

He added that Nawaz Sharif has completed the five-year disqualification period. Shehbaz also said: "The law which is in the field right now states that the maximum period for disqualification is five years. Nawaz Sharif will return and this verdict will not be an obstruction. Nawaz Sharif will come back to Pakistan next month and will face the law and lead the election campaign."

Nawaz had reached London on November 19, 2019 when he fell critically ill in prison. It was alleged by the family that the government of Imran Khan and his backers had tried to poison Nawaz and as a result, he suffered.

Justice Bakir to be sworn in as Sindh caretaker CM

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh caretaker Chief Minister-designate Justice @Maqbool Bakir will take the oath to his office in a swearing-in ceremony to be held on August 16 (today).

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori approved the appointment of Justice (R) Maqbool Bakir as caretaker Chief Minister and also issued a notification. The oath-taking ceremony of the caretaker chief minister of Sindh will be held on August 16. The governor gave his approval on the recommendation of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who sent the name to the governor on Monday night.

Outgoing Chief Minister Shah and Opposition Leader in Sindh Assembly Rana Ansar reached a consensus on the name of Justice @Bagir as a caretaker chief minister after hectic three-day consultations which ended yesterday. According to a statement issued by Sindh CM Office on Monday, "After three-day consultations between Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Leader of Opposition in the dissolved provincial assembly Rana Ansar, the two have agreed on the appointment of retired justice Maqbool Bagar as caretaker chief minister."

The MQM-P also confirmed yesterday that consensus was reached on the name of Mr Bakir, saying that "the party has taken into confidence its partner before reaching the decision," adding that the MQM considered the Grand Democratic Alliance's (GDA) input. Justice @Bakir's name as the caretaker chief minister was suggested by Murad Ali Shah, and Opposition Leader Rana Ansar approved the name on the advice of the GDA.

Justice @Maqbool Bakir was born in 1957. He hails from Karachi. He did his LLB from University of Karachi and started practicing law in 1981.

10455 suspects checked in operations by CTD Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in collaboration with the local police conducted information-based operations in different districts of the province to ensure that no untoward incidents take place during Muharram-ul-Haram and August 14th.

The operations were conducted from July 17th to August 13th, according to a spokesman for CTD Sindh on Tuesday.

Information-based operations were carried out in Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Nawab Shah, Sukkur and Larkana areas.

During the operations, 10455 suspects were checked through the Talash App, 124 suspects, including 34 illegal Afghan immigrants, were handed over to police stations concerned for further support and verification. A total of 24 accused were arrested and cases were registered against them in the CTD police station. 15 illegal pistols, a rifle and two cars were recovered from the arrested accused.

IGP organizes farewell for recently retired, outgoing officers

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Tuesday organized a simple and dignified ceremony in honour of recently retired and outgoing officers at the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi.

The farewell lunch was given in honor of retired and about to be retired officers that included superintendents of police (SP) Muhammad Najeeb Khan, Muhammad Zubair, Wajahat Hussain, Ashiq Ali Buzdar, Parvez Akhtar Bangash, Syed Saghir Hussain and Mukhtiar Solangi, according to spokesman for Sindh Police. All senior police officers of CPO were also present on the occasion. The Police Chief appreciated the efforts and measures taken by these officers for the Sindh Police Department in controlling the law and order situation while performing their duties.

Bodies of premature babies found at Karachi hospital

KARACHI (INP): In a shocking incident, two premature infant bodies were found from a private hospital's washroom in Karachi, says in media reports.

The authorities stated that the hospital's personnel stumbled upon the premature babies' bodies within a wastebasket inside the rest-room. The hospital's management, situated in North Nazimabad, revealed that two women visited the facility, with one of them undergoing a pregnancy ultrasound. Following the receipt of the lab results confirming twins, both women entered the hospital washroom. Subsequently, they spent several hours there and eventually rushed in a hurry, according to the hospital officials. A case has been registered against the women at the Hyderi police station.

CM visits LDA's one-window cell, listens to public complaints

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi made a visit to the Lahore Development Authority's (LDA)'s one-window cell on Tuesday, where he engaged with visitors to inquire about the status of their applications.

During interactions with citizens, concerns were raised regarding delays in the processing of their applications. In response, the CM promptly called the relevant officials and instructed them to ensure the timely disposal of pending applications. In his commitment to addressing citizens grievances, Mohsin Naqvi issued immediate directives to resolve the complaints of individuals on the spot. He underscored that No Objection Certificates (NOCs) would be provided to senior citizens at their residences without delay. Additionally, he outlined plans for the establishment of a streamlined system to deliver complete documents to other citizens directly at their doorstep, further enhancing convenience.

Emphasizing the importance of catering to expatriate Pakistanis, the chief minister directed the in-charge of the one-window cell to address complaints from overseas citizens within ten days instead of the previously stipulated two weeks.

During the visit, concerns were also raised by citizens regarding the need for repeated visits to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) office for verification purposes. In response, the CM assured citizens that he would liaise with the federal government to establish an FBR counter within the LDA One-Window Cell.

Highlighting measures to enhance citizens accessibility, Mohsin Naqvi noted that the operational hours of the one-window cell have been extended, with the facility now operating in two shifts until 9:00 pm.

The chief minister's prompt responsiveness to citizens' concerns and his commitment to improving facilities at the one-window cell were met with

gratitude by those in attendance.

Nation showcased unparalleled display of unity on Independence Day: CM: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday said that the nation had showcased an unparalleled display of unity and consensus on the occasion of Pakistan's 76th Independence Day, underscoring the nation's remarkable character. In a media statement, he emphasised that vibrant nations commemorate their independence with unwavering national fervor and determination.

The caretaker chief minister said the judiciary, military authorities, civil administration, police, and various other institutions wholeheartedly participated in the Independence Day celebrations, sending a resounding message of unity and solidarity. The CM praised and acknowledged the commendable efforts put forth by provincial ministers, administration, police and other departments in orchestrating the Independence Day festivities.

It was indeed heartening to observe that an atmosphere of tranquillity prevailed throughout the province during the Independence Day events, allowing the populace to engage and revel in the jubilation of freedom actively, he noted.

Expressing his sentiments, he lauded the diligent commitment of the police, administration and line departments in upholding a peaceful ambience. He highlighted the noteworthy contribution of the cabinet committee on law and order, alongside law enforcement agencies, in organising comprehensive arrangements for establishing a serene environment. The CM underscored the commendable roles played by the police, administration, and line departments in creating a harmonious milieu.

Furthermore, he highlighted the collaborative effort of provincial ministers, civil administration, police, and other stakeholders who worked cohesively as a unified team.



KARACHI: People dangerously travelling on a roof top of a minibus.

Flag hoisting at Quaid e Azam's house at Karachi

KARACHI (NNI): In a spirited and patriotic event held at Quaid-e-Azam House Museum (QAHM), the Grand Nephew of Quaid-e-Azam, Liaquat Merchant, along with Ikram Sehgal, Vice Chairman of the Board of Management (BOM) QAHM, led the flag hoisting ceremony to commemorate the enduring legacy of the Father of the Nation.

The ceremony, marked by a profound sense of national pride, brought together students from various educational institutions, highlighting the unifying power of Quaid-e-Azam's Students from Ida Rieu College for the deaf and blind, as well as Saint Joseph's Covenant School and Nasra School, participated wholeheartedly, cre-

ating a vibrant and festive atmosphere at QAHM.

The flag hoisting ceremony commenced with the resonant notes of the national anthem played by the band from Ida Rieu College. The fluttering national flag served as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by the Muslims of the British India to from Pakistan and ideals of Quaid-e-Azam and his vision for an independent Pakistan.

The young students, bearing small flags in their hands, proudly marched before the Vice Chairmen, paying homage to the nation's founder. In an inspiring address to the gathering, Liaquat Merchant, Senior Vice Chairman of BOM QAHM, extended a warm welcome to all attendees and shared insightful anecdotes about Quaid-e-Azam's pivotal

role in guiding the Muslims of India towards the creation of Pakistan. Mr. Merchant emphasized the timeless relevance of Quaid-e-Azam's principles and encouraged the students to imbibe these values in their own lives, ensuring a bright future for Pakistan.

Ikram Sehgal, Vice Chairman of BOM QAHM, delivered a motivational speech, underscoring the importance of youth in steering Pakistan towards a path of prosperity and success. He urged the students to strive for excellence and uphold the ideals of unity, faith, and discipline – the very essence of Pakistan's foundation. The ceremony resonated with patriotic fervor as the students sang national songs with fervor, guided by the melodious tunes played by the Ida Rieu College's deaf and

blind band, under the direction of Mr. Atif Bader. Ms. Ameena Saiyid, Member BOM, expertly conducted the proceedings, ensuring a seamless and engaging experience for all attendees.

Ms. Shehnaz Wazir Ali, also present at the occasion, delivered an insightful address that highlighted the significance of preserving and cherishing the legacy of Quaid-e-Azam, emphasizing the role of educational institutions in nurturing future leaders who will continue to uphold the nation's ideals. Following the ceremony, the students were treated to a delightful refreshments, generously provided by the Vice Chairman.

This gathering fostered a sense of camaraderie and unity among the students, further reinforcing the spirit of patriotism.

Syeda Laila Rubab

Independence is a blessing and this blessing is being celebrated with great passion all across the country.

Different mediums are used by the media and institutes to express patriotism and educate people about the day of independence. Contrarily, roadsides are decorated with flags, children used to play out with horns, youngsters used to over speed, one wheel and drive their bikes crazily.

The mediums of celebrations that lead to trouble must be condemned. Since the decorative flags that are decorated with a great passion are resulted in being trash.


But that's not it, before resulting in trash they are seen everywhere laying on the ground coming

under the feet.


The horns are not noise pollution. Whereas many youngsters go through injuries and accidents due to their childishness.

Yes it is the right of every citizen to express their love and patriotism towards Pakistan. But patriotism can be expressed in many other ways that could benefit the motherland too. Plantation campaigns are one of them.

By the means of this newspaper I would like to convey my point to the government to condemn these sorts of activities. And also the media industry because they have a great impact on thought building of people, to educate the people about the positive acts that could be beneficial rather than brings trouble.



حکومت پاکستان
وزارت داخلہ



NADRA
National Database and Registration Authority

نیشنل ڈیٹا بیس اینڈ رجسٹریشن
اتھارٹی (نادرا)

نوٹیفکیشن غیر حاضری

آپ کو مطلع (برائے شہریوں) کی طرف سے: (پیدائشی ڈیٹا کی تصدیق اور ترمیم کے لیے درخواستیں قبول کرنے کے لیے)۔

بروز 22 - May - 2023 کے اپنی ڈیٹا کے بغیر درخواستیں پیش کی گئیں۔

مقامی نوٹ: (2) (2) کو نوٹ کریں۔

RHO/NADRA/Disp/08/HR/57002/First Notice
Dated : 16 - June - 2023

آپ کو مطلع (برائے شہریوں) کی طرف سے: (پیدائشی ڈیٹا کی تصدیق اور ترمیم کے لیے درخواستیں قبول کرنے کے لیے)۔

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RHO/NADRA/Disp/08/HR/15591/Second Notice Dated: 13-July-2023

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مقامی نوٹ: (2) (2) کو نوٹ کریں۔

RHO/NADRA/Disp/08/HR/15591/Second Notice Dated: 13-July-2023

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PHC seeks details of cases against ex-MNA, MPA

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Monday directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Anti-Corruption Department and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to provide details of the cases registered against former MNA Mehboob Shah and MPA Humayun.

The bench comprising

Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Qazi Subhan asked the anti-corruption watchdogs to provide details of all the cases and inquiries against the petitioners.

Earlier, the legal counsel of the petitioner's Advocate Malik Ajmal Advocate said that as soon as the petitioners are released from jail, they are arrested in another case.

He said that anti-corruption

bodies had not provided details of the cases and inquiries against them.

The court has asked NAB, Anti-Corruption and FIA to respond on the next hearing.

Meanwhile, in another case, against former MNA Anwer Taj, the court adjourned the hearing till August 21 due to the unavailability of the legal counsel of the petitioner.

District Interfaith Harmony Council meets

PESHAWAR (APP): A meeting of the District Interfaith Harmony Council, held here with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Shah Fahad in the chair on Tuesday.

Besides, officers of the district administration, Auqaf and other concerned departments, the representatives of Hindu, Christian, Sikh and other minority

communities especially participated in the meeting.

The participants of the meeting gave a detailed briefing to the district administrator regarding their problems.

The Deputy Commissioner heard their problems with keen interest and directed the concerned for immediate resolution of their problems.

He said that district administration is serious regarding the resolution of the problems facing the minority communities, saying the doors of his office will always remain open for them.

On this occasion, the representatives of different religions expressed gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner, Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: An artisan gives final touch to a wooden horse cart (Tanga) for decoration at his workplace.

NIH doubles anti-venom stock — to tackle snakebite envenomation

PESHAWAR (APP): National Institute of Health (NIH), one of the most prestigious institutions involved in multi-disciplinary public health-related activities, has increased its stock of anti-venom to tackle the growing threat of snakebite envenomation in the country during the monsoon season.

In a video advisory issued by NIH for the awareness of the public about the treatment of snake bites, NIH warns that in flood-hit areas and those receiving many rains, there are risks of an increase in incidents of snake bites.

"Snakebite is a significant, but often neglected health issue affecting mil-

lions of people in developing countries," adds the video message.

World Health Organization (WHO) has declared snake bite a neglected tropical disease which is affecting around 30,000 people in Pakistan on an annual basis.

The main reason behind death due to snake bites is a lack of awareness among people who instead of forthwith rushing patients to the hospital, prefer the traditional way of treatment.

In the health advisory, NIH team members apprised people to tackle snake bites for proper treatment of victims.

Apart from the video message, NIH also pre-

pared a pictorial display for educating the public about better treatment of snake bite victims.

"We are preparing polyvalent antivenom which is made by injecting horses with venom for the treatment of Big Four, the Indian cobra, common krait, Russell's viper and the saw-scaled viper," informs Amina Najam, Senior Scientific Officer Biological Production Division of National Institute of Health.

Talking to APP, Amina informed that NIH was producing 20000 vials of anti-venom per year but has now increased its capacity up to 60,000 vials.

We have also approached provincial governments for procurement of anti-venom from NIH to meet the need of treating snake bite victims, she told APP.

Amina said snake bite incidents are increasing in the wake of floods and excessive rains during monsoon, inundating large areas in both urban and rural settlements.

There is no proper data regarding the number of snake bites at the national level and the public health departments should maintain records and share with concerned departments for tackling this neglected tropical disease which is becoming a public health burden in the country.

BDU defuses 361 bombs in six months

PESHAWAR (APP): In the first six months of this year, The Bomb Disposal Unit (BDU) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police defused as many as 361 bombs during various operations and crackdowns across the province.

According to an official report issued here Tuesday, 115 bombs were detonated in Mardan, including 33 rockets, 79 hand grenades, two time bombs and one remote control device.

Similarly, 87 bombs including suicide vests were defused in Peshawar, 55 bombs in Kohat, 31 rockets in Dir, 11 hand grenades each in Malakand and DI Khan, nine explosive materials in Charsadda and Bannu, six hand grenades and one time bomb in Hangu, six hand grenades in district Kurram, four hand grenades in Karak and Mohmand, three hand grenades in Khyber, two hand grenades in Lakki Marwat and one hand grenade each in Waziristan, Orakzai and Swabi.

Al-Khidmat launches plantation campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): Al-Khidmat Foundation has initiated a large-scale plantation drive in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as part of the 'Clean and Green Pakistan' initiative.

The campaign aims to plant up to 2 million saplings in educational institutions, including universities and colleges.

The foundation had also launched a nationwide Mega Plantation Campaign in collaboration with Clean and Green Pakistan, with over 10 million saplings to be planted across the country to address climate change and other environmental challenges in the country.

The Al-Khidmat mega plantation campaign commenced at Bacha Khan University in Charsadda.

Volunteers from the Foundation, along with male and female students, successfully planted over 10 thousand saplings.

Dr. Muhammad Mush-taq Ahmad Mangat, Vice President of Al Khidmat Foundation Pakistan, expressed the organization's commitment to planting saplings in regions where they can be nurtured and safeguarded.

KP ex-legal adviser Arif Yousaf held from ATC

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Legal Adviser of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government Arif Yousuf was arrested from the court room on Tuesday.

The Anti-Terrorism Court rejected bail application of the accused of May 9 and 10 arson and vandalism case in Peshawar.

Arif Yousuf was arrested by Khan Raziq Police Station after the ATC judge rejected his bail application.

He was a legal adviser to the former Chief minister of KP Pervez Khattak.

Power suspension notified

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Tuesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV PESCO Colony Grid Station on 16th August from 7 a.m to 12 p.m.

Subsequently, the consumers of 11 KV ICF, Darmangai, Warsak Road, Shagai, KSM feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will also remain suspended from 132 KV Shahi Bagh Grid Station on 16th August from 7 a.m to 12 p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Industrial Naguman, Nadran Bypass, Bakhsho Pull, Ghari Hamza, Old Naguman, Shahalam, Latif Abad, Dalazak, Samar Bagh, New Takht Abad, New Naguman, Khazana feeders will face inconvenience.



PESHAWAR: Provincial General Secretary PML(N) Women Wing KP Farah Khan with others members cutting a cake to celebrate Independence Day. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Meeting discuss progress on Balakot Hydropower Project

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Executive Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), Engineer Naem Khan on Tuesday chaired a meeting to discuss pace of work on Balakot Hydropower Project.

The meeting was attended by teams representing Chinese construction company, Gazoba China and Turkish Consultants, Dolsar

besides concerned officials.

Chairing the meeting, CE PEDO told that work is underway on Balakot Hydropower Project tunnel and colony with brisk pace and matter relating to acquire land have been settled.

He directed Chinese contractor to further increase work speed and said that Balakot Hydropower is a flagship

project that would be completed in seven years with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank.

He told that estimated cost of the project is 2.755 million dollars that would generate revenue of Rs.15 billion rupees annually and create about 1400 employment opportunities.

ACD summons Shaukat in corruption case on 18th

PESHAWAR (INP): Shaukat Yousafzai, PTI leader and former provincial minister, has been summoned by the Anti-Corruption Department (ACD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on 18 August to record his statement in a corruption case.

The notice, which is available with the news agency, asks Yousafzai to appear in person on August 18. The case is ongoing, and the notice does not pro-

vide any further details.

Yousafzai is a senior leader of the PTI, and he served as provincial minister for finance and revenue from 2013 to 2018. He is also the current president of the PTI's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter.

This is not the first time that Yousafzai has been summoned by the anti-corruption department. In 2019, he was also asked to appear in person to record

his statement in a separate corruption case. He denied any wrongdoing in that case, and the matter is still under investigation.

It remains to be seen what will happen in the case against Yousafzai. However, the fact that he has been summoned by the anti-corruption department is a serious development. It will be interesting to see how he responds to the allegations against him.



PESHAWAR: A beggar woman asking for some mercy while sitting along road side.

5 PSP officers reshuffled in a major shake up

PESHAWAR (APP): The Office of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) has announced the transfer and posting of six senior police officers in the public interest with immediate effect, said a notification issued here by the Central Police Office here on Tuesday.

According to the notification, Mr Awal Khan PSP (BS-20) has been posted as Additional IGP/Headquarters Khyber Pakhtun-

khwa in his own & scale. He will assume the charge of his new assignment on arrival from 118th National Management Course.

Similarly, Dr Muhammad Akhtar Abbas PSP (BS-20) has been posted as DIG/Legal KP. He will also assume charge on arrival from 118th NMC while Aftab Ahmad Mahsud PSP (BS-20) DIG/ Administration Investigation Branch has been transferred

and posted as DIG/Special Branch replacing Muhammad Saleem PSP (BS-20), who has been posted as DIG Internal Accountability Branch.

Furthermore, Irfan Tariq PSP (BS-20) Deputy Commandant Elite Force KP has been transferred and posted as DIG Information Technology while Ziaullah Khan PSP (BS-19) DIG/ Investigation as Deputy Commandant Elite Force.

I.Day celebrated at WCC

PESHAWAR (APP): The 76th Independence Day of Pakistan was observed with enthusiasm at Women Crisis Center (WCC) in Peshawar. The function was formally started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, a Naat performance, and a warm welcome by the Manager of WCC.

The event included the national anthem, national songs performed by resident kids and women, a game competition for resident kids, and a touching tableau featuring Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Iqbal, and Fatima Jinnah to convey messages of faith, hard work, brotherhood, and inclusion for the country's prosperity.

Guests of the event included Deputy Director Women Empowerment Syeda Nudrat, Dr. Irum Irshad Chairperson Psychology Department and Chairperson Advisory Committee of WCC, Advocate Khushnood, Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee, and others who added significance to the event. At the end of the event, Secretary of the Social Welfare Department Zia ul Haq joined the cake cutting ceremony with the guests of the event and staff of WCC.

The Secretary shared his thoughts on Independence Day with the participants of the event, followed by awarding prizes to the kids.

District officer Peshawar Noor Muhammad also paid a visit to WCC.

Meanwhile, independence day was also celebrated at Dar-ul-Aman district in Haripur, Superintendent, Dar-ul-Aman, Malika Hajab Chishti, female staff, Director, Aghaz Development Organization for Women Sajida Malik, Representatives, Kawish Welfare Society, Nighat Kayani, and Kishwar Habib, and residents of the institute commemorated Pakistan's 76th Independence Day.

200,000 children to be vaccinated

PESHAWAR (INP): A seven-day anti-polio vaccination campaign was kicked off in district Khyber of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday.

During the campaign, more than two-hundred thousand children up to age of five will be administered anti-polio vaccine.

For administering the anti-polio vaccine, a total of nine-hundred and sixty-five teams have been constituted.

The health department has urged the parents to ensure polio vaccination of their children for their better future.



PESHAWAR: Secretary Social Welfare Department Zia ul Haq cutting a cake to celebrate Independence Day.

Hot, humid weather with chances of isolated rain, thunderstorms

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

However, it said that isolated rain-thunderstorm associated with gusty winds is likely to occur over Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Battagram, Kohistan, Torghar, Shangla, Chitral, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat,

Buner, Malakand, Bajaur, Mohmand, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, Nowshera, Peshawar, Khyber, Kohat, Hangu and Kurram districts.

During the last 24 hours hot, humid & partly cloudy weather prevailed in most districts of the province. Rain-thunderstorms with gusty winds occurred over most districts of the province.

Rain recorded (in mm): Nowshera (Risalpur 64 & Cherat 16), Timergara 54,

Bajaur (Pashat 27 & Khaar Trace), Dir 25, Khyber (Landi Kotal 09 & Tirah Trace), Kakul 06, Mirkhani 05, Takht Bhair & Parachinar 03(each), Peshawar (City 02 & Airport 01), Saidu Sharif, Kalam & Buner 02 (each), D.I.Khan (Airport 01 & City Trace) Drosch and Kohat Airbase 01(each).

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 35/25, Chitral 37/19, Timergara 34/20, Dir 31/18, Mirkhani 40/15, Kalam 25/11, Drosch 39/23, Saidu Sharif 33/19, Pattan 38/24, Malam Jabba 23/15, Takht Bhair 32/24, Kakul 31/21, Balakot 31/021, Parachinar 30/15, Bannu 39/24, Cherat 27/17, D.I. Khan 42/27.

The highest temperature recorded in the province was 42°c in Dera Ismail Khan.



In brief

Painting exhibition F.P. Report

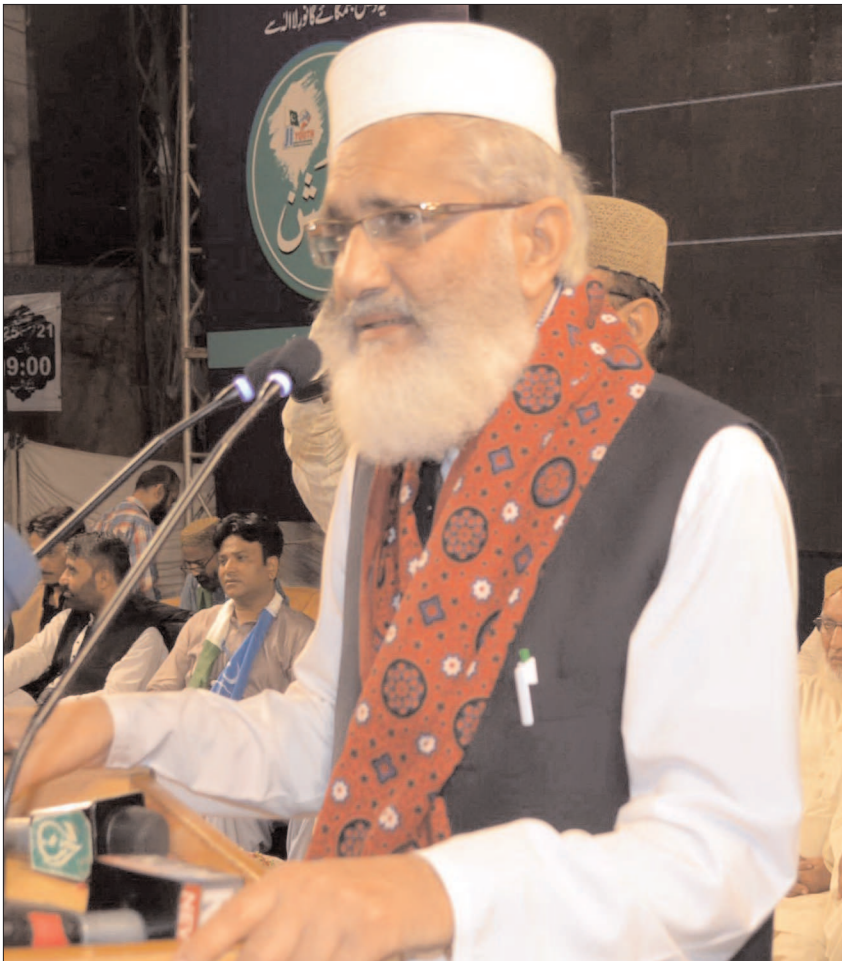
BANNU: Divisional Commissioner Parwez Sabatkhel has said that painting exhibitions are helpful to promote the artwork of local artists and calligraphers. This he said while speaking at an inaugural function of painting and calligraphy exhibition at Jinnah Hall in Bannu, he said that such events also provided the local artists the platform to present their work and received applause from art lovers. The exhibition was arranged in connection with Independence Day celebrations. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Bannu Qasim Ali Khan, deputy commissioner Manzoor Afridi, DPO Iftekhar Shah and line department officials were also present. Commissioner said that the calligraphy and artwork on village life, green environment, historical buildings, streams and rivers and other themes proved that the southern region was rich in calligraphy and artwork talent. He assured the artists that the administration would hold such events for the welfare of calligraphers and painters in future.

Butcher shops sealed F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Assistant Commissioner Tank Aminullah Khan on Tuesday paid a surprise visit to the bazaar and sealed several butcher shops for violating rules by selling meat on meatless days. He undertook the visit in line with directives of the provincial government to extend relief to citizens by providing essential food commodities at affordable price. During the visit to Tank bazaar, the AC visited butcher shops, poultry shops, bakeries, hotels and groceries shops and inspected prices, quality and hygiene conditions. He also checked warehouses of various edible items and checked the expiry and hygiene conditions and imposed fines on several shopkeepers for violating relevant rules. During inspection, he also found several butchers selling meat on prohibited days and sealed their shops. He asked the shopkeepers to display price lists at prominent places of their shops and provide quality items at officially-prescribed rates.

Meeting discuss dengue F.P. Report

KOHAT: A meeting regarding prevention from dengue virus was held under the headship of Deputy Commissioner Kohat, Dr. Azmatullah Wazir wherein officers from all the concerned departments were present. At the meeting, the officers gave a detailed briefing about the elimination of dengue virus, its prevention measures and the available drugs used to cure dengue fever. Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir issued instructions to the officers to display banners regarding prevention from the dengue in mosques and union council offices. He also directed the officers to sensitize people regarding cleaning their water tanks on urgent basis to avert breeding of dengue larva. He said assistant commissioners shall monitor anti-dengue campaigns in their respective areas. The Deputy Commissioner also issued instructions to the concerned authorities to ensure necessary measures regarding the elimination of dengue virus and appealed to the people of Kohat district to cooperate with the health department staff so that the fight against the dengue could be won with unity.



HYDERABAD: Ameer of Jamat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq addressing the youth convention.

Two brothers die due to toxic gas

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Due to the accumulation of toxic gas, two brothers identified as Suhail 26 and Shuaib 22, residents of Miskini Dara died of suffocation in a well at Timergara in Lower Dir district here on Tuesday, residents and official sources said.

The sources said that the victims were working in an under-construction open well at the old Maila Dak but they fall unconscious due to the accumulated toxic gases. Rescue 1122 medical and disaster team rushed to the site and succeeded in pulling out the bodies.

The bodies were shifted to the district headquarters hospital in Timergara, from where the volunteers of the Al-Khidmat Foundation took the bodies in an ambulance to their home town of Miskini Dara. Locals said that moving scenes were witnessed when the coffins of both brothers were brought to the graveyard for funeral prayer.

Meanwhile, eight members of a family were injured when a mudslide hit the house of one Bakht Zada at Andheri village in the jurisdiction of Balambat police station here on Tuesday. The Rescue 1122 disaster team retrieved the

injured and shifted them to the DHQ hospital in Timergara. Their condition is stated to be out of danger.

Floodwater entered houses in the Walai Kandao area here on Monday night, but the rescuers shifted a total of 30 affected persons, including 15 men and 15 women, to a safe zone at night. The Timergara assistant commissioner, Dr Nida Iqbal, along with additional deputy commissioner (relief), Tariq Hussain, and Rescue 1122 district in charge Ibrar Ahmad visited the affected family at Andheri and provided it with tents, mats, gas cylinder, cooler and blankets. The officials said the administration would provide all possible assistance to the victims.

Residents demanded an end to load shedding: Fed up with long load shedding of electricity, low voltage and heavy electricity bills in the Koto union Council, the leaders of all parties met with Xen WAPDA and informed about the problems, issues and sentiments of the people.

Former members of assembly Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, Muhammad Zamin Khan Advocate, Haji Dawood Syed, Malik Abdul Sattar Khan, Sirajuddin, Maulana Hanifullah, Qazi

Ayazuddin, Shafiullah, Malik Amitaz, Salim Advocate, Khadim Jan, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and others told XEN Wapda Mujahid Khan. That electricity load-shedding is happening for seven to ten hours on a daily basis in Koto Union Council and in light rains and storms, electricity in the area remains missing for days due to low voltage and heavy bills among the public.

There is outrage and therefore the WAPDA authorities should resolve these issues immediately, otherwise the people of the area will not be able to bear any more. He said that we are sitting to serve the people and uninterrupted power supply is our first priority. Practical steps will be taken which will improve the power supply.

Heavy downpours, storms disrupted communication: Communication system disrupted due to severe storms in Timergara and near areas, 8 people were injured when mud fell on a house in Andheri village near Timergara have been taken to the headquarters hospital Timeegara, where they are undergoing treatment. Also, due to the last severe storm, the people trapped in the storm drain in Wali Kundu were safely pulled out and rescued.

PML-N prioritizes minority's welfare: Tarar

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Former Federal Minister and leader of PML-N Saira Afzal Tarar has said that the Month of August has special importance due to two things for the people of Pakistan, first to celebrate Independence Day on 14, August and second National Minority Day which observe on 11, August at private and government level. She was addressing a ceremony held to observe Minority Day at Jinnah Hall Hafizabad.

Ex-MPA and provincial president PML-N (Minority wing) Tahir Khalil Sandhu, ex-MPA Dr. Muzaffar Ali Sheikh, Divisional President PML-N (Minority Wing) Gujranwala Sohail Anwar Sohota, Chairman All Pakistan Minorities Alliance Movement Javed Qamar Sandhu and a large number of people belongs to Christian Community also attended the ceremony. She said that objective of observing this day was to disseminate message of founder of Pakistan Quid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah among people who was desired to such homeland which clear from social evils including nepotism, corruption, and dishonesty as well people could enjoy equal rights, religious freedom and protection of life, prosperity and honour.

Independence celebration held: The 76th Independence Day was celebrated with traditional enthusiasm and zeal in the district. In this connection major flag hoisting ceremony was held at district com-

plex where Deputy Commissioner Umer Farooq Warraich unfurled national flag.

ADCG Intiaz Ali Baig, Chief Executive Officer Education Sohail Azhar Khan, Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Umer Sharif Rathor, government officers, officials, journalists, students and other people belongs of different segments of society attended the ceremony. Active squads of Police, Rescue 1122 and Civil Defence accorded guard of honour while special prayers were also offered of integrity, progress and prosperity of the country on this occasion.

DC also planted sapling in the lawn of district in connection with monsoon and Independence Day. Independence Day was also taken out from district complex led by DC Umer Farooq Warraich. Special flag hoisting and other function to celebrate Independence Day were also arranged at educational institutions in the district.

Meanwhile, a flag hoisting ceremony was also held at Rescue 1122 office where DC Umer Farooq Warraich and District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 Engineer Adnan Nawaz hoisted national flag.

The other hand, a separate ceremony was also held at District Jail Hafizabad to celebrate the day. DC Umer Farooq Warraich and Superintendent District Jail Farrukh Rasheed distributed sweets and gifts among prisoners and planted samplings to inaugurated tree plantation campaign in the jail.

Meanwhile, DC also attended the flag hoisting ceremony arranged by the District Bar Association. President District Bar Malik Waqas Raza Awan, General Secretary Muzammal Aziz Gujjar, other office bearers of bar and members of district bar also participated the function.

Former MPA booked under corruption charges: Anti-Corruption Hafizabad has registered a case against more than 11 people including Ex-MPA Asadullah Arain, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Pindi Bhattian Ikramullah Sandhu and Chief Officer Abid Qayyum Qazi on the charges of preparing fake map of rice mills, construction of mills without approval of map from TMA Pindi Bhattian and non-payment of government dues.

50kg dead chickens seized

KASUR (INP): A team of the Punjab Food Authority recovered 50kg dead chickens and destroy it. On receiving a tip-off, the Kasur food safety team raided a poultry shop in Kaisarghar, Kasur, and recovered dead chickens.

A case has been registered. The accused was also arrested and handed over to the police. Punjab Food Authority Deputy Director Rao Obaidul Rehman said that dead chickens had been recovered from a poultry shop on the outskirts of Kasur.

Natives celebrates Independence Day

F.P. Report

NARAN: The Natives in collaboration with the Directorate of youth Affairs, KPK brought together youth from across Pakistan to celebrate Independence Day and International Youth Day. The 5 days event was held in Battakundi Naran.

Dr. Shuja Ahmad, Deputy Directorate of Youth Affairs Hamid Khan, D.D HED Arshad Hussain and A.D Directorate of Youth Affairs Naeem Gul had joined the event.

Deputy Director Directorate of youth Affairs, Mr. Hamid Khan engaged with the participants of Azaadi Camp to discuss about the Independence Day. He emphasized on the significance of this day and the participants enthusiastically heard the speaker.

A.D. Directorate of Youth Affairs, Mr. Naeem Gul enlightened the youth at the Azaadi Camp regarding the International Youth Day. He shed light on youth empowerment, significance of youth for our beloved country and the role that youth can play for its uplift. Dr. Shuja Ahmad took to stage and spoke on Emotional Intelligence, the participants keenly heard the speaker as he brought to discussion the various aspects of Emotional Intelligence and its practical implementation. He discussed what role emotional intelligence can play for the youth empowerment.

FIPV drive begins in Khyber

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Remained suspended for a week, Fractional Inactivated Polio Vaccine (FIPV) drive kicked off in Khyber on Monday. Last week the campaign was suspended due to a boycott of the police forces to provide security to the polio teams in protest in Khyber.

District Health Officer Dr Zafar confirmed the resumption of the anti-polio drive in Khyber and said teams are prepared to conduct the seven days long campaign across the district. As per the health department official besides Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV), a fractional dose of Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine to be administered in the ongoing campaign to eliminate the virus of the crippling disease, Polio.

The official went on that children aging from four months to five years will be vaccinated with the FIPV in their right hands. Approximately 965 teams had been constituted to immunize 228000 children across the district. Two positive polio cases have been recorded so far in 2023 in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Youth tortured to death

F.P. Report

SHAHADADKOT: One Saeed Khan tortured dead after abduction in the premises of Goth Chawki area of Shah Dad Kot district, on Tuesday.

According to details, Ahmed Bojani, head of Goth Chowki of Balochistan Levies Police, near Tehsil Qubo Saeed Khan of Qamber Shahdadkot district, was killed on the spot by armed men with axes while the accused were on the spot, managed to escape, the body of the deceased was handed over to the heirs after the post-mortem in their custody by the Levies police.

On the other hand, the cousin of the deceased youth, Abdul Nabi Bojani, told the media that the deceased used to work at a Bahai junk shop when he was selling goods on the dirt bridge in the area, the people of the Magsi Adamani tribe after abducting the young man subjected him to severe torture and killed him with the sportsmen at the checkpoint area. They said that the deceased Mukhtiar was innocent.

3 brothers along with mother shot killed in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: As many as four persons including

mother with three sons shot killed inside their residence by refusing selling their house while the murderer escaped from the crime scene in the premises of Hoti police station, on Tuesday.

The deceased were identified as Mst Shaheen-wife of Rahim Gul- and her sons named Numan,26, Usman, 24 and Irfan,21 years of age. The alleged killer who fled the scene, was identified as Fawad.

Officials of the relevant Hoti Police Station quoted Liaba,18, daughter of slain woman as saying that she along with her mother and brothers was present inside their home when the accused knocked their door. She told that as her brother Irfan went to see who was knocking the door, the alleged killer Fawad gunned down him and then entered their home to start indiscriminate firing killing her mother and two other

brothers on the spot while she herself was narrow escaped on the occasion.

The complainant cited a dispute over their house with the accused as a reason which led to killing of her mother and brothers. The accused who was also residing in neighborhood, wanted to buy the victims' home as per the price of his own choice but the owners were disagree with him.

The officials of Hoti Police Station registered FIR against the accused on the complaint of, Liaba, daughter of slain woman. The officials told that they had begun further investigations into the case as well as accelerated raids to arrest the alleged killer forthwith.

Traffic accident victim dead due to alleged negligence of hospital's staff: An injured person died due to alleged negligence of Katlang Type D Hospital staff, on Tuesday. The deceased person's brother Tahir Khan registered a formal case. And demanded an inquiry. Talking to media

persons at Type D Hospital, Katlang, he said that his 57-year-old brother Raziq Rehman was on his way to Mardan when a high-speed Chung Chi collided with a tractor-trolley.

As a result of which Raziq Rehman was seriously injured. When he was brought to Type D Hospital Katlang, he was sent home after first aid. After reaching home, his condition worsened, we immediately rushed him to Mardan Medical Complex, but he could not survive. He maintained that he was not immediately diagnosed in a Type D hospital.

They were not given proper treatment and doctors did not even examine them. And the male nurse gave the vaccination and left. When MS Dr. Muhammad Tahir was questioned in this regard, he said that if the relatives of the deceased make an application, they will hold an inquiry and if the investigation is proved, the officials guilty of negligence will be punished.

TMA Hangu to launch innovative E-TMA App

F.P. Report

HANGU: Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) Hangu is proud to unveil the E-TMA app, a groundbreaking digital initiative that underscores our commitment to elevating citizen services through technological innovation.

The launch event held at the DC Office Hangu saw Deputy Commissioner Hangu, Fazal Akbar, highlight the app's role in establishing a transparent and efficient governance system tailored to citizen needs.

In collaboration with the FCDO-funded Sub-National Governance (SNG) Programme, TMA Hangu proudly announces the official launch of the E-TMA app. This pioneering digital solution, developed in partnership with the Local Government, Elections, and Rural Development (LGERD) KP, represents a significant stride towards a digitally empowered and citizen-centric society.

Notably, the E-TMA app's pilot project was first

successfully introduced in Swabi district. Building upon this success, TMA Hangu's collaboration with SNG Programme takes the initiative to the next level. The app is poised to revolutionise access to municipal services, offering convenience, transparency, and efficiency to residents and businesses alike.

The E-TMA app is designed to simplify the process of accessing municipal services by providing a seamless digital platform for various service applications. With the aim of reducing physical visits to government offices and bureaucratic obstacles, citizens can now effortlessly submit applications from the comfort of their homes. The app introduces a Real-time Progress Tracking feature, enabling users to monitor the status of their service requests, fostering transparency and accountability. The user-friendly interface ensures accessibility for all members of the community.

The official inauguration of the E-TMA app took place in the presence of dis-

tinguished public officials, local government representatives, business community leaders, and civil society advocates. This event, jointly organized by TMA Hangu and SNG Programme, underscores the dedication to advancing digitalization in the region.

Speaking on behalf of SNG Pakistan, Kashif Ali, the District Team Lead, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "The E-TMA app launch symbolizes our unwavering belief in the potential of digital transformation to foster inclusive and sustainable development. We are proud to partner with TMA Hangu in this transformative endeavor."

TMA Hangu and SNG Programme extend their gratitude to LGERD KP for their invaluable collaboration and support, which has culminated in the successful pilot and launch of the E-TMA app. This innovative app is poised to set a precedent for efficient public service delivery in the province, reflecting the shared commitment to digital progress.



HYDERABAD: A view of water like flood situation at Kotri Barrage.

Rescue 1122 presents parade; poetry competition held

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The 76th Independence Day of the country was celebrated with national zeal and zest. Local deputy commissioner Abdul Hadi performed flag hoisting ceremony on the premises of his office while police and Rescue 1122 contingents presented salute to the national flag.

The deputy commissioner along with Brig Imran, DPO Muhammad Ashfaq Khan and assistant commissioner Yasir Nazir sowed saplings to formally kick off monsoon tree plantation drive. A grand function was held at Lt Adnan Shaheed sport complex where school students and

boy scouts sang patriotic songs and highlighted the importance of the day in their speeches.

Players and athletes exhibited judo, karate and gymnastic skills. DC along with army officials cut the birthday cake and also distributed trophies and cash prizes among the students and players. Civil and military officials, teachers, students, scouts and people from different walks of life participated.

A flag hoisting ceremony was also held at the police lines in the District Headquarters Complex Tajazai. The youth affairs department also organised a poetry session and an archery competition.

Football, cricket and other game events were also held in the district.

In Bannu, the Independence Day function began with a flag hoisting ceremony at commissioners' house, attended by civil and military officials and people from different sheds of life. Divisional commissioner Parwez Sabatkhel performed the flag hoisting. Students presented tableaux, sang national songs and delivered speeches. Brig Muhammad Tayyab, Regional Police Officer Qasim Ali Khan, Deputy Commissioner Manzoor Afridi, DPO Iftekhar Shah and Secretary to Commissioner Noorul Amin were also present.



Ukraine's western region hit by large-scale Russian air attack



MOSCOW (Agencies): Russia launched a large-scale air attack on Ukraine's western region of Lviv and the northwestern region of Volyn, hitting buildings, wounding civilians and forcing evacuations, officials said. "Many missiles were shot down, but there were also hits in Lviv," the city's Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said on the Telegram messaging app on Tuesday morning, adding that orders were given to evacuate at least one burning apartment building.

Four people required medical assistance and more than 100 residential apartments were damaged in the attack, including a kindergarten that was destroyed by falling debris from a destroyed Russian missile, the mayor said on Telegram. Earlier, the Lviv region's governor, Maxim Kozitsky, said that "groups of Russian missiles" were headed towards the region. At least two people were also injured in a Russian air attack on the city of Lutsk, in Ukraine's Volyn region, local authorities said on Telegram. The Volyn region, north of Lviv, also borders Poland.

At least one person was also wounded as a result of a Russian attack on

Ukraine's southwestern region of Dnipropetrovsk, where an enterprise was hit and a fire broke out, Serhiy Lisak, the governor of the region said on the Telegram. Air raid alerts were issued across Ukraine for about two hours, starting at about 2am local time on Tuesday. Local news media, The Kyiv Independent, reported earlier that the Ukrainian Air Force had warned that western regions of the country were threatened by Russian missile attacks.

Explosions were also heard in the western Khmelnytskyi region of the country, according to local military administration officials, The Kyiv Independent reported. Until July, the Lviv region which is far from the front lines and which borders NATO-member Poland to its west, had been spared most Russian air attacks. But in July, seven people were killed when a missile slammed into a residential building, Ukrainian media reported that, according to preliminary information, Tuesday's attack was the largest air assault on the Lviv region since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Judge sides with youth activists in US climate case

WASHINGTON (Agencies): A federal judge in the United States has sided with youth activists who accuse Montana state agencies of violating their constitutional rights to a clean and healthy environment. In a ruling, District Court Judge Kathy Seeley found that the policy the US state uses to evaluate requests for fossil fuel permits is unconstitutional.

She pointed to the fact that the policy - part of the Montana Environmental Policy Act - prevents the state government from weighing the harmful effects of greenhouse gas emissions. "Montana's emissions and climate change have been proven to be a substantial factor in causing climate impacts to Montana's environment and harm and injury," Seeley wrote. The Montana trial is the first of its kind in the United States. It adds to a small but growing number of legal decisions around the world that have established a government's duty to protect citizens from climate change. Ruling requires the Montana legislature to find a way to bring the policy into compliance. But that is set to be a slow process in a

Republican-led state heavily reliant on the fossil fuel industry. Nevertheless, Julia Olson, a lawyer representing the young people for the environmental group Our Children's Trust, hailed the decision.

"As fires rage in the West, fueled by fossil fuel pollution, today's ruling in Montana is a game-changer that marks a turning point in this generation's efforts to save the planet from the devastating effects of human-caused climate chaos," Olson said in a statement. "This is a huge win for Montana, for youth, for democracy, and for our climate. More rulings like this will certainly come." But Emily Flower, spokeswoman for Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen, dismissed decision. "This ruling is absurd but not surprising from a judge who let the plaintiffs' attorneys put on a weeklong taxpayer-funded publicity stunt that was supposed to be a trial," Flower said. She accused Seeley of being an "ideological judge who bent over backward to allow the case to move forward" and said the state would appeal. The 16 plaintiffs in the case

range in age from five to 22. During a two-week trial in June, their lawyers presented evidence that increasing carbon dioxide emissions are driving hotter temperatures, more droughts and wildfires. They argued the state's policies were directly affecting the wellbeing of the young people, both physically and mentally.

For its part, the state has argued that, even if Montana completely stopped producing carbon dioxide, it would have "no meaningful impact" because the state's emissions are relatively small compared with the amount produced globally. The case is the latest in a trend of youth-led climate lawsuits. In March, a Swedish court gave the green light to a climate lawsuit filed by 20-year-old activist Greta Thunberg and others, alleging the government's approach to stemming rising temperatures was "insufficient". In April, a judge in Ontario also ruled that Canada's courts may consider a lawsuit brought by seven youth activists, charging that the government's response to climate change infringed on their human rights.

Jailed US resident begins hunger strike

WASHINGTON (Reuters): A US permanent resident detained in Iran since 2016 has begun a hunger strike in protest of his exclusion from last week's deal between Washington and Tehran that could eventually result in the release of five Americans jailed in Iran, his son said. Shahab Dalili, 60, a shipping captain who had emigrated to the United States after retiring, was detained in Tehran in April 2016 during a visit for his father's funeral.

He was charged with aiding and abetting a foreign country and was handed a 10-year prison sentence that he is serving in Iran's Evvin prison which holds many political prisoners. Under a complicated agreement whose implementation will likely take weeks, Iran may free five detained US citizens in return for \$6 billion of Iranian funds in South Korea being unfrozen. Washington would also release several jailed

Iranians. As first step of the deal, Iran last week allowed four detained US citizens to move into house arrest from Tehran's Evvin prison, a lawyer for one said. A fifth was already under home confinement.

"The deal is being done and he's not part of it. That was very heartbreaking," Dalili's son, Darian, said in a brief telephone interview. He added that he himself also began a hunger strike to raise awareness about his father. "He feels betrayed. He is demoralized. He believes that the US would bring back anyone that they want to bring back," Darian said. Pressed by reporters at the State Department daily briefing, deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel did not give a clear reason why Dalili was not part of the deal but said he has not yet been declared "wrongfully detained." The legal determination is made by the State Department and effectively means that the US

government views the charges levied against the individual as politically motivated and false. The determination allows the US State Department to dedicate more resources into the case, assigns the responsibility with a special presidential envoy and raises the prominence of the issue.

Patel also did not say why Dalili was not categorized as wrongfully detained. Dalili's son Darian told Reuters that he received a phone call from the Department's acting special envoy for Iran, Abram Paley. "I asked why haven't the (wrongfully detained) designation happened yet and he wasn't able to provide an answer," Darian said. The State Department declined to comment specifically on Paley's phone call with Dalili's son but Patel earlier said the United States "regularly and actively review individual cases for indications and indicators of possible wrongful detention."

Huge fire at Tehran's grand bazaar in Iran causes no casualties

DUBAI (Reuters): A large fire broke out at the grand bazaar in Iran's capital of Tehran, though it did not cause any casualties, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported on

Tuesday. "A fire broke out in Ahangaran's Bazaar in Tehran's Grand Bazaar and about 30 warehouses and shops were caught in flames," the spokesperson

of Tehran's fire department said.

Firefighters have managed to control the massive fire without any injuries but many financial losses are expected, Tasnim reported.

Israeli forces kills two Palestinians

WEST BANK (Agencies): Israeli forces have killed two Palestinians during a raid on a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank city of Jericho, medical sources told the Reuters news agency. "Two young men were rushed to the hospital with bullets in their chests," the Jericho Hospital's director told Reuters on Tuesday. Residents in the area said there were armed clashes with Israeli forces but it was not known whether the two slain men were involved.

The raid lasted for less than an hour, the residents added. Violence in the occupied West Bank has worsened over the past months amid Israeli raids on refugee camps in the territory, deadly attacks by Jewish settlers on Palestinian villages and Palestinian street attacks on Israelis.

Lebanon asked to release Qaddafi's son

BEIRUT (AP): Libya's judicial authorities have formally asked Lebanon to release one of the late dictator Moammar Qaddafi's sons, held without charges in Lebanon since 2015, because of his deteriorating health, officials said. The health of Hannibal Qaddafi has been deteriorating since he went on hunger strike on June 3, to protest his detention without trial. He was taken to hospital at least twice since then and has been only drinking small amounts of water.

According to two Lebanese judicial officials, Libya's prosecutor general Al-Sediq al-Sour, sent a request earlier this month to his Lebanese counterpart, Ghassan Oueidat, regarding Hannibal Qaddafi. The officials spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media. The note stated that Lebanon's cooperation in this matter could help reveal the truth regarding the fate of a prominent Lebanese Shiite cleric, Moussa al-Sadr, who went missing in Libya in 1978. It questioned why Qaddafi was being held and asked that he be either handed over to Libya or be allowed to return to Syria, where he had been living in exile with his Lebanese wife, Aline Skaf, and children until he was abducted and brought to Lebanon eight years ago. The Lebanese prosecutor then referred the case to Zaher Hamadeh, the investigative judge in the missing cleric's case, who is studying the Libyan request and would respond in time. Hannibal Qaddafi has been detained in Lebanon since 2015 after he was abducted by Lebanese militants demanding information on the whereabouts of the cleric. Lebanese police later announced it had picked up Qaddafi from the city of Baalbek in northeastern Lebanon, where he was being held. He has since been held in a Beirut jail.

The disappearance of al-Sadr in 1978 has been a long-standing sore point in Lebanon. The cleric's family believes he may still be alive in a Libyan prison, though most Lebanese presume al-Sadr is dead. He would be 94 years old. He was the founder of the Amal group, Arabic for "hope," and an acronym for the militia's Arabic name, the Lebanese Resistance Brigades. The group later fought in Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war. Lebanon's powerful Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri heads the group. Most of al-Sadr's followers are convinced that Moammar Qaddafi ordered al-Sadr killed in a dispute over Libyan payments to Lebanese militias. Libya has maintained that the cleric and his two traveling companions left Tripoli in 1978 on a flight to Rome and suggested he was a victim of a power struggle among Shiites. Moammar Qaddafi was killed by opposition fighters during Libya's 2011 uprising-turned-civil war, ending his four-decade rule of the North African country. Hannibal Qaddafi, who was born two years before al-Sadr disappeared, fled to Algeria after his father was toppled and Tripoli fell to opposition fighters, along with his mother and several other relatives.

UN to hold emergency meeting on Azerbaijan's blockade of road

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The UN Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting Wednesday in response to a call from Armenia saying the mainly Armenian-populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh in neighboring Azerbaijan is blockaded and 120,000 people are facing hunger and "a full-fledged humanitarian catastrophe."

Armenia's UN Ambassador Mher Margaryan asked for the meeting on the dire situation in Nagorno-Karabakh in a letter to the ambassador of the United States, which holds the Security Council presidency this month. The UN Mission to the UN said the emergency open meeting will take place on Wednesday afternoon. In his letter to Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Margaryan said Azerbaijan's complete blockade since July 15 of the Lachin Corridor - the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia - has created severe shortages of food, medicine and fuel. "The deliberate creation of unbearable life conditions for the population is nothing but an act of mass atrocity targeting the indige-

nous people of Nagorno-Karabakh and forcing them to leave their homeland," he said, stressing that this constitutes "an existential threat to them." Margaryan asked the Security Council, which is charged with ensuring international peace and security, "to prevent mass atrocities including war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide."

Nagorno-Karabakh came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by the Armenian military in separatist fighting that ended in 1994. Armenian forces also took control of substantial territory around the Azerbaijani region. Azerbaijan regained control of the surrounding territory in a six-week war with Armenia in 2020. A Russia-brokered armistice that ended the war left the region's capital, Stepanakert, connected to Armenia only by the Lachin Corridor, along which Russian peace-keeping forces were supposed to ensure free movement. Margaryan accused Azerbaijan of violating the Russian-brokered armistice and international humanitarian law as well as orders by the International Court of

Justice in February and July. The UN's highest court said in its orders that Azerbaijan should "take all measures to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions," the Armenian ambassador said. Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry has accused Armenia of violating its territorial integrity and sovereignty and of smuggling weapons into Nagorno-Karabakh. Last week, the former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court warned that Azerbaijan is preparing genocide against ethnic Armenians in its Nagorno-Karabakh region and called for the Security Council to bring the matter before the international tribunal. Luis Moreno Ocampo said in a report requested by a group of Armenians, including the country's president, that as a result of the blockade "there is a reasonable basis to believe that a genocide is being committed." He said the UN convention defines genocide as including "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction."

US ambassador makes visit to jailed journalist

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The United States ambassador to Russia has reiterated her call for the release of journalist Evan Gershkovich after making a third visit to the jailed Wall Street Journal reporter. Ambassador Lynne Tracy said through a spokesperson that the 31-year-old Gershkovich appeared to be "in good health" despite nearly four and a half months in detention.

"Once again, the United States calls on the Russian Federation to immediately release Evan Gershkovich and also to release wrongfully detained US citizen Paul Whelan," the spokesperson said. Gershkovich and Whelan, a former US Marine and corporate security expert, are being held on charges of espionage in two separate cases. The US has condemned the allegations as illegitimate and politically motivated, and both men have maintained their innocence. Gershkovich was arrested on March 29 while reporting in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg near the Ural Mountains. He is

being held in pre-trial detention after a court rejected an appeal to overturn his arrest in April. Not since the Cold War has a US journalist been arrested on spying charges. Tracy has since met with Gershkovich on April 17 and again on July 3.

US officials have previously protested that they had been denied access to the journalist, who is being detained in Moscow's infamous Lefortovo Prison. No date has been set for his trial. Whelan, meanwhile, was arrested in 2018 at a Moscow hotel after allegedly receiving a thumb drive with intelligence information, according to prosecutors. He was ultimately sentenced to 16 years in prison. In 2022, the administration of US President Joe Biden said that officials had made a "serious offer" to get Whelan back as part of a prisoner swap. But when such an exchange finally materialised in December, it only involved the release of Brittney Griner, a US basketball star imprisoned for cannabis possession.

Her freedom came in exchange for the release of Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout, known as the "merchant of death". It was the second time a prisoner exchange with Russia had failed to include Whelan. In April 2022, the US swapped Marine veteran Trevor Reed for Konstantin Yaroshenko, a Russian pilot convicted of cocaine smuggling. Reed had served three years for allegedly assaulting a police officer.

As the US continues to negotiate for another prisoner exchange, Whelan and his family have expressed concern that he could once again be left out of any potential swap. "Paul's fear of being left behind a third time was apparently palpable in his conversation with our parents yesterday," his brother David Whelan told the Wall Street Journal in April. Whelan's and Gershkovich's arrests have come during a period of heightened tensions between the US and Russia, particularly in the wake of the latter's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

China opposes UNSC meeting on NK rights

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): China opposes a planned United Nations Security Council meeting on human rights abuses in North Korea because it will only "intensify confrontation and antagonism," a spokesperson for China's UN mission in New York said. The United States, Albania and Japan requested the meeting, which will be held. It will be the first formal public meeting of the 15-member council on the issue since 2017.

"China sees no added value for the council to have such a meeting and will be against it," said China's UN mission spokesperson, adding that the council's mandate was "maintenance of international peace and security, not human rights." "A council meeting on human rights in the DPRK falls outside the council's mandate, politicizes human rights issues, and only serves to intensify con-

frontation and antagonism," said the spokesperson, referring to the country's formal name - the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for an increase in missile production to help secure "overwhelming military power" and be ready for war, state media KCNA said, as South Korea and the United States gear up for annual military drills. It was not immediately clear if China would call a procedural vote to try and block the Security Council meeting on rights abuses, but a senior US official has said they were confident they have the minimum nine votes needed to move ahead. Vetoes do not apply on procedural issues. North Korea has repeatedly rejected accusations of abuses and blames sanctions for a dire humanitarian situation. Since 2006 it has been under UN sanc-

tions over its ballistic missiles and nuclear programs, but there are aid exemptions. In March, the United States accused China of attempting to hide North Korea's atrocities from the world by blocking the webcast of an informal meeting of Security Council members on accusations of human rights abuses by Pyongyang. The council has held annual formal meetings on the issue for the past three years, but behind closed doors. Between 2014 and 2017 the council held annual public meetings on human rights abuses in North Korea. A landmark 2014 UN report on North Korean human rights concluded that North Korean security chiefs - and possibly leader Kim himself - should face justice for overseeing a state-controlled system of Nazi-style atrocities. The United States sanctioned Kim in 2016 for human rights abuses.

Ethiopia Amhara: Air strike kills at least 26

TIGRAY (BBC): A suspected air strike in Ethiopia's Amhara region has killed at least 26 people, a hospital official said. The strike in Finote Selam was among the most deadly in the region, where the army has been fighting Fano, a paramilitary force. Ethiopia's human rights commission has expressed "grave concern" over the "deadly hostilities". PM Abiy Ahmed's government imposed a six-month state of emergency across Amhara on 4 August.

The fighting has been fuelled by Fano accusations that the federal government is trying to weaken Amhara's defences. It is Ethiopia's

worst crisis since a civil war in the northern Tigray region ended in November. Fano backed federal forces during the Tigray war. Fano has refused to disarm, prompting the federal government to deploy the army. The hospital official told the AFP news agency that all the victims who arrived were "wearing either casual civilian clothing or traditional clothes".

"The casualties range from a 13-year-old child to the elderly," he said. "I didn't get the chance to see what caused the explosion... but residents said it was a drone strike". A university teacher who was visiting a

relative in the hospital told Reuters he had seen 14 bodies there and been told by a medical worker that another 12 had died. Fifty-five more are being treated for injuries sustained in the explosion, a hospital official said. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) called on "conflicting parties to immediately end" all alleged violations of human rights laws. The violence has led to drastic action, such as the Israeli government evacuating its citizens and Jewish people from the area last week. Amhara is home to thousands of members of the Jewish community.

'No Labels' offer independent presidential ticket in 2024

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP): A national political movement that could offer an independent presidential ticket in 2024 as an alternative to major-party nominees said it has now won ballot access in 10 states, after North Carolina election officials formally granted official status to a "No Labels" affiliate. The State Board of Elections voted 4-1 to recognize the No Labels Party as an official North Carolina party following a successful petition effort. It joins four other recognized parties with which voters can now choose to be registered and field candidates.

The new North Carolina party is linked to a national No Labels effort that lists a wide array of mostly centrist political leaders backing it. They include ex-North Carolina GOP Gov. Pat McCrory, US Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and former Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman, a former Democrat who became an independent. No Labels is poised to offer an independent ticket for president and vice president if Democrats and Republicans "select unreasonably divisive presidential nominees." North Carolina, usually considered a battleground state, has 16 electoral votes at stake. The other states are Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota and Utah. Reaching 10 states is "a historic victory for Americans who have said loud and clear they want more choices at the ballot box. The spirit of democracy is winning in America today," civil rights leader Benjamin Chavis, a North Carolina native and national co-chair of No Labels, said in a news release. There is no named ticket yet for No Labels. Group leaders have said it would stand down if there's no clear path to victory next year. But some Democrats are worried that won't happen, leading unintentionally to the election of Republican Donald Trump. National left-leaning groups have been working to derail the group's presidential ambitions.

North Carolina law says that to be recognized, a party must collect signatures from registered voters equal to 0.25% of the total number of people who voted in the last election for governor in 2020, or just under 13,900 signatures. State election officials agreed that No Labels provided over 14,800 signatures and met a requirement that at least 200 signatures each come from three congressional districts. The other official North Carolina parties are the Democratic, Republican, Green and Libertarian parties. Voters also can register as unaffiliated, which represents the largest bloc in the state. Board Chair Alan Hirsch and member Jeff Carmon, both Democrats, joined Republicans Four Eggers and Kevin Lewis in voting for the official recognition.

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JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Russo-China nexus and a multipolar world

CHINESE Defense Minister Li Shangfu is currently on a six-day visit to Russia and Belarus, during which he is scheduled to interact with top Russian leadership and military Commanders along with attending an important multinational security conference in Moscow. During the second leg of his trip, Li will visit Minsk to meet Belarusian strongman, Alexander Lukashenko, hold meetings with senior military leadership and visit important defence installations there. According to the Chinese authorities, the visit underscores the drive by Russia and China to align their foreign policies in a bid to compete with the West-led unipolar liberal democratic order through multinational cooperation that guarantees a multipolar or at least a bipolar world in the future.

Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu is visiting Russia and Belarus in a show of support as the West attempts to isolate two allies over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. China-Russia ties had grown rapidly over the past years, whereas, Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and Western animosity toward Beijing further intensified their quest for mutual augmentation and cemented strategic economic and security bonds between them. There had been frequent high-level contacts and bilateral exchanges between Moscow and Beijing and both countries made concerted efforts to expand their cooperation in multiple domains, particularly in trade and investment, science and technology, defence and security, space and cyberspace etc. At the same time, both neighbours enhanced their political cooperation at the global level by backing each other viewpoints at the global forums, particularly the United Nations, the IAEA, G7, G20 and others to collectively defend their core interests and offer a unified resistance against the Western bloc.

Over the past year and a half, Russia and China have projected a unified response to the Western bloc through strengthening their military partnership, joint patrols and combined military drills in the contested Indo-Pacific region and South China Sea. Both neighbours are also leading an ongoing de-dollarization campaign which aims at ending the dollar monopoly in global trade by replacing the greenback with local currencies that will not only liberate their trade with other nations but will also be a great blow to the American dollar when it gets full implementation in the future.

The recent Moscow-sponsored global meet-up of over a hundred nations is another attempt of the Russo-China bloc to create a new consortium of like-minded nations and developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America to look beyond the Western market to counter Western dominance in the global economy. Although BRICS nations have a long-held quest to replace the US dollar with an alternative currency or use local notes for bilateral trade, however certain regulatory complications and legal constraints took too longer to realise that dream. The ongoing trade war and the tussle between major powers is a two-edge weapon and counterproductive policy that equally affects its originator along with the targeted nation. Today, the West is the biggest importer of Chinese products and Western consumers have a higher per capita income as compared to their Russian and Chinese contenders. On the other hand, China has great stacks in the US and European economies and its cheap manpower and cost-effective products have no alternatives so far.

In the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Kyiv, Beijing is taking advantage of Moscow's isolation and has brought an uptick in its efforts to ally with nations that it leads against Western rivals. China tactfully uses Russian card, while Moscow laid all its eggs in China's basket. Beijing seems to be in a little hurry and is spreading its wings a little too big. Although China groomed marvellously in the fields of manufacturing and infrastructure over the past decades, but it could not assimilate civic liberties such as the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and religion in its society which became a severe impediment for Beijing at the global level. Currently, a tug-of-war is going on between the West and the Russo-China bloc, however the champion would be decided by the future events and the time to come.

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The Elahi Switch...



Whitewashing slavery in US schools will teach students anti-Blackness

Donald Earl Collins

AT a press event in Utah on July 21, GOP presidential contender and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis attempted to find the silver lining of American chattel slavery. "Some of the folks ... eventually parlayed, you know, being a blacksmith into doing things later in life," he said, referring to enslaved people.

DeSantis made these utterings while defending the Florida State Board of Education's new standards for teaching African American history in public schools, which downplay and whitewash the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. As a reminder, slavery in the United States was a 246-year-long apocalypse of kidnapping 300,000 African people, transporting them across the Atlantic, beating, torturing and raping them, and working them to their early deaths.

The racist idea that slavery was a positive experience of self-improvement for enslaved Africans is not new. It is the same racist reasoning the United States' third president, Thomas Jefferson, used 240 years ago in his 1785 Notes on the State of Virginia, where he wrote that many enslaved Africans "have been brought up to the handicraft arts" under the tutelage of "the whites". It is the same reasoning American abolitionist and writer Frederick Douglas pushed back on in 1845, when he criticised the myth of the "happy slave". The idea that Europeans stole African people from West Africa and then trained them up to be farmhands and blacksmiths is ludicrous beyond measure. As historian Michael W Twitty has written: "Because rice was not indigenous to the Americas and plantation owners had no knowledge of how to grow it, enslaved Africans [with experience growing it] were brought to fuel its husbandry, feeding the US' eastern seaboard, Britain and provisioning many parts of the British Caribbean." Elsewhere, it has been documented: "African men with iron making skills were imported to the Chesapeake [in the state of Virginia] to work as blacksmiths ... Ironworkers were an elite group in West and West Central Africa."

There is plenty of historical evidence to disprove the ridiculous claim that the Florida State Board of Education is trying to push about slavery. But this is by far not the only problem with its new curriculum standards. With language like "positive contributions" and "African patriots", it is

trying to veer away from addressing the horrific realities and effects of slavery, Jim Crow, redlining, and white vigilantism. The middle school benchmarks mention the need to "analyze slave revolts that happened in early colonial America" and "examine the Underground Railroad and its importance to those seeking freedom", but say absolutely nothing about why enslaved Black people would revolt or steal themselves to freedom. Even when the transatlantic slave trade or the nature of American chattel slavery is included, it is in the context of "systematic slave trading in Africa" or in comparison with "indentured servitude contracts". All this has come after DeSantis's campaign against "wokeness" and his success in banning "critical race theory" (CRT) from Florida's public schools, colleges and universities last year. While the Florida State Board of Education appears happy to join the governor's anti-woke crusade, there seems to be little concern about how this would affect students.

Glossing over the brutal history of US slavery will only increase anti-Blackness in the near term by signalling that anything said, written, done, or experienced by Black people in the US matters not and instead deserves erasure and marginalisation. It will also promote internalised racism among African Americans in the long run. The racism as exhibited in "anti-woke" curricula and in book bans in Florida and across the US will reinforce anti-Blackness for yet another generation of children. DeSantis is hardly alone in his attacks, for which there has been much precedent. There was a brief effort in 2022 to get the Texas State Board of Education to call slavery the "involuntary relocation of African people during colonial times" in the state's social studies curriculum for public schools, an effort the board rejected. A year earlier, the state passed legislation banning schools from teaching any materials that may cause an individual to "feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of the individual's race or sex". Texas Governor Greg Abbott, who signed it into law, said at that time that more needed to be done to "abolish" CRT.

In Florida, nearly 21 percent of public school students are Black; in Texas, they are 13 percent. Overall, 7.4 million African

Americans attend public schools across the US. The rhetoric and legislation DeSantis, Abbott, and other politicians are pushing aim to appeal to white supporters terrified of living in a majority-of-colour nation that could threaten their economic and political power. They serve to whitewash the truth of the Black experience in the US and the endemic nature of American racism. They are deliberately anti-Black. In my own way, I have wondered about the pervasiveness of anti-Blackness in the US since I was six years old. I remember one summer day in 1976 when my mother and I walked into a Black-owned mom-and-pop store in Mount Vernon, New York, near the border with the Eastchester section of the Bronx.

My mom complained bitterly about the higher prices the store had for the same stuff she usually bought at a Met supermarket or at Waldbaum's. "If it's Black, it's no good," she said as we walked out of the store that day, and not for the last time. What my mother said, articulating a common stereotype about Black businesses, and what I experienced while shopping at Black-owned stores while growing up never really matched up, so I never internalised this anti-Blackness the way my mother had. In college, I learned about the unfair lending practices that made Black-owned stores more expensive to run, which was when I finally jettisoned this kind of anti-Black perception. One historical event that influenced my thinking on anti-Black racism and internalised racism was the 1954 Brown v Board of Education case in which the US Supreme Court ruled that state-sanctioned apartheid in schools was unconstitutional.

Thurgood Marshall, a civil rights lawyer and head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense Fund, was the lead litigator for the case that involved segregated schools in Kansas, Virginia, Delaware, South Carolina and the District of Columbia. In front of the Supreme Court, Marshall and his team successfully argued it was not enough to bring Black schools to the material level of white-only schools to ensure equal education for Black children. The long-term societal and psychological damage Jim Crow inflicted on them made segregation "inherently unequal", as Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote in

the Supreme Court's unanimous decision in favour of the parents. Over the following seven decades, scholars, activists, and educators would fight to make school curricula more inclusive as well. They recognised that anti-Blackness in US education was systemic and often excluded Black ideas, Black authors, and Black experiences. In this context, any curriculum that emphasises that slavery existed elsewhere or that some enslaved Black folk learned a trade is denying their students the opportunity to think critically about their past, present, and future. This kind of education and the racist rhetoric that supports it insinuate that the truth of the Black past does not matter, that their education and full development as human beings in a multiracial society does not matter. What is clear is that as attacks from DeSantis, Abbott, and so many others continue, state education departments across the country will continue to revise curricula and ban books they deem anti-racist. It means a lack of representation of Black authors, Black intellectuals, Black ideas and Black experiences for millions of African Americans kids.

It means a paternalistic and racist misrepresentation of the horrors of slavery and of the resilience it took for enslaved Black folk to build a culture of resistance that would foster social justice movements and cultural creation worldwide once emancipation finally occurred. It means that even the knowledge of such resistance and innovation, including the path to the Brown v Board of Education ruling, could be marginalised or erased at the whim of an "anti-woke" politician or state school board. DeSantis, Abbott, and many others have declared that anti-racist teaching is "teaching kids to hate this country". My own intellectual evolution, though disillusioning, would not have occurred without the help of education about systemic racism and its deep roots in the US and in the West. Learning about the history of humans is hard, it is uncomfortable, especially when one is confronted with truths that expose the lies one learns at an earlier age. But it freed me to think in counterintuitive ways about Blackness and about the world. Disillusioning white kids by teaching them the ugly history of American racism is not teaching hate, but not teaching the truth of the Black experience is certainly teaching anti-Blackness to Black students.

Aljazeera

Iran's plan of promoting Latin American ties

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

IRANIAN President Ebrahim Raisi visited three Latin American countries in mid-June. This trip was an opportunity to visit three revolutionary countries that are under US sanctions, namely Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba. These countries are also ideologically close to the revolutionary Iranian state, as they oppose the US-led international order and Washington's foreign policies.

One of the trip's objectives was to publish diplomatic statements outlining Iran's convergence with the revolutionary Latin American countries against US pressures and policies and to present a common agenda. Raisi explained that Latin America is no longer "the backyard of the Americans" because of the search for independence of each of the Latin American countries. Despite the ideological convergence between Iran and the revolutionary Latin American countries, they do not complement one another from an economic standpoint. For example, even though Iran and Venezuela proclaimed during Raisi's visit that they aimed to reach a trade volume of \$10 billion and eventually \$20 billion, official trade reached only \$3 billion in 2022. Also, Iran's relationship with Nicaragua is now focused more on developing military cooperation in order to counter US influence in Latin America, rather than on economic matters, and Cuba has been a historical partner of Iran since the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Overall, it can be said that the Iranian strategy in Latin America is based on exporting and reinforcing the revolutionary ideals that are specific to the populist ideology of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khomeini. Raisi tapped into the populist orientation of the revolutionary Latin American states. All three of these countries embrace anti-US sentiments and these feelings are predominant in their societies. Paradoxically, even if anti-US feelings are predominant in some segments of the Latin American population, it is clear that, in Iran, the majority of public opinion was indifferent to the conservative Iranian president's diplomatic tour.

By addressing the peoples of Latin America, who are, according to Iran, subjected to "US arrogance," Raisi sought to restore his revolutionary image on the international scene, but this diplomatic rhetoric is no longer appealing within Iran. Indeed, Raisi's search for revolutionary legitimacy is part of ongoing efforts to restore the credibility and support base of the Iranian leadership, both of which diminished greatly following the September 2022 death of Mahsa Amini and the ensuing national protests. In addition, Iran's long-lasting and continuous economic woes have compounded the legitimacy crisis facing the country's leadership, with it struggling to craft effective policies and solutions to remedy the economic crisis. The tough sanctions regime on Iran has not helped the leadership in reviving the fortunes of the economy.

While the economic situation is very difficult inside Iran, this trip to Latin America allowed Raisi to strengthen the anti-US consensus inside the Iranian

establishment. This remains one of the ideological tenets of the Khomeinist state and perhaps one of the tenets that continues to gel the establishment together. Because of the lack of popular interest in his Latin America trip, Raisi asked the Iranian media to provide more coverage of his foreign diplomatic visits. This request was apparent during his meeting with Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting on Aug. 7. Indeed, the majority of Iranian public opinion is not interested in the Iranian state's diplomatic activism in distant parts of the world, such as Latin America. The Iranian people want the economic problems of the country to be taken seriously and for governance to improve, not for the president to spend vast sums on long diplomatic visits for the sake of improving the standing of the Iranian state and the implementation of its ideological projects and schemes.

Besides the Iranian internal political context, Raisi's trip was also part of the ongoing showdown between Iran and the US over the Iranian nuclear issue. This distant trip allowed Raisi to maintain valuable diplomatic support to limit Iran's international isolation and marginalization within international organizations. It also stemmed from Iran's desire to appear as a world power at a time when Tehran is encountering difficulties on the regional scene. This Latin American escape also reflected an Iranian diplomatic illusion of having the capacity to influence geopolitical developments in the backyard of the US. Despite this grand Iranian illusion, the symbolic dimension of Raisi's trip and his meetings should not be neglected because they reflected hostility and convergence against Washington's foreign policies. However, at the same time, the economic reality of the cooperation between Iran and the revolutionary Latin American countries should not be overestimated, despite the signing of numerous memorandums of understanding.

Iran's interest is in finding ways to circumvent the economic sanctions that are impacting the capacity of Iranian leaders to transform the country's economy into a real emerging one. However, the economic significance of Raisi's trip was somewhat diminished as he did not go to Brazil, the main economic power in the region, which hosted former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009. President Raisi turned to Latin America because of the economic difficulties facing Iran and because of its deteriorating relations with neighboring countries, as shown by the tensions with Azerbaijan and the Taliban government. Geographical distance is certainly a limitation to deepening bilateral relations on the economic and strategic levels, but it constitutes an advantage in terms of improving the image and standing of the Islamic Republic. The ignorance in Iran's understanding of Latin America and the anti-US ideological orientation in the region allow Raisi's trip and others to happen, but they are not enough to produce economic complementarity and deep economic relations between Iran and the revolutionary Latin American countries.

Arab News

Hun Sen has been terrible for Cambodia

Mu Sochua

LAST month's elections in Cambodia should have dispelled any illusion that democracy - for long under attack - is even alive in the country. The campaign, and subsequent ballot, was a tightly-controlled and stage-managed process, which deprived the country's 9.7 million registered voters of a political alternative. It was mere theatre, and the result was entirely predictable.

Hun Sen and his ruling Cambodian People's Party won their preordained landslide in a contest in which they faced no credible opposition. The election was about paving the way for a handover of power from Hun Sen to his son, Hun Manet, and entrenching a dictatorship that has ruled the country for 38 years. Even before the polling booths closed on July 23, it was a foregone conclusion that Hun Sen's CPP would romp to 'victory'. And, so it was, with the CPP taking 120 of 125 available seats in Cambodia's National Assembly.

Suppression was rife. Voters who dared to damage

or destroy their ballots as a sign of protest faced the prospect of jail time or having to pay a hefty fine. And independent media were muzzled against speaking out on Hun Sen. I, and dozens of other exiled political opponents, exemplify the outcomes of those that choose to participate in Cambodia's increasingly Soviet-style interpretation of democracy. My former party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party, won over 43 percent of the vote in the 2013, 2015 and 2017 elections, despite open corruption and interference by Hun Sen and his government. Our presence, and growing competition with the incumbent administration, would be healthy in any other democratic country. However, for Hun Sen, we posed too much of a risk - and, like others in my country's dark history, we were dissolved for allegedly orchestrating a 'foreign coup' against the government.

This time, a similar fate befell Candlelight, a new

opposition party, which was on course to defeat Hun Sen's CPP until its abrupt disqualification in May 2023. The party was barred from fielding candidates because it "submitted a photocopied document rather than an original copy", as part of its application, and Candlelight's members and activists were subsequently targeted and incarcerated by government forces. And yet, still, even against this backdrop, peaceful opposition found a way to manifest. National counts show that upwards of half a million Cambodians spoiled their ballots, despite threats of fines or arrest. This accounts for one in 18 votes cast at the elections, and, together with the consistent birth of new opposition forces, suggests that the will for a democratic alternative to the CPP will not be suffocated, irrespective of government corruption and intimidation. It also, arguably more than ever, shows the need for

the international community - and in particular, democratic leaders in the West - to call out the abuses of the Hun Sen administration and to enact punitive measures against him and his son, Hun Manet.

This cannot come soon enough. For, as part of the ongoing succession plan, we are now witnessing a solidification of the Cambodian elite into key positions of influence. Beyond the handover of the premiership to Hun Manet, which will take place later this summer, many ministries are now being stuffed with woefully inexperienced children of party loyalists, who will continue the legacy of their parents. This sad reality has already been evidenced in the appointment of Say Sam Al as minister for the environment - a figure, who, despite showing some initial interest in working together with young environmentalists, quickly gave way to the ruling tradition of arresting and imprisoning

those who seek to defend the natural world. Other appointees, including the new minister of defence, Tea Seih - son of the current minister of defence, Tea Banh - and Minister of the Interior, Sar Sokha, also seem grossly inappropriate. The latter, in particular, seems to share Hun Manet and Tea Seih's lack of grounding for office, raising concerns that he will not be able to prevent the increasing power of the Chinese mafia and their roles in human trafficking and other crimes against ordinary Cambodians.

These machinations are playing out at the same time as many young people leave for opportunities abroad, or risk imprisonment for trying to protect those that are most vulnerable in society. The international community has a historic and binding responsibility when it comes to Cambodia. Many of its members were signatories to a commitment, when there were first free and fair elections in June 1993, that sought to underpin democra-

cy in Cambodia. They have a responsibility, under the Paris Peace Accords, to defend human rights and to call out the continuing abuses of the CPP. They must make it clear, both to Hun Manet and others who take power with him, that the international community insists on positive democratic change in Cambodia, starting with the release of all political prisoners and amnesty for all exiles who wish to return to their country of birth.

The new leadership must not seek to divide the population, as their parents have done, or silence their opponents. And, in the case of Hun Manet, there must be a demand that he is a legitimate ruler. The Cambodian people are hungry for democracy, for quality healthcare and education, for freedom, and for three meals a day. The international community has an obligation to respond, demand change, and, if required, coordinate visa and asset sanctions against those of the CPP who want to destroy the democratic future of my country.

How China can make a difference in Israel-Palestine conflict

IT is feasible that China will play an important role in mediating Middle Eastern conflicts. In fact, it already has. In the case of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, however, mediation is hardly the issue. Even before Beijing successfully managed to achieve reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran in April, Chinese diplomacy had shown exceptional maturity. For many years, China was perceived to be an outsider to global affairs, supposedly contenting itself with economic expansion or regional economic integration.

Former US President Donald Trump forced, or rather accelerated, China's global outreach when, in 2018, he launched an unprecedented trade war on the powerful Asian country. Trump's plan backfired. Not only did Washington fail to make Beijing bow to American diktats, it also inspired what became known as China's wolf diplomacy - a self-assertive Chinese approach to foreign policy. From an American - or Western - viewpoint, the new tactic was perceived to be hostile and aggressive. But from a Chinese perspective, the policy was necessitated by the relentless war launched against China by successive US administrations, along with their Western allies. The Russia-Ukraine war has accentuated China's role in international conflicts and diplomacy. Though Beijing's 12-point peace proposal, announced in March, failed to impress the West and was only superficially welcomed by Moscow, it highlighted an important shift. The fact that China found it necessary to develop an elaborate political position as a potential mediator conveyed that it was no longer content with playing the role of supporting actor in international forums.

China's diplomacy was dismissed by many, especially in Western media and politics, as a nonstarter, if at all serious or even well-intentioned. However, merely three weeks later, the Chinese-brokered Iran-Saudi Arabia agreement was unveiled. Major political actors in the region, including Washington, appeared to be taken by surprise. The Chinese success story was juxtaposed by many journalists in the Global South with Washington's conflict-prone, dead-end diplomacy in the Middle East.

Buoyed by its success, China ventured further into new diplomatic territories, offering to mediate between Israel and Palestine. The Palestinians welcomed a Chinese role; the Israelis were disinterested. The Chinese government is aware of the near-impossibility of engaging both Palestinians and Israelis in genuine peace talks. Though Palestinians are desperate to escape or at least balance out Washington's hegemony, it is not in Israel's interest to abandon the US - its greatest political benefactor, financier and military backer. Though China and Israel have developed relatively strong economic and, for China, strategic ties in recent years, Beijing's geopolitical worth for Tel Aviv is simply incomparable to that of Washington. It would also make little sense for Israel to grant Beijing any political leverage at a time of geopolitical transitions, especially because China has historically supported the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom. For decades, China served as a key supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organization and, later, the state of Palestine at the UN, insisting on the respect and implementation of international laws relevant to ending the Israeli

occupation. Unsurprisingly, China recognized the PLO's political status in 1965 and the state of Palestine in 1988. Now, it is pushing for full Palestinian membership in the international body. The Chinese position was fundamental to Beijing's strategic alliances in the Global South in previous decades. But the economic growth of China and its integration into a Western-centric economic system, starting in 1978, progressively weakened China's trade and political relevance in the Global South. This process is, however, being reversed, not only because of Washington's trade war and the hostilities of Western countries to join Beijing's Belt and Road initiative, but because of the US-led Western sanctions on Moscow. The Western economic war on Russia is an urgent reminder to China that it cannot fully rely on Western markets and financial systems. China's slow drift from a Western-centric economic system is being coupled with a whole new approach to foreign policy - wolf diplomacy in the West and a gentler, kinder approach in the Global South.

Even before then-Foreign Minister Qin Gang phoned his Palestinian and Israeli counterparts in April to offer mediation, China had already introduced a peace initiative known as the four-point proposal. This proposal highlighted China's readiness to move past its role as a trade partner into one of a political actor on the global stage. For China, this is not only a matter of prestige. Various Muslim and Arab countries, along with Israel, are critical parties in the ambitious BRI project.

In recent months, China's interest in being a peace mediator has increased exponentially, especially

amid the near-total absence of Washington, the self-proclaimed "honest peace broker." China has also shown a willingness to mediate between rival Palestinian groups. That, too, ushers in an evolution in China's approach to Palestinian politics. However, it will not be easy. The Palestinian Authority's financial well-being - and political future - is largely linked to Washington and other Western capitals. Though Palestinian officials, including the likes of Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki, have threatened to "turn to China" due to the PA's "disappointment" in Washington, such a shift will not be permitted, if not by Washington then by Tel Aviv itself.

The visit in June by President Mahmoud Abbas to Beijing, although touted by the PA-run media as an earth-shattering event, will not be a game changer. True, it highlighted China's growing interest in Palestine, but it is unlikely to be followed by substantive action on the part of the Palestinian leadership. Palestinians need China, as they need other powerful players in the Global South, but it is not mediation that they desperately require. Mediation does not end military occupations or dismantle apartheid regimes. Instead, Palestinians need solidarity. The major changes underway in the world's geopolitical map and the rising importance of the Global South present Palestinians with unique opportunities to break away from US-Western hegemony and to reconnect with Palestine's true strategic depth in Asia, Africa, South America and the rest of the world. For this to occur, Palestinians must present their cause as one united front, not as political fragments and factions. Only then can emerging powers view Palestine as a serious geopolitical asset in a vastly changing world.

Should America's allies plan for the worst?

Bruce Wolpe

THE question from the Finnish journalist to President Biden at last month's US-Nordic leaders' summit in Helsinki was direct: "What actions will you take to assure Finland that the US will remain a reliable Nato partner for decades to come?" Biden replied: "I absolutely guarantee it."

There is no question. There's overwhelming support from the American people," before adding the caveat: "You know, no one can guarantee the future, but this is the best bet anyone could make ... As sure as anything can possibly be said about American foreign policy, we will stay connected to Nato - connected to Nato, beginning, middle and end."

In an interview a few weeks earlier, Richard Haas, who recently stepped down as president of the Council on Foreign Relations, said that the most serious threat to the security of the world right now was the United States. "It's us," he told Peter Baker of the New York Times. "I should have a nickel for every non-American, every foreign leader who said to me, I don't know what's the norm and what's the exception any more. Is the Biden administration a return to the America I took for granted and Trump will be a historical blip? Or is Biden the exception and Trump and Trumpism are the new America?"

These issues are beginning to hit home in Australia and with other US allies. Many are already seeing in 2024 a reprise of the successive shocks of 2016 - the Brexit vote in June as a precursor to the upheaval heralded by Trump's election in November - and what ensued during Trump's four years in office. We know from the litany of explosive books, from veteran journalist Bob Woodward to Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton and so many others in between, what Trump is capable of - and that he would approach a second term with vengeance uppermost in his mind against those who crossed him or stood in his way. Today, leaders of the world's democracies at least have the benefit of over-the-horizon political radar of what may be coming, given the long lead time of Trump's all-so-visible and unrelenting campaign to regain power.

With respect to my coun-

try, Australia, the deep engagement with the US began on the western front in the first world war. Australia has supported American troops in numerous wars the US has waged since then. The Anzus treaty is in its 71st year and "a hundred years of mate-ship" has been richly celebrated. It is safe to say that Australia's alliance with the US is the least troubled of any bilateral relationship the US has with other countries, including Israel, Canada and the UK. Australia is an integral part of the Quadilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) with India, Japan and the US. The Aukus agreement brings the US together with the UK and Australia in a strategic partnership to promote stability and security in the Asia Pacific region. But what happens to this web of ties if Trump returns to the presidency? Trumpism has four pillars that he wields as swords. America first, to ensure that US interests are always paramount in any foreign policy and military decision taken. Isolationism, where the default position is to end American commitments overseas and to bring US forces home.

Protectionism, expressed through trade and tariff wars with the goal of securing trade surpluses for the US with all its trading partners, from China to Canada to Mexico to Europe and back across all of Asia. And nationalism, to build walls on America's southern border and close its doors to migrants seeking the American dream. In a second term, he will pursue these policies even harder. Trump learned immense lessons from his first four years about who, in the US and around the world, frustrated his policy objectives and how they could be crushed and punished to help him win more victories in his second term. What happens if Trump cripples, perhaps even works deliberately to destroy, Nato and the UN, begins a trade war with the EU, executes accommodations with Putin and Russia over Ukraine, surrenders Taiwan to China and withdraws troops and naval forces from the Asia Pacific region?

At this granular level, each leader of a state around the globe allied with the US faces the daunting issue of how to manage all this incoming from Trump should he return to the Oval Office. How can you best deal with a

hostile partner? How do those western countries allied with the US today realign their policies to ensure their security tomorrow? But these questions also reveal a deeper issue with respect to the ties that bind so many democracies around the world with the US. For example, can Australia - should Australia - continue its alliance with the US if the US in 2025 may no longer be the United States that has existed for nearly 250 years? Australia's alliance is with a country that stands for freedom; democracy; liberty; human and civil rights; and the rule of law. What happens if the struggle for democracy and the soul of America fails in 2025? What if President Trump declares martial law, if the military is deployed to cities across the country to put down protests and restore law and order? What if Trump disobeys court orders, including from the supreme court, to cease and desist his executive actions? What if he ignores laws passed by Congress, orders the detention and imprisonment of his political enemies, has journalists arrested and jailed, and shuts down certain media outlets? What if he interferes with elections held in states across the country and for Congress?

If Trump dismantles American democracy, America will no longer be populated by united states. It will be bitterly divided. There will be immense unrest. The country will no longer be the United States. Trump redux therefore poses an existential question: how could Australia remain allied with a country that has discarded the fundamental values of democracy that have bound these two nations together? How can Australia be allied with a country that is drifting towards autocracy? And it's not just Australia. Every country strategically tied to the US will need to contemplate the consequences of Trump's campaign for the presidency.

It is time to face up to this question. It is better for America's allies to be proactive in 2024 in planning for such a catastrophic upheaval in global politics than to be reactive in 2025. As long as Trump is within reach of the presidency, this question is a clear and present danger to every democratic country that today stands proudly with the US.

The Guardiank

World must respond to settler war on Palestinians

THE settler state is conducting a war on Palestinians. This is the defining process of this ultra-extreme Israeli coalition, which is building ever more intensely on the crimes of its predecessors. A settler-dominated coalition is engineering what, for settlers, will be the full and final defeat of what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu disparagingly referred to in a recent interview as the "Palestinian thing." He said it like the Palestinians were irritating little flies to be squashed. The official military parlance for the streets in Hebron where Palestinians are forbidden to drive and walk is "sterile."

Settler groups are engaged in their own sterilization process, with full state and army support. This has borne fruit in their warped view of the world. Palestinian rural communities are, according to the UN, increasingly succumbing to the coercive environments the settlers create. So far in 2023, at least 478 Palestinians, including 257 children, have abandoned their communities, unable to cope with the intense pressure, harassment and violence. The latest community to leave was at Ras Al-Tin on Aug. 3. This was close to another that evacuated at Ein Samiya in May. The settlers at nearby illegal outposts were deliberate and calculated in trying to clear this land to the north-east of Ramallah. Before long, the settlements will Hoover up these lands for their own inexorable expansion. With 22 of these illegal settler outposts legalized so far this year, expect ever more attacks on Palestinians as the settlers fast track the process of transforming a few caravans into major towns.

Palestinian residents have told me several times that the determining factor in such situations have been the children. The settlers

know this and ensure that the children witness acts of violence against their families. Terrified, the children start begging to leave.

Who do the settler groups target? Let us be clear, the violence is not random. It has specific aims that differentiate it from mere violent thuggery and hooliganism. Specific areas need to be emptied - sterilized - in order for ambitious settlement projects to advance.

Palestinian herders have long been a target. For settlers, these communities, which graze significant pockets of land, are a danger to their enterprise. With the help of the occupation authorities, their available land space has been deliberately shrunk through a variety of techniques, including the declaration of military zones and nature reserves. Restricting water is another devastating tactic, with settlements seizing water and settlers taking over vital springs. I have met dozens of communities where the people all tell you how little land they have left to graze and how many sheep and goats they have been forced to sell just to survive. Their way of life has been rendered almost impossible in communities all over the West Bank.

Palestinian farmers are also in the settlers' cross hairs. They tend to have more settled claims to the lands they cultivate, so settler groups have typically used violence and force. The burning of crops, including olive trees, is becoming ever more commonplace. The torching of vehicles and farm machinery exacts a punitive cost for already impoverished Palestinian farmers.

The Israeli state is not turning a blind eye. It is fully focused on advancing the settler project and ensuring settlers win this war. Palestinian land is confiscated,

homes demolished and settlers protected. Palestinian land is often declared a closed military zone and, in some areas, Palestinian villages are emptied for several days so that Israeli soldiers can undergo military exercises. Crucially, the Israeli authorities deprive Palestinians of equitable supplies of water. More than 200 Palestinian villages that the settler movement would like to see cleansed do not have access to piped water. What should happen is that the international community insists, backed up with telling penalties, that these communities that have been forced from their lands are allowed to return. They also must be allowed to live in safety and dignity, free from violent threats and intimidation and with proper access to services and water.

The US has belatedly started heading in the right direction, ahead of most of its European partners. It has begun to use the term "settler terrorism." Major reservations about the overuse of the term terrorism are justified, not least around issues of definition. If a state or power can depict its opponents as "terrorist," then all too often critical debate about the issue evaporates. Yet, by any reasonable standard, the use of violence for overt political purposes, violating international law against a civilian population living under occupation, must qualify. When settlers torch cars, businesses and olive groves to push Palestinians off their land, surely these actions qualify as terrorist. When these actions are coordinated and enacted by specific settler groups, shouldn't they be described as terrorist organizations, including their political wings?

As is so often the case, in Israel itself, the term terrorist is applied against settlers more often than in the international corridors of

power. In June, Israeli security chiefs - at odds with their political masters - designated settler attacks as "nationalist terrorism." How many international statesmen have dared to use this term? Contrast this with Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. Following the settler killing of a Palestinian in Burqa this month, he described those settlers who have killed Palestinians as heroes. Settlers can attack, Palestinians are not allowed to defend. Flowing from this logic, settler terrorist groups should be proscribed. Why should they be allowed to operate internationally, raising funds and promoting the colonial exploitation of Palestinian land without consequences? Settler leaders who incite violence or participate in attacks should not be getting visas to other countries.

The second term that needs to be applied is "ethnic cleansing." This has been a feature of the Palestinian Nakba throughout its 75 years. Palestinians have been consistently forced from their lands. What the world is witnessing today is a continuation of that process in plain sight. Establishing a coercive environment where Palestinians have no choice but to leave their homes and lands is unquestionably an act of ethnic cleansing and this needs to be stated, loud and clear, across the globe. Absent significant action - and history does not give cause for optimism - this ethnic cleansing will not just continue but accelerate as part of this settler war. Settler bodies will milk every opportunity they can while this coalition is in power to intensify this act and squash Palestinians into ever more crowded and impoverished urban slums. Even then, many extremist settlers will be hoping to encourage as many Palestinians as possible not just to flee their villages but the West Bank itself.

Chris Doyle

Why young women like me love Donald Trump

Karoline Leavitt

DONALD Trump is the first choice candidate for Republican women - and it's not even close. A poll released this week shows Trump leading with a majority 52 percent of the female primary vote, leaving his closest competitor Ron DeSantis far behind at 11 percent.

If President Trump continues to dominate in polling, you'll continue to hear out-of-touch talking heads in the mainstream liberal media begging the question of why women should support Donald Trump. Per usual, they just don't get it.

As a young Republican woman, I can proudly say that I love this country just as much as any man and I share the same concerns as the men in my life about the direction America is headed under Joe Biden and the Democrats. I support President Trump for the same reasons the men in my communities support him. I want America to be safe, prosperous, and free.

I want a booming economy, and good-paying jobs for my friends and family. I want less taken out of my hard earned paycheck through taxation. It was thanks to President Trump's leadership that women's unemployment hit its lowest level in nearly 70 years. If empowering women to get into the workplace and provide for their families isn't pro-women, I don't know what is. The real question that we should be asking is this: how could women ever support Joe Biden? His policies have hurt women's pocketbooks, increased their weekly gas and grocery bills, and made it more difficult to purchase a home due to record-high interest rates.

But Joe Biden's support for transgender-identified men in women's sports, bathrooms, and locker rooms is even more insulting to women. These policies are implemented in the name of progressive ideology, but they have only regressed our society to the days before Title IX was signed into law - a law that prohibited sex-

based discrimination for federally-funded educational centers, facilitating a boom in women's sport. As a former NCAA Division II college softball player, I can assure you that it would not be "pro-women" for me to step up to the plate and try to hit a fast-ball from a six-foot, 200-pound man. President Trump has been a strong advocate for female athletes, promising to keep men off our athletic fields and out of our locker rooms. And what about Joe Biden's efforts to demonise the police?

Recently, a video showing a shaken woman recounting her assault in San Francisco went viral, shared by countless others sick and tired of the lawlessness in the ultra-liberal city. These problems aren't confined to San Francisco: similar tales of criminal anarchy in major urban areas are depressingly common. That's not Donald Trump's fault - it's the fault of Joe Biden and Democrat politicians like Eric Adams who encourage lawlessness with hair-brained bail reform policies that discharge perpetrators and terrorise innocents. Donald Trump is the strongest law and order candidate America has ever had. Like millions of women, I want a President who backs our men and women in blue. We want to live in safe communities, and we want deranged criminals who commit heinous crimes to be locked up in prison, not walking our streets. Under President Trump, overdoses in my home state of New Hampshire were declining for the first time in years. Now, fatal drug overdoses are rising at a rate higher than any other state in the nation. I know too many mothers who have had to bury their children because Joe Biden's administration does not care enough about their lives to end the trafficking of Chinese fentanyl into our communities.

Women want - and deserve - a president who actually cares about ending the fentanyl crisis that is taking too many young lives in

our communities. And it's mothers who are now often confronted with the insane leftist ideologies about race and gender in the curriculums of America's public schools, poisoning the minds of their young children. Joe Biden has no plan to stop this indoctrination of an entire generation. In fact, he encourages it. President Trump has a detailed policy plan to cut federal funding from any school that adopts "critical race theory, gender ideology, or other inappropriate racial, sexual, or political content onto our children." What mother would oppose that policy?

Are women supposed to be in support of corruption, as well? It's not Donald Trump Jr. in the headlines for getting rich from selling his family's "brand" to Chinese Communist Party-linked businessmen. No, it's Hunter Biden who did that, with his father's assistance. The patriotic women I know backing Donald Trump want an end to the corruption that has plagued Washington for decades. The Justice Department should lock up criminals, not its political opposition. We are disgusted by Joe Biden's cynical abuse of power. Fundamentally, any common sense pro-American policy is a pro-women policy. Take national security, for example. There are hundreds of thousands of women proudly serving in our Armed Forces. Just like their fellow male service members, they want a military that is trained to be the fiercest, strongest, fighting force in the world.

The mom, Cheryl Rex, ripped into Joe Biden for lying that his son also came "home in a flag-draped coffin." Is it pro-women to lie to a grieving mother? Like millions of hardworking, common sense women across this nation, I want integrity restored to the White House. I want America's economy to thrive, our streets to be safe, and our nation to be respected on the world stage again. That's why I want President Donald Trump back in the Oval Office.

Opening up at right time

THE World Bank has recently described the African Continental Free Trade Area as a "game changer" which will create a single, continent-wide market that unites 54 countries with a combined population of 1.3 billion and GDP of \$3.4 trillion. The AfCFTA represents a comprehensive plan which seeks to create a single, liberalized market for goods, services and labor. It will reduce barriers to trade and investment and boost competition, raising the attractiveness of Africa for regional value chains and to investors.

Achieving the AfCFTA's full potential, however, will depend on bringing in significant policy reforms and trade facilitation measures. To unlock the untapped potential, various intra-African non-tariff barriers, including costly non-tariff measures, infrastructure gaps, and market information gaps, need to be successfully addressed. This requires continued joint efforts under the AfCFTA and many issues need to be resolved before the agreement can fully function. Negotiations in this regard are currently in full swing and the implementation of the AfCFTA is thus firmly on track. The encouraging adoption by the African Union of 2023 as the "Year of AfCFTA: Acceleration of the African Continental Free Trade Area Implementation", is expected

to generate greater political will and commitment and accelerate the effective implementation of the AfCFTA to bring increased benefits to African people. The AfCFTA will build on the progress made by the continent's eight Regional Economic Communities under their customs unions, free trade areas and other trading arrangements.

Trading under the agreement commenced on Jan 1, 2021, after a fairly long delay mainly as a result of the impact of COVID-19. The ultimate objective is to ensure that AfCFTA is truly operational at the earliest and that the gains from the initiative lead to improved implementation in order to achieve increased inter-regional and intra-Africa trade that would yield economic development for the betterment of the continent at large. Apart from deeper integration, the enhancement of intraregional trade, infrastructure and harmonizing policies on investment, diversification, value added production, competition, e-commerce, and intellectual property rights, it is anticipated that the AfCFTA will also boost foreign direct investment, bringing in much-needed capital, technology and skills.

Despite many headwinds, trade between Africa and China jumped to a record \$282 billion in 2022

Gert Grobler

and continues to grow, as a result of Beijing's recent push to boost imports from Africa, with an 11 percent year-on-year growth. It was the second consecutive year of growth since the pandemic, which negatively affected trade in 2020. The implementation of the AfCFTA agreement is a complex and highly collaborative undertaking, which requires that Africa draws on the expertise and experience of, among others, its international partners. Africa has therefore warmly welcomed China to actively participate in the development of the AfCFTA and provide continued support to the secretariat of the AfCFTA toward the full implementation of this important initiative. With the establishment of the AfCFTA and increasing involvement of Chinese firms, China and Africa are set to utilize the AfCFTA to identify and leverage growth in sectors with high growth potential, such as green energy and power infrastructure, agriculture and the digital economy.

Apart from eliminating trade barriers and boosting intra-Africa trade, the AfCFTA will also advance trade in value-added production across all sectors of the African economy. Africa and China's increasing constructive cooperation in boosting economic recovery, in particular, the current

concrete steps introduced by China to contribute to the expansion of value-added exports from Africa to China toward balanced growth of bilateral trade, is of great importance to Africa. It further underscores the vital role that China, as Africa's largest trading partner, plays in trade, investment and manufacturing on the African continent. The AfCFTA, an exciting new trade regime which created the world's largest free trade area, is indeed a vital building block toward the achievement of the AU's strategic framework, Agenda 2063, which is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is clear given the longer-term prospects of Africa's demographics, especially its youth dividend, technology, abundance of natural resources and human ingenuity, that the international community will increasingly embrace the continental free trade area which augurs well for the future well-being and prosperity in Africa.

It is credit to Africa that at a time the world is generally experiencing a rise in trade protectionism and trade wars, the continent, over a period of five years, has taken the lead in negotiating an agreement that actually liberalizes and "opens up" trade. It is indeed an important and critical evolution in African policymaking.

The China Daily



PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 141 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 141.35 points, a positive change of 0.29 percent, closing at 48,565.75 points against 48,424.40 points the previous trading day.

A total of 251,692,333 shares were traded during the day as compared to 368,334,990 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs9.038 billion against Rs17.063 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 340 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 160 of them recorded gains and

155 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 32,221,592 shares at Rs2.36 per share; WorldCall Telecom with 26,238,028 shares at Rs1.22 per share and Dewan Motors with 16,932,604 shares at Rs14.08 per share.

Nestle Pakistan XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs118.00 per share price, closing at Rs7,299.00, whereas the runner-up was Al-Abbas Sugar with a Rs33.70 rise in its per share price to Rs483.80.

Sapphire Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs27.45 per share closing at Rs1,050.11; followed by Colgate Palm with Rs11.75 decline to close at Rs1,355.75.

Rupee extends losses against dollar

Exchange rate of Pakistan rupee weakened by Rs3.01 against the United States dollar in the interbank trading on Tuesday and closed at Rs291.50 against the previous day's closing of Rs288.49.

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

Rs299.1 and Rs302 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.13 to close at Rs318.38 against the last day's closing of Rs317.25, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.99, whereas an increase of Rs3.13 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs369.80 as compared to the last closing of Rs366.67.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 82 paise each to close at Rs79.36 and Rs77.71 respectively.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging and displaying vegetables to attract customers at weekly bazaar, Peshawar Morr.

Chinese enterprises participation in Karachi expo — to help enhance Pak's exports to China: Qadir

BEIJING (APP): The Chinese enterprises showed great interest in the diverse Pakistani products at the recently concluded first International Food and Agriculture Exhibition in Karachi and expressed willingness to do business with local companies injecting essential momentum into Pakistan's efforts to enhance exports to China, said Commercial Counselor, Pakistan Embassy Beijing, Ghulam Qadir on Tuesday.

"It was a wonderful event wherein we were able to arrange many business-to-business meetings between the Chinese and local manufacturers and they were very excited to see the diversity of out-

standing products during the expo," he told APP here. Ghulam Qadir led a delegation of around 110 Chinese representatives from Beijing and neighboring provinces at expo.

This year's theme of the exhibition was Growing a Sustainable Future, and the expo brought international and local communities together to generate hope for building a common future.

A large number of the Chinese seafood and grain associations participated in the exhibition after the signing of the protocols for meat, chili, and other products.

The commercial counselor said that the expo was very well arranged by

Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and the response of the Chinese businessmen is very encouraging.

"Chinese are very happy and they want to do business. The prices are competitive. The products range is very good. Diversity is there and so I think we have a lot of export prospects," he added.

He informed that the Chinese enterprises wanted to import rice, sesame, sesame oil, and meat from Pakistan which will help increase our exports to China.

A number of Chinese companies were wanting to visit meat factories and some of them have shown

interest in high-quality chili.

Responding to a question, he said that the Chinese delegations have held very important meetings in Karachi and they were very satisfied to explore new opportunities and make smooth strategic alliances.

It also provided an opportunity for the Chinese delegation to explore partnerships with local businesses and build strong relationships with Pakistani customers.

In addition, this event was a great opportunity for these companies to tap into new markets and gain greater market share in the country," he added.

Asian markets mixed on US tech rally, weak China data

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets were mixed Tuesday as a US tech rally buoyed sentiment while a batch of disappointing data from China stoked concerns over the state of the world's second-largest economy.

Gains by large tech companies including Amazon, Google parent Alphabet and Meta Platforms lifted the Nasdaq by more than one percent at the close Monday.

The sentiment initially carried through to Asia with Tokyo climbing 0.6 percent, boosted by a surge in tech firms and data showing the Japanese economy grew 1.5 percent in the quarter to June thanks to robust exports on the back of a weaker yen.

Sydney, Taipei and Kuala Lumpur were also in the green but other markets gave up early gains, with Singapore, Bangkok and Wellington lower while Jakarta was flat.

Seoul and Mumbai were closed for holidays.

Hong Kong closed down 1.0 percent and Shanghai was off 0.1 percent as a fresh batch of weak figures from Beijing failed to reassure investor concerns about the stuttering Chinese economy.

European markets fell in early trade, with London down 1.1 percent as Britain reported an increase in unemployment while Frankfurt was off 0.7 percent and Paris was 0.8 percent lower.

Chinese data released Tuesday showed slowing growth in July retail sales while industrial production fell short of analyst expectations.

Beijing also said it would stop reporting its youth unemployment rate, which hit a record 21.3 percent in June, prompting concerns over transparency.

"China reported July data that broadly missed expectations. The National Bureau of Statistics report also omitted the unemployment figure for young peo-

ple, which has soared to record highs in recent months. Again the lack of transparency continues to irk investors," said Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management.

"I think the market was braced for China data to dive below the low watermark. Indeed, heavy rain-falls in northern China, disappointing exports and credit data, and the continuous slide in property sales all pointed to weakness in July activity data. So, I don't think the so-called 'data dump' missing by a wide margin was that big of a shock."

Shortly before the figures were released, China's central bank unexpectedly cut its one-year loan rate (MLF) in a move to boost the economy amid renewed concerns over the heavily indebted property sector and the woes of massive developer Country Garden, which has warned of billions in losses.

The latest data is likely to increase pressure on

Beijing to step in to support an economy that has largely failed to bounce back post-Covid.

"The slightly earlier timing and a larger than expected 15 basis point rate cut of MLF show that Beijing feels the urgency to take more policy easing actions to stabilise expectations and growth," Xiaojia Zhi, chief China economist at Credit Agricole, told Bloomberg.

On foreign exchange markets, the ruble was trading around 97 to the dollar after Russia hiked its key interest rate to 12 percent following an emergency central bank meeting to stem a slide in the currency.

On Monday, the ruble crashed past 100 to the dollar, its lowest level since March 2022 — following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the imposition of Western sanctions.

Elsewhere, the dollar was holding steady above 145 yen, its strongest level against the Japanese currency since November.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was recorded at the Port where three ships, Northern Jamboree, Theresa Schulte and Milha Qatar carrying Containers, Chemicals and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Maersk Atlanta, Maersk Boston, Bow Titanium and Takreem with Containers, and Chemicals also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

POA berths engaged by eight ships during the last 24 hours, out of them, four ships, Northern Jamboree, Pacific Julia, Centurion Signifier and Ruby are expected to sail on Tuesday's afternoon.

A cargo volume of 147,620 tonnes comprising 127,288 tonnes imports cargo and 20,332 tonnes export cargo including containerized cargo carried in 2,220 Containers (1,024 TEUs imports and 1,196 TEUs export) was handled at the Port during last 24 hours.

Three ships five ships are at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them, six ships, Takreem, Maersk Bostan, Maersk Atlanta, Imke Selmer, Hafnia Nile and Jipro Neftis & another MSC Yukta X scheduled to load/offload Clay, Containers, Coal, Gas oil, Chemicals are expected to take berths MW-2, QICT, PIBT, FOTCO and ECTL respectively on Tuesday.

China's retail sales maintain stable growth

BEIJING (APP): China's retail sales of consumer goods, a major indicator of the country's consumption strength, maintained stable growth in July, official data showed Tuesday.

The retail sales of consumer goods increased by 2.5 percent year on year last month to nearly 3.68 trillion yuan (about 512.22 billion US dollars), according to the NBS. In the January-July period, the figure increased 7.3 percent. The consumer market continued to recover and service consumption grew rapidly, the NBS said in a statement.

"Domestic demand kept growing," NBS spokesperson Fu Linghui told a press conference Tuesday. "The service consumption, such as summer vacation tourism, picked up markedly, offering significant support for expanding consumption."

In July, the catering sector reported a revenue increase of 15.8 percent from a year earlier.

Int'l traders want to develop ties with agro-based SMEs

LAHORE (APP): The traders of China, Indonesia, Belgium and ASEAN (Association of South East Nations) have evinced keen interest in developing trade relations with local SMEs dealing in food and agricultural products.

It was disclosed by Farhan Aziz Khawaja, Chief Executive Officer of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) on Tuesday while commenting on SMEDA's participation in the 1st International Food and Agriculture Exhibition (FoodAg-2023) organized by the Trade Development Authority Pakistan (TDAP).

The exhibition, he said, had provided a unique opportunity to SMEDA for meeting 500 international SMEs from 60 countries along with 15 regulatory and development bodies of the visiting countries. "We

held exclusive meetings with delegates of ASEAN, Indonesia, China and Belgium for promoting SME to SME trade relations in food and agricultural sector," he added and appreciated the role of Pakistan's commercial

counsellors in managing networking with international SMEs and the respective SME development agencies.

The CEO SMEDA informed that the meetings with Indonesian and Chinese Embassies have paved the way for MOUs at secretariat level to strengthen SMEs trade relations and also share experience on SME development with SMEDA. A delegation of the overseas Pakistanis businessmen from Belgium has also expressed deep interest in promoting export of Rice and Potato from Pakistan to Belgium with support of SMEDA, he said

and informed that the delegation is right now visiting Khanqah Dogran along with a team of SMEDA for examining fields of Rice and Potato and also meeting with local farmers and SMEs dealing in these products.

It is notable that SMEDA team led by CEO Farhan Aziz Khawaja, apart from strengthening networking with international SME bodies, had helped set up an exclusive pavilion comprising Agro-based SMEs of Sindh and Baluchistan under GRASP; a project being undertaken for Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress in Sindh and Baluchistan. SMEDA is one of the key partners to this project along with ITC (International Trade Center), FAO (Food & Agriculture Organization), and PPAF (Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund).

Cars' sale drops 64 per cent in July

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of cars during the first month of the current financial year 2023-24 has dropped by 64.32 percent as compared to the same month of last year, a recent data released by Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA) said.

According to the data, as many as 3,702 cars were sold during the month under review as opposed to 10,378 units in the same month of last year. The breakup figures showed that 208 units of

Honda Civic and City were sold during the corresponding month of the year 2023-24 as compared to the sale of 2,408 units last year.

Toyota Corolla and Yaris cars sales also decreased by 38.46 percent as it went down to 1,067 units from 1,734 units in July of the previous year.

Suzuki Swift's sales also decreased by 22.42 percent as its sale went down to 249 units from 321 units last year.

Sale of Suzuki Cultus declined to 177 units during

the first month of the current year, whereas during the same month last year, the sale was recorded at 661 units while the sale of Suzuki WagonR also decreased to 245 units from 282 units last year.

Suzuki Alto's sales also witnessed a sharp decline of 68.81 percent from 4,618 units to 1,440 units during the current year, whereas the sale of Suzuki Bolan decreased to 146 units as opposed to sales of 353 units in the same month of last year.

Tokyo shares close higher after strong GDP data

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo shares closed higher Tuesday as investors cheered surprisingly strong Japanese GDP data, and as semiconductor stocks rose following a rebound of US tech shares.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.56 percent, or 178.98 points, to 32,238.89, while the broader Topix index added 0.41 percent, or 9.42 points, to 2,290.31.

"A wide range of stocks were buoyed as investor sentiment improved following the rise in US tech stocks and strong preliminary GDP figures," Iwai

Cosmo Securities said in a note.

But the market was later weighed down by weak economic indicators from China for July, it added.

Investors picked up semiconductor shares after the Nasdaq surged 1.1 percent overnight.

In Tokyo, Advantest, which makes tests for semiconductors, jumped 1.91 percent to 18,120 yen, while Tokyo Electron, which makes tools to make semiconductors, gained 1.67 percent to 20,610 yen.

High-tech investor SoftBank Group added 0.66 percent to 6,675 yen.

Sony Group advanced 0.36 percent to 12,220 yen.

Shortly before the opening bell, official data showed the Japanese economy grew 1.5 percent in the three months to June driven by robust exports on the back of a weaker yen.

The reading, which was also boosted by the return of tourists after the Covid pandemic, smashed market expectations of an expansion of 0.8 percent.

But Japan's consumption remained weak, causing worries among investors. The dollar traded at 145.54 yen, against 145.50 yen seen in New York overnight.

Crude dips as China data sours sentiment

LONDON (Agencies): Oil prices edged lower on Tuesday as sluggish Chinese economic figures were countered by Beijing unexpectedly cutting key policy rates for the second time in three months, according to Reuters.

Brent crude futures dipped 53 cents to \$85.68 per barrel by 1:08 p.m. Saudi time. US West Texas Intermediate crude slipped 66 cents to \$81.85 a barrel.

Supply cuts by Saudi Arabia and Russia, part of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies known as

OPEC+, had helped galvanize a rally in prices over the past seven weeks.

China's industrial output and retail sales data on Tuesday showed the economy slowed further last month, intensifying pressure on already faltering growth and prompting authorities to cut key policy rates to shore up activity.

"When the oil market appears to be comfortable in rally of late, it is often the case that China is the number one fire douser, throwing a wet blanket over those dreaming for heady (\$90-handle crude and

beyond," said John Evans of oil broker PVM.

In an effort to shore up support, the People's Bank of China lowered the rate on 401 billion yuan (\$55.3 billion) in one-year medium-term lending facility loans to some financial institutions by 15 basis points to 2.5 percent.

"The market was expecting the PBOC to wait until September before easing again, and today's cuts suggest that the authorities' concern about the state of the macroeconomy is mounting," said Robert Carnell, Asia Pacific head

of research for ING Bank.

On a brighter note, refinery throughput in July at the world's biggest oil importer rose 17.4 percent from a year earlier, as refiners kept output elevated to meet demand for domestic summer travel and to cash in on high regional profit margins by exporting fuel.

Still, sentiment on China is souring, added PVM's Evans. "Markets are... becoming bored of the tepid stimulus shown so far from officials who think if they keep talking big and delivering small repeatedly, investors will believe them," he said.



In brief

Zahid secures Amateur titles

ISLAMABAD (INP): Zahid Khan secured the Amateur titles of Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Tournament and Awaish Rasheed got 2nd position. In the amateur event of the tournament was played at Leader City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi. Zahid Khan secured the first position with 391 points. Owais Rasheed got the second position with 374 points and Haider Aziz got the third position with 330 points. Fayyaz Chaudhry finished fourth with 304 points. President, Pakistan Bowling Federation, Ijazur Rahman, Secretary General Mohammad Hussain Chatta and a large number of peoples were also present on this occasion

Sindh wins championship

KARACHI (APP): Sindh won the National Women Catch Ball Championship-2023, at Karachi University here on Tuesday. Director General (sports), Higher education Commission, Javed Memon was the chief guest and gave away the prizes to the players. President, Pakistan Catchball Federation, Maqbool Arain, Secretary General, Ume Laila Kalsoom, and a large number of people were also present on the occasion, said a communique. Sindh won the titles of the National Women's Catchball Championship-2023. Karachi University obtained second position while The City school DK bagged third position and Islamabad finished fourth position. Twelve teams from across the country took part in the championship, which was divided into four groups, Sindh Green, City School and Happy Home School in Group A; Punjab, Islamabad, and Gilgit-Baltistan in Group B, Balochistan, City School DK and Suceptor College in Group C; while Group D includes teams from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh White, and Karachi University.

Independence Day Basketball Match

ISLAMABAD (NNI): In a thrilling basketball match held as part of the Independence Day celebrations, Islamabad Timberwolves emerged victorious over their rivals, Islamabad Rockets, by a close margin of 52 points against 49 here at Hamidi Hall, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. Ali Hamza Kazmi of the Timberwolves demonstrated remarkable skill and finesse on the court, leading his team as the top scorer with an impressive 19 points. He was closely followed by Raheel Gill, who contributed 9 points to the Timberwolves' victory. On the Rockets' side, Ramzee showcased his talent and determination, securing 12 points, with Ahmed putting forth a commendable performance as well, scoring 10 points. This match was officiated by a team of proficient referees as Umer Mahmood, Yasir Ghaffor, and Farhan (Navy) took charge as referees, ensuring a fair and unbiased contest. The distinguished gathering of sports enthusiasts and professionals witnessed Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shahid Islam, gracing the event as the chief guest while President of the Federal Basketball Association (FBA) Ejaz Rafi Butt, was present as the guest of honor. Alongside them, the notable attendees included National Coach Riaz Malik, Rana Nasrullah, Fitness Expert from Pakistan Sports Board, Azam Dar, Director Administration PBBF. Addressing the audience, General Secretary of FBA.

Spain beat Sweden in dramatic finish to reach final

AUCKLAND (Agencies): Spain beat Sweden in a thrilling finish to reach their first Women's World Cup final.

Captain Olga Carmona scored an 89th-minute winner to spark wild scenes of jubilation among their supporters at Eden Park, Auckland.

Sweden - who have now lost back-to-back World Cup semi-finals - had equalised through Rebecca Blomqvist just 93 seconds earlier and it looked like the match would be going to extra time.

A game of few chances had sparked into life when substitute Salma Paralluelo, 19, gave Spain the lead with just 10 minutes remaining. They will face England or Australia in the final in Sydney on Sunday.

The semi-final between the Lionesses and the co-hosts is live across the BBC on Wednesday (11:00 BST). Explosive finish after cagey 80 minutes

While Spain's players celebrated wildly on the pitch at full-time, Sweden's dropped to the floor as their

World Cup dream came to an end. There was little evidence of what was to come during a tight and cagey opening 80 minutes.

Spain boss Jorge Vilda opted to recall two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas, whose minutes on the pitch have been limited as she returns from a serious knee injury. And it was Putellas who brought the biggest cheer of the opening half from the sell-out 43,217 crowd when she nutmegged Manchester City's Filippa Angeldahl.

It took until the 42nd minute for the first shot on target, Sweden's Fridolina Rolfo denied her third goal of the tournament by her Barcelona team-mate Cata Coll. Spain dominated possession but Sweden's defence, which has been solid and resolute for the past month, frustrated their opponents for long periods, while the Swedes once again used a familiar weapon to try and find a breakthrough.

Seven of their 11 goals at this tournament before the semi-final had come from

set-pieces but Coll, who had not started a senior game for Spain prior to the World Cup, stood up well to Sweden's inswinging corners, which had caused havoc in previous matches.

Then came the explosive finish.

Paralluelo, who scored the winner in the quarter-final against the Netherlands, kept her composure to fire Spain ahead before substitute Blomqvist poked home the equaliser.

With extra time looming, Carmona sent Spain through with a shot which went in off the bar following a corner.

Spain recover from squad turmoil

Spain had only won one of their previous seven Women's World Cup matches before this tournament. They now head for the final after their fifth - and most dramatic - win in New Zealand. This historic win for Spain came just 15 days after they were beaten 4-0 by Japan in a group match.

Boss Vilda said after that defeat "no-one should lose



AUCKLAND: Olga Carmona of Spain celebrates the second goal during the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023 Semi Final match between Spain and Sweden at Eden Park.

hope" and his players have responded by eliminating Switzerland, the Netherlands and Sweden.

Spain had come into this tournament under a cloud after 15 players had threatened to quit the team as they were unhappy with Vilda's methods, and the coach initially exiled them from the squad. Three of the 15 - Mariona Caldentey, Aitana Bonmati and former Manchester United defender

Ona Batlle - were eventually included in his squad for the World Cup. Spain appear to have put those differences to one side as all three players helped their country reach the final on a memorable night for La Roja.

'I hope Spain win'

It was the same old story for Sweden as they lost for the fourth time in five World Cup semi-finals, having knocked out 2015 and 2019 winners the

United States and Japan in their past two matches.

Their players have been ruthless and efficient at this tournament but looked heartbroken after going so close to forcing extra time.

"There are so many emotions right now," said boss Peter Gerhardsson. "Everyone just feels sadness and huge disappointment." Sweden now go to Brisbane for the third-place play-off on Saturday (09:00 BST).

"We will be really, really ready for that game," added Gerhardsson, who said he hoped that Spain would go on to win the World Cup.

Sweden's defeat means Caroline Seger, their long-term captain, will end her international career without a World Cup winners' medal after five tournaments. Seger has been limited to just 69 minutes of action at this World Cup because of a calf injury.

Sana of Pakistan Army, Waqar of PAF win Independence Day Women, Men Squash titles



PESHAWAR (APP): Sana Bahadur of Pakistan Army and Waqar Mehboob of Pakistan Air Force clinched the trophies of the Women and Men Independence Day Squash Championship played here at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex on Tuesday.

Known businessman and Owner of the Deans Plaza Asif Jamal, Col. Abid Aziz, Chief Security Officer Cantt, Daud Khan Secretary to Chief Minister graced the closing ceremony as guests, witnessed the two grand finals of the Women and Men Squash Championships and gave away prizes.

Former World Squash Champion Jansher Khan, Chairman KP Squash, Legendary Qamar Zaman, Senior Vice President KP

Squash Association Ehsan Ullah Khan, Major Sheryar, Associate Secretary Dr Riaz Khan KP Squash Associate Secretary Sajjad Khalil, Finance Secretary Wazir Mohammad, Executive Member Sher Bahadur, Fazal Khalil Directorate Senior Coach & Chief Organizer Munawar Zaman, Squash Coaches Mohammad Waseem, Amjad Khan, Mahmood Khan, Adil Zar Gul, Mohammad Adil Faqir, Chief Referee, Squash players spectators also present during the Independence Day Cake Cutting ceremony.

There was standing aviation from all the participating players for former World Champion Jansher Khan to pay him rich trib-

ute for his unmatched services, he rendered for keeping the Pakistan's flag high during his 20-years only supremacy, winning 99 consecutive matches, a record unmatched in the world of squash.

The players present on this occasion also gave honor to former World Champion Qamar Zaman, who remained World No. 2 for 11 consecutive years, along with another legendary and former World No. 2 Mohib Ullah Khan and former World No. 10 Amjad Khan, former World No. 11 Mansoor Zaman and former World No. 8 Ehsan Ullah Khan.

Addressing the ceremony, the chief guest Asif Jamal lauded the services

being rendered by the players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the World of squash. "I feel honored to be among the legends of squash Jansher Khan, Qamar Zaman, Mohib Ullah Khan and other leading players," Asif Jamal said. He also thanked Director Blue Tones Squash Academy Wazir Muhammad for inviting him to the Independence Day Championship and giving him a chance to be among the legends.

Asif Jamal also appreciated Sana Bahadur and Waqar Mehboob for ranking high among other players of the country besides representing Pakistan at the international levels. He assured the organizers of his support in the other events. He said along with the government, the business communities and persons from the private sectors should come forward and support the players in different games including squash.

Earlier, the Women Final Sana Bahadur (Army) recorded victory Nimra Aqeel (KP) by 3-1, the score was 11-7, 11-3, 5-11 and 11-6 while in the Men final Waqar Mehboob (PAF) beat Saddam Ul Haq (Army) in straight sets, the score was 13-11, 11-4 and 11-5.

In the semi-final Nimra Aqeel (KP) beat Hifsa Yousaf (Wapda) by 12-10, 11-8, 7-11, and 11-1 and Sana Bahadur (Army) defeated Manahil Aqeel (KP) by 3-0 in the second semi-final, the score was 11-5, 11-9 and 11-2. In the Men semi-final Waqar Mehboob (PAF) beat Mutahir Ali Shah (KP) by 3-0, the score was 11-2, 11-7 and 11-5 and Saddam Ul Haq (Army), in the second semi-final, defeated Muhammad Azaan Khalil (KP) by 11-6, 11-9 and 11-4.

LAHORE (APP): Muhammad Javed Malik and Ali Naqvi, both part of ICC International Panel of Match Officials and PCB Elite Panel of Match Referees will lead the playing control team in the six limited-overs matches between the national women's sides of Pakistan and South Africa in Karachi from 1 to 14 September.

Also, for the first time in Pakistan, two female umpires Afia Amin and Saleema Imtiaz, who are part of PCB's Women's Panel of Umpires, have been included as reserve umpires in an international bilateral cricket series. Saleema recently officiated women's exhibition matches in Rawalpindi. Additionally, both Afia and Saleema were part of the ACC Women's Emerging Teams Asia Cup in Hong Kong.

Three T20Is will be played at the National Bank Stadium from 1-4 September. This will be followed by the three ODIs, which are part of the ICC

Women's Championship 2022-25 and will be played from 8-14 September at the same venue.

Meanwhile, the third T20I, which was originally scheduled to take place on 5 September, has been rescheduled and will now take place on 4 September.

Faisal Afridi, Rashid Riaz and Tariq Rasheed will form the umpiring panel. Faisal and Rashid are part of PCB Elite Panel of Umpires and PCB match officials on the ICC International Panel. Tariq is part of PCB Elite Panel of Umpires.

The T20Is will begin at 1930, while toss will take place at 1900 PKT. The first ball in the ODIs will be bowled at 1530 PKT.

Umpire and match referee appointments (Matches from 1 to 14 September)

1 September - First T20I. Faisal Afridi and Rashid Riaz (on-field umpires), Tariq Rasheed (third umpire), Saleema Imtiaz (reserve umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee)

3 September - Second

T20I. Rashid Riaz and Tariq Rasheed (on-field umpires), Faisal Afridi (third umpire), Afia Amin (reserve umpire); Muhammad Javed Malik (match referee)

4 September - Third T20I. Faisal Afridi and Tariq Rasheed (on-field umpires), Rashid Riaz (third umpire), Afia Amin (reserve umpire); Muhammad Javed Malik (match referee)

8 September - First ODI. Faisal Afridi and Rashid Riaz (on-field umpires), Tariq Rasheed (third umpire), Saleema Imtiaz (reserve umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee)

11 September - Second ODI. Rashid Riaz and Tariq Rasheed (on-field umpires), Faisal Afridi (third umpire) and Saleema Imtiaz (reserve umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee)

14 September - Third ODI. Faisal Afridi and Tariq Rasheed (on-field umpires), Rashid Riaz (third umpire) and Saleema Imtiaz (reserve umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee).

Pakistan to host World Bodybuilding event for first time

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan will host the World Bodybuilding event for the first time in the country's history in October this year.

According to reports, the World Bodybuilding Organization has granted permission to Pakistan to host the event for the first time.

The mega event will take place in October, in which more than 300 bodybuilders and models will take part in 30 categories including Mr. and Miss Universe.

The international event will be held under the Global Powerlifting and

Physique International, GPBI Pakistan President Ramiz Ibrahim Khan said.

He said that bodybuilders from 40 countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Italy, Germany, and India will participate in the event.

Pakistan's famous actors Umar Shahzad and Mohammad Raees will appear in the event in the fashion model category.

Three women from Pakistan will also be in action in the powerlifting category.

Ramiz Ibrahim Khan said that for the first time in the history of bodybuilding, Pakistan will host such a big event.

Private cricket ground plays key role in flourishing talent

Muhammad Anas

Musazai, an area in the outskirts of Peshawar, is a village almost 4km far from the city, where cricket play and amateurs come across to participate in cricket matches and tournaments, announced by the organizers. A cricket ground has been organized for this purpose by a 25 year old resident, Inam Khan, which led to the rise of cricket after a robust decline it faced in the area due to non-availability of pitches. It is no one but himself who inculcated the idea in him which led to his success altogether and ignited the youth towards the game again. In addition to this it also created business opportunities such as parking —for vehicles a 30 rupee each— and a general store— selling cold drinks and biscuits. Every month a fresh tournament is announced which gives an opportunity to all cricket players belong to any other city across the province of KP i.e Peshawar, Swabi, Mardan, Swat etc.

to participate in, after depositing the required entry fee. Athletes who go for PSL/IPL or International cricket also come here. Lately, a cricket player, having expertise in batting, who was said to have been selected by the Pakistan cricket board (PCB), also participated in a final match whose batting led the team with a 20 runs more score. Amateurs also caught selves with him, who, sooner— if given opportunity—will be seen by us on a TV screen, playing on behalf of his beloved nation, Pakistan.

The stadium has been organized and its management is carried out by private source not by any other politician belonging to any other party and constituency concerned, who claimed to have inaugurated blah, blah areas for playing purposes which is a lie en masse. However, all the playing fields are organized by private funds, collected from players by the members who run them, while Fabian Policies have been followed towards young by those who promised them

for the provision of such facilities which are still due. Lately, a tournament was announced which led to its final match (a 16-over innings each) held on Sunday, 16th July, 2023, with the participation of chief guests, Malik Siraj—A candidate for PK-82 from JUI-F and Mufti Gulzar Ahmad, one of the prominent Islamic scholars in the village. Both of them gave their speeches while standing upon the flag of Sweden—which was later put on fire through ashes—to show wrath and zeal in response towards the Swedish citizen after he desecrated the Holy Quran in Stockholm. The act was described by world leaders too.

Following the distribution of trophies, the guests also announced cash prize to winners and losers of the match and promised them to provide every assistance need for the expansion of games in the village, irrespective of post-election results. The event ended after the spectators chanted slogans of Allah-u-Akbar and Pakistan Zindabad.

Jishn-e-Azadi Sports Festival concludes at Kohat



Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Jishn-e-Azadi Sports Festival concludes at Kohat. Like other parts of the country, the 76th Independence Day was also celebrated with great pomp and show and national enthusiasm in Kohat.

In this regard, the Regional and District Sports Office Kohat also organized the Jishn-e-Azadi Sports Festival side by side the traditional Independence Day programs.

The Independence Day celebrations were formally started under the supervision of Regional Sports Officer Kohat Sajid Afridi on the night of August 13 at 12 o'clock at the Kohat Sports Complex with fireworks which was largely attended by the patriotic fans.

Similarly, on August 14, the Sports Department also organized a special program for the inmates of Kohat Jail on this day, beside various sports events including Football, Badminton, Volleyball, Athletics, Men's Archery, Women's Archery, Tug of War and Musical Chairs games.

Football and Badminton matches were won by Kohat, Athletics 800 Meters Race by Arshad, Men Archery by Abdul Ghaffar, Women Archery by Areeba while Tug of War competition was won by the District Administration by defeating Kohat Police.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat Azmatullah Wazir was the chief guest of the Sports Festival, while District Police Officer Kohat Farhan Khan and Additional

Deputy Commissioners Shahryar Qamar and Reena Suhrwardy were the guests of honour.

The guests distributed prizes among the winners. On this occasion, cash prizes were also given to the players of Street Child Football Norway from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on behalf of the Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Regional Sports Officer Sajid Afridi gave away honorary shields to all the participating officers of the district administration and police force. Deputy Commissioner Kohat paid tribute to Sajid Afridi for organizing a successful Jashan Azadi Sports Festival and hoped that he will play his role on such important occasions in the future as well.



In brief

Smooth flow of traffic directed

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police issued 37,110 fine tickets to vehicles over hampering traffic flow and overloading. It was also directed to ensure smooth flow of traffic at major roads and to take stern action against those creating inconvenience for the road users, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police is taking all possible measures to ensure a safe road environment in the city with maximum convenience to road users. The special enforcement squads have been constituted to ensure the implementation of traffic rules and smooth flow of traffic in rush hours, he added. While reviewing the overall performance report about traffic related issues, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, directed to depute special squads at Islamabad Expressway, Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed road, Srinagar Highway and other important boulevards of the city to ensure smooth traffic flow. Islamabad capital police personnel were directed to ensure traffic discipline in the city and take action against violators without any discrimination. Efforts are underway to ensure smooth traffic flow in the city and cooperation of road users is crucial to overcome the traffic related problems, he maintained.

Five members of criminal gangs held

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police Nilore and Koral police station teams have arrested five wanted members of two criminal gangs involved in numerous criminal activities and recovered stolen motorbikes and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police had categorically started a crackdown against criminal elements in order to save the precious lives and property of citizens. Following these directions, the Nilore police teams used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending four wanted members of a dacoit gang involved in numerous robbery activities. The accused were identified as Muhammad Khalil, Muhammad Ilyas, Kabeer Ahmed and Jameel Ahmed. Police team also recovered weapons with ammunition and dacoity tools from their possession.

Psychological test conducted

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, a psychological test of security division personnel was conducted to improve the performance and mental abilities of the officials of the Islamabad Capital Police, a police public relations officer said. He said that, a psychological test was conducted to enhance the abilities of police personnel. SSP Security was chairing the psychological committee, while SP Headquarters Clinical Psychologists are members of the committee. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that the Islamabad Capital Police is always engaged in law and order duties in order to ensure the safety of the lives and property of the citizens. Maintaining the law and order situation in the federal capital Islamabad is a big challenge, due to which the officials were facing not only physical but also mental difficulties.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori calls on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. Senator Sarfraz Bugti was also present in the meeting.

NA speaker extends felicitations to Pakistan Civil Award nominees

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, on Tuesday, conveyed his heartfelt congratulations to the individuals nominated for the prestigious Pakistan Civil Awards in a gesture of appreciation and recognition.

These awards, which acknowledge remarkable contributions in diverse fields, including social, public, educational, scientific, heroic, artistic, literary, cultural, journalistic, and medical domains, reflect the nation's gratitude for their exceptional services.

A notable highlight of Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf's message was the profound tribute paid to senior political leader Syed Qaim Ali Shah. Acknowledging Shah's profound political acumen and unmatched insights, he lauded him as a seasoned political and social luminary.

"A significant historical figure, Syed Qaim Ali Shah stands as the sole surviving member of the 1973

Constitutional Committee, having the distinct honor of signing the Constitution. Given his extensive political, social, constitutional, and public contributions, the conferment of the esteemed Nishan-e-Imtiaz, Pakistan's highest civilian award, is seen as a commendable acknowledgment," he maintained. Another prominent figure spotlighted in the Speaker's message was the late Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Shaheed Mufti Abdul Shakoor.

Revered for his principled political leadership and renowned religious scholarship, Mufti Abdul Shakoor's enduring legacy was underscored by Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. "A posthumous recognition through the Nishan-e-Imtiaz for his religious and political contributions further commemorates his invaluable service," he added.

Additional Secretary for Legislation at the NA, Muhammad Mushtaq, was also celebrated for his excep-

tional dedication and competence. Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf emphasized the pivotal role of the NA as a constitutional cornerstone and lauded officers like Mushtaq as invaluable assets.

Commending Mushtaq's pivotal role in enhancing legislative efficiency, he expressed gratitude for his outstanding contributions. The hope was expressed that officers like Muhammad Mushtaq would continue to shape the institution's progress and the country's welfare. He said eminent social personality Amjad Saqib's remarkable efforts in the realm of social welfare were praised as a beacon of hope for marginalized segments of society and his dedication was hailed as commendable, and the conferment of the Nishan-e-Imtiaz added to his laurels. Lastly, the speaker applauded the journalistic contributions of Waqar Sati, a distinguished journalist who has left an indelible mark in the field of journalism.

PDM parties' hopes dashed to ground on caretaker PM's appointment: Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Monday all the hopes and aspirations of the PDM parties dashed to ground on appointment of caretaker prime minister.

In his message on social networking website X, Rashid said the 13 parties seemed ashamed of each other. The PDM parties had not even courage to congratulate each other on appointment of caretaker PM. He said these parties were asking from each other what and how it had happened.

Rashid said the way the 16-month-old incompetent PDM government departed and humiliation

they had to face was also a part of history. They (former PDM rulers) were not even considered worthy of being consulted, he stated.

The former federal minister asked in which country of the world Section 144 was imposed on Independence Day.

He said electricity was cut off in those areas where the headquarters of all the military organisations were located. People were arrested and locked up in police stations, he added. He said the institutions should make it clear where women and children were kept after they were taken away from their homes.

The senior politician was of the view that seeds of hatred which were

being sown in Pakistan would not yield any positive results. The consequences might be dire, he warned. He said no head of Pakistan's political party was present at the oath-taking ceremony of the caretaker prime minister on Monday.

The AML head further said everyone was looking at each other asking what had happened and how it happened. They (PDM allies) were avoiding each other to make any comment on the new development because they had no courage. Just as the old cabinet members' names were placed on the ECL, the current cabinet of 85 members should also be put on the list, he said.

Civil society concerned over violation of tobacco control laws

ISLAMABAD (INP): The leading civil society organizations and public health advocates in Pakistan have come together to raise their collective voices against the blatant violation of tobacco control laws by tobacco manufacturers at various points of sale across the country. This alarming trend has prompted a call for immediate action from government authorities and relevant stakeholders to enforce and strengthen tobacco control measures.

Project Coordinator of Coalition for Tobacco Control Pakistan (CTC-Pak) Zeeshan Danish said: "The rampant violation of tobacco control laws at the point of sale is deeply concerning. We have worked tirelessly to advocate for strong tobacco control measures and to protect our citizens, especially our youth, from the harmful effects of tobacco."

It is disheartening to witness tobacco manufacturers undermining these efforts using deceptive marketing tactics targeting vulnerable populations."

He said that the point-of-sale advertisement also remains a challenge. Tobacco products are often displayed

prominently near cash counters, making them easily accessible and appealing to consumers, including youth.

This exposure normalizes tobacco use and increases the likelihood of impulse purchases. Furthermore, schemes and promotions announced by tobacco companies, such as price discounts or bonus offers, entice consumers and can lead to increased consumption.

These tactics undermine public health efforts and target vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals and youth, who may be more susceptible to price incentives.

Zeeshan Danish Project Coordinator CTC-Pak emphasized that a multifaceted approach is necessary to address these violations.

Strengthening enforcement mechanisms and penalties for violating tobacco control laws is crucial.

Collaborative efforts between government agencies, public health organizations, civil society and media can play a pivotal role in raising awareness and enforcing compliance with tobacco control laws.

ANF seizes 207 kg drugs in 15 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 15 operations across the country managed to recover 207 kg drugs and arrested 18 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that operations were conducted in Islamabad, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Quetta, Peshawar, D.I.Khan, Hyderabad and Karachi and ANF recovered 24.2 kg heroin, 3.6 kg Ice, 151.7 kg charras, 7.2 kg opium and 20 kg intoxicated tablets. Six vehicles were also impounded during operations, he added.

The spokesman said that in an operation at Islamabad International Airport, 39 drug-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Qatar-bound passenger.

In another operation conducted in Faisalabad, 48 kg charras and 7.2 kg opium were recovered from a car. An accused was also rounded up.

In third operation in Kuchlak area Quetta, 80 kg charras concealed in a deserted area was recovered. 28 kg heroin was recovered from a Toyota Pick-Up intercepted in Nowshera while an accused was also netted during the operation. In an operation conducted in Bareilly Colony, Karachi, 20 kg intoxicated tablets were recovered from a house. An accused was also nabbed during the operation.

Other operations were conducted in different areas and ANF seized drugs from the possession of arrested accused. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

Police intensify action against unregistered vehicles

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Action against the unregistered and smuggled vehicles has been intensified in Islamabad. According to the Islamabad police spokesperson, all illegal vehicles will be seized.

He advised the drivers to keep vehicle documents with them while driving.

He also advised motorists to use only those number plates issued by the government. He also warned the law violators of stern action.

PPP HR Cell decides to formulates proposals for party manifesto

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The first formal meeting of the recently set up PPP Human Rights Cell was held Tuesday in the Party's office in Islamabad to discuss the strategy for addressing human rights issues from the platform of the Cell.

Presided over by the President of the Cell former Senator Farhatullah Babar the meeting was attended by Samana Malaika Raza general secretary, Zulqarnain Asghar vice president, Advocate Shakeel Abbasi Additional General Secretary, Tariq Ghauri information secretary and Samina Salam finance secretary of the PPP HR Cell. The membership of the HR Cell of the Party was notified by the Party last week. The Cell is envisaged to have members from across the board of all marginalized sections including women, minorities and the disabled

The meeting decided to submit proposals to the Party this week on various human rights issues in the country for incorporation in the Party manifesto being finalized ahead of the forthcoming general

elections. The meeting also expressed concern over the spate of laws recently rushed through the parliament particularly the Criminal Laws Amendment Bill 2023 to further amend the sensitive blasphemy law. It noted that first the Private Bill was rushed through the National Assembly without debate and without quorum and then similarly got passed by the Senate without proper debate. Some parliamentarians later complained that they had not even seen the Bill.

The meeting noted that blasphemy in any form of any religion cannot be condoned and must be punished, there were serious questions about the intentions behind the Bill which, it feared, will only promote sectarianism and intolerance in the country. Warning that the legislation, instead of the purported objective of countering terrorism, will stoke sectarianism and communalism, it urged all sane elements to persuade the state to revisit the decision. The meeting also thanked the Party Chairman for reposing confidence in it.

NHMP foils effort to smuggle ice worth millions of rupees

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police on Tuesday foiled an attempt to smuggle huge quantity of ice worth millions of rupees on Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway.

According to the details, the contraband was recovered near Rishkai Service Area, when patrolling Sector Commander M-1 Shafiqur Rahman signaled to stop a suspicious vehicle. The driver fled from the spot and the Sector Commander M1 issued an instruction to stop the suspicious vehicle and chased it himself. Seeing the Motorway Police from behind, the accused pulled the vehicle off the road and left the vehicle and fled from the spot. On searching the

suspicious vehicle, 15 packs of ice were recovered from the vehicle. The Motorway Police seized the suspicious vehicle and started searching for the accused. The total weight of ice was 15 kg and 600 grams.

The price of ice in the world market is said to be in millions of rupees.

After completing the initial legal proceedings, the vehicle and drugs were handed over to the police station of Tor District, Mardan. The instruction to keep a close watch on the vehicles was ongoing and further legal action was ongoing.

Ice (crystal methamphetamine) is a drug that stimulates the brain and nervous system, and is highly addictive.

33,823 tenants and 18,334 house servants data registered through online system

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The capital Police had introduced an online registration system for tenants and house servants following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan in order to control criminal activities in the federal capital.

ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that, the system has been very effective for identifying the employees involved in crimes and bringing them to justice. He further said

that registration of tenants and domestic workers not only keeps a close eye on the miscreants but also prevents the elements involved in any kind of dubious activity.

He urged the house owners to verify the backgrounds of people before giving them employment and get them registered with the nearest police station, Police Khidmat Markazs and through an online portal to avoid any untoward incident.

He further said that, some evil-minded elements can disguise them-

selves as ordinary citizens and cause damage by engaging in serious incidents like theft and robbery. The Islamabad Capital Police was committed to provide modern facilities to citizens through innovation and modern technology, he added. The documents required for registration of house servants and tenants include the original national identity card of the landlord, tenant/servant and one copy, passport size photographs and physical presence of both the parties was mandatory.

Railways upgrading stations, linking with regional countries

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Railways is spending millions of rupees to improve its infrastructure, including tracks, bridges, stations, and rolling stock. This is despite financial constraints that the organization is facing.

One of the major projects that Pakistan Railways is undertaking is the rehabilitation of 518 kilometers of track between Kotri and Khanpur. This project is costing Rs. 1862.84 million. Other projects include the rehabilitation of Karachi Port tracks, the upgrading of Railway Dry

Ports, and the rehabilitation of track machinery.

Pakistan Railways is also planning to upgrade 11 stations under PSDP projects. These stations are Peshawar, Hassan Abdal, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Narowal, Nankana Sahib, Raiwind, Okara, Sahiwal, and Bahawalpur.

The upgradation of Main Line-I is another major project that Pakistan Railways is undertaking. This project is costing \$6.683 billion and is being negotiated with the Chinese side. Pakistan Railways is also taking steps to improve the maintenance of its assets. These measures

include increasing fiscal space for maintenance through transfer of pension, reducing utility bills through solarization, improving procurement management through prioritized procurement, and an efficient fuel management system.

The department is also gradually shifting from manual to a mechanized track maintenance regime for enhanced productivity and quality. Improved governance of the maintenance system through the introduction of IT-related interventions (ERP, etc) and provision of professional human resources is also among the top priorities.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in building a boundary wall on Islamabad Expressway.

CCTV systems installed

KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Minister Interior Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) said in a meeting with representatives from the Chinese company Huawei that the ministry will install an advanced CCTV system in every province of Afghanistan. The spokesman of the Ministry of Interior Abdul Mateen Qani said that Abdullah Mukhtar, the deputy minister, met with Huawei representatives in Kabul to discuss technology projects.

Afghan athlete wins C'ship

KABUL (Khaama Press): Zakia Khudadadi, an accomplished taekwondo athlete from Afghanistan, clinched the gold medal at the European Championship in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Zakia proudly represented her nation and won the European championship in her weight category by defeating all three of her opponents. Her victory brings honour to Afghanistan and shows the world the determination and effort of Afghan athletes on the global stage.

NRC calls for sustainable solutions to prevent catastrophe in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Country Director for the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Afghanistan emphasized the necessity for sustainable solutions to avert a potential catastrophe faced by the Afghan people, a statement issued.

"Two years since the change of authorities in Afghanistan, a humanitarian tragedy is unfolding. The situation is driven by a devastating mix of food insecurity and climate change, funding cuts, operational restrictions, and the absence of effective diplomatic engagement," On the second anniversary of the Taliban takeover, Neil Turner highlighted in the statement.

He mentioned that around 15.3 million Afghans are currently experiencing food insecurity, and in 25 out of 34 provinces, there are alarming levels of acute

malnutrition surpassing the emergency threshold. Moreover, despite being over halfway through the year, the humanitarian response plan, which aims to assist over 21 million people, remains underfunded at less than 25 per cent.

"The Afghan people need long-term sustainable solutions to end the humanitarian crisis. This must include efforts to promote greater economic stability, including a functioning banking sector and connection to the international financial system. Without progress on the economy, including the resumption of long-term development assistance, sustainable solutions will never be achieved," Turner said.

The NRC called upon the authorities in Afghanistan to "uphold their obligations as duty bearers, towards all members of the population, including

enabling unhindered and principled humanitarian access and education for women and girls."

he organization appealed to the international community to "sustain humanitarian funding to stabilize the crisis and to step-up diplomatic engagement to find constructive ways forward for Afghanistan as peoples' lives and futures depend on it."

Meanwhile, the advent of Taliban rule in the country has brought about a series of decrees that have significantly curtailed human rights, focusing on women's rights. These measures have been implemented amidst an ongoing and severe humanitarian crisis. The combined impact of these developments has given rise to deep concerns about the state of fundamental freedoms and well-being within the country.

Ministry: Low level of water in Helmand River 'alarming'

HELMAND (Khaama Press): The Islamic Emirate's foreign minister expressed alarm over the Helmand River's lack of water.

The ministry said in a statement that Iran's Technical Team visit to Dehhravud Hydrometric Station shows that the water in this river has decreased to less than seven cubic meters per second, which is alarming.

According to the statement, the Iranian delegation assessed the current water year to be far less than normal particularly due to the severe droughts caused by the global phenomenon of climate change.

"As a result of the observation, the Iranian delegation found that the Helmand river has the least water flow and its tributaries such as Arghandab, Musa Dala, Arghistan and Tarnak are completely dry

where water only flows during floods, making it difficult for the Helmand river water to reach the Delta area," the statement reads.

"On the day when the Iranian delegation measured the water flow in the Dehhravud Hydrometric Station, the water flow was less than seven cubic meters per second, which is actually alarming," Zia Ahmad Takal, deputy spokesman of the foreign ministry said.

The statement said that if it rains and the conditions are favorable, the Islamic Emirate will be committed to pay Iran's rights.

"If the amount of water is complete and we have water, then we will fulfill our commitment 100%," said Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman of the Islamic Emirate.

Meanwhile, some water experts asked the Islamic

Emirate to remove Iran's illegal barriers and pumps from the river of Helmand on the common border of the two countries.

"Iran has to fulfill the commitment it made within the Helmand Treaty framework and remove the obstacles from the Helmand River that have cut off water to the Kang and Chakhansuor districts. And there are illegal pumps on the border pumping water illegally into this country," said Najibullah Sadid, a water expert.

In the past few months, the issue of water rights from the Helmand River has become a controversial issue between Afghanistan and Iran.

Earlier, Iran's foreign minister said that Tehran has placed the issue of its water rights from Afghanistan on its agenda through legal and political means.

CPJ concerned by situation of journalists in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in a statement called on the Islamic Emirate to "stop its relentless campaign of media intimidation and abide by its promise to protect journalists in Afghanistan."

Access to reliable and trustworthy information can help save lives and livelihoods in a crisis, but the Taliban's escalating crackdown on media is doing the opposite."

This comes as some journalists expressed concern over lack of access to information and the arbitrary detention of the journalists.

"We call on the Islamic Emirate to provide access to information and provide support to the media," said Mehdi, a journalist.

"Two years after the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan's once vibrant free press is a ghost of its former self," said Beh Lih Yi, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)'s Asia program coordinator.

Beh Lih Yi added that "worsening media repression is isolating Afghanistan from the rest of the world, at a time when the country is grappling with one of the world's largest humanitarian emergencies."

Masror Lutfi, the head of the Afghanistan National Journalists Union (ANJU) said that the independence of the media needs to be respected.

"For media activities to be continued properly, there is a need for media independence to be respected. The legal issues which were supporting the media community should be implemented again," he said.

However, the deputy Minister of Information and Culture (MoIC), Mahaajar Farahi, accused the Committee to Protect Journalists (CJP) of not observing neutrality in forming the report.

Farahi said that if the journalists are committed to their professions, there is no reason to detain them.

Ataullah Omar, the journalist of TOLONews in Kandahar, was detained by the Islamic Emirate.

IEA strives to provide working environment

KABUL (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, said that they are trying to provide a better working environment for professors of Afghan universities.

Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir raised this issue during a meeting with around 450 Afghan university professors in Kabul, which was organized for the encouragement of the country's academic figures.

University professors and academic figures of Afghanistan are the assets of this country and the Islamic Emirate never wants to lose them, he emphasized. In the past two years, it has been proven that no university professor or school teacher in Afghanistan has been threatened, rather they have

been respected and their benefits and salaries have always been paid on time by the Islamic Emirate, he added.

Mr. Kabir said that the universities are centers of science and knowledge, not the place for promoting foreign cultures and beliefs which was driven under the former administration.

Sheikh Mawlawi Nada Mohammad Nadim, Acting Minister of Higher Education, who participated in this meeting said, after the return of the Islamic Emirate, nearly 450 Afghan university professors who moved abroad to continue their studies have returned for serving the country's youths with their knowledge.

On the other hand, Acting Minister of Information and Culture Mullah Khairullah Khairkhal, said that extensive efforts



should be made for intellectual revival of the young generation, and the opportunity gained after several years should be used well.

Later on, Mawlawi Noorullah Nouri, Acting Minister of Border and Tribal Affairs, and Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Hanafi, Acting Minister of Vice and Virtue, stated that the future of the country is dependent on professors and that professors at Afghan universities need to inspire students with

Islamic and patriotic spirit.

Meanwhile, some of these professors who have returned to the country said the goal of their reunion with their people was to assist the youth in their knowledge and self-sufficiency of Afghanistan in terms of education.

They added that stability and progress of Afghanistan is not possible without education and they want to start teaching again in universities to achieve this goal.

Two years since Islamic Emirate takeover, girls call to reopen schools

KABUL (TOLONews): Some students asked the current government to lift restrictions on women's education on the eve of the Islamic Emirate's two-year rule.

The girls said that the country's educational system would be harmed if schools and universities were to remain closed.

Tayeiba, a 20-year-old athlete who has won several medals, said that women's participation in society and attendance at universities are vital needs.

"I had achievements in this field --and now we are banned and it is very disappointing for me and all Afghan girls," Tayeiba said.

"I feel bad and hopeless and see the future of my country as dark. I ask the Islamic Emirate to open schools," Raihana, a student said.

The associate director of the Women's Rights Division at Human Rights Watch, Heather Barr, expressed her concerns about continued bans on women and girls in Afghanistan, saying "Now, at this two-year point, we really don't know how much worse things could get, and what other plans they have for the future for further restricting the lives of women and girls."

"As we mark two years since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, we are

also unfortunately mourning two years during which girls have been banned from attending secondary education, and we know of course that the ban was extended to higher education in December of 2022. What this means is that we now have two years of girls who should have graduated from high school, girls who should have entered training programs to become a doctor, nurse, midwife, or a teacher, not entering those programs," she said.

According to some professors and campaigners for women's rights, the exclusion of women from the workforce and education would exacerbate the problems in the nation.

"Afghan women should have their role in Jihad Akbar, which includes acquiring science and knowledge, as well as Afghanistan's economic and political issues," Suraya Paikan, a women's rights activist told TOLONews.

"When Islam and the prophet have said that one should seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave, why are the schools closed to girls?" said Ghafur Merzayee, a teacher.

Previously, the Islamic Emirate said that this is not a permanent issue and they are trying to reopen schools for girls as soon as possible.

Stanikzai claims scholars differ over women's right to education

KABUL (Agencies)" Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, deputy foreign minister for political affairs, said on the second anniversary of the return to power of the Islamic Emirate that education is the right of men and women, but states religious scholars have different opinions.

Stanikzai has said that the Islamic Emirate is not opposed to women's education, as women and men have the right to education but says there are differing opinions among scholars and once these differences have been resolved that the gates of schools and universities will be reopened for girls. He said however that this is a time-consuming issue.

Major political upheaval after Taliban's Afghanistan takeover

KABUL (Khaama Press): Following years of conflict, Afghanistan witnessed the resurgence of the Taliban in 2021, marking a critical turning point. This resurgence ushered in a series of profound political transformations that have reshaped the country's landscape.

In the sections below, we will illuminate the critical political developments that have unfolded in the wake of the Taliban's reclaiming power, underscoring their far-reaching implications.

Formation of the Taliban government:

Following the collapse of the preceding Afghan government, the Taliban assumed control and established their own governing body. Their administration centred on an Islamic state guided by their distinctive interpretation of Islam. Leading this new government was Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzadeh, recognized as Amir al-Momineen.

Government structure transformation:

The Taliban underwent a significant government structure overhaul, declaring the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's governance dissolution and establishing an Islamic Emirate in its stead. This profound alteration in their administrative framework has presented many challenges, triggering extensive global responses and reactions.

Revisions in legislation and governance:

The Taliban has introduced significant alterations to Afghanistan's legal and policy framework. They have enforced Sharia laws according to their understanding of Islam. This has had pro-

found implications on various aspects, including law enforcement, stability, judicial processes, women's attire, education, media freedom, and human rights. Observations from global sources about prevailing laws and regulations in Afghanistan suggest a regression to policies and laws reminiscent of past decades.

Changes in the status of women:

Following the resurgence of the Taliban, substantial shifts in the role of women have transpired. The Taliban's return led to numerous constraints on women's participation. Their edicts dictated that women could pursue only restricted education and engage in occupations aligned with their specific interpretation of Islamic principles. Moreover, the Taliban enforced conservative dress codes for women across society. Presently, girls beyond the sixth grade have not been allowed to attend school, women are not permitted to pursue higher education at the university level, and women are not allowed to participate in the workforce. Despite these changes, it remains evident that women and girls have experienced a reduction in their influence within the social sphere.

Concerns and responses:

The resurgence of the Taliban has prompted widespread apprehension among international communities and various nations regarding women's and overall human rights in Afghanistan. In response, numerous countries have enacted sanctions and economic restrictions against the Taliban administration.

Moreover, many Afghans, particularly those who played active political, social, and cultural roles in preceding decades, have expressed their disapproval and sorrow through protests against the Taliban regime.

Struggle and resistance:

Following the rise of the Taliban to power, pockets of Afghanistan saw the emergence of diverse movements that aimed to resist their authority. Among these were factions representing different ethnicities, religious ideologies, and individuals vehemently opposed to the Taliban regime. These ongoing struggles and acts of resistance continue to reflect the discontent and determined opposition of specific segments within Afghanistan towards the Taliban-led government.

Taliban and the principle of non-compromise

Since their resurgence to power, there have been numerous endeavours to engage in negotiations and find common ground with the Taliban. However, the Taliban's inclination to alter their policies and seek power consolidation is limited. This unyielding stance has significantly hindered the progress of negotiation attempts and yielded limited success thus far.

The Taliban are reluctant to engage in dialogues and make concessions with their adversaries. Their predominant strategy for upholding and securing their authority revolves around military confrontation and their power utilization. A cursory analysis underscores the principle of unwavering determination in the Taliban's governance approach, which channels

all opposition factions towards armed resistance.

Taliban's diplomatic engagements with various countries

Following the resurgence of the Taliban, several nations have conscientiously assessed their disparities and objectives regarding the Taliban.

Consequently, this has prompted diplomatic and political engagements to transpire. Countries like Pakistan, Russia, Iran, and Qatar have initiated communication with the Taliban, engaging in informal dialogues and negotiations. These interactions underscore a proactive approach by certain nations to foster connections and engage with the Taliban leadership.

Furthermore, the United Nations and various countries have engaged in meetings and negotiations with the Taliban.

These dialogues have encompassed critical matters like security, humanitarian aid, and Afghanistan's future. Despite the absence of formal recognition of the Taliban as Afghanistan's government, the overt engagement of nations and international bodies with the Taliban underscores the group's capacity to capture the interest of regional players and actively engage in noteworthy political and diplomatic discourse.

Key factors shaping recent political developments in Afghanistan

What precipitated these transformations? Can it be asserted that the potency of external elements influences internal elements?

Experts have scrutinized various perspectives to elu-

cidate the causative factors and events behind the downfall of the Afghan republic. Among the primary catalysts is the endorsement of the Doha Agreement, the withdrawal of American troops, the dearth of inter-Afghan negotiations, rampant corruption within the preceding administration, the escalation of insecurity, the incapacity of the security forces, and the flight of Ashraf Ghani, the former President of Afghanistan, alongside his policies grounded in apprehension towards his associates.

The Doha Agreement assured the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. The absence of anticipated intra-Afghan negotiations following the agreement's signing is attributed to external influences shaping recent events. However, it is crucial to recognize that internal dynamics wielded a more significant impact than external elements. Pervasive corruption within Ghani's administration, his undignified departure during the nation's crisis, and the utter disintegration of security forces are prominent factors that collectively precipitated the downfall of Afghanistan's former government.

The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has brought about many challenges. This power shift has been accompanied by significant obstacles that warrant attention. Among the notable challenges ensuing from the Taliban's return to power are:

Internal security:

A paramount concern for the Taliban lies in upholding internal security. Their

resurgence has precipitated a fresh wave of instability and terrorism in some areas of Afghanistan. Despite the Taliban's declarations of their responsibilities as the new governing entity, their capacity to ensure comprehensive security across the nation remains incomplete.

Human rights and international apprehensions:

Historically, the Taliban have faced widespread global criticism due to their oppressive human rights policies, characterized by stringent gender constraints and severe limitations on women's rights and freedom of speech. The resurgence of the Taliban's authority has sparked international unease regarding safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the imposition of numerous prohibitions by the Taliban has further amplified these concerns.

Humanitarian and economic assistance is imperative for Afghanistan to address its societal needs and embark on reconstruction. The resurgence of the Taliban, coupled with their limited global legitimacy as a governing body, has created uncertainties and limitations surrounding the sustained provision of such aid. Reports from the United Nations underscore that the resurgence of the Taliban has considerably amplified the demand for immediate assistance, affecting a substantial portion of the population, estimated at up to 30 million individuals.

Refugees and immigrants:

The resurgence of the Taliban has triggered a

surge in Afghan refugees and immigrants, instilling concern among neighbouring countries about regional stability and exacerbating internal social tensions. Effectively navigating the Taliban's diplomatic relations with neighbouring nations and the global community remains a formidable challenge in addressing this complex issue.

Government formation and structure:

The Taliban is grappling with significant hurdles in establishing a stable and internationally acceptable governing body.

Central to this challenge is the imperative to create an inclusive government that accurately represents the diverse spectrum of Afghan society, encompassing various social strata and ethnicities. Ensuring civil rights and freedoms, fostering constructive engagement with diverse political and religious factions, and forging consensus on domestic and foreign policy agendas are pivotal prerequisites in this endeavour.

Impact on regional security:

The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has significantly affected the region's security landscape and its neighbouring nations. Heightened fears revolve around the potential proliferation of terrorism, the consequential disruption of peace and stability, and the encroachment upon the sovereign borders in the border regions shared by Afghanistan and its neighbouring nations.

Influence on cultural and educational domains:

Historically recognized for their conservative stance and adherence to tra-

ditional Islamic beliefs, the Taliban's resurgence has sparked apprehensions concerning their influence on Afghan culture and the preservation of national identity. Moreover, concerns have been raised about their stance on education, particularly for women and other marginalized groups. This could lead to restricted access to education and hinder progress in this critical sector.

The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has triggered significant political and security transformations. While the Taliban has seized control of the Afghan government and amassed considerable military strength, addressing the ongoing crises has proven elusive. Serious apprehensions revolve around the potential erosion of human rights and civil liberties and the hard-won advancements in gender equality. The status of women and the sustainability of social progress hang in the balance. Moreover, the global unease regarding terrorism, regional stability, and the escalating spectre of mass migration has heightened.

Forming a stable and inclusive government that gains domestic and international recognition presents a significant challenge. The resurgence of the Taliban has created a situation in Afghanistan where the political landscape is uncertain. This requires the unwavering focus of the global community and collaborative efforts to address these challenges. It is crucial to work together to find solutions that can lead to lasting stability and peace within the nation.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with the representatives of PFUF, APNS, PBA, CPNE and AEMEND, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

35 dead after blast at Russian fuel station

MOSCOW (AFP): At least 35 people were killed in an explosion that created a huge fireball at a fuel station in Russia's remote Caucasus republic of Dagestan, spurring condolences from President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday. Images distributed by the emergency ministry showed burnt-out cars silhouetted by the massive blaze and rescue workers in helmets attempting to put out the fire and clear rubble.

Local authorities said 35 people had died and 64 had been injured -- they earlier said 80 were wounded. The Kremlin issued a statement saying: "President Putin expresses his most sincere condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy in Dagestan and wishes a speedy recovery to the victims."

The explosion in the city of Makhachkala happened at a fuel station after a fire broke out, the regional branch of the investigative committee, which probes major incidents, announced on social media. Russia's national investigative com-

mittee later said the fire broke out in the building of a car maintenance service, after which it "spread to an adjacent room where, according to preliminary data, flammable fertiliser was stored, resulting in an explosion." Investigators have opened a criminal case into the provision of services that failed to meet safety requirements, it said. State-run news agencies TASS and Ria Novosti reported that the fire had been extinguished, citing the emergency ministry.

Makhachkala, a city of over 600,000 on the Caspian Sea, is the capital of Dagestan, a Russian republic bordering Chechnya. The blast was heard shortly before 10:00 pm (1900 GMT) on Monday, Sergei Melikov, head of the Dagestan administration, announced on social media. A witness quoted by Russian daily newspaper Izvestia said the fire started in an area where cars were parked and spread to the petrol station.

"After the explosion, everything fell on our heads. We couldn't see any-

thing any more," said the witness, who was not named. Video footage released by the emergency ministry showed firefighters trying to extinguish huge flames near burnt-out vehicles, as rescue workers examined the rubble of a building with flashlights.

The fire had spread over an area of around 600 square metres (6,450 square feet), the ministry said, adding that 260 firefighters had been deployed. A government Il-76 aircraft carrying medical equipment had been dispatched to Makhachkala to evacuate the seriously injured to Moscow, it added. Seventeen wounded were to be flown to Moscow, according to the administration, and Melikov said the evacuation had since been completed.

The Dagestan government declared August 15 a day of mourning. "State flags will be flown at half mast throughout the country, and cultural institutions and TV channels will be asked to cancel entertainment events and programmes," Melikov said.

SC disposes of contempt plea against Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Supreme Court on Tuesday disposed of the contempt petition against Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former federal minister Ahsan Iqbal. "It is our job to determine whether there has been contempt of court or not," Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandial said while hearing the case.

"There is no justification to continue this case," the chief justice remarked and thanked petitioner Mehmood Akhtar Naqvi for informing the court about what Ahsan Iqbal had said. "Ahsan Iqbal is a disciplined person. He, in his speech at a seminar in 2018, said that politicians' self-respect should also be protected. I don't think something was said that could be viewed as contempt of court," the chief justice remarked.

"My argument is that no one is above the Constitution and the law," petitioner Mehmood Naqvi said. "Do not speak in front of the court. The Supreme Court's power of contempt of court is not for general use," the chief justice said to the petitioner.

"In my view, Ahsan Iqbal is a very serious and intellectual person. He, in an emotional speech, said his honour is equal to that of a judge or a general," he added. "After five years, what Ahsan Iqbal should be questioned for? We will see if something serious happens. The Supreme Court is not taking any strict notice of this. Our decisions should have enough weight to be followed," he declared. A two-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandial, heard the case.

Fawad's apology accepted

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday accepted the unconditional apology of former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry in the contempt case.

Last year in August, the ECP had issued notices to Fawad Chaudhry, and others for allegedly using "intemperate" language against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja and the electoral body. ECP contempt case was heard against former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry by a four-member commission headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja.

ECP urges caretakers to ensure 'level playing field' for all parties in next polls

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday instructed caretaker governments in the Centre and all the provinces to provide a level playing field to all contesting candidates and political parties during the upcoming general elections in the country.

In a statement, the election watchdog said that the National Assembly and provincial assemblies in Sindh and Balochistan stand dissolved on August 9, 11 and 12 respectively. Senator Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar — a lawmaker belonging to Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) — has been selected as caretaker prime minister. The decision came after the second round of consultations between then prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and Leader of the Opposition in the dissolved NA Raja Riaz, and a summary to this effect had been approved by President Arif Alvi under Article 224 1A.

In Sindh, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and Leader of the Opposition in the dissolved provincial assembly Rana Ansar on Monday night reached a consensus on the appointment of Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar as the interim CM. The selection for the name of caretaker chief minister in Balochistan remains in limbo, as incumbent CM Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo and Leader of the Opposition Malik Sikandar Khan could not reach a consensus on any name so far.

The ECP said that it was mandated with the constitutional duty to organise and conduct elections in terms of Article 218(3) of the Constitution and to make such arrangements as are necessary to ensure that the elections are conducted honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with the law. "It has become imperative that the ECP

ECP should conduct delimitations transparently: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Tuesday said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should conduct delimitations of constituencies in a transparent manner.

The remarks of CJP Bandial came whilst heading a two-member bench, which was hearing petitions against delimitations of provincial constituencies PS 7, 8, and 9 Shikarpur, which were challenged in the apex court in 2018. During the hearing, CJP Bandial remarked that the delimitations of constituencies were a matter of public interest and that it had been brought up in the top court several times.

"Election commission should conduct delimitations in a transparent manner," the top judge said asserting that if the tapeder modifies the circle even slightly, it can affect the votes a candidate receives. Furthermore, CJP Bandial inquired when were the general elections being held. To this, the Director General (Law) Muhammad Arshad shrugged his shoulders. "As yet, no date for the elections has been decided. The election commission should resolve all issues before the polls," the CJP said. "This matter is more sensitive in Sindh. Grievances often come forth that delimitations in the province were not correct," he added. After hearing the arguments, the SC referred the matter back to the electoral body.

shall take all necessary steps under the Constitution and prevalent law for the smooth conduct of general elections," he added.

The electoral watchdog directed the caretaker governments at the federal and provincial levels to assist the ECP in holding elections in accordance with the law and ensure the compliance of all the notifications, directives and provisions as laid down in Section 230 of the Act ibid. The ECP also placed a ban on transfers and postings of public officers to ensure transparent elections. "Not to post or transfer any public official after the issuance of this notification under the federal and the provincial governments without prior approval in writing of the ECP as laid down in Clause 2(f) of Section 230 of the Elections Act, 2017," it added.

The election body also banned all kinds of recruitment in any ministry, division, department or institution

under the federal, provincial and local governments with immediate effect, except with the prior approval of the Commission. The ECP also refrained the interim government from announcing or executing any kind of development schemes at federal and provincial levels except those which are ongoing or approved before the issuance of the notification.

All development funds relating to local government institutions in the provinces and cantonment boards, for the new schemes, throughout the country, will stand frozen after the announcement of the election schedule with immediate effect till the announcement of the results of the general elections, read the notification. It further said the caretaker governments shall perform their functions and attend to day-to-day matters which are necessary to run the affairs of the federation and provinces in accordance with the law.

Ex-KP CM advisor held

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Former Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Law Arif Yousaf has been arrested from the Anti-terrorism Court (ATC) following rejection of bail in 9th& 10th May vandalism, on Tuesday.

Former Advisor Arif Yousaf was shifted Khan Razzaq police station following his arrested from ATC courtroom. ATC Judge Adil Khan rejected interim bail plea in 9th& 10th vandalism occurred following arrest of Imran Khan in charge corruption charges.

According to prosecution, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Arif Yousaf along with other former parliamentarians are responsible for 9th& 10th May hooliganism and vandalism after arrest of Imran Khan by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Islamabad. ATC

Special Judge Adil Khan has rejected interim bail plea of Arif Yousaf after conclusion of arguments from both sides.

PHC extends former MNA Taj bail's plea: Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Naeem Anwar extended former Member National Assembly (MNA) Anwar Taj's bail plea till 21st August. Additional Advocate General and Shah Faisal Otmonkhel advocate appeared before PHC while the lawyer requested for adjournment due to the unavailability of Sher Afzal Marwat as main counsel in the petition due to the death of his family member.

However, Justice Naeem Anwar inquired regarding availability of Sher Afzal Marwat advocate and time-frame for adjournment while Shah Faisal advocate requested for provision of one week in this regard. In the meantime, Additional Advocate General argued

that petitioner didn't appearing before Shabqadar's court while available at High Court. Police raiding petitioner's residence continuously despite obtaining bail from court, the counsel argued while PHC has adjourned further hearing till 21st August.

Meanwhile, Special Anti-Corruption Peshawar Judge has extended interim bail pleas till 29th August of former MPAs and ordered respondents to submit record in recruitment against the merit. According to prosecution, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) former Members Provincial Assembly (MPAs) named Ifthikhar Mashwani, Abdus Salam and Peer Musawir had made recruitment against the meritocracy. Anti-corruption has filed First Information Report against PTI's MPAs while the petitioners had approached honorable court to obtain relief in this regard.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of All Parties Hurriyat Conference chanting slogans during protest outside to observe Indian Independence Day as Black Day.

Rabbani for timely polls

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Senator Raza Rabbani said on Tuesday that despite passage of six days after dissolution of National Assembly, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has not yet announced about elections.

The Senator said, "Time passes rapidly over the 90 days' constitutional deadline for elections but regretfully the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has yet to issue a comprehensive statement on the election." "The ECP should inform about the time limit it required for fixing boundaries of constituencies after approval of the digital population census results," Raza Rabani maintained.

He emphasized, "The election commission should not treat the issue as a routine matter." "The delay in holding elections within the period allowed by the constitution, will bring serious consequences for the federation," he cautioned. Senator Raza Rabbani had earlier also warned that delay in elections would prove to be "dangerous" for the federation.

The PPP Senator had commented after the CCI unanimously approved the 7th Population and Housing Census, making it almost certain that the general elections would not be held within the constitutional period and during the current year as the election commission will be needed time for fresh delimitation of the constituencies according to the new census figures.

Elahi remanded to NAB custody till 21st

LAHORE (INP): A Lahore accountability court on Tuesday remanded PTI President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi to the custody of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) till August 21 in a case pertaining to bribes over development project contracts.

A day earlier, the former Punjab chief minister was arrested by the anti-corruption watchdog shortly after he was released from Adiala jail. He was set free upon the completion of his 30-day detention, which was under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance. But as soon as he walked out of Adiala jail's gate, he was taken into custody by a NAB team, headed by Deputy Director Najamul Hassan. The team consisted of personnel from the bureau's Rawalpindi and Lahore zones. Later, police obtained a one-day transitory rem-and of the PTI leader from a court in Rawalpindi.

NAB alleges that Elahi received bribes/kickbacks in exchange for getting the "contracts of road schemes of Gujrat Highways Division awarded to favourite/hand-picked contractors". His son Moonis Elahi, Mahr Azmat Hayat and others are also

accused in the case. The case claims that the co-accused were "involved in causing loss to the government exchequer to the tune of millions of rupees against receipt of commission/kickbacks and committed offences of corruption and corrupt practices" under Section 9(a) of the NAB ordinance, 1999. Earlier, a frail-looking Elahi was presented before the accountability court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Zubair Shahzad Kiyani.

At the outset of the hearing, Elahi's lawyer Amjad Pervaiz requested the court to grant him five minutes to talk to his client. When the proceedings commenced, NAB counsel Waris Ali Janjua said four suspects had previously been arrested in the said case. "The court may approve Elahi's physical remand till Monday (Aug 21) as by then the SC and LHC verdict will also be announced," he suggested.

Janjua, however, interjected here and said NAB was seeking Elahi's physical remand for 14 days. However, ADSJ Kiyani remarked that the matter would be decided by the court. Elahi is among several PTI leaders and work-

IHC directs police to produce Sheharyar

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to produce arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) leader Sheharyar Khan Afridi before it on Wednesday and also summoned the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) in personal capacity.

Justice Babar Sattar, hearing the case, observed that it was necessary to cite reasons for keeping anyone in custody. He issued show-cause notices to the ICT Deputy Commissioner and SSP Operations as to why not contempt of court proceedings should be initiated against them.

Kashmiris observe Black Day to condemn forcible Indian occupation

ISLAMABAD (APP): As India celebrated its independence day on Tuesday, the people of Kashmir from across the globe observed it as the Black Day to condemn the unlawful and forcible Indian occupation, denial of self-determination right and nefarious action of scraping special status of the disputed territory.

The Indian independence day was marked with mass anti-India protest rallies and demonstrations in all small and major towns in the liberated territory including the capital city of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber, Rawalakot, Bagh, Palandri, Neelam Valley, Jhelum valley, Haveli and other towns and villages. People from diverse segments of civil society including social, political, and other public representative organizations attended the rallies holding black flags and wearing black bands around their arms to mark Indian Independence Day as black day.

The protestors condemned the Indian oppression to convert the IIOJK into the world's biggest military zone by deploying around a million troops usurping the Kashmiris' rights to freedom of speech, movement and communications. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference leadership in its statement said India had no right to celebrate its Independence

Day in IIOJK as it was holding the territory against the will of the Kashmiri people. The leaders said India was rejoicing on its freedom but killing Kashmiris for demanding the same. Calling it a "matter of shame for New Delhi," the Hurriyat leaders pointed out that Indian armed forces had mercilessly killed over 500,000 Kashmiris in last 76 years but was still observing its Independence Day in the territory shamelessly. New Delhi, they added, is celebrating its freedom from Britishers, today, but denying the same to the IIOJK people.

Meanwhile, Indian troops, paramilitary and police personnel were deployed in strength in every nook and cranny of the territory, subjecting the people to immense discomfort. A multi-layer security blanket involving helicopter reconnaissance and drone surveillance was put in place to ensure smooth conduct of India's Independence Day celebrations in Kashmir. Elite Special Operational Group personnel assisted by Indian army and paramilitary forces carried out area domination exercises around city centre Lal Chowk and Bakshi stadium, the venue of the main Independence Day function in the valley. The troops frisked vehicles and passersby. Posters again appeared in different areas of the territory.

The posters said that India had invaded Jammu and occupied Kashmir forcibly against the will of Kashmiri people. The Kashmiris living in Mirpur staged a rally and unanimously passed resolution warning India to abstain from launching any aggression against Pakistan or Azad Jammu and Kashmir. "Every individual of AJK is fully prepared to make a defense of inch after inch of the motherland -- shoulder to shoulder with valiant armed forces of Pakistan if India dared to launch any attack against Pakistan or AJK", the rally declared. The rally thanked and paid rich tributes to the people of Pakistan for their unequivocal full support of Kashmiri's struggle for right self-determination. The participants expressed grave concern over the fast-deteriorating conditions of the people in strife-torn and fully-locked indefinite curfew-riddled Indian held Jammu and Kashmir for the past 10 days. India, it said, has latterly turned the occupied J&K state into the world's largest jail and garrison.

They, through another resolution, called upon the international community especially the United Nations to immediately move for getting the special status of the disputed Jammu & Kashmir state restored -- for onward early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue in line with the UN

resolutions. It urged the world body to take immediate notice of history's worst Indian act of state terrorism and aggression let loose against the innocent people in occupied Jammu Kashmir by forcibly revoking the special status of the disputed state.

The rally called upon the world body -- UNO, international human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Red Cross, Human Rights Watch, and others to immediately move for ensuring the supply of food and medicines to save the lives of the house-detained people in curfew-riddled occupied Jammu & Kashmir state in general and the Muslim-majority areas of the troubled valley in particular. In his statement, Pakistan People Party PPP (Shaheed Bhutto) AJK chapter chief Muneer Hussain Ch. Advocate has said that Indian independence day was observed as black day to express hatred against the Indian illegal occupation over their motherland. This symbolic protest was meant to seek world attention towards the atrocities committed by Indian forces in Kashmir and denial of their right to self-determination by the Indian state.

"On one hand India has let loose its trigger happy forces to unleash terror in the region while on the other the occupation authorities are hatching conspiracies to change the popu-

lation ratio to turn Muslim majority of the state into a minority", Muneer said. On July 19, 1947, a meeting of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was held at the residence of an illustrious Kashmiri leader, late Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim Khan, (later the founder President of Azad Jammu Kashmir) chaired by the veteran leader, Ch. Hamidullah Khan because the apex leader, Quaid-e-Millat Ch. Ghulam Abbas was put behind the bars by Hari Singh for voicing the will of the people against the Dogra regime.

The resolution of the State's accession to Pakistan was presented in the presence of 59 bold and vibrant leaders. As was envisioned—the resolution was instantaneously adopted with one-voice amid boom of slogans — Allah-o-Akbar (God is Great) and Pakistan Zindabad (Long Live Pakistan) by the partakers as well as a copious number of Kashmiris, camouflaging the venue of the moot. The resolution expressed Kashmiris' out-and-out and absolute confidence in the dynamic leadership of the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah with the words, "We salute him (The great Quaid) and congratulate him from the core of our hearts with mammoth delight and soul satisfaction on the auspicious occasion of the establish-

ment of Pakistan."

Giving a stern warning to the Hindu Dogra ruler, the valiant people of the state, with more than 85 per cent Muslim populace asked Singh to declare the State's accession with Pakistan without any vacillation before August 14, 1947 or get ready to face a cataclysmic fate—if this popular voice of the people is mistreated. Eventually, India, through a gruesome operation resorted to an illicit invasion of the Jammu & Kashmir State. To thwart this illegitimate and inane Indian act—the heroic people of the State—stood up like an unyielding rock against the atrocious Dogra regime.

This culminated into the establishment of Azad Jammu Kashmir as a base camp for the liberation of the rest of the State's territory from the unjust Indian yoke. So, since decades, the people of Jammu and Kashmir had been asking India to bow before their acknowledged aspires for exercising their birth right of self-determination to save the South Asia region from a catastrophic peril. The Kashmiris urge India to quit the part of the Himalayan State of Jammu & Kashmir—which New Delhi is keeping in bondage at hefty gun-point with the deployment of almost a million military might.