

SC takes suo motu notice

ISLAMABAD (INP): A lawyer has requested the Supreme Court (SC) to take suo motu notice of the increase in the prices of petroleum products. Advocate Mudassar Chaudhry said in his plea that the prices of petroleum products have been increased. The inflation-stricken poor people are committing suicide due to price hike; the constitution ensures right to life to every citizen.

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi administering the oath of office to members of caretaker Federal Cabinet, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Ministers of Interim PM's cabinet take oath

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Newly-appointed Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar's cabinet was sworn in on Thursday at a ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad.

President Arif Alvi administered the oath to the 19-member interim federal cabinet. According to a document, 16 federal ministers, 6 special advisers and 3 advisers are part of the new cabinet.

Federal ministers: Senator Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti — Interior/ Overseas Pakistanis/ NARCO; Jali Abbas Jilani — Foreign Affairs; Shamshad Akhtar — Finance and Revenue / Economic Affairs /Statistics/ Privatization; Lt General (ret'd) Anwar Ali Hyder — Defence/ Production/ Aviation; Murtaza Solangi — Information and Broadcasting; Sami Saeed — Planning Development; Shahid Ashraf Tarar — Communication (Railways/ Postal Services/ Ports/ Maritime Affairs); Ahmad Irfan Aslam — Law and Justice / National Resources / Climate Change and Water; Muhammad Ali — Energy and Power / Petroleum; Gohar Ejaz — Commerce/ Textile / Industries / Production; Umar Saif — Information Technology and Telecommunication /Science and Technology; Nadeem Jan — National Health Services, Regulation and Control; Khalid George — National Health Services, Regulation and Control; Aneeq Ahmad — Religious Affairs/ Hajji/ Interfaith Harmony; Jamal Shah — National Heritage and Culture; Madad Ali Sindhi — Federal Education / National Harmony / Youth Affairs.

Advisers to PM: Air Marshal (ret'd) Farhat Hussain Khan — Aviation; Ahad Khan Cheema — Establishment; Waqar Masood Khan — Finance; Mishal Hussain Malik — Human Rights / Women Empowerment; Jawad Sohrab Malik — Overseas; Vice Admiral (ret'd) Iftikhar Rao — Maritime Affairs; Wasih Shah — Tourism; Dr Jehanzeb Khan — Govt Effectiveness / SIFC Syeda Arifa Zehra — Education and National Harmony Affairs.

The ceremony started with the national anthem before the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran and was attended by Interim Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, politicians and prominent figures from all walks of life.

Soon after the oath taking ceremony,

Cabinet vows to cope with challenges

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The members of the newly-appointed interim Federal Cabinet on Thursday vowed to cope with the challenges confronting the country and serve the masses within their short stint.

The 16-member interim cabinet members took the oath of office at a swearing-in ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, also attended by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and prominent figures from various sectors.

Talking to newsmen after his oath, Murtaza Solangi said that the masses would be ready to back the government if it succeeded to create closeness with them. The minister said if he were given the portfolio of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, he would strive to modernise the state media institutions, including the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan to make them cope with the modern trends. Talking to media, former foreign secretary Jali Abbas Jilani, who is also part of the interim cabinet, said the main objective of the foreign policy was to serve the national interests. He said the caretaker cabinet would strive to serve the country's interest through national consensus and improve cordial ties with countries like China, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and South Asian states, among others.

He said Pakistan should further strengthen its relationship with China being a strategic partner with great economic cooperation. Similarly, he said, the success of the Afghan government was also essential that should play its role to eliminate terrorism. Moreover, Jilani said, he also desired that Pakistan's all longstanding disputes with India should be resolved peacefully including Kashmir, Sir Creek and water issues. Madad Ali Sindhi told the media that if given the portfolio of education and youth ministry, he, in cooperation with his team, would strive for the promotion of education in the country. He said the caretaker government would also address the issue of confrontation in student politics as disputes among the student unions adversely impacted the working of universities. Renowned actor and director Jamal Shah, who was also sworn in, said if given the portfolio of the culture ministry, he would serve to promote the country's cultural heritage as coming from the same field, he was cognizant of the potential in the culture sector.

ny, the caretaker ministers, advisers and special advisers were assigned their portfolios by Interim Premier Kakar.

According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division, the prime minister awarded the portfolios of Finance and Revenue, Economic Affairs, Statistics and Privatisation to former State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor Shamshad Akhtar. Earlier this week, Dr Akhtar — who was also finance minister in the caretaker government prior to the 2018 general election — was conferred Nishan-e-Imtiaz by President Alvi on Independence Day.

Former foreign secretary Jali Abbas Jilani has been given the ministry of foreign affairs. She served as the SBP governor from January 2, 2006, for a three-year term, becoming the first woman to head the country's central bank.

Meanwhile, Jilani has 38 years of bilateral and multilateral experience as a public servant and career diplomat, having served as Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States,

Belgium, Luxemburg, the EU, and Australia.

Jilani was appointed foreign secretary in 2012, and while serving the post, he was closely involved in negotiations and finalisation of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), signing the key agreements for the project during the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang under the then-Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government.

Eminent textile industrialist and Chief Executive of Ejaz Group of Companies Dr Gohar Ejaz has been assigned portfolios of Commerce, Textile, Industries and Production. Furthermore, ministries of Interior, Overseas Pakistanis and NARCO has been assigned to Senator Sarfaraz Bugti. Previously, he held the portfolio of minister of home and tribal affairs of Balochistan. Lieutenant General (ret'd) Anwar Ali Haider was given the portfolios of Defence, Defence Production and Aviation.

Meanwhile, the caretaker prime minister has convened a maiden session of his cabinet on Friday (today).

Solangi assumes charge as Info Minister



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Murtaza Solangi on Thursday assumed charge as Interim Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

"Mortaza Solangi arrived in his office at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting after taking oath of his position (at the President's House)," said a news release.

After assuming the responsibilities as the interim information minister, Murtaza Solangi held a meeting with the ministry's officers and his staff.

Qureshi, Asad get interim bail

LAHORE (PPI): Anti-Terrorism Court Lahore on Thursday granted interim bail to PTI senior leaders Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Asad Umar until September 2. Judge Ijaz Ahmad Butt ordered both PTI leaders to join police investigation into torching of police vehicles during May 9 violence. The court also issued notice to police in this regard and adjourned the hearing till September 2.

However, PTI leader Dr Yasmin Rashid's judicial remand in connection with a case concerning May 9 vandalism and making speeches against institutions was extended by another 14 days. The anti-terrorism court Lahore ordered the police to again produce Yasmin Rashid in court on August 31. The anti-terrorism court Lahore extended PTI leader and former Punjab governor Umar Sarfraz Cheema's judicial remand by another 14 days on Thursday and directed the police to again produce him in court on August 21.

Yasmin Rashid, Cheema's remand extended: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) Thursday extended the judicial remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Dr. Yasmin Rashid and Omar Sarfraz Cheema in Askari Tower attack case.

Yasmin Rashid and Cheema were presented before the ATC judge Aijaz Ahmed Battar after their judicial remand expired today. The court while extending her judicial remand for 14 more days, ordered police to file a challan of the case. Meanwhile, the investigation officer (IO) sought more time for the submission of the challan stating that the proceedings are in the final stage.

Govt ordered to produce Hassaan

LAHORE (PPI): The Lahore High Court (LHC) Thursday ordered authorities to produce PTI chairman's nephew Hassaan Khan Niazi before court by August 18. Justice Sultan Tanveer of Lahore High Court issued the written order on a petition filed by Hassaan Niazi's father Hafeezullah Niazi for recovery of his son.

IG Punjab police and others have been made parties in the petition. In a written order by the LHC, the court said parties should submit a report on the next hearing regarding recovery of Niazi. "If Niazi is in the custody of any party, he should be produced in the court on August 18," said the court order. The name of Hassaan Niazi, the nephew of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, has been included in the A-Plus category of accused.

Elections to be delayed

ECP decides to go for fresh delimitation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has opted to initiate the delimitation of constituencies following the approval of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) for the Digital Population Census 2023 and complete the process within four months.

The decision to the effect was taken during a meeting chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja and attended by the ECP members, secretary and other officials, a press release said. The ECP issued a notice seeking help from provincial governments and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in the delimitation process. According to the schedule, delimitation committees will be established on

August 21.

Administrative tasks concerning delimitation will be concluded by August 31. Delimitation committees' training is scheduled for September 1 to 4. Allocation of district quotas for national and provincial assembly seats to delimitation committees will take place from September 5 to 7. Delimitation committees will conduct the initial delineation of constituencies between September 8 and October 7. Preliminary proposals will be made public on October 9. Representations on preliminary proposals can be filed between October 10 and November 8, and the Commission will address/hear these representations from November 10 to December 9.

The final delimitations will be published on

December 14. It may be noted that after the CCI granted approval to the Digital Census 2023 results on August 5, an official notification was issued two days later. As per Article 224 of the Constitution, it is stipulated that following the dissolution of the National Assembly or a Provincial Assembly, a general election to the respective Assembly must take place within 90 days of the dissolution.

The National Assembly was dissolved on August 10, and subsequently, the provincial assemblies of Sindh and Balochistan were also dissolved. Similarly, after each census, it is necessary to delimit the constituencies of the National Assembly and provincial assemblies. This process typically takes a minimum of four months to complete.

Govt will strive to meet expectations of public: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said that his government would make its utmost efforts to come up to the expectations of public representatives within the given short stint.

The prime minister said this in a meeting with Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani here. The Senate chairman congratulated the prime minister on assuming the office. Prime Minister Kakar thanked Sadiq Sanjrani, who expressed the hope that the caretaker government would

not only assist in holding fair elections as per public expectations but also accelerate the course of economic development. Senator Danesh Kumar also attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar has said that the government would be assiduously working to facilitate a free and fair election process in Pakistan according to the Constitution.

On his Twitter handle, the prime minister thanked US Secretary of State Antony Blinken for his good wishes. "We place

importance on our partnership with the US and deeply value the shared commitment to economic prosperity, democracy and stability in the region," he further posted.

Earlier, the US secretary of state, in a tweet, congratulated the new Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar. "As Pakistan prepares for free and fair elections, in accordance with its constitution and the rights to freedom of speech and assembly, we will continue to advance our shared commitment to economic prosperity," Blinken added in his tweet.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani and Senator Danesh Kumar called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Probe ordered into vandalism of churches

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The interim Punjab government has ordered a high-level inquiry after a mob set fire to a number of churches and vandalised Christians' homes during a rampage on Wednesday, with authorities saying over 100 people had been arrested.

The mob made its way through a predominantly Christian area on the outskirts of the industrial city of Faisalabad after allegations spread that the Holy Quran had been desecrated. "This was a well thought out plan to disrupt peace and a high-level investigation is underway regarding the desecration of the Holy Quran and incidents that take place afterward," a spokesperson for the provincial government said in a statement.

The spokesperson said police "foiled" the bid to attack the homes of the minorities and that the "peace committee" mobilised to ensure similar attempts are thwarted. "The frequency and scale of such attacks — which are systematic, violent and often uncontrollable — appear to have increased in the last several years," said the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

The rights group called

for the setting up and equipping of special police forces to protect religious minorities' sites of worship, as directed by a 2014 Supreme Court judgment. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar called for stern action against those responsible for Wednesday's violence. "I am gutted by the visuals coming out," he said.

Police and rescue officials said at least four churches had been set on fire, while residents said as many as a dozen buildings with church status had been damaged. Several thousand police have been sent to secure the area and dozens of people detained, Amir Mir, the information minister for Punjab province, said in a statement that also condemned the alleged blasphemy.

Yasir Bhatti, a 31-year-old Christian, fled his home in a narrow alley next to one of the churches that was ransacked by the mob. "They broke the windows, doors and took out fridges, sofas, chairs and other household items to pile them up in front of the church to be burnt. They also burnt and desecrated Bibles, they were ruthless," he told AFP by phone.

Blasphemy is a sensitive issue in Pakistan, where

anyone deemed to have insulted Islam or Islamic figures can face the death penalty. Pakistani bishop Azad Marshall, in the neighbouring city of Lahore, said the Christian community was "deeply pained and distressed" by the events.

"We cry out for justice and action from law enforcement and those who dispense justice and the safety of all citizens to intervene immediately and assure us that our lives are valuable in our own homeland," he posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. The United States on Wednesday urged Pakistan to investigate mob attacks against churches and Christian homes that broke out in the east of the country amid blasphemy rumors.

"We are deeply concerned that churches and homes were targeted in response to reported Quran desecration in Pakistan," State Department spokesman Vedant Patel told reporters. He said that while the United States backed free expression, "violence or the threat of violence is never an acceptable form of expression." "We urge Pakistani authorities to conduct a full investigation into these allegations and call for calm," he said.

Delegation of minorities' calls on CJP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An eight-member delegation of Sikh community, headed by Samuel Payara- Chairman, Implementation Minority Rights Forum- paid a courtesy call on the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial, here at the Supreme Court on Thursday.

The delegation comprised Baba Makhan Singh, Baba Guralp Singh, Dr Sahib Singh, Sardar Bishan Singh, Amrik Singh, Kaka Singh, Satnam Singh and Dharam Singh. The CJP welcomed the delegates and felicitated them on Minorities Day, says a statement released by the Supreme Court. He briefed them about the rights of minorities as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973. He further added that in Pakistan, every citizen has the right to profess and practice their respective faiths.

He termed the courts in Pakistan as the custodian of the fundamental rights of the people, which have always been cognizant of the rights of minorities and have delivered judgments to enforce, implement and address issues faced by minorities in Pakistan.

No space for intolerance, extreme behaviour: COAS

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir on Thursday condemned the "extremely tragic and totally intolerable" Jaranwala incident, saying that "there is no space for such incidents of intolerance and extreme behaviour".

As per the military's media wing, General Munir made the remarks when he was asked a question about the mob that set fire to a number of churches and vandalised Christians' homes during a rampage over alleged blasphemy on Wednesday.

The mob made its way through a predominantly Christian area on the outskirts of the industrial city of Faisalabad after allegations spread that the Holy Quran had been desecrated. The question was asked by a "participant" during the COAS's address to the 370 students that were interns at the yearly Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Internship Programme.

"Jaranwala incident is extremely tragic and totally intolerable. There is no



space for such incidents of intolerance and extreme behaviour by any segment of the society against anyone, particularly against minorities," the army chief was quoted by the ISPR as saying.

The COAS said that all citizens of the country "are equal amongst each other irrespective of religion, gender, cast or creed". He assured that no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands and those "culpable of committing such crimes will be brought before the court of justice". Earlier in his address, Gen Munir highlighted the "role of youth towards national development".

"Youth is the future of Pakistan, which can contribute immensely towards peace, progress and prosperity of the country," the army chief said. He also "highlighted the efforts of inimical forces towards creating and fomenting fissures, intolerance, mistrust and violent behaviour among the people to spread anarchy and unrest in the country."

He added: "It's imperative for the youth to discern the difference between truth, half-truth, lies, misinformation and disinformation." In the end, Gen Munir also lauded the young internees for successfully completing the programme.



WHO delegation meets PFA DG

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of the World Health Organisation (WHO) called on Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar to discuss the medical screening project and reorganise the testing system for food-borne diseases.

During the meeting, the DG PFA said that the authority was working on reducing medical screening fees for small-scale businesses and providing free facilities for roadside street vendors. He also highlighted the plan to reorganise the testing system for food-borne diseases with the help of WHO, as well as the implementation of food worker screenings to prevent the spread of such diseases.

Furthermore, he said that the help of other departments and institutions including WHO will be taken to reduce the burden on food workers. He added that around half a million basic food workers including roadside street vendors across Punjab. The director general further stated that efforts are being made to reduce the burden of medical screening fees for small food workers. He said that if hepatitis is detected during the medical screening, food workers will be referred for free treatment.

Karachi Police chief chairs meeting

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Javed Alam Odho on Thursday chaired an important meeting regarding improvement and innovation in investigation department of police. During the meeting, the progress of high-profile and other serious cases was carefully reviewed and a comprehensive strategy was formulated, said a news release.

The Additional IGP Karachi pointed out the shortcomings in the investigation of the cases and gave instructions to carry out a comprehensive and effective investigation process as per the modern requirements. He instructed to ensure the identification parade of the arrested accused and timely availability of CCTV footage. The city police chief also ordered for timely payments of cost of investigation to investigation officers and to ensure presence of Crime Scene Unit at the crime scene. He also asked to reward the officers with better performance and to initiate strict departmental proceedings against the ones with poor performance.

Former PM Imran took u-turn on providing houses to displaced persons: CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday said former prime minister Imran Khan's led federal government had promised to provide shelter to the displaced persons of Gujjar, Mehmoodabad and Orangi Nullah but he reneged his promise as usual.

He stated this while talking to media persons here outside the Supreme Court registry after appearing in a case of rehabilitation of displaced persons.

The chief minister said Imran Khan, continued to make an announcement that his government would provide houses to all the displaced persons under 'Naya Pakistan housing scheme', but later on, he took a U-turn. He said Imran Khan was well known for his u-turns.

Murad Ali Shah said the provincial government had been working on this sincerely since the day first.

It prepared a rehabilitation scheme of Rs 9.8 billion, he said, adding the floods of 2022 caused the lack of resources which halted the process of rehabilitation.

"Today, we presented two options before the court for rehabilitation of displaced persons. First to provide 80 square yards plots with construction money and the second to provide amount for both a plot and construction.", the CM said.

He said the Sindh government was giving cheques of Rs 15,000 to the affected people for rental purposes.

Murad Ali Shah said the government had been working on this however it could not submit progress reports in the court for which he had sought an apology and his apology had been accepted. The chief minister on the occasion was flanked by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab and former provincial minister Nasir Shah.

IG awards cash rewards, certificates to officials

LAHORE (APP): IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar awarded cash rewards and commendatory certificates to 50 employees from constables to inspectors here on Thursday. The awards were given to Inspectors Aamir Iqbal, Qamar Sajid, Ijaz Rasool, Zahid Saleem and Muhammad Raza, including officers and personnel in CCPO Office, Investigation, Operations and CIA.

The IG ordered the officials to speed up the process against drug eradication and said that daily intelligence-based operations were being conducted to eradicate drugs in the vicinity of educational institutions and hostels.

Dr Usman Anwar directed that special measures should be taken to bring the suspects involved in motorcycle and vehicle theft to justice and patrolling of Dolphin, Peru and patrolling forces should be extended.

DIG Headquarters Humayun Bashir Tarar, DIG IT Ahsan Younas, AIG Discipline Ahsan Saifullah and other officers were also present during the ceremony.

Retired DSPs meet with IG Punjab: A ceremony was held at the Central Police Office by IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar to honour retired DSPs of Punjab Police. During the ceremony, the IG Punjab thanked retired officers for their valuable services to the police department.

He said Punjab Police would continue to benefit from the experiences and recommendations of retired officers for the improvement of administrative matters. Dr Usman Anwar shared that various projects were underway for well-being of retired officers, personnel, and their families. The IG Punjab also awarded commemorative shields to former DSPs.

Winner team to get 5 free admissions in IPS

F.P Report

PESHAWAR: AZMAT Ullah, President of Jamiat e Islami (JI), invited Bilal Afridi (Director of IPS) as the chief guest for a cricket final match that was played at Regi Village. Our honorable Director handed out cash awards and trophies to the winning team and the runners-up team.

Bilal Afridi announced scholarships upto 80% for every student from Regi, in response to a specific request from Azmat Ullah. In addition,



the runners-up team received scholarships upto 90%, while the students from winning team would receive 5 free admissions.

'PM&DC holds meeting with WFME President'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: To safeguard the future of doctors who want to go abroad for work or training the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council after completing the mandatory requirements to be eligible for WFME recognition of its Accreditation Programme and after submission of complete application to the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) to initiate the accreditation process.

The President PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj to fulfill this gigantic task in record time constituted a WFME accreditation cell consisting of experts from all over Pakistan and conducted several meetings for extensive deliberation to fulfill all the requirements of WFME.

PM&DC is taking significant steps towards international recognition in this context, an online landmark meeting

with President WFME Prof. Ricardo León-Bórquez and his team. The meeting was conducted on 8th Aug 2023.

The meeting was chaired by President PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj at the PMDC secretariat. The meeting was also attended by Prof. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Khan VC Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Prof. Dr. Riffat Shafi HOD Medical Education Department, Shifa College of Medicine, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, Dr. Naveed Yousuf Associate and Chair Department for Educational Development Aga Khan University, Dr. Usman Mahboob Associate Professor at Institute of Health Professions Education & Research, Khyber Medical University, Ms. Saira Rubab Director Legal Section PM&DC, Dr. Muhammad Suleman Sadiq Manager Assessment Medical Education Department PM&DC. Ms. Jana Cohlova Recognition Programme

Project Manager along with the WFME President attended the meeting. The main purpose of the meeting was to further improve ties and understanding between WFME and PM&DC and to discuss the way forward for the PM&DC recognition. During the meeting, a brief & comprehensive introduction was given to WFME President regarding the PM&DC. Later on, very detailed deliberation was done regarding the recognition process of PM&DC with the WFME.

All the participants from PM&DC raised pertinent queries which were well replied and explained by President WFME and Ms. Jana. PM&DC made the commitment with the WFME team that all the necessary steps will be taken to expedite the process of recognition with the PM&DC. The meeting ended with a note of thanks from President PM&DC.



KARACHI: Former Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah talks to media after appearing before Supreme Court.

Ashrafi visits church in Lahore, expresses solidarity with Christian community

LAHORE (APP): Interfaith Harmony Council President and Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi visited Saint Anthony Catholic Church here on Thursday and expressed solidarity with the Christian community after the Jaranwala incidents.

Addressing a press conference at the church here, he expressed sorrow over the recent events, stating that harming innocent lives and property was totally against the

Islamic teachings.

On behalf of all Pakistanis, he sought pardon from the Christian community over the losses, Christian had to suffer at the hands of angry mob in Jaranwala.

Ashrafi urged the government and judiciary to investigate the matter, suggesting that stern award of sentence in previous such instances could have prevented the current tragedy. He also expressed his sorrow over destruction of sacred texts

and called for accountability.

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw also spoke at the conference. He expressed distress faced by the Christians and condemned the burning of Holy Quran.

He emphasised the need for patience and tolerance, while demanding a thorough investigation into the incident.

He thanked the Muslim individuals, who provided shelter and assistance to the affected Christians.

Students' 68 projects put on display at SSUET Open House

KARACHI (PPI): Departments of Electronic Engineering, Telecommunication Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, and Computer Engineering of Sir Syed University of Engineering & Technology (SSUET) organized an Open House/Orientation session at the campus. The students who were invited with their parents to attend the session were provided with the vision and academic guidance at the Orientation session prior to the start of regular classes.

A total of 68 projects were put on display at the Open House, which were designed and produced by the students among which 23 projects were sponsored by Ignite. Electrical Department presented 18 projects among which 4 projects were sponsored by Ignite, and Electronic Engineering Department put forth 17 projects among which 6 projects were funded by Ignite, while Biomedical Engineering Department presented 12 projects among which 5 projects were sponsored by Ignite. Furthermore, out of 34 projects, only 13 projects of Computer Engineering were displayed among which 4 projects were sponsored by Ignite. Similarly, 8 projects of the Telecommunication Engineering Department were exhibited along with 4 Ignite-funded projects.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

INVITATION OF BIDS

(SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPES)

Sealed tender/bids on the basis of "Single Stage Two envelopes Procedure" are hereby invited for execution of the following works from eligible contractors/firms duly enlisted/register with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in relevant specialization technical category and financial limit Category C-5 & above is required on percentage rates basis on Pak. PWD Schedule of Rates 2022, who process valid renewal with PEC, having renewal upto 30/06/2024.

S#	Title of Work	Nit Amount	Earnest Money	Tender Cost
	DISTRICT TORGHAR			
1	Construction of PCC Roads at Surband Basal Khail District Torgar.	Rs.31,584,571/-	2% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
2	Construction of PCC Roads at Shaloon Basal Khail District Torgar	Rs.31,584,571/-	2% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
3	Construction of PCC Roads at Mada Khail District Torgar	Rs.31,584,571/-	2% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
4	Construction of PCC & Improvement Roads at Legra Mada Khail District Torgar	Rs.31,584,571/-	2% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-
5	Construction of PCC Roads at Gharai Mada Khail District Torgar	Rs.31,584,571/-	2% of bid amount	Rs. 5000/-

Terms and Condition for Bidding:

- The constructors/firms/companies who will receive bidding documents are required to submit their bid in two separate scaled envelopes, i.e., one envelop containing technical information/data and documents of the contractor/firm required for post qualification, clearly marked as "Technical Bid", while the second envelop containing bid price clearly marked as "Financial Bid"
- The application must be accompanied with bid security in shape of CD/deposit at call from any Scheduled Bank of Pakistan, in favour of Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II, Pak.PWD, Peshawar, clearly mentioning the name of firm, whereas the difference of the tendered amount must be accompanied with Financial Bid with its sealed envelop.
- Bidders may purchase the Bidding Documents from the office of Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II, Pak. PWD Peshawar at cost of Rs. 5,000/- (Non refundable upto 04/09/2023 during office hours).
- Envelopes of Technical Bid & Financial Bid shall be submitted in the office of the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division-II, Pak. PWD Shami Road Peshawar on 05/09/2023 by 12.30 PM. The envelope containing Technical Bid shall be opened on same day at 01.00 P.M in the presence of Bidders representatives who opt to be present, Bids received after the prescribed date and time shall not be accepted.
- Bidders will be Technically Qualified on the basis of information provided with the Bids as per the criteria prescribed in the Bidding Documents. Once a Technical Bid received and opened in this office, no addition/subtraction/alteration of any sort of document will be acceptable.
- Pay Order/Demand draft will not be acceptable.
- All CDR once received will be credit into the Government Account and will be re-funded through Government Cheque.
- No tender will be entertained without bid security @ 2% of the bid amount if not found will be declared as non responsive
- Every firm/contractor must provide the affidavit on stamp paper regarding the non litigation with the department.
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPRA Rules 2004, the under signed reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids/ proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal.
- The documents provided by the bidders will be verified and in case found ambiguous/fake one, the firm will face immediate/appropriate penal action as per rules and law.
- METHOD OF PROCUREMENT**
 - As per PPRA rule 36(6), open competitive Bidding with "Single Stage Two Envelop" Procedure- One envelop containing Technical Proposal and the other Financial Proposal and both sealed in separate envelopes.
 - After conducting evaluation of Technical Bids, qualified firms shall be informed accordingly for opening of their Financial Bids whereas bids of unqualified firms shall be returned unopened.
 - Non-compliance of Instructions to bidders in the Tender Documents will lead to disqualification/non-responsiveness of the bid/firm.

Executive Engineer

Central Civil Division No.II, Pakistan Public Works Department

Shami Road Peshawar

Phone/Fax: 091-9211471/091-9211471, Email: ccd1pwdpsh@gmail.com

PID(P) 319/23

Umrah-returned couple looted

KARACHI (INP): Three alleged criminals carried out a robbery against a couple that had arrived in Karachi earlier Thursday morning following their Umrah pilgrimage. Robbers in police uniforms target couple after umrah arrival in Karachi

According to the details, the husband and wife were robbed by three criminals at gunpoint outside their home in Karachi's Liaquat Abad No. 3. The three robbers wearing police attire looted husband and wife - who had arrived home after performing Umrah - from both local and foreign currency and flee from the scene. On the complaint of the effected citizen, the incident's report has been registered in the Super Market Police Station.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
INTERIOR DIVISION NATIONAL
DATABASE & REGISTRATION
AUTHORITY

CORRIGENDUM

Cancellation of Walk in Test / Interview

With reference to PID (I) 814/23 advertisements published in daily newspapers i.e The Frontier Post & Mashriq Peshawar dated 6th August 2023 regarding recruitment of staff for project-based vacancies through Walk-in-Test/ Interview to be held from 19th August 2023 till 23rd August 2023.

It is hereby informed that the said recruitment activity has been cancelled due to unavoidable reasons.

Human Resource Section – Peshawar
Regional Head Office NADRA,
Phase-5 Hayatabad, Peshawar
091-9217735

PID(I) 1065/23



Belgium to support promotion of edu in merged districts

PESHAWAR (APP): Ambassador of Belgium Charles Delogne on Thursday called on Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali here at the Governor's House.

In the meeting, discussions were held on bilateral issues, trade relations and enhancing people-to-people relations between the two sides, said a press release issued here.

The two sides also discussed issues related to providing better education

opportunities to the youth of the merged tribal districts.

The governor said that Belgium should provide support for promoting education in the merged districts of the province and special scholarships for the youth.

He suggested that Belgium should introduce an educational project that could bring the youth of merged districts forward in the field of education.

Ghulam Ali also under-

lined the need to strengthen bilateral trade and people-to-people ties with Belgium. The Belgium envoy said the two countries had a history of 75 years of strong public and diplomatic relations.

The two countries were celebrating the anniversary of 75 years of diplomatic relations, he added.

He assured that the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be supported to bring forward in the education sector.



PESHAWAR: DG KPRA Shah Mahmood Khan and Provincial Team Lead SNG Programme Dr. Raheel Ahmad Siddiqui signing over documents.

Ignorance, negligence in state's petitions shouldn't be tolerated, says AG

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advocate General (AG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javeed said that ignorance and negligence of concerned officials shouldn't be tolerated in state cases because most of the petitions are decided against the relevant government's department due to delay in submission of comments before court, on Thursday.

This he claimed while addressing a meeting of focal persons of all provincial departments and added that the AG office will forward attitude of the relevant department due to negligence in submission of reply before the competent court.

The problems are arising due to lack of coordination

between provincial departments and AG office while stressed upon constitution of comprehensive for following state's cases collectively. He assured focal persons to uphold their problems before competent authorities in this regard.

Additional Advocate Generals named Danyal Khan Chamkani and Jalal-un-Din Akbar Garha while AG claimed that the office facing problems due to the non-submission of comments by competent government respondents despite thousands of petitions are pending in the courts across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Unfortunately, hundreds of Contempt of Court (COC) proceedings are under trial against govern-

ment's officials, AG Amir Javeed said. He argued to implement court's order before COC proceedings which will ensure supremacy of law in the society.

AG Amir Javeed claimed that as many as six thousands petitions have been decided in favor of provincial government in last six months. He directed Law Officers for timely submission of comments otherwise his record should be forward to Chief Secretary and Chief Minister.

Amir Javeed ordered the AG office to cooperate law officers across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure speedy conclusion of court proceedings while committed for playing his positive as Chief Law Officer in the province.

Tamgha-e-Imtiaz

KP to nominate 23 medical staff

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Health Department has decided to nominate 23 doctors, nurses, and paramedics' staff from across the province for the award of Tamgha-e-Imtiaz.

The nominations will include medical staff who lost their lives while rendering services during the COVID-19 pandemic in the province.

An official of the health department said that the Federal government has sought details of the martyrs for the civil award besides payment of the martyrs' package.

The Tamgha-e-Imtiaz is a Pakistani civil award that is given for distinguished service in the fields of literature, arts, sports, medicine, engineering, education, public service, and others. The award was established in 1957 and is the third-highest civilian award in Pakistan. The nominations for the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz will be made by the KP Health Department and will then be forwarded to the Federal government for approval.

The awardees will be formally announced by the President of Pakistan at a later date. The decision to nominate the medical staff for the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz is a recognition of their sacrifices and dedication during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The medical staff worked tirelessly to save lives and provide care to patients during the pandemic. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

JI to hold APC on merged districts' rights

PESHAWAR (APP): Jamaat-e-Islami has announced that an all-party conference will be held on August 29 to address the rights of the merged districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Addressing a press conference here Thursday, Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami KP Professor Ibrahim expressed concern over unfulfilled promises of rights, construction, and development for the people of the former tribal areas.

The conference will extend invitations to the central leadership of political parties within the province, he told. He highlighted that a previous conference was organized in May, focusing on the issues of merged districts.

He demanded the restoration of 12 National Assembly seats for the merged districts and the resolution of objections to the tribal districts' census.

He said that the commitment of allocating 100 billion rupees annually for the construction and development of the merged districts was not fulfilled.

ANP flays Jaranwala incident

PESHAWAR (APP): Senior leader of the Awami National Party (ANP), Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilor, expressed deep sorrow over the tragic incident in Jaranwala, calling it as a painful event.

He emphasized that the destruction of churches and homes was distressing, adding that such occurrences could have been prevented and the responsible had been punished in the past.

He underscored the importance of identifying and penalizing those who instigated and participated in the incident.

He said that ANP condemned the unfortunate incident, reiterating the party's stance that Islam respects all faiths.

The senior leader demanded that those who committed wrongful acts must face legal consequences, advocating for stringent punishment through due process.

He highlighted the negative impact such incidents have on the country's international reputation, potentially causing hardships for overseas Pakistani communities.

He stressed unity among citizens, irrespective of their religious beliefs, adding that all citizens are equally devoted to the country.



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of Belgium Charles Delogne meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.

SNG handed over RIMS Pilot to KPRA

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sub-National Governance (SNG) Program of the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) formally handed over Restaurant Invoice Management System (RIMS) pilot to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) on Thursday in a graceful ceremony at a local hotel here.

This significant milestone marks a step forward in modernizing tax collection and reporting processes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. RIMS, a digital platform developed under the guidance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA), represents a groundbreaking initiative to strengthen tax administration.

The pilot's successful completion underscores KPRA's commitment to utilizing technology to streamline business operations, foster greater accountability and enhance transparency within the public and private sectors.

The pilot program, hosted on KPRA servers, enables real-time reporting of sales and the collection of sales tax from restaurants. This innovation eliminates the scaling-up challenges faced by the previous invoice reporting system, offering an inbuilt online Point of Sale (POS) system.

RIMS comes equipped with features including a food ordering and table reservation Application branded as "Khatir," end-to-end restaurant management capabilities, tax rebate options for orders made through RIMS, and both online and offline functionality to circumvent connectivity constraints.

Speaking at the occasion Director General KPRA Shah Mahmood welcomed the participants that includ-

ed the officials of the KPRA department, representatives of business associations, media representatives, and teams from SNG KP and FCDO.

He stressed the fact that efficient tax collection and facilitation is the prime objective of KPRA and RIMS is another step in making ease of doing business a reality in this province. Shah Mahmood especially praised the SNG team for making this project a success and hoped for continuity in support and cooperation in the future.

The formal handover ceremony symbolised the transfer of ownership of the RIMS pilot from SNG to KPRA. This transition signifies not only the culmination of technical deliverables but also the beginning of a new era in revenue collection efficiency and transparency. The business community including FPCCI, Local and Women Cham-

ber's representatives offered the government to work together to implement this system in the whole province.

The ceremony was also addressed by Andrew Bowden, Group Head of FCDO UK in Pakistan who expressed his gratitude to the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in taking up tax reforms towards transparency and making the system accountable.

Speaking on the occasion, the Provincial Team Lead SNG Program, Dr. Raheel Ahmad Siddiqui extended his heartfelt congratulations to all participants and stakeholders for their dedication and commitment to this endeavour.

RIMS serves as a testament to the power of collaboration between the public and private sectors, showcasing the potential to achieve lasting positive change for the citizens of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

SCCI invites Belgium companies to invest in KP's important sectors

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry acting president Ijaz Khan Afridi invited Belgium companies to make investments in mine, mineral and other important sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Prospects of enhancing mutual trade ties between Pakistan and Belgium are brighter, says Ijaz Afridi while speaking to members during a visit of Ambassador of Belgium in Pakistan, Mr Charles Delogne here at the chamber's house on Thursday.

Commercial Attaché of the Belgium Embassy in Islamabad, Abid Hussain, Trade Officer Shoukat Niazi, Former presidents of the chamber Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sherbaz Bilour, former vice president Malik Niazi Muhammad, members of executive committee of the SCCI Naem Qasmi, Kashif Amin, Hafaf Ali Khan, Javed Ahmad Khan, Laal Badshah, Monawar Khurshid, Abdul Hakim Shinwari, Qurtul Ain and Ihsanullah, Fazl e Wahid, Saddam Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ishtiaq Muhammad and others were present during the meeting.

The SCCI's acting president called for establishment of business to busi-

ness contacts, organizing of joint exhibitions and taking benefits from each other's experiences to further strengthen the mutual economic cooperation between the two countries.

Charles Delogne while speaking to members of the SCCI said that his country gave much importance to Pakistan to further enhance the diplomatic and bilateral trade relations with Pakistan, because of which cordial diplomatic and trade relations were established between the two countries for the last 75 years.

He said bilateral cooperation has been improved to some extent after granting

of GSP+status to Pakistan. However, the envoy stressed the need for further enhancing bilateral trade and economic relations with Pakistan.

Mr Delogne mentioned that his country is working on several social and economic uplift projects, including education, health and infrastructure sectors.

The diplomat praised the resilience of Pakistan's nation for combating natural disasters, floods under the depressing economic conditions.

He said his country will continue its cooperation in multiple-sectors for the economic and social devel-

opment of Pakistan. On the occasion, Delogne assured to simplify the process for business visa issue and will remove all hurdles/irritants in this regard.

Earlier, the SCCI's former presidents Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sherbaz Bilour and executive members pointed out various issues that were hampering bilateral trade and economic relations and gave a number of suggestions for their immediate solution.

The participants stressed for fully reaping benefits of GSP+status and further enhancing bilateral relations with Belgium and other European countries.



PESHAWAR: Acting president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ijaz Khan Afridi presenting over a shield to Belgium's Ambassador Charles Delogne.

Govt directs officers to continue work on their present posts

ESHAWAR (APP): The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Thursday directed five officers who have been promoted from grade 18 to grade 19 in light of the notifications of Establishment Division Islamabad to continue working on their present posts.

According to separate notifications issued by the Establishment Department, KP, Shah Rukh Ali Khan has been directed to continue working as Director General Food Safety and Halal Food Authority Peshawar, Umara Khan as Additional Secretary of the Higher Education Department, Hamid ur Rehman as Additional Inspector General Prisons KP, Muha-

mmad Ali Asghar as Chief Economist Planning and Development Department, Miss Shahana Bibi as Additional Secretary Industries, Commerce and Technical Education while upon promotion to BPS-19

on regular basis Fazal Akbar has been directed to continue work as Deputy Commissioner Hangu. Meanwhile, the Government of KP has appointed Sharif Hussain (PMS BS-19) awaiting posting in the

Establishment Department as Special Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It was notified by the Establishment Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Commissioner visits Warsak Dam

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner Peshawar Division Muhammad Zubair visited Warsak Dam on Thursday to review the security situation and ongoing rehabilitation work on the dam. The major purpose was to bring improvement in the security of the staff of the project. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shah Fahad, Deputy Commissioner Khyber Abdul Nasir, SP Security Atiq Shah, DPO Khyber Saleem Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief Peshawar Imran Yousafzai and other relevant officers also accompanied the commissioner. On this occasion, the Project Director gave a detailed briefing on the ongoing work on the second Warsak Dam Rehabilitation Project, while the Director Security gave a detailed briefing on the security of the staff working on the project. Talking on the occasion, Commissioner Peshawar Division Muhammad Zubair issued directives to fully implement the code of conduct for the safety of the staff working on the project in accordance with the instructions of the federal and provincial governments.



PESHAWAR: Laborers loading sacks of fertilizer on a delivery van at Faqirabad area.



In brief

Meeting reviews progress of PCP F.P. Report

MINGORA: Deputy Commissioner Swat, Irfanullah Wazir here Thursday chaired a meeting to review monthly progress of government departments and Pakistan Citizen Portal (PCP). The meeting was also attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief, Abrar Wazir, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance, Abdul Latif and assistant commissioners. The meeting was also presented monthly report of PCP and performance details of line departments. Meeting also directed heads of line departments to further improve output and increase efforts to facilitate people. Addressing the meeting, DC stressed officials to come up to the expectations of people and perform duties with dedication and professionalism. He also directed concerned officials to dispatch weekly and quarterly report of citizen portal to DC office.

Elders agreed to demolish pickets F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: A Jirga of Kurram elders here Thursday decided to demolish pickets established between Balisk Khel and Khar Kali areas of tribal district Kurram. The Jirga was also attended by District Police Officer Kurram, Muhammad Imran, Commandant Kurram Militia, Taimur Sultan, scholars of various sects and assistance commissioners. The Jirga elders signed an agreement mutually agreeing to demolish pickets being constructed between Balish Khel and Khar Kali. They also constituted committee comprising religious scholars and elders to supervise the demolishing process. It was decided that elders would assemble near Balish Khel check post to identify the pickets and afterwards demolishing process would start by police and frontier constabulary. It was decided that strict action would be taken against those trying to interfere the whole process.

Two dead in road mishap

JHANG (INP): Two people including a woman were killed and as many others injured as a van crashed into a roadside tree on Jhang Road close to Sultan-Layyah Road on Thursday, witnesses and rescuers said. The dead and the injured were shifted to the THQ hospital Athara Hazari. Police said the fatal crash happened moments after the van driver fell asleep. The passengers were heading to Kot Addu from Islamabad at the time of the incident. Police impounded the damaged vehicle for legal formalities.

Dr. Asiya defends Ph. D thesis F.P. Report

MARDAN: A scholar of Directorate of Philosophy (Ph. D) Asiya Khattak has been awarded a doctoral degree in finance management sciences from Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) after she successfully defended her research thesis. The officials of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan told that the scholar's research dissertation was "Impact of Corporate Governance on Investment Efficient: mediating role of financial reporting quality." Her thesis was evaluated by two foreign professors hailing from New Zealand and Malaysia. The external examiners were Professors Dr. Romania Bangesh of Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar and Dr. Asif.



GILGIT: Ex-Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Hafiz Hafeez Ur Rehman addressing a press conference at PML-N Secretariat.

Adenzai elders seek solution to public issues

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Adenzai elders and local political figures on Thursday met with the assistant commissioner Muhammad Daud Saleemi at the Chakdara police station and apprised him the issues faced by local residents.

The delegation included Syed Sultanat Yar Bukhari of the JJ, Khurshid Ali Khan of the PPP, Javed Iqbal of the JUI-F, Allah dad Khan of the ANP, Javed Khial of the PTI, Maulana Ubaidullah of the Rah e Haq Party and Daud Khan of the PML-N. They said that local residents were suffered due to prolonged power outage, lawlessness, drugs' abuse and other street crimes. The AC listened to the elders and informed them that the government had banned public rallies and corner meetings owing to security situation, so the elders should cooperate with the administration in that regard.

Earlier a meeting of the Adenzai Qaumi Jirga was held at Chakdara with its chairman Khurshid Ali Khan in the chair. The Jirga members Sultanat Yar Bukhari, Haji Zar Naseeb Khan, Sartaj Khan, Maulana Ubaidullah

Anwar, Muqarab Khan, Malik Fakhruz Zaman, Javed Iqbal, Amanullah Khan and others agreed to work collectively against drug abuse, lawlessness, interest-based bargaining, growing street beggary and other issues in the area.

The meeting also agreed to hold separate meetings with the district administration and police high ups in order to prepare them for launching a crackdown against the outlaws. The jirga members asked the local political leadership to avoid supporting drug smugglers, drug sellers and criminals in the Adenzai tehsil. They also asked the Peshawar Electric Supply Company officials to share the load shedding schedule with the jirga in order to avoid any untoward incident. The Chakdara tehsil bar president advocate Wajid Khan also announced that none of the bar member would appear in courts for the criminals.

ANP manifesto: The Awami National Party Lower Dir on Thursday announced its manifesto for the next general election. Talking to local journalists at Timergara, the ANP central spokesman Zahid Khan said that provision of Sui gas to all parts

of the district, extension and repair of Chakdara to Chitral road, up gradation of Timergara hospital, establishment of a new administrative division comprising the districts of Lower dir, Upper Dir, Lower Chitral, Upper Chitral and Bajaur and construction of link roads had been included in the party manifesto. He said the ANP would complete all these projects if it came into power in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The ANP leader said that they did not believe in mere slogans and promises. He said the ANP believed in serving the masses and would prove it.

Lady health workers: The All Lady Health Workers Association Lower Dir chapter on Thursday formed a 5-member election committee to conduct election for the district cabinet on Aug. 27. The decision was made during a meeting of the association at Timergara. The participants agreed to hold election for the district cabinet on Aug 27 for which all LHWs would be invited to participate. The aspirants were asked to collect nomination papers from the election committee.

Islamia varsity secures 1st position



Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: Executive Member of IUB Performing Arts Society, Directorate of Students Affairs, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Usama Tariq won the fifth position in Essay Writing in Pakistan Inter-University English Competition organized by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

He was given a certificate of appreciation and a prize money of one lac. The title of the article was "Pakistan of 2047 and Aspirations of Youth". Usama Tariq belongs to the Department of Management Sciences, Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar, Vice Chancellor, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Dean Faculty of Management Sciences, Prof. Dr. Jawad Iqbal, Director of Students Affairs, Prof. Dr. Abdul Rauf and Advisor IUB Performing Arts Society Agha Sadaf Mehdhi have congratulated Usama Tariq on this achievement.

Girl student dies, brother injured F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A nine-year-old girl student died while her brother was injured when they suffered an electric shock in Sur Pul area of Mayyar here on Thursday morning.

Local police said the girl and her five-year-old brother were on their way to school when they received an electric shock from a fallen high-voltage electricity poll. As a result, the girl named Husna died on the scene while her brother Rahim Shah was badly injured and shifted to DHQ Timergara Hospital.

AC inspects markets, check vegetables, fruits prices: The district administration continues to inspect the markets in the district by checking prices of vegetables and fruits here on Thursday.

Assistant commissioners, additional assistant commissioners and food staff of the district administration Dir Lower along with the local Police and Dir Levies took 134 actions across the district on self-inflicted inflation, arbitrary rates, poor cleanliness and non-availability of official price list.

Two killed

FAISALABAD (INP): Two persons were killed in separate incidents here in and around Faisalabad on Thursday. A 45-year-old person committed suicide by jumping in front of a moving train near Nishatabad railway station. The deceased was identified as Muzhar Hussain r/o mohala Ramzanabad. Rescue team handed over the body to railway police.

Economic Zone a milestone for uplift of Chitral

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Chitral is the largest district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in terms of area covering 14850 square kilometers but it is the most backward in development. Since there is no industry, factory, or big business in Chitral, most of the people here go to Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and other big cities of Pakistan for earning their livelihood and work. Chitral Economic Zone has been approved for the first time in the history of Chitral and in the 75 years of the creation of Pakistan, on which the work is going on very quickly with high quality.

It is worth to mention here that due to their tireless efforts of Sartaj Ahmad Khan former Tehsil Nazim and president Chamber of Commerce and Industries the Chitral Economic Zone has been approved for which the provincial government has sanctioned Rs 400 Million. This fund is earmarked for Chitral Economic Zone office, roads, drains, tube wells, transformers and electricity, drainage and other construction works

and more than a hundred factories will be establish here. If the resources are available, most of the marble factories will be set up in this economic zone.

Apart from this, there are plans for mineral and gemstone polishing and cutting, processing of dry fruits, handicrafts and embroidery centers for women. Economic Zone Manager Khabib Khan told our correspondent that it covers forty acres of land. It includes industrial zones and offices etc. Habib Khan further said that if a dry fruit plant is set up here, dry fruit can be packed with more sophisticated way and will be export to foreign countries as well.

The local people are also very happy on establishment of Economic zone. They said that now will not be faced to go abroad or in other cities out of Chitral for earning livelihood but we will get jobs here locally.

Jan Sons Construction Company spokesperson Rashid Minhas Khattak says that if the government wants to develop Chitral through economic zone, we will also contribute to it. We will try to ensure that

the entire work of the Economic Zone is of the standard quality. We never compromise on quantity and quality. He said that Chitral is a far-flung and backward district. When a machine breaks down, we have to take it to Peshawar, Nowshera or Rawalpindi, but despite all these difficulties, we have accepted it as a challenge. At times, up to 150 workers work with us.

After, completion of Chitral Economic Zone, when around a hundred factories will be established here, it will change the fortunes/fate of this area. Most of the people of Chitral were forced to go out of Chitral and even out of the country for hard work. After its functioning the condition of the roads of Chitral will also improve because the high quality white marble will be ready for exporting after polishing, then roads will have to be built to supply them in big markets of the country. According to experts, Chitral Economic Zone will be a milestone in changing the fortunes of this area and will cause of launching net of development works here.

Strict implementation of anti-dengue plan directed

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Yousaf Rahim on Thursday directed district administrations of Mardan and Swabi to ensure strict implementation of the dengue action plan of the provincial government to prevent dengue fever. He emphasized on the need for administrative and revenue officers to set monthly targets for achieving government revenue and to make effective strategies to achieve these targets.

He was addressing the monthly performance review/revenue meeting in his office. Additional Commissioner Naeem Akhtar, DC Mardan Abdul Rehman, DC Swabi Gohar Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and AACs of both districts participated in the meeting. Deputy Commissioners Mardan and Swabi gave a detailed briefing to the meeting about the various government targets in both the dis-

tricts, the data of the achievement of the government revenue, the implementation of the tasks referred by the provincial government and the performance of the administrative officers.

Addressing the meeting, Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim directed the administrative officers to keep a close watch on the prices of essential commodities and take full action against the elements responsible for artificial inflation. He directed the Deputy Commissioners to ensure the implementation of the action plan regarding dengue fever in both districts and to monitor the implementation of the SOPs formulated in this regard so that the disease does not become an epidemic.

Commissioner also emphasized on effective awareness campaign about dengue. He issued necessary instructions for timely payment of financial com-

pensation to the heirs and injured persons of those who died in various accidents during the monsoon rains.

The meeting was briefed about the activities going on from the platform of Reading Club and it was told that on the occasion of Independence Day, speech contests were conducted between students of schools in Mardan and Swabi and cash prizes were given to the position holders given while more activities are planned from the Reading Club platform after the opening of schools and colleges.

Commissioner Mardan appreciated the performance of the Reading Club so far and directed that the Reading Club can play an important role in bringing the youth back to book reading and populating the libraries. He directed that in this regard, Mardan and Swabi. The services of scholars and writers should be utilized.

Ranipur Pir, SHO, doctor arrested

RANIPUR (PPI): Khairpur police on Thursday arrested a Pir, a SHO and a doctor in connection with the death of 10-year-old housemaid allegedly due to torture.

According to police, Fatima, 10, a daughter of Nadeem Ali, a resident of Khanwahar area, used to work as a housemaid for Pir Syed Asad Shah Jilani in Ranipur town of district Khairpur. Her mother told the police that her daughter had been murdered as there were marks of torture on her body.

The Sukkur deputy inspector general (DIG) of police suspended the Ranipur station house officer (SHO) after videos of

the girl, suffering from extreme physical pain, went viral on social media. In one of the videos, torture marks were visible on Fatima's body while in another video, the girl was panting in a room. She was buried without a post-mortem.

The videos went viral on social media, and they sent a wave of shock and anger among netizens. Upon being informed of it, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mir Rohail Khan Khoso reached Ranipur police station and arrested accused Syed Asad Shah Jilani. Family members of the girl were also summoned for further legal

action. "No matter how influential the accused is, he will be punished severely," the SSP vowed.

Meanwhile, the police also arrested the Ranipur SHO and a doctor, who forged a fake medical report of the girl, on the charge of facilitating and hiding the crime. A DVR of CCTV cameras was also recovered from SHO Amir Chang. Police said that they were trying to recover the record of previous weeks of the haveli with the help of DVR. The entire team of the Ranipur SHO and the doctor have been involved in the investigation on the order of DIG Javed Jaskani.

Civil society annoys price hike in PoL products

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Political and Social Leader Chaudhry Khaliq Ur Rehman Advocate Former Chairman Chief Minister Grievance Cell said that he rejects the increase of Rs 17 in petroleum products and demands the caretaker prime minister to reconsider his decision and withdraw the increase immediately.

This he said while talking to media personnel and added that the increase in petroleum products is equivalent to increasing the hardships of the people. Chaudhry Khaleeq Ur Rahman Advocate said that due to the increase in the

prices of electricity, petrol and necessities of life, it has become difficult for the people to live. The government should take such steps to provide relief to the people as soon as possible.

Police held flagship march: Flag March of Multan Police to make security arrangements more effective and maintain law and order atmosphere in Multan District. The flag march was led by SP Cantt Qazi Ali Raza Officers and Jawans of SP City Division Hasan Raza Khakhi, DSPs, SHOs, Traffic Police, Elite Force, Dolphin Force and Guard Squad participated in the flag march.

The flag march started

from Police Lines Multan and passed through different areas of the city and ended back at Police Lines. On this occasion SP Cantt Qazi Ali Raza said that effective security measures have been taken in Multan to avoid any untoward incident. He said that Multan Police is taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property.

SP said that the main objective of this flag march is to make security effective in Multan district, to maintain law and order situation and to be ready all the time to deal with any untoward incident so that any evil elements can carry out their evil deeds.

Cadet College Mohmand role in education lauded

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is rapidly setting the pace of education and development. In the area which was once affected by terrorism, educational institutions have been established by the efforts of Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North.

Like other important institutions in the field of education, Cadet College Mamad Gat located in district Mohmand is a unique institution of its kind. As many as 97 cadets have graduated from the cadet college since its establishment in 2020 and are studying in reputed colleges and universities in Pakistan.

Apart from this, former students here have also got commission in Pakistan Army. The current strength of cadets in the Cadet

College Mamad Gat is 500, in which students from all over Pakistan and especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are studying. For the promotion of education in the merged districts, 50 seats have been allocated in each entry for tribal children by Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North. While 10 special seats have been allocated for the children of martyrs. After the establishment of cadet college in the area, a large number of tribal people are determined to enroll their children.

The local people are thankful and grateful to the Pakistan Army for providing high quality education facilities, who have made sacrifices to establish peace, law and order in the area and gifted the best cadet college to make the future of the children of the province bright.



Huge wildfire forces evacuation of Canada's capital

OTTAWA (Agencies): A huge wildfire in northern Canada is moving closer the city of Yellowknife, the capital of Canada's Northwest Territories, and evacuation of the city's 20,000 residents has been ordered, the territorial government said. Canada is enduring its worst-ever wildfire season with more than 1,000 active fires burning across the country, including 230 in the Northwest Territories.

Yellowknife's mayor Rebecca Alty said that authorities believe the progress of the wildfire would allow time for people to evacuate, according to local media outlet Cabin Radio. "The city is not in immediate danger and there is a safe window for residents to leave by road or air," Alty said, according to Cabin Radio.

Rylund Johnson, a member of the Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, said on social media that people had already started to evacuate the city voluntarily and were now under order to do so by noon on Friday. "Flights will start Thursday afternoon. If you have ground transportation, check if your friends and family have a ride," he said on the social media platform previously known as Twitter.

Shane Thompson, the Northwest Territories' environment minister, told a news conference that the "wildfire situation has taken another turn for the worst". "A fire burning west of Yellowknife now representing a real threat to the city," he said, announcing the order for the city's nearly 20,000 residents to leave by Friday noon by vehicle or air.

Thousands of residents of the sparsely-populated northwest territory have been forced to evacuate from



smaller communities, and the hamlet of Enterprise near the Alberta border was almost entirely destroyed by a blaze that swept through. Northwest Territories Premier Caroline Cochrane said that some Yellowknife residents were pre-emptively leaving the city. "I've never seen so many vehicles leaving town," Cochrane said. "There's all kinds of rumours out there, but be ready and evacuate if necessary. Be calm. Do not panic."

Yellowknife has a population of approximately 20,000 people and lies 400km (250 miles) south of the Arctic Circle. NWT Fire said the 163,000-hectare (402,781 acres) wildfire is currently 17km (around 10 miles) from Yellowknife and would likely reach Highway 3, the only highway connecting the city to the rest of Canada, on Thursday. Some areas along the highway had already been ordered to evacuate. "There is risk to the city of Yellowknife. Our team, alongside the city of

Yellowknife, are doing everything possible to slow the growth of this fire and protect the community," NWT Fire said.

The Northwest Territories declared a state of emergency and the Canadian military has been mobilised to help tackle the blazes and airlift some residents to safety. Cochrane spoke to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau about the wildfire situation. Trudeau reaffirmed the federal government's ongoing commitment to help the territory, according to a readout of their conversation. Western Canada is enduring a heat wave that saw 19 daily heat records broken and is fuelling hundreds of out-of-control wildfires. Blazes have engulfed parts of nearly all 13 Canadian provinces and territories this year, forcing home evacuations, disrupting oil and gas production and drawing in federal as well as international firefighting resources.

US slaps curbs on entities over alleged arms deals between NK, Russia

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States imposed sanctions on three entities it accused of being tied to arms deals between North Korea and Russia as Washington cracked down on those seeking to support Russia's war in Ukraine. The US Treasury Department in a statement said that Russia has increasingly been forced to turn to North Korea and other allies to sustain its war in Ukraine as it expends munitions and loses heavy equipment on the battlefield.

The action is the latest by Washington, which has imposed rafts of sanctions targeting Moscow and Russian President Vladimir Putin since the start of the war, which has killed tens of thousands of people and turned cities to rubble. "The United States continues to root out illicit financial networks that seek to channel support from North Korea to Russia's war machine," Treasury's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian Nelson, said in the statement. "Alongside our allies and partners, we remain committed to exposing and disrupting the arms trade underpinning Putin's brutal war in Ukraine."

Russia's embassy in Washington and North Korea's mission to the United Nations in New York did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The entities targeted in action are Limited Liability Company Verus, Defense Engineering Limited Liability Partnership and Versor S.R.O. The Treasury said Slovakian national Ashot Mkrtichev, already under US sanctions, is the president of Versor, founder and owner of Verus and director of Defense Engineering. Washington accused Mkrtichev of negotiating with North Korean and Russian officials to organize potential plans to transfer over two dozens kinds of weapons and munitions to Russia in exchange for goods to North Korea. Action freezes any US assets of those designated and generally bars Americans from dealing with them. Those that engage in certain transactions with the sanctioned entities can also be hit with punitive measures.

Malley, on leave from US Iran envoy post

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Robert Malley, who in June was put on unpaid leave from his post as US special envoy for Iran because his security clearance is under review, will teach a course on foreign policy at Princeton University this fall, Princeton said. Malley stepped back from his State Department role shortly before Iran's release of five US citizens to house arrest as part of a deal under which they would eventually leave Iran and \$6 billion in Iranian funds in South Korea would be unfrozen.

US President Joe Biden tapped Malley in January 2021 to try to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, under which Tehran agreed to limit its nuclear program to make it harder to obtain a nuclear weapon in return for economic sanctions relief. Malley was not able to resurrect the agreement, which then-US President Donald Trump abandoned in 2018, arguing that its terms were too favorable to Iran and that it failed to place sufficient restrictions on Tehran's nuclear program. Iran denies its program is designed to obtain a weapon. Princeton's School of Public and International Affairs said in a statement that Malley would teach a graduate course this fall on foreign policy decision-making and one or two undergraduate courses on some combination of diplomacy, negotiation, and foreign policy in the spring.

"While I am on leave from the State Department, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with the next generation of public servants," Malley said in the statement. "I look forward to my time at Princeton and returning to government service in due course."

More than 60 migrants feared dead at sea off Cape Verde coast

LONDON (BBC): More than 60 people are feared dead after a boat carrying migrants was found off Cape Verde in West Africa. Thirty-eight people, including children, were rescued, with footage showing them being helped ashore, some on stretchers, on the island of Sal. Almost all those on board the boat, which was at sea for over a month, are thought to have been from Senegal.

Cape Verde officials have called for global action on migration to help prevent further loss of life. The vessel was first spotted, police told the AFP news agency. Initial reports suggested the boat had sunk but it was later clarified that it had been found drifting. The wooden pirogue style boat was seen almost 320km (200 miles) off Sal, a part of Cape Verde, by a Spanish fishing boat, which then alerted authorities, police said. The survivors include four children aged between 12 and 16, a spokesperson for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said. The boat left the Senegalese fishing village of Fasse Boye on 10 July with 101 people on board, Senegal's foreign ministry said, citing survivors. Moda Samb, an elected official in the village, told AFP news agency nearly all those on the boat had grown up in the community and that some local families were still waiting

to hear whether their relatives were among the survivors. The ministry said it was liaising with authorities in Cape Verde to arrange the repatriation of Senegalese nationals. The passengers' other countries of origin reportedly include Sierra Leone and, in one case, Guinea-Bissau.

Jose Moreira, a health official on Sal, said the survivors were improving and were being looked after, with a focus on rehydration and tests for conditions like malaria. Health Minister Filomena Goncalves said: "We know that migration issues are global issues, which require international co-operation, a lot of discussion and global strategy. "We all - all the nations - have to sit down at the table and see what we can do so that we don't lose any more lives at sea, above all." IOM spokeswoman Safa Msehli said safe pathways for migration were "sorely lacking" and that their absence gave "room to smugglers and traffickers to put people on these deadly journeys".

The survivors may have ended up in Cape Verde, but it was almost certainly not their intended destination. The archipelago sits around 600km off the coast of West Africa and on the migration route to the Canary Islands, a Spanish territory seen by many as a route to the EU. According to the IOM, it is one of the most danger-

ous journeys any migrant can make. As ever with irregular migration, exact figures are hard to come by, but between 2020 and 2023 at least 67,000 people arrived in the Canary Islands.

Over that same period, just over 2,500 lost their lives. The IOM point out that figure covers the deaths that have been registered. Given the irregular and secretive nature of the route, the true figure could be far higher. So, what is driving people to leave their homes and risk such a dangerous journey? In many cases, poverty is thought to be a key factor. Europe is seen by many as a route to a better life for the person migrating, as well as remittances to support the families they leave behind. There are, however, other factors at play as well. Much of West Africa is increasingly unstable, with coups and Islamist insurgencies making an already difficult situation worse. In Senegal, opposition politicians have been imprisoned, with claims of violent crackdowns by the authorities. President Macky Sall recently announced he would not seek a third term in office, but tensions remain high.

In the end, there are as many reasons to migrate as there are people on the move. Each person has their own motivation, their own story. It seems at least 60 of those came to a traumatic end in the Atlantic ocean.

Communist Party tries to reverse economic slump

BEIJING (AP): Chinese leader Xi Jinping has called for patience in a speech released as the ruling Communist Party tries to reverse a deepening economic slump and said Western countries are "increasingly in trouble" because of their materialism and "spiritual poverty." Xi's speech was published by Qiushi, the party's top theoretical journal, hours after data showed consumer and factory activity weakened further in July despite official promises to support struggling entrepreneurs. The government skipped giving an update on a politically sensitive spike in unemployment among young people. Xi, the country's most powerful leader in decades, called for China to "build a socialist ideology with strong cohesion" and to focus on long-term goals of improving education, health care and food supplies for China's 1.4 billion people instead of only pursuing short-term material wealth.

Since taking power in 2012, Xi has called for restoring the ruling party's role as an economic and social leader and has tightened control over business and society since taking power in 2012. Some changes come at a rising cost as successful Chinese companies are pressured to divert money into political initiatives including processor chip development. The party tightened control over tech industries by launching data security and anti-monopoly crackdowns that wiped out billions of dollars of their stock market value. "We must maintain historic patience and insist on making steady, step-by-step progress," Xi said in the speech. Qiushi said it was delivered in February in the southwestern city of Chongqing. It is common for Qiushi journal to publish speeches months after they are delivered.

Economic growth slid to 0.8% in the three months ending in June compared with the previous month, down from 2.2% in January-March. That is equivalent to a 3.2% annual rate, which would be among China's weakest in decades. A survey in June found unemployment among urban workers aged 16 to 24 spiked to a record 21.3%. The statistics

bureau said this week it would withhold updates while it refined its measurement. The government also has expanded anti-spying rules and tightened controls on information, leaving foreign and private companies uncertain about what activities might be allowed. Xi stressed "common prosperity," a 1950s party slogan he has revived. He called for narrowing China's yawning wealth gap between a tiny elite and the poor majority and to "regulate the healthy development of capital" but announced no new initiatives. "Common prosperity for all people" is an "essential feature of Chinese-style modernization and distinguishes it from Western modernization," Xi said. Western-style modernization "pursues the maximization of capital interests instead of serving the interests of the vast majority of people," Xi said. "Today, Western countries are increasingly in trouble," Xi said. "They cannot curb the greedy nature of capital and cannot solve chronic diseases such as materialism and spiritual poverty."

Lithuania closes two border crossings

KANIUKAI (Agencies): Lithuanian will temporarily close two of the country's six border crossings with Belarus due to what the government said were "geopolitical circumstances", and as concerns grow in the region over the presence of thousands of Russia's Wagner Group mercenaries within Belarusian territory. Belarus, Russia's staunchest ally, reacted promptly to the announcement, criticising what it called Lithuania's "far-fetched" decision to close two of its border checkpoints.

"This decision is one of the preventive measures to contain threats to national security and possible provocations at the border," Lithuania's Interior Minister Agne Bilotaite said. Bilotaite did not spell out the threats in the reasoning for closing the two rural border crossings from Friday, which were not used by commercial vehicles. Over recent few weeks, Lithuania has discouraged its citizens from travelling to Belarus, even setting up signs at the borders saying: "Do not risk

your safety - do not travel to Belarus. You may fail to come back". Lithuania has also cited the security risk posed by the Wagner mercenary group, which has taken refuge in Belarus since their failed mutiny against Russia's military leadership in June.

Lithuania, which shares a nearly 680-kilometre (422-mile) border with Belarus, declared its independence from the Soviet Union 33 years ago. A democracy and a member of NATO and the European Union, Lithuania has been a strong supporter of Ukraine in its war against Russia and a place of refuge in recent years for many who have fled an authoritarian crackdown in neighbouring Belarus and increased repression in Russia. The commander of Lithuania's border guard agency, Rustamas Liubajevs, estimated there could be up to 4,500 Wagner fighters in Belarus, with some stationed close to the Lithuanian and Polish borders. Wagner's presence in

Belarus has sparked alarm among Minsk's western and northern neighbours, including Poland and Latvia. Poland has said it will bolster its eastern border with 4,000 troops supporting the national border agency and another 6,000 in reserve. Latvia has also increased its security presence on its borders with Belarus. Bilotaite said that Lithuania and Poland are also discussing the possibility of completely closing their borders with Belarus. Talks on the subject will take place in Warsaw at the end of the month, she said, according to the Baltic News Service. Authorities in Belarus chided the Lithuanian decision. "Lithuania, by taking such decisions, purposefully and deliberately creates artificial barriers on the border to serve its political ambitions," Belarus's border force said on social media.

It said the decision would cause traffic queues and lead to long waits at the border, calling the move an "unfriendly step" based on "far-fetched reasons".

China urged to tackle online racism targeting Black people

NEW YORK (Agencies): Human Rights Watch has found racist content targeting Black people is becoming increasingly prevalent on China's social media platforms where it is being used to attract traffic and generate profit. The rights group reviewed hundreds of videos and posts from 2021 on platforms including Weibo, a short messaging app, and Douyin, the Chinese TikTok, and said it found that content often portrayed Black people through "offensive racial stereotypes".

Such material was also found on the video-sharing platform Bilibili, Livestream and video app Kuaishou, and social media and e-commerce site Xiaohongshu, it said, noting that the companies had failed to deal with it. "The amount and extremity of racist content on the Chinese internet suggest that the platforms either are not meeting their own standards banning racist content, or that their policies are inadequate when addressing racist content, both contrary to their human rights responsibilities," the report said.

Human Rights Watch noted that influencer videos depicting Black Africans as primitive or dependent on Chinese people as their saviours were particularly widely shared, while Black people who married Chinese were accused in online posts of "contaminating" and threatening the Chinese race. Chinese in relationships with Black people, meanwhile, were accused of being traitors. "The Chinese government likes to tout China-Africa anti-colonial solidarity and unity, but at the same time, ignores pervasive hate speech against Black people on the Chinese internet," Yaqiu Wang, senior China researcher at Human Rights Watch said in a statement. "Beijing should recognise that undertaking investments in Africa and embracing China-Africa friendship won't undo harm caused by unaddressed racism." Accusations of racism against Africans also emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, when some were forced out of their apartments and singled out for quarantine, prompting rare criticism from African leaders. Some African residents said they had been the target of everyday racism and xenophobia long before that, with state media and adverts deploying 'Blackface' and racial caricatures. Human Rights Watch noted most Chinese social media platforms have community standards and guidelines that ban content promoting racial or ethnic hatred and discrimination.

Threats to return to war in Yemen hinder efforts

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Threats to return to war in Yemen are hindering efforts to start peace talks as Arab world's poorest country faces an increasingly dire economic situation, a senior UN official said. Hans Grundberg, the UN special representative for Yemen, told the Security Council that hostilities between Houthis rebels and government forces haven't returned to levels before a six-month truce that ended in October, but he said intermittent fighting and exchanges of fire have continued.

He singled out six frontline areas. They include Yemen's third-largest city, Taiz, which has been under siege by the Houthis since 2016; Hodeida, where Yemen's main port is located; and the oil-rich eastern province of Marib, which the Houthis attempted to seize in 2021. Yemen's civil war erupted in 2014 when the Iran-backed Houthis swept down from their northern stronghold and chased the internationally recognized government

from the capital, Sanaa. A Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year on behalf of the government, and in time the conflict turned into a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The war has devastated Yemen, killing more than 150,000 people and creating one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The restoration of Saudi-Iran ties in April raised hopes of progress in ending the conflict, but so far there has been none.

Grundberg said his recent talks with both sides showed "general willingness to seek solutions, but this still needs to translate into concrete steps, in particular, a clear agreement on the way forward that includes restarting an inclusive Yemeni political process." And against the backdrop of intermittent fighting, he said, the threats to return to war are "not conducive to maintaining a fruitful mediation environment." Grundberg called on both sides "to refrain from escalatory rhetoric" and continue to use channels estab-

lished under the truce to de-escalate incidents. Last month, Grundberg told the council the fight over economic wealth "has become inseparable from the political and military conflict" and the rivals were now battling over revenue from ports, trade, banking and natural resources.

The UN envoy said that the Houthis and government are continuing "to resort to antagonistic economic measures to weaken the other side" - tactics that primarily hurt civilians and sow distrust. "The government is still being prevented from exporting petroleum products, its major source of revenue, and intra-Yemeni trade in goods and services remains curtailed due to restrictions and the imposition of exorbitant fees and taxes," Grundberg said. He also cited further deterioration in basic services with power stations shutting down due to a lack of fuel and electricity cuts in the southern city of Aden reaching 18 hours a day in stifling summer heat.

US, Brazil discuss Biden-Lula meeting

NEW YORK (Agencies): The US and Brazil are discussing a possible meeting between Presidents Joe Biden and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva at next month's United Nations General Assembly in New York, according to three Brazilian officials, amid strains in relations. Biden and Lula, as the Brazilian leader is known, spoke by telephone about their common goals on climate and other issues even as the two countries have had recent disputes over the war in Ukraine and relations with China.

The officials who described the potential meeting did so on condition of anonymity because it had not been finalized. The US National Security Council declined to comment. Biden, according to a White House account of the call, promised to ask

Congress to provide \$500 million over five years for a fund to promote reforestation in the Amazon and "help mobilize up to \$1 billion to support the restoration of degraded lands in Brazil and the Amazon region through the US International Development Finance Corporation."

Earlier, Argentina Presidential Frontrunner Calls China an 'Assassin' The Biden-Lula conversation occurred days after the primary victory by Javier Milei, a radical libertarian, in Argentina's presidential election, stunned the Americas. Milei scorns Lula and other Latin American leftist leaders as socialists and in an interview with Bloomberg, described his relationship with Lula's right-wing predecessor, Jair

Bolsonaro, as "excellent." Milei also vowed that, if elected, he would pull out of the Mercosur trade bloc with Brazil.

Although Biden trumpeted Lula's victory over Bolsonaro last fall and hosted him at the White House in February, the Brazilian president has shown scant enthusiasm for Biden's international campaign to arm and bolster Ukraine, remarking in July that "the world is starting to get tired." He also declined to criticize Moscow for its conduct in the conflict, asserting that the US and Ukraine should have been more diligent in negotiating with Russian President Vladimir Putin. And at a time when the US is trying to isolate China, Lula made a high profile trip to Beijing in April and has said he wants closer Brazilian-Chinese relations.

Saudi Arabia says it executes American citizen

DUBAI (AP): Saudi Arabia executed an American citizen who had been convicted of killing his father. The Interior Ministry identified the executed man as Bishop Sharif Naji Naseef and said he beat and then strangled his Egyptian father to death. It also said Naseef used narcotics, mutilated his father's body after his slaying and attempted to kill another person before his arrest.

The statement did not

identify how Naseef was executed. However, Saudi Arabia typically beheads those sentenced to death. A lawyer for Naseef could not be immediately identified. It wasn't known if Naseef had a home address in the United States. Vedant Patel, a spokesperson for the US State Department, said that American diplomats visited Naseef in July and that he hadn't been identified as being wrongfully detained prior to his execution.

Saudi Arabia ranks among the world's top executioners behind China and Iran in 2022, according to statistics from Amnesty International. Though executions slowed during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, they've surged in recent years. In March 2022, the kingdom executed 81 people on the same day, the largest known mass execution carried out in the kingdom in its modern history.

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Corruption, an incurable menace in Pakistan

THE Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has recently initiated inquiries in four cases of mega corruption linked to several banks for opening LCs at a US dollar rate higher than what it was in the interbank at that time. According to the reports, eight banks minted over 65 billion only in this fashion. Meanwhile, the FIA has also kicked off an inquiry into alleged embezzlement of Rs32 billion in the purchase of land for M-6 motorway by the concerned district administration along with looking into an alleged corruption scam relating to the relief goods meant for distribution among the victims of the superfloods that ruined the most parts of the country during the monsoon season last year. Similarly, the agency is currently investigating another embezzlement of 1.8 million bags of flour in the 'Muft Aata Scheme' in the same period. Interestingly, the agency was at sleep during all that time until Senator Saifullah Abro pointed out those corruption cases and advised the watchdog to digout facts about those scams.

Corruption is the longstanding problem of Pakistani society, that distorts economic decision making process, deters local and foreign investment, undermines competitiveness, slows economic growth and finally ends up in persistent depletion and under development of the country. Historically, Pakistan has been struck into multiple civic, social and governance issues that not only marred the Pakistani society but also collapsed the entire system of the country. Besides other political and administrative ailments, institutional corruption has grown many folds over the past decades while it became an incurable disease in the current era. Lax anti-corruption laws, bogus institutional procedures and absence of accountability further grounded this social curse in the entire setup of the government at the centre, provincial as well as the local level. Meanwhile anti-graft watchdogs including the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Police and National Ombudsman Office further added to the public complaints because they do not move an inch in grave cases of murder, fraud, and theft without taking bribe or bounty from the victims as well as from the accused, which made those institutions null and void. Thus bureaucratic malignancy, nepotism and confederateship among the ranks of Police, bureaucracy, judiciary and overall society became a real impediment in the path of an all out campaign for accountability and prosecution of corrupt government officials and culprits involved in the crime.

In the current scenario, other than the flourishing evil of corruption in the government departments, the private businesses, entities and banking consortiums had shaped into mafias/cartels, and blatantly involved in illegal profiteering, and cartelization by taking advantage of lex regulations, malpractices and corruption of the government officials. There had been persistent reports about private banks' involvement in hoarding of foreign currencies, particularly US dollar and manipulation of currency exchange rates over the past year that not only caused billions of rupees loss to national exchequer but earned a bad name for the country. Meanwhile, oil, sugar, and construction mafia, along with imports and exports businesses are the conglomerates that have caused unprecedented economic and monetary loss to the country in the past years and those blockchains are also ready to repeat the history if the government did not act proactively.

Historically, there had been recurrent calls from the public and the civil society demanding legal and economic reforms to control the evil of corruption and multiple attempts had been made by the successive past governments to curb dishonesty of public office holders and adulteration of business cartels. Multiple new laws had been in place and several new anti-graft institutions were founded to combat corruption but that no single endeavor could prove its worth so far and that curse flourished unhinderedly throughout in the past. In fact, there is no scarcity of legal codes and regulating bodies, but a sense of duty and loyalty to the nation does not exist in the politicians, bureaucrats and other public office holders who receive hefty salaries, bulk of allowances and incentives on a monthly basis but fail to undertake their official obligations as per the constitution. Due to these reasons, the country has witnessed degradation in all walks of life ranging from agriculture to industry, education to civic developments instead of grasping growth and development in new technologies and innovations to compete in the world. Hence, until and unless each government servant and every citizen could not be liable for its misconduct, no improvement in our national life is less likely to be visualized any time in the future.

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Suu Kyi's sentence reduction a hollow gesture by Myanmar mily

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

IN a surprise announcement, Myanmar's military leaders this month reduced Aung San Suu Kyi's prison sentence by six years. Suu Kyi, the former democratically elected civilian leader and Nobel laureate who was ousted by a coup in February 2021, saw her original 33-year sentence trimmed to 27 years. But at the age of 78, the shortened sentence offers little solace to her future prospects. It remains probable that she will pass away during her time in confinement. Thus, one must question the underlying rationale of the Tatmadaw for this gesture.

While the Tatmadaw commands dominion as the sole authority in Myanmar, its overthrow of the civilian government has unfolded in a manner contrary to its initial intentions. Following the coup, Myanmar plunged into a state of active civil strife. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, the former ruling party, has united with other armed factions and ethnic parties to establish the exiled national unity government. Operating under the banner of the People's Defense Force, a coalition of militias and preexisting insurgent armies, these armed forces are embroiled in a brutal internal conflict that largely remains veiled from global view due to Myanmar's communication blockade and the risks faced by outsiders attempting to report on the ongoing war.

Consequently, the military is increasingly seeking external recognition and support, primarily from neighboring nations within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Criticism has been directed at ASEAN for not leveraging its influence to instigate change in Myanmar. In July, Thai Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai conducted a discreet visit to Naypyidaw, Myanmar's capital. The reduction in Suu Kyi's sentence was positioned as a reciprocal gesture in response to this diplomatic engagement. This strategic move aimed to showcase Thailand's efforts to engage with the junta and possibly exhibit a modest improvement in the regime's behavior.

Nonetheless, this diplomatic outreach is gradually chipping away at the uni-

fied position against the junta held by ASEAN. While Myanmar's neighboring countries in mainland Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, are eager to renew ties with the military leadership despite the junta's human rights violations, other ASEAN members - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines

The reduction in Suu Kyi's sentence was positioned as a reciprocal gesture in response to this diplomatic engagement. This strategic move aimed to showcase Thailand's efforts to engage with the junta and possibly exhibit a modest improvement in the regime's behavior. Nonetheless, this diplomatic outreach is gradually chipping away at the unified position against the junta held by ASEAN. While Myanmar's neighboring countries in mainland Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, are eager to renew ties with the military leadership despite the junta's human rights violations, other ASEAN members - Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore - are displaying an increasing openness to being influenced by these attempts. This trend is exemplified by discussions between the leaders of Malaysia and the Philippines, wherein they considered granting neighboring nations greater flexibility in handling Myanmar's predicament.

and Singapore - are displaying an increasing openness to being influenced by these attempts. This trend is exemplified by discussions between the leaders of Malaysia and the Philippines, wherein they considered granting neighboring nations greater flexibility in handling Myanmar's predicament. This inclination is likely to persist, particularly as Laos, a one-party state backed by its armed forces, prepares to take on the role of ASEAN chair. China has further bol-

stered the junta's pursuit of international acknowledgment. Alarmed by the prospect of Myanmar's ongoing civil conflict destabilizing its own borders, China's diplomats have applied pressure on the ethnic armed groups within Myanmar to abstain from aligning with the national unity government. Despite this support, the

national recognition it seeks, even without fully reclaiming its dominance.

Despite the intricate diplomatic maneuvers taking place, Suu Kyi's future continues to remain ensnared within the confines of imprisonment, with her prospects looking bleak. She bears sole responsibility for this predicament. The international perspective on Suu Kyi, once hailed as a champion of democracy and human rights, has shifted and the fervor that once fueled calls for her release has waned considerably. While her popularity endures within Myanmar's borders, this support has failed to ignite a widespread global campaign advocating for her freedom. During her year in power, she held the reins as the leader of the civilian government, yet her track record - particularly concerning democratic principles and human rights - was woefully disappointing. During her tenure, she seemed to forsake the very values that we once associated with her. Her most glaring lapse lay in her defense of the Myanmar military's atrocities against the Rohingya, amounting to a grave humanitarian crisis. The National League for Democracy, her political party, was complicit in the disenfranchisement of nearly all remaining Rohingya ahead of the last general election.

Despite certain clashes with the military over state control, the party failed to genuinely pave the way for democratic growth within both the government and society at large. Instead, the focus primarily revolved around centralizing power, extracted from the military, into the hands of Suu Kyi. This approach partly stemmed from her inability to tolerate criticism and dissent, as well as her lack of foresight in cultivating a sustainable democracy that could extend beyond her own tenure.

Though her popularity among some of Myanmar's populace endures for now, the prospect of lifelong imprisonment seems a certainty. While Suu Kyi's political relevance on paper remains, her ability to lead or inspire the people of Myanmar toward any political goal will gradually fade if her confinement is not significantly reduced.

Dilemmas surrounding any Ukraine-Russia peace deal

Andrew Hammond

A year and a half since Russia's invasion, there are growing signs that the Ukraine war could extend into a third year in February 2024. However, while a peace deal seems far-fetched right now, much thinking is underway across the world about the shape of such an agreement, from Beijing to Brussels and Washington to Warsaw.

A broad sweep of 20th century history shows that wars that have ended in conclusive, lasting peace have generally been preceded by decisive military victories on the ground. A standout example here is the allied victory in the Second World War. Conversely, wars that have ended through negotiations and diplomatic pressure, without clear-cut military outcomes, can quite often lead to long periods of frozen conflict and/ or instability. This includes the Minsk Agreements, which were brokered with the help of Germany and France, after Russia's incursions into Eastern Ukraine in 2014.

Of course, this pattern is not historically predetermined and there are exceptions. For instance, there was lasting peace without a decisive military victory in the Finnish-Soviet Winter War of 1939-1940. This began with a Soviet attack on Finland and ended with the Treaty of Moscow, which gave the Soviet Union the key territories it wanted, while Finland retained its independence. Set in this context, the current Ukraine-Russia war appears unlikely to see an overwhelming conventional military victory for either side any time soon. To be sure, the Ukrainian counteroffensive has made some significant headway in recent months. But Ukraine's progress has been uneven so far, not least because of heavy military mining by Russia. Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said on Sunday that his nation's soldiers have been unearthing five mines for every square meter of land in some places.

Despite the growing signs that the conflict may well extend into 2024, some key figures - including former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger - believe the war could end this year. The big reason for this, in Kissinger's view, is the involvement of China in the Ukrainian peace process following the release of Beijing's 12-point position paper published on the one-year anniversary of the start of Russia's invasion earlier this year. In May, Kissinger said: "Now that China has entered the negotiation, it will come to a head, I think, by the end of the year. We will be talking about negotiating processes and even actual negotiations." While Kissinger's prediction remains a possibility, it would require vast preparation work in the coming months.

The recent Jeddah dialogue, which was a widely welcomed attempt by Saudi Arabia to push this agenda forward, was not technically a peace negotiation, since Russia was not formally involved. It was, however, an important exercise to broaden diplomatic support for a peace process, including the attendance of the US and other NATO allies. It is potentially significant that

China attended the meeting too and, according to reports, participated constructively, alongside several states that have previously insisted on neutrality, such as India, Brazil, Indonesia, Egypt, Chile, Mexico and Zambia. While key Western governments attended the Jeddah talks, there is a significant body of opinion in many of these countries that Ukraine should not rush into a potentially messy peace agreement with Russia. This was reflected in an important report, released in July, by the Chatham House think tank, which featured contributions from more than half a dozen key thinkers, including Simon Smith, a former UK ambassador to Ukraine and ex-director of the Russia file in the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and Eastern European expert Kataryna Wolczuk.

A starting point for this analysis is that the best outcome of the war is a comprehensive, clear Ukrainian victory on the battlefield. By contrast, a protracted or frozen conflict benefits Russia, as does a ceasefire or negotiated settlement on Moscow's terms. The report's argument that the best outcome is a full, clear Ukrainian victory on the battlefield is not just to preserve Ukraine as a sovereign state. Moreover, wider European and global security is threatened, including the viability of the rules-based international order that has been in place since 1945. So, a potential precedent is at stake that could encourage other states with extraterritorial intent.

The nature of the peace deal advocated in the report therefore includes the following essential elements. Firstly, the removal of Russian forces from the occupied territories, the reintegration of those territories into Ukraine, and a recognition of the principle of respect for the country's sovereign independence and pre-2014 territorial borders. Secondly, better defense against wider Russian military and nonmilitary threats, including the protection of economies and trade routes. Ukraine will also need future security and political guarantees. So, the plan's chances of success, the report argues, will be greater if Ukraine's aspirations for NATO and EU membership are delivered, as previous skeptics like Kissinger have now argued too. The study makes clear that the quest for peace is full of challenges. Any permanent or interim solution that partially preserves the current battlefield status quo will allow Russian forces to regroup, leaving Ukraine less than fully sovereign.

This may merely postpone later offensives. Moreover, the eventual outcome will have profound global implications, as senior officials such as former NATO Secretary-General George Robertson have separately argued. The report makes clear that the argument that sacrificing Ukraine will save the world from a broader conflict is fundamentally flawed. Therefore, the fine details of any eventual Ukraine-Russia peace will really matter, whatever the timing. A bold agreement that benefits Ukraine while safeguarding Euro-Atlantic security may be key to any potentially lasting peace in the longer term.

Arab News

Rishi Sunak is plotting to make this the net zero election

John McTernan

KEIR Starmer has everything going for him. A decisive opinion poll lead - which his party has held since December 2021. A party that has unions, members and MPs working together for victory, as was shown at the national policy forum where Starmer got his way on every issue. A talented frontbench - who politician for politician outclass the current tired Tory cabinet.

Or nearly everything. Labour currently lacks one vital quality: confidence. While heading for a victory bigger than Tony Blair's landslide of 1997, the party appears to be too frightened to fight. Whenever the Tories do something profoundly amoral or un-British - such as telling refugees to "fuck off" - by their vice-chair, Lee Anderson, recently did - Labour seems scared of going on the attack. (And what Anderson said should be stated in its full unbowed-lerised form.) But, like

showbiz, successful electoral politics requires swagger, plus a desire to run towards the sound of gunfire, not away from it.

Labour's caution is understandable. Not only was the 2019 general election Labour's worst result in terms of seats since 1935, it was also its third election defeat in just four years. Keir Starmer has never stood in a parliamentary election that Labour has won. That is scarring because defeat eats the soul. But excessive caution kills hope. And the next general election has to be about hope for two reasons. First, it is a change election. The polls tell us one big thing: voters want to see the back of the current government. Despite Rishi Sunak's earnest technocratic endeavours to focus on moving the needle on his five carefully chosen pledges, he is personally as unpopular as Liz Truss was as prime minister. It's just that her delivery of 30-point leads to Labour flatters Sunak by compari-

son. But change has to be to something, not merely away from the present. Which leads to the second point: progressive parties win when they own the future and fairness. This is why Labour's focus on "getting rid of the barnacles", the Australian strategist Lynton Crosby's term for ditching unpopular policies and positions, is becoming a drag on it. It's just a tactic - however important, it doesn't build up to anything more than a proposition that Labour isn't a risk any more. Changing yourself is a hygiene factor - it gets you the right to be heard. But changing the country is a mission that gets you a mandate along with your majority. The change the nation wants is tackling the climate crisis. As Luke Tryl, director of More in Common, says: "Our polling and focus groups are clear. If the Conservative party were to deliberately tarnish its

green credentials, it would risk further damaging the party's prospects with the two voting blocs they most need to win back: voters in the blue and red wall."

The climate crisis is proximate and pressing and it is an appropriately big mission for the strategic, interventionist state Starmer and Rachel Reeves are modelling on Bidenomics. The £28bn green prosperity fund is also Labour's biggest investment bet, which is best understood as Ed Miliband explains it, as a 21st-century industrial strategy that cuts prices for cars, heating and energy and delivers jobs. Not only that. The Tories are now making a historic strategic error. They act as though they want the next election to be a referendum on net zero. Normally, Napoleon's advice is sound: "Never interrupt your enemy when they are making a mistake." This time, Labour should seize the moment and

run with it. It will define Starmer in terms of what he stands for and it will allow the Labour party to frame the politics of the coming decades as Margaret Thatcher did in 1979.

There is always a Labour fear that the Conservatives are playing five-dimensional chess and that their apparent errors are actually a stroke of genius. But we know that the Tories are only playing checkers - and losing badly. We have seen this movie before, in the 2022 Australian general election. Scott Morrison, then the Liberal prime minister of Australia, declared a war on woke and created a clear dividing line between his government and the Australian Labor party (ALP) on fossil fuels, climate crisis and coalmining. The strategy was a disaster. The country wanted change and voters gave the ALP a majority, while conservative voters, many of them women, were alienated by the Liberals' reac-

tionary politics and voted for a "startup party", the Teals, which wanted to clean up politics and the climate. Starmer should take confidence from that result, but should also learn the other lessons of Australian Labor. The party adopted a "small target" strategy and kept policy promises to an absolute minimum. Because voters wanted a change election they sent a message to both main parties. The Liberals were humiliated, but Labor lost seats to the Greens. There is a cost to crouching too low.

This is a crucial moment for Labour. Starmer needs to define his leadership as a crusade to protect the future. And he needs to hammer the Tories for their errors on climate breakdown and make them pay for years to come. The climate crisis should be for the Conservative party what the winter of discontent was for Labour: a decades long sign that the party is unfit to govern.

Fury of the silent majority is driving a global Right-wing counter-revolution

THESE are not happy times. Across the West, the vast majority of voters are fed up with the status quo, furious at the political class and desperate for alternatives. They believe society to be broken, that the post-industrial economy and globalisation generally aren't working for them, and are angry at the vast cultural, social and technological changes that they feel have been foisted upon them.

Almost wherever one looks, from New Zealand to the Netherlands, hundreds of millions no longer feel in control, valued or even consulted by the self-satisfied ruling class. In the UK, 70 per cent believe the country is moving in the wrong direction, a YouGov poll reveals. An NBC poll found 74 per cent of Americans saying their country is on the wrong track. We have entered the lengthiest period of prolonged popular disenchantment since the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of democratic politics, a disturbing state of affairs that urgently requires addressing if countries aren't to fall prey to demagogues. It has become rational to be pessimistic, especially when elections don't change anything.

Life expectancy may have peaked; economic growth has been feeble for years, as have real wages; certain groups have seen their prospects plunge especially severely; home ownership is increasingly out of reach; the family is under extreme pressure, and women are having far fewer children than they tell pollsters they would like; loneliness is exploding as it becomes harder to form and stay in long-term relationships; secularisation has left an unfilled spiritual void across the West that is being met by dysfunctional ide-

ologies and social movements; and crime is far too high. In many countries, university over-expansion has created a toxic two-tier society, fuelling elite overproduction. Woke storm-troopers have seized control of culture, education and business across the English-speaking world, imposing nihilistic gender extremism and critical race theories. The governing classes have got it shockingly wrong on many other issues, from foreign policy to Covid to money-printing, and never atone for their mistakes.

In Europe, including Britain, there is a popular consensus that there has been and remains too much immigration. In France and several other countries, integration is widely understood to have failed. There is growing scepticism of the rush to net zero: while Western publics are very concerned about climate change, they aren't prepared to see their living standards decimated to deal with it. There is an increased suspicion of the surveillance society and of the war against cash, and a growing urban-suburban clash. This sense of alienation is especially prevalent among the working and lower middle classes, as well as the young, but no element of society is immune from it, other than perhaps multi-millionaires. As ever in times of dislocation, a small minority has embraced outright conspiracy theories (such as on 9/11) or despicable prejudice (such as anti-Semitism), fanned by rabble-rousers with no real solutions.

But even for the sensible majority, the belief in progress that used to define the Western psyche has faded, with hope replaced by despair, bitterness and fear. The political phenomenon of our times

is mass discontent, and yet this crisis continues to be largely ignored by an unempathetic ruling class. Its only answer is more of the same: higher taxes, more social-democratic tinkering, more power to unaccountable bureaucracies such as the EU or WHO, increased immigration, and even greater social engineering. In the past, when the ruling elites were conservative, such estrangement might have led the public into the arms of the Left. Contemporary elites are centre-Left utopian technocrats, and today's counter-revolutionaries are on the Right. Almost everywhere, that is where the populist energy, the desire for change, lies.

In America, Oliver Anthony, a previously unknown musician who has shot to fame with Rich Men North of Richmond, symbolises this shift. He rails against low pay, welfarism, state-subsidised obesity, woke social control and rich Left-wing elites. His song, now number one on Apple ahead of Taylor Swift, encapsulates how Right-wing populism has become the anti-establishment movement globally. It is no wonder that the Republican party has been taken over: even if Donald Trump is destroyed, his second and third-placed rivals, Ron DeSantis and Vivek Ramaswamy, are revolutionaries. The latter two are great, but not all of the Right-wingers riding the international populist wave are good news. Some would be a disaster; others fantastic. Some rising parties are anti-capitalist, a grave error. In other cases, public concerns about the volume of immigration are being hijacked by politicians with an atavistic hatred of the other. Germany is in deep trouble, thanks to Angela Merkel,

but it is hugely troubling, including for historical reasons, that the AfD is getting 22 per cent of the vote. Marine Le Pen has moderated her policies, but I'm unclear how her statist economics would save France. Yet the global Right-wing revolution is gaining ground regardless. In Italy, Giorgia Meloni is prime minister. In the Netherlands, the anti-net zero farmers' party has surged. Across the Continent, including in Scandinavia, mainstream parties are adopting once unthinkable policies on immigration. In Spain, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, a rising star, is advocating Thatcherite populism. In New Zealand, the centre-Right is ahead in the polls and the libertarian ACT party has rocketed. In Argentina, one leading presidential contender is an anarcho-capitalist. In Paraguay, the Right-winger Santiago Peña has won the presidency. Benjamin Netanyahu regained power last December.

There are, of course, exceptions to the global shift to the Right: Brazil, where Lula's neo-communists are back, and, of course, Britain, thanks to Tory uselessness. Brexit was the first domino to fall, the start of what will prove to be many international counter-revolutions against the Blob. The Tory party had a golden opportunity to channel this insurgency into a mainstream yet drastic programme of renewal. Boris Johnson could have been in power for a decade, yet he, together with Rishi Sunak, blew it, embracing net zero and social democratic profligacy and failing to control immigration and the public sector. Keir Starmer will win, and then seek to impose Left-wing solutions on to an increasingly Right-wing world.

The Telegraph

ASEAN-China partnership in a new era

THE global landscape is swiftly evolving into a multiplex world defined by multiple modernities, diverse civilizations and multiple power centers. This is an interconnected and interdependent world where both state and non-state actors interact to shape the emerging international order. The relationship between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China is evolving within this dynamic.

The geographical proximity between the ASEAN member states and China has served as a foundation in shaping their relations and facilitating frequent interactions, exchanges and cooperation at various levels. This proximity has not only encouraged the development of robust diplomatic ties but has also allowed for the easy movement of people, goods and ideas between the ASEAN members and China. The shared land borders, maritime routes and immediate regional presence have created an environment conducive to sustained engagement and collaboration, fostering a sense of familiarity and mutual understanding.

Two decades have passed since China ratified the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation with ASEAN. This milestone provides an opportune moment to reflect on the development of the ASEAN-China partnership and the contributions China has made toward fostering regional peace and stability. Over the years, the strategic cooperation between the ASEAN and China has yielded significant achievements and demonstrated the potential for mutually beneficial collaboration. China's adherence to the principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation has played a significant role in maintaining peace and stability in the region. China's willingness to engage in dialogue and collaborate with the ASEAN members has helped build confidence, reduce tensions and establish a foundation for peaceful coexistence.

While remarkable progress has been made, challenges remain in the ASEAN-China partnership. Addressing territorial disputes in the South China Sea and ensuring the effective implementation of existing agreements will require continued commitment and dialogue. Maintaining transparency, adhering to international law, and promoting peaceful resolution mechanisms will be essential to building trust and confi-

Chheang Vannarith

dence between ASEAN and China. One of the key achievements of the ASEAN-China partnership has been the establishment of a robust economic relationship. China has emerged as ASEAN's largest trading partner since 2009, with trade volumes increasing over the years. Last year, the bilateral trade volume hit \$975.3 billion. The ASEAN-China Free Trade Area has contributed to the expansion of trade and investment, benefiting both sides. Version 3.0 of ACFTA negotiations was officially launched early this year to further liberalize and facilitate bilateral trade flow.

ACFTA 3.0 is set to synergize harmoniously with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and other collaborative economic and trade mechanisms within the region. This dynamic partnership aims to propel the region into a thriving epicenter of growth that is marked by openness, inclusivity and shared prosperity. Currently, over 90 percent of goods (approximately 7,000 types) benefit from tariff-free treatment between China and ASEAN. The upcoming ACFTA 3.0 aims to further reduce tariffs, establish regulations in areas such as customs, inspections, and quarantine, and enhance the liberalization and simplification of trade and investment. This will also result in better safeguarding of consumer rights and interests on both sides, fostering the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and generating additional employment opportunities.

Beyond economic ties, the ASEAN-China partnership has fostered vibrant people-to-people exchanges. Cultural events, educational programs and tourism initiatives have facilitated greater understanding, appreciation, and friendship between ASEAN and China. These interactions have not only strengthened societal bonds but also paved the way for enhanced cooperation in various sectors such as education, science and technology and tourism. Connectivity lies at the heart of ASEAN-China cooperation, promoting trade, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. China's Belt and Road Initiative has provided a platform for infrastructure development and connectivity projects in the region. Collaborative initiatives, such as the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism, have strength-

ened regional connectivity, enhancing transportation and fostering cross-border cooperation. China's commitment to investing in infrastructure has boosted connectivity within ASEAN and beyond, facilitating economic integration and regional development.

ASEAN and China have also deepened their cooperation in non-traditional security areas, such as counter-terrorism, disaster management and transnational crime. Joint exercises, information-sharing mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives have strengthened regional responses to common challenges. China's active participation in these areas has facilitated knowledge sharing, technical assistance and resource mobilization, contributing to the overall resilience and security of the region. While significant progress has been made in the ASEAN-China partnership, there are areas where further cooperation can bring mutual benefits. Continued efforts should focus on strengthening people-to-people exchanges, fostering cultural understanding, and promoting sustainable development. Environmental cooperation, technology sharing and digital connectivity are promising avenues for deepening collaboration. By building on past achievements, ASEAN and China can unlock the immense potential for shared prosperity, greater regional integration and sustainable development.

As the ASEAN members and China navigate future challenges, it is crucial to sustain the positive momentum, reinforce mutual trust and continue to work together to ensure a peaceful and prosperous future for the region. The ASEAN-China partnership serves as a shining example of cooperation and diplomacy in an increasingly interconnected world. The binding factors of ASEAN-China relations - geographical proximity, civilizational connectivity, economic interdependence, and common security - complement and reinforce each other, forming a multifaceted foundation for a dynamic and enduring partnership. These factors not only facilitate practical cooperation but also promote a sense of shared destiny, fostering an environment where mutual interests are pursued, challenges are collectively addressed, and a true community with a shared future can be realized.

The China Daily

Fani Willis is taking a major gamble on the Trump case

AS Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis ended her press conference late Monday night, she said former President Donald Trump and his 18 co-defendants would have until Friday, Aug. 25 to voluntarily surrender for their alleged role in trying to overturn the 2020 presidential elections in the state. All defendants who have commented thus far - including Trump - have denied wrongdoing.

While Trump is likely to comply with Willis' demand - he has voluntarily surrendered in the other three criminal cases he faces - that is likely the easiest hurdle Willis will face in her quest for justice for the people of Georgia. To begin, Willis - and the assigned judge - will struggle to schedule a speedy trial. Though Willis has asked the judge to set a trial date for March 4, 2024, it must be slotted into a very crowded trial calendar for the former president, who is in the middle of a busy presidential campaign - which will only get busier into 2024. And, assuming that Willis wants to leave the case intact and try all defendants together, as she said she intends to do, Trump's lack of availability will govern the entire case.

In addition, each defendant in the case increases the time it takes to get to trial - and to conduct a trial - because each defendant will have their own motions to make and issues to raise about an endless variety of matters. And the more defense lawyers that are involved in the case, the more challenging it is to find dates that work with the schedules of all defendants and their counsel. The truth is, 19 defendants is a non-starter - logistically, a trial with that many people would be near-impossible - but even if most of the defendants plead guilty, as many of them may do to avoid the substantial risk of prison time, a multi-defendant RICO trial is likely to take months.

Team Trump will certainly lean into the notion that these proceedings should be delayed until after the election. As he has in the other cases, Trump will likely try to string out pretrial litigation as much as possible, and will argue that the campaign - and the existence of the other cases - provide reasons to set a trial date after the 2024 election. This argument has

been partially successful with US District Judge Aileen Cannon in the federal classified documents case. She recently set a May 2024 trial date - earlier than Trump wanted, but half a year later than the prosecution was seeking. Given the additional charges and the indictment of a third defendant, it is possible that Cannon will move the case further back.

It is unclear whether the judge assigned to the Georgia case would be amenable to delay arguments. Fulton County Superior Court Judge Scott McAffee has been a judge only since February of this year, so his track record on such requests is unknown. I expect that, as in the New York case, where the judge recently denied such a motion, Trump will seek to move the case against him to federal court. Mark Meadows, his former chief of staff and co-defendant in the Georgia indictment, has already filed such a motion. This may seem to be a more favorable venue for the defense because of the greater odds of a potentially more conservative jury pool and the possibility a Trump-appointed judge would preside over the case.

Trump may believe that the chances of success in moving the Georgia case to federal court are higher than they were in New York, because on the surface, there is a stronger argument that the alleged crimes of election interference are more related to his presidential duties than was true in the New York hush money case, where the conduct occurred before he even took office.

But it's still an uphill battle, because removal to federal court is unusual in criminal cases and only applies in limited circumstances. The statute most likely to be invoked by the former president - 28 US Code Section 1442(a)(1) - allows removal where a federal officer is charged with an act related to their official duties. This statute requires Trump to establish that he was an "officer" acting within the scope of his professional responsibilities when he conducted his pressure campaign on Georgia officials.

However, asking the Georgia secretary of state to "find" votes to change election results seems to be the opposite of trying to ensure

integrity in the 2020 Georgia race. More to the point, ensuring electoral integrity is not the president's job, but that of those very officials Trump was trying to undermine. Trump and others in the case may also move for a change of venue. The defense could seek a more advantageous jury pool in a part of Georgia where the 2020 vote favored Trump over Biden. Fulton County, Georgia's most populous county, went convincingly for Biden in 2020, but Trump won most counties in the state.

The defense is likely to argue that the significant amount of publicity about the investigation has tainted the jury pool in liberal-leaning Fulton County, perhaps citing the media tour of the grand jury foreperson as evidence of that. The foreperson's statements do not appear to have violated the grand jury rules, though her tour plays into what I expect will be the defendants' larger claim that the vast public interest in this case means they cannot get a fair trial in Fulton County.

A change of venue motion is a long shot, however. Publicity about these events and the case is hardly limited to the Atlanta area, such that moving the trial will make virtually no difference in the jury pool's exposure to news coverage of the case. It will be up to the judge to carefully select a jury that can assess the case fairly, notwithstanding some knowledge of the investigation. Also, not only is Fulton County the center of more of the charged criminal conduct than any other place, but in terms of logistics and security issues, Atlanta is a better choice for trial than a smaller, more rural area. In addition to these early motions, Trump, and to the extent relevant, his co-defendants, will assert a long list of substantive defenses and arguments as the litigation proceeds that will likely mirror those in the January 6 case charged in Washington, DC.

Likely included will be Trump's claim of immunity from prosecution for acts committed in his capacity as president, his alleged reliance on the advice of counsel, the claim that the First Amendment protects him against prosecution for the conversation with Georgia Secretary of State Brad

Raffensperger and the claim that Trump and others lacked the requisite intent to commit a crime because of the genuine belief that Trump was the rightful winner of the presidency in 2020. None of the above claims appear at this point to be viable, and all of them are likely to be litigated in other courts before they will be resolved in Georgia. While those decisions may not be binding on the Georgia judge, they will be informative as he considers the issues.

If Trump and his co-defendants do manage to push this case until after next year's election, that could both increase Trump's chances of winning the election and diminish the threat these cases pose to him. As president, Trump would have the power to scuttle the federal cases and a greater ability to avoid accountability in the state cases as well.

While Trump would lack direct control over the state cases as president, there is a not insignificant chance that a federal court would find that state charges could not proceed against a sitting president, and/or grant a Trump motion for release from prison if he had been convicted and sentenced to a term of incarceration because of the need for him to fulfill his presidential responsibilities. In other words, while Willis' best chance of getting a conviction and seeing that conviction stick may be to move forward as expeditiously as possible, she appears to have decided to go in a different direction: charging everything and everyone that should be charged - and letting the chips fall where they may.

What we know for sure is that there will be a lot of movement in this case in the weeks ahead. With 19 defendants, there will almost certainly be a number who plead guilty without cooperating and at least a few who cooperate with authorities, which could change the whole trajectory of the case. Willis' decision to proceed as she has - charging everyone she wanted to charge with the statute she wanted to use - is the purest way to approach the case as a prosecutor, and I admire her for that. We'll have to see, though, how that decision plays out when the reality of dealing with defendants amid a political campaign season and three other criminal matters hits home.

CNN

Robert Taylor

Kent in glorious sunshine was almost intolerable. But I held my tongue. Best not to get on the wrong side of a guy who has your morning coffee and croissant in his gift.

As it happens, the manager was delightful from that point on - helpful, friendly and hospitable. It was ever thus with the French. Faced with holidaying Brits, they've always mixed charm, warmth and humour with occasional rudeness.

Has Brexit changed much? Well, on the political level, of course it has. Relations are as bad as at any time since the war. And even on summer holidays the most ardent Brexiteer must admit it takes longer to get through passport control (though Newhaven to Dieppe was as smooth as you

like). Of course, the French can no more steer clear of mentioning Brexit than Basil Fawlty could stop blathering on about the war. They know it's potentially explosive, particularly when we're just trying to have a holiday. But they can't help themselves, delighting in the phrase "la folie", as though our leaving the EU was anyone's business but our own. They regard the whole thing, and the Brits who "fell for it", with pity bordering on contempt.

Well, frankly, if the manager had called Brexit "une folie", I'd have launched into a diatribe about how it gave us the freedom to deviate from EU policy, as we did with sending weapons to Ukraine faster, and that his serious case of Europhilia totally blinded him to

reality. But, taken as a whole, given how much has happened since my last French holiday back in the old days of 2019, I was struck less by what's different than what's the same.

The tourist experience has hardly changed at all, and the biggest shake-up in our relations since 1973, when we joined the EEC, has been negligible. As always, far too many of us rock up with little more French than oui, non, s'il vous plait and merci, while the French, pointedly responding in English, delight, amuse, irritate and rile. "We're leaving the EU but not Europe," Theresa May used to say - something I always considered history's most meaningless expression. But perhaps she had a point. We still flood into Europe each year, especially France, and get the same old treatment.

The French are still overcome with Brexit schadenfreude

HOW long does it take a French hotel manager to blame a rainstorm on "the English"? Well, I can tell you. Because I researched that very question ten days ago as I dashed from my car through the lashing downpour towards my Normandy hotel, with suitcases and the rest of the Taylor clan in tow. As a storm propelled us, soaked, over the threshold and into a charming old-world hallway, I pondered whether the answer could possibly be less than half a minute.

I was way out. It actually took fewer than six seconds for the manager to examine my drenched state, gesture towards the storm-battered front door, and, with the most disgusted of gallic shrugs, declare: "English weather". What cheek! The temptation to retort that I'd left

Russia committing grave acts of ecocide in Ukraine

ROBERT Andriy Yermak & Margot Wallström Oppenheimer, the American physicist who led the team that developed the world's first nuclear weapons, quoted from ancient Hindu scriptures to illustrate his conflicting feelings about the forces his science unleashed: "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds," he said. In his later years, Oppenheimer longed for a future "without nation states armed for war, and above all, a world without war".

Yet there's another kind of loss that Oppenheimer recognised only too clearly in his readings of the Bhagavad Gita, the ancient text he turned to after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Humans now possess the power to destroy the world they live in.

The people of Ukraine have grown cruelly familiar with war and death, inflicted on them by a nation state with vastly superior resources: they will never forget the human loss they have suffered in fighting to save their homeland. But Ukraine is also facing a destruction of habitat and nature on a scale that will reverberate far beyond its borders. While it is almost impossible to measure, the breadth and depth of this damage must be understood.

Russia has taken deliberate aim at Ukraine's environment: its rivers, forests and fields. Many of Ukraine's natural reserves - its animal and sea life, water and impressive biodiversity - have been terribly damaged or polluted. Toxins leak from its damaged industries and infrastructure. Global food security is at risk. The world cannot afford to ignore this growing environmental threat.

The overwhelming threat

to Ukraine's environment was highlighted in June, with the extraordinary collapse of the huge Nova Kakhovka dam, which held back one of the biggest water reservoirs in Europe. This was no coincidental collapse: the dam was under Russian control when an explosion inside an internal passageway blew its concrete heart to pieces. This unleashed a catastrophic flood that wrecked over 40 towns and villages and one of the world's most valuable agricultural regions. Tonnes of oil were spilled into the Dniro River. An uncountable number of landmines were strewn into the river and the Black Sea, leading to toxic leakage. Today, we worry that an environmental disaster of even greater magnitude is looming at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. The plant was seized by Russia last year and remains under its control. Ukrainian intelligence has accused Russian forces of mining the plant, either to destroy it before they are expelled, or to stage an incident they would try to pin on Ukraine.

Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, visited Zaporizhzhia in June and described the situation as "extremely volatile". Playing with explosives at a nuclear power plant risks environmental doom - for Ukraine and for all of Europe. Nuclear contamination does not stop at borders. Russia will face justice. Both the international criminal court and Ukraine's prosecutor general are investigating these acts as war crimes. But under both Ukrainian and Russian law, some of these crimes qualify as ecocide - an apt term for these terrible times: "the mass destruction of flora and fauna, poison-

ing of air or water resources, and any other actions that may cause environmental disaster," as defined in Ukrainian law.

One day the war will end, and environmental safety is one of the key priorities to construct a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, as set out in President Zelenskyy's peace plan. The president's 10-point strategy placed emphasis on the protection of the natural environment. He has appointed a group, including senior Ukrainian officials and prominent international personalities, to push both Ukraine and the international community to be specific about how that can happen. Indeed, national security advisers of key global players discussed the path to peace in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, earlier this month.

The reconstruction of Ukraine and its industries should be guided by green, net-zero objectives. Environmental reconstruction goals will need strong support from the international community. But urgent action is needed now. Measures to prevent further environmental catastrophe or mitigate damage should be prioritised - even during war. The people of Ukraine have become grimly accustomed to war, death, and destruction - but we must do all that is possible to prevent further environmental disaster, which may later have unpredictable consequences for the region, and the world. "It is perfectly obvious that the whole world is going to hell," Oppenheimer declared at the height of the cold war, but here in Kyiv, we have not given up hope. The world's best chance of avoiding hell depends on the rest of us trying to do something to prevent it.

The Guardian



PSX turns around, gains 179 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 179.40 points, a positive change of 0.37 per cent, closing at 48,325.84 points against 48,146.44 points the previous trading day.

A total of 48,146.44 shares were traded during the day as compared to 194,576.873 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs10.021 billion against Rs7.670 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 325 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 155 of them recorded gains and 147 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Dewan Motors with 25,214,746

shares at Rs14.23 per share; JS Bank Ltd with 14,384,000 shares at Rs5.59 per share and Pak Refinery with 12,576,009 shares at Rs16.71 per share.

Ismail Ind witnessed a

maximum increase of Rs42.50 per share price, closing at Rs642.50, whereas the runner-up was Sanofi-Aventis with an Rs38.00 rise in its per share price to Rs800.00.

Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs91.50 per share closing at Rs1,158.50; followed by Raffhan Maize with Rs53.20 decline to close at Rs8,446.80.

Pakistan rupee shows stability against US dollar in interbank

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani rupee after remaining under pressure from the US dollars during the last two days showed some stability on Thursday in the interbank trading amid strong demand for the greenback.

According to the data extracted from the money dealers, the local currency appreciated by 43 paises against the greenback and was currently being traded at Rs294.50

On Wednesday, the Pakistani rupee had settled at Rs294.93, a decline of Rs3.42.

This was rupee's weakest closing since May 11 this year, when the local currency slumped near the Rs299 level. Currency dealers were of the view that the demand for the US dollar was high but the fear was too strong that the dollar would keep increasing under the interim government.

Money dealers expressed no surprise over the exchange rate trend as it was expected since the PDM government relaxed curbs on imports under IMF pressure which could further erode the rupee's value in a few weeks since the country's foreign exchange reserves are not enough to meet its external obligations. In a related development, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said the government will ensure continuity in economic policies, and look to improve them further.

Kakar said an increase in foreign investment under the Special Investment Facilitation Council would remain one of the key priorities of the interim government.

Kyrgyz company sees promising investment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): A visiting delegation of Kyrgyzstan business community on Thursday described Pakistan as a promising destination for investment, especially in the food sector.

Zhumadil Egemberdiev, who is heading the delegation of a company "Shoro," expressed keen interest to explore potential investment avenues and collaborations within Pakistan's vibrant food industry, particularly in the Punjab province.

Talking to Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House and Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis, he stressed the need for focusing on a mutual goal of fostering economic growth and enhancing bilateral ties.

He said recognizing the abundant resources, skilled workforce, and growing consumer demand within Pakistan, Kyrgyz businessmen were enthusiastic about the prospect of joint ventures and partnerships that could drive innovation, employment opportunities, and market expansion.

Zhumadil Egemberdiev said the food industry, being an essential component of both countries' economies, offered a plethora of opportunities for collaboration.

He said Kyrgyzstan's expertise in certain food products and processing techniques could synergize effectively with Pakistan's rich agricultural resources and establish international standard food processing facilities.

"This potential partnership can result in the creation of value-added products, improved supply chains, and a broader market reach," he added.

Zhumadil Egemberdiev proposed the establishment of a collaborative platform that facilitated communication, knowledge exchange, and business matchmaking between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan.

"This platform can serve as a foundation for dialogue, enabling interested parties from both nations to explore areas of synergy, and identify specific projects for investment," he added.

Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House and Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis said he believed that

the successful realization of such collaborations could not only benefit the two economies but also contribute to the global food market efficiently.

He said he envisioned a partnership that was built on mutual respect, trust, and a shared commitment to excellence.

Meher Kashif Younis said "As we embark on this exciting journey of exploring investment opportunities, we look forward to receiving Kyrgyz business community's insights, suggestions, and recommendations on how to proceed effectively?"

He said valuable guidance would be instrumental in shaping the direction of the collective efforts and maximizing the potential of this partnership.



HYDERABAD: Labourers sorting onions for delivery to other markets at Subzi Mandi.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Wide Juliet, Maersk Pelepas, Asphalt Alliance, Laniki, IMKE Selmar and Al-Jassasiya, are scheduled to load/offload Container, Bitumen, Palm oil, Coal and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, three more ships, New Liberty, Elka Athina and Hafnia Caterina scheduled to load/offload Corn, Gas oil and Mogas also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 11 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Wide Juliet, Maersk Pelepas, Jipro Neftis, and Takreem sailed out to sea on Thursday, while another ship Isabelita is expected to sail on the same day.

A record cargo handling was observed at the port where a cargo volume of 204,606 tonnes, comprising 177,476 tones imports Cargo and 27,130 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,428 Containers (930 TEUs Imports and 1498 TEUs export) was handled during the last 24 hours.

There are seven ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a chemicals carrier, Bow Titanium, and container ship APL Southampton are expected to take berths at Engro Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on Thursday, while three more container ships, Al-Safat, SSL Mumbai and Singapore are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Friday.

Gold rates up by Rs1,200

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,200 and was sold at Rs225,000 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs223,800 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,029 to Rs192,901 from Rs191,872 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 Karat gold went up to Rs176,826 from Rs175,883, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs2750 and Rs2357.68 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$5 to \$1,900 from \$1,905, the association reported.

SMEDA to organize webinar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Small Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to organize a webinar on "Amazon Private Label for SMES" for profitable business growth tomorrow (Saturday).

SMEDA under NBDF for SMEs, is offering free online awareness sessions on various e-commerce verticals through pre-qualified services provider M/S Extreme Commerce across Pakistan, according to a source in the authority.

The e-commerce awareness and training initiatives will provide opportunities to SMEs on high trending and most demanding e-commerce tools, and platforms.

PBF calls for revival of sick industries

PESHAWAR (APP): Vice Chairman, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Ashfaq Paracha on Thursday urged the authorities concerned to take effective measures to revive sick industries and also solve the problems being faced by the industrialists in the province.

He said that steps should be taken to resolve the issues of the industrialists in the industrial estates falling under the KP Economic Zones

Development and Management Company and the Small Industries Development Board as well.

The PBF Vice Chairman was given a detailed briefing by the Nowshera Industrial Zone officials and steps taken so far for resolving the problems of industries established across the province.

Paracha further said that high cost of doing business has already proved to be dangerous for the trade industry, as ever-increasing cost of production is the

real threat to the economy amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar.

Vice Chairman Ashfaq Paracha demanded of the government to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers. The government may avoid shifting power distribution companies' inefficiencies' burden to the consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment.

Pakistan's Food Agri Exhibition: Over 200 Chinese businessmen participated

ISLAMABAD (INP): The participation of over 200 Chinese businessmen in Pakistan's first International Food and Agriculture Exhibition Karachi shows China's great interest in Pakistan's agro products and their exports to China.

The largest participation from China was confirmed by the Ambassador of Pakistan to China Moin ul Haque in a recent tweet.

The ambassador termed it as the biggest ever delegation of businessmen from China showing the country's greater interest in Pakistan's agriculture industry.

The event attended by more than 680 delegates from Africa, China, USA and Oceania was also appreciated by the Pakistan business community.

They called it a great initiative to promote Pakistan's agricultural and food potential and proposed to hold such events in future also.

According to Gwadar Pro, Chela Ram Kevlani, Chairman of Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), extended his profound appreciation to the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) for flawlessly executing FoodAg 2023. Kevlani commended the exceptional event as a pivotal platform for effectively connecting rice exporters with international buyers.

The event witnessed \$410 million worth of deals and the signing of 10 MoUs, bringing together more than 221 exporters who showcased over 500 high-quality products to the world.

The products in focus included meat and poultry products, processed food, rice, salt, sea food, tobacco, vegetables, spices, juices, nectars, biscuits and confectionery, dairy, dates, dry fruits, fruits, honey, beverages, oil, and cereals.

According to TDAP the

objective of FoodAg was to introduce Pakistani products in the conventional and non-conventional markets to enhance the agro based exports and to facilitate the availability of raw and value-added products to the international community.

Pakistan being an agricultural country contributes 22.7 percent to the National GDP and provides employment to around 37 percent of the population.

Cotton, sugarcane, rice, wheat and maize are the major crops cultivated in the country along with many minor crops.

Pakistan is among the top ten producers of wheat, rice, cotton, sugarcane, mango, dates and mandarins.

As per the statistics, Agro-Food exports contribute 17% to the national exports of Pakistan. The main products exported are rice, meat, fruits & vegetables, tobacco, spices and seafood.

Red chillies can stimulate economic activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik on Thursday said the production and trade of red chillies stimulate economic activity, both locally and globally.

Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by Pir Saddam Hussain Shah, he said red chillies hold significant importance in the economy due to their widespread use in various industries and cuisines, said a news release issued here.

He said red chillies have

applications beyond the culinary world and also used in the production of pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and even in some industrial processes.

This diversification of usage enhances their economic significance and makes them a valuable commodity in both domestic and international trade, he added.

He said it contributes to the agricultural sector, providing income and employment opportunities for farmers and laborers

involved in its cultivation, harvesting, and processing.

In addition, red chillies are a key ingredient in the food and beverage industry, adding flavor and spice to a wide range of dishes and products, he remarked.

This drives demand and consumption, which further supports the economy by creating markets for various food products.

He said the export of red chillies can also generate foreign exchange earnings for countries that are major producers.

Walmart raises 2024 forecast after 'strong' quarter

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Walmart raised its full-year forecast on Thursday following a jump in quarterly profits, pointing to solid increases at US stores and e-commerce.

The big retailer, which has been seen as well positioned amid inflation because of its reputation for value, enjoyed another quarter of growing sales at its namesake US stores, with robust demand for groceries and pharmaceuticals offsetting weakness in discretionary consumption and the effects of wage increases.

Walmart reported second-quarter profits of \$7.9

billion, up 53 percent from the year-ago period, a period marred by excess inventories due in part to pandemic supply chain issues. Revenues rose 5.7 percent to \$161.6 billion.

"We had another strong quarter," said Walmart Chief Executive Doug McMillon in a press release. "Food is a strength, but we're also encouraged by our results in general merchandise versus our expectations when we started the quarter."

McMillon said the company is in a "good position" on inventory, adding "we like our position for the back half of the year."

Walmart's US division -- which accounted for more than two-thirds of revenues during the quarter -- jumped 6.4% in comparable sales, a closely watched industry data point.

The business won market share gains in groceries, higher prescription counts and benefited from price hikes on some goods. On the downside, Walmart also cited "softness" in discretionary areas including apparel, home and sporting goods.

Walmart lifted full-year projections and now sees full-year earnings of between \$6.36 and \$6.46 a share, up 26 cents from the prior range.

Tokyo shares fall on worries over China, US rate hikes

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo shares fell on Thursday as investors continued to worry about the Chinese economy and more US interest rate hikes.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index lost 0.44 percent, or 140.82 points, to 31,626.00, while the broader Topix index slipped 0.34 percent, or 7.78 points, to 2,253.06.

"The market is looking for the next level of support. The current cycle of falls could continue a little more," said Chihiro Ota of

SMBC Nikko Securities. "Shares of other Asian markets are similarly down."

Wall Street shares ended in the red after minutes from the US Fed's July policy meeting showed that most participants saw a risk that inflation could require further tightening.

This "prompted the US yield to rise and encouraged selling of stocks", IwaiCosmo Securities said in a note. However, the Tokyo market trimmed losses in the afternoon on

bargain-hunting while players also bought back shares of companies with strong earnings.

Looking ahead, global investors will focus on key US earnings reports including retail giant Walmart and Applied Materials, which supplies equipment to make semiconductors.

Among major Tokyo shares, Nintendo fell 1.78 percent to 6,180 yen, while heavily weighted Fast Retailing, which manages the Uniqlo brand, lost 1.49 percent to 33,020 yen.

A major producer of construction equipment, Komatsu, dropped 1.66 percent to 3,910 yen, and Advantest, which makes tests for semiconductors, lost 0.66 percent to 18,200 yen.

Meanwhile, Sony Group rose 1.00 percent to 12,130 yen, and Tokyo Electron, which makes tools to build semiconductors, shed earlier losses and rose 0.44 percent to 20,465 yen. Toyota also managed to reverse losses to end up 0.27 percent to 2,377 yen.



In brief

Mazhar bags Azadi Cup deaf title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mazhar bagged the Deaf Title of the Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Tournament held at Leisure City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi. Mazhar of Wah Cant won the Deaf Title of Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Tournament with 279 points while Umar of Islamabad got 236 points and Nazeer also of Wah Cantt bagged third position with 215 points. President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz ur Rehman was also present on the occasion to cheer up the players for the competitions.

Taimoor to face Indian on Aug 26

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani boxer and Asian Boxing Federation Heavyweight Champion Taimoor Khan would face India's Jaskaran Singh in a bout at Dubai on August 26. Taimoor said the bout was part of the World Boxing Association's (WBA) Colour World Cup World Tour. It may be mentioned that Taimoor Khan retained his Asian Boxing Federation Heavyweight Championship title after defeating his Thai counterpart, Aekaphob Auraiwan, in a highly-anticipated bout in Bangkok earlier this year. Taimoor who knocked out his opponent in the second round to defend his title and extended his overall fight record to seven wins, which now include six knockouts, said he would fully prepare for the fight.

DG SBP distributes prizes

LAHORE (APP): Director General (DG) Sports Board Punjab (SBP) Dr Asif Tufail distributed certificates and prizes here at the Taekwondo Summer Camp Belt Promotion Test ceremony at Nishtar Park Sports Complex (NPSC) Gymnasium Hall on Thursday. Senior taekwondo coach Raees-ur-Rehman and Administrator NPSC Gymnasium Hall Mustafa Shah were also present. Exhibition taekwondo matches and combined taekwondo performance were also conducted at the ceremony. Dr Asif Tufail witnessed the exciting performance and matches and appreciated the taekwondo skills of young players. Forty girls participated in the Belt Promotion Test, out of which 22 were declared successful and were awarded belts and certificates. He awarded black belts to top performing four girls - Mahraib Mannan, Zariab Ahmed, Sana Muqaddas and Neerab Waseem. Another shining star Shumaila Nazir was given the 4th Dan Master Degree Certificate on the occasion. The other prominent taekwondo players include Mishaal Asif, Zainab Zahid, Manahil Asif, Faryal and Mahnoor Asif. Addressing the participants, Director General Sports Board Punjab Dr Asif Tufail appreciated the performance of young participants of taekwondo summer camp. "Indeed it was a useful activity and a suitable platform for young taekwondo players to demonstrate their hidden potential," he added. The DG SBP said taekwondo is a rapidly growing game among the younger generation. "Sports Board Punjab will continue to support and promote such popular games in future as well," he maintained.

Djokovic makes winning US return in Cincinnati as rival retires

CINCINNATI (AFP/APP): Novak Djokovic made a winning return in his first appearance on U.S. soil for two years on Wednesday, reaching the third round of the ATP/WTa Cincinnati Open when Alejandro Davidovich Fokina retired hurt.

The world number two Serb advanced after winning the first set 6-4, when his Spanish opponent could not go on with a lower back injury. "He told me it started yesterday," the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion said. "Hopefully he will be ready for New York (US Open). "This is never the way you want to win, the crowd was expecting a match, a battle," the 36-year-old added.

"I have mixed emotions with how the match ended. I'm hoping to build form and progress through the tournament by raising my level."

Djokovic is playing in the United States for the first time since 2021.

He was barred from entering the country during the latter stages of the COVID-19 pandemic after refusing to get vaccinated.

Djokovic's next opponent on Thursday will be Gael Monfils, who continued his run of comeback form by defeating Australian Alex de Minaur 7-5, 6-4 to reach a third round for the second consecutive week. The 36-year-old Frenchman excelled as he beat the weekend finalist in Toronto in two hours with 29 winners to 14 for de Minaur.

"It will be a battle of the

veterans," Djokovic said of the over-35 clash.

"Gael is an amazing guy, i truly respect and like him - he brings so much joy to fans.

"He's the most charismatic player we've had in the last two decades."

Elsewhere Wednesday, Italian eighth seed Jannik Sinner fell back to earth with a 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) opening loss to qualifier Dusan Lajovic, just three days after winning his first ATP Masters 1000 title in Toronto. On his 22nd birthday, Sinner lost for the first time this season in an opening round after 13 winning starts. The 33-year-old Lajovic, ranked 66th in the world was outstanding as he took full advantage of Sinner's fatigue after his efforts in Canada, winning all his 16 points at the net and all five break points he faced. It was also a disappointing day for fifth seed Casper Ruud, with the Norwegian going down 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 to Australian qualifier Max Purcell, ranked 70th in the world.

Daniil Medvedev started his Cincinnati campaign with a comprehensive win.

The number three backed up last week's victory over Lorenzo Musetti with a repeat performance, dispatching the Italian 6-3, 6-2 after also having beaten him six days ago in Toronto. Last year's runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas tamed the upset hopes of American Ben Shelton, defeating the 20-year-old 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/2).

Alexander Zverev, the 2021 champion, moved into a third-round showdown with Medvedev, putting down Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 7-5, 6-4.

Toronto semi-finalist Tommy Paul was slotted in as the next opponent for top seed Carlos Alcaraz with a 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) defeat of Frenchman Ugo Humbert.

In the WTA draw, world number one Iga Swiatek raced to a 6-1, 6-0 sweep of American Danielle Collins to reach the third round on the first dry day of the week. The Pole, who lost a Montreal semi-final to Jessica Pegula, defeated Collins last week and took just 61 minutes to do it again. Top American Pegula relied on an angry racquet smash to reset her game after losing the opening set to Martina Trevisan of Italy. The third seed, who won the Montreal title at the weekend, reversed her fortunes for a 6-7 (2/7), 6-2, 6-3 win to reach the third round.

"Sorry to my racquet," she said. "I was not so positive today, but the crowd really helped me out.

"It was a super-quick turnaround for me from Canada. Conditions here are very different and that's always going to be trouble. The ball really flies."

Tenth-seeded Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova advanced past Anastasia Potapova 6-4, 6-2. She will next play American Sloane Stephens. Venus Williams lost to China's Zheng Qinwen 1-6, 6-2, 6-1.

US CG calls on Chairman Zaka Ashraf

LAHORE (NNI): The U.S. Consul General William K. Makaneole, accompanied by his wife, paid a courtesy visit to Pakistan Cricket Board Management Committee Chairman Mr Zaka Ashraf Thursday at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The meeting was held as part of farewell meetings for the U.S Consul General, whose two-year term is coming to an end.

The meeting was held in a cordial manner, where in a gesture of solidarity,

the U.S. Consul General pledged the support of the United States Government for the handicapped cricket team in Pakistan. Mr. Zaka Ashraf extended his best wishes to the U.S. Consul General for his future endeavours, and emphasised the significance of sports diplomacy in developing good relations between both countries.

In return, the U.S. Consul General expressed his wishes to Zaka Ashraf and the PCB for the upcoming events.

PSB bars Hockey Federation from working, suspends officials

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has stopped the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) from working and suspended officials to ensure free and fair elections in accordance with the prime minister's directives.

According to a notification issued by PBS on Thursday, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHC) has been stopped from working except for camp organised for Asian Games and team management.

The suspension has been ordered to ensure the conduct of free and fair election following scrutiny of the clubs throughout the country, the notification read.

The Prime Minister's office has recently issued a notification directing the Ministry for Inter-Provincial Coordination

(IPC) to send reference against the PHF to FIA and also directed the PSB to hold free and fair elections of the federation in accordance with the PM's directives. Next Read: Needless delay in polls will unite political forcThe Lahore High Court (LHC) Thursday ordered authorities to produce PTI chairman's nephew Hassaan Khan Niazi before court by August 18.

Justice Sultan Tanveer of Lahore High Court issued the written order on a petition filed by Hassaan Niazi's father Hafeezullah Niazi for recovery of his son. IG Punjab police and others have been made parties in the petition.

In a written order by the LHC, the court said parties should submit a report on the next hearing regarding recovery of Niazi. "If Niazi is in the

custody of any party, he should be produced in the court on August 18," said the court order.

The name of Hassaan Niazi, the nephew of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman, has been included in the A-Plus category of accused.

Police sources said the accused, involved in the May 9 incident, had been named in A-Plus and A categories.

A Lahore police team will depart for Quetta next week to take custody of Hassaan Niazi.

After fulfilling the legal requirements, DIG Investigation Imran Kishwar will also be part of the team to bring Niazi. Niazi has been handed over by the Abbottabad police to the Quetta police.

The Home Department has written a letter to transfer Niazi to Lahore.

West Indies players make jump in ICC rankings after series win

BARBODAS (INP): Several West Indies players have been further rewarded for their brilliant series victory over India by making giant strides on the latest MRF Tyres ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings.

Under the leadership of Rovman Powell West Indies defeated India 3-2 in their home T20I series on Sunday, having received some outstanding performances from a number of their players during the five-game rubber.

Opener Brandon King scored an unbeaten 85 in the series decider in Florida and that helped

the 28-year-old rise five places to 13th overall and a new career-high rating on the list for T20I batters. King scored 173 runs in total for the series and his amount was only bettered by teammate and Player of the Series Nicholas Pooran with 176 runs. West Indies left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein jumps three places to 11th overall on the T20I bowler rankings following his five wickets for the series, while India tweaker Kuldeep Yadav improves 23 runs to 28th after his six scalps across the five matches.

There is also some joy

for West Indies pacer Romario Shepherd, with the right-arm making one significant ground on the list for T20I bowlers and all-rounders following his Player of the Match performance in the decisive fifth and final match of the series against India.

Shepherd claimed career-best 4-31 in the eight-wicket triumph at Central Broward Stadium on Sunday and was duly rewarded with a 20-place jump to 63rd on the list for bowlers and a four-spot improvement to 19th on the T20I rankings for all-rounders.



DUBAI: Zahoor Khan dismissed Dane Cleaver for 4 in 1st T20I.

New York Warriors all set to lift maiden trophy

NEW YORK (INP): New York Warriors is all set to lift the maiden trophy of the US Masters T10, vows the American Pakistani entrepreneur and the co-owner of the team New York Warriors Kamran Awan.

The US Masters T10 is starting on August 18 at Broward County Cricket Stadium, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Kamran promises to lay the foundation of cricket in the USA, a sport that is followed by hundreds of millions of people across the globe, the sport that binds Pakistanis together. Hugely investing in the UST10 Kamran is spotlighting the global popularity of this unique cricket format. While he aspires to ignite cricket euphoria in the US through the T10 league, Kamran also has his eyes fixed on the upcoming T10 League in Pakistan.

Supported by his partners Husnain Bajwa, Preet Kamal and Gurmeet Singh; Kamran is confident that New York Warriors is all set to lift the title as it has the strongest team with three former Pakistani captains playing for New York Warriors. Its squad flaunts Misbah ul Hassan, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Muhammad Razaque and Sohail Khan among other prominent international players. This is the first tournament of the Masters T10 League in the US after having been to Zimbabwe, UAE, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Locally called the US Masters T10 League it will be played between six teams including New York Warriors, Atlanta Fire, California Knights, Texas Chargers, NJ Legends and Morrisville which will culminate on August 28, 2023.

Six international cricketers to attend PCB Level-2 Cricket Coach course

LAHORE (APP): Six Pakistan internationals (men and women) cricketers are among the 30 participants who have registered for the six-day Level 2 Cricket Coach course. The course will be held at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore from 18 to 23 August.

Pakistan international players include Aimen Anwar (8 ODIs, 37 T20Is), Imran Butt (6 Tests), Javeria Khan (116 ODIs, 112 T20Is), Javeria Rauf (4 ODIs, 13 T20Is), Mansoor Amjad (1 ODI, 1 T20I) and Sajid Khan (7 Tests).

The Level 2 course participants will be taught on advance coaching skills

which include how to deduct errors and rectifying it through video analysis. This also includes work on communications skills, mental and physical strength, nutrition, planning and creating plans to help players graduate to the next level.

The course will be conducted by NCA coaches Shahid Aslam, Rahat Abbas Asadi, Imran Abbas, Rao Iftikhar Anjum, Mauhtashim Rashid, Umar Rashid, Saqib Faqir and Yasir Malik.

At the conclusion of the course, the participants will be given three months to complete their assignments. The success-

ful participants will be awarded Level 2 coaching certificates.

Participants (in alphabetical order): Adnan Raees, Ahmed Ali, Aiman Anwar, Altaf Ahmad, Arun Lal, Atiq-ur-Rehman, Ayaz Hussain Jamali, Haroon Ahmad, Haziq Habib, Imran Ali, Imran Butt, Jahangir Mirza, Jahanzaib Khan, Javeria Khan, Javeria Rauf, Khaqan Arsal, Mansoor Amjad, Mansoor Khan, Mohammad Zahid, Muhammad Saleem, Mujahid Hamid, Rahim Baz Khan, Saeed Bin Nasir, Sajid Khan, Shahid Ali, Shahid Saddique, Shoaib Zikria, Snober Gul, Zafar Ali Katper and Zaka-ur-Rasheed.

Danish overjoyed for being conferred with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Top squash player Danish Atlas Khan was brimming with joy for being conferred with one of the highest Civil Award Tamgha-e-Imtiaz said he was excited and grateful for the honour.

Danish, who was conferred with the award for on his outstanding achievements for the country in the field of Squash, said, "I'm very excited to hear the news and I'm grateful to the

president for honouring me with the said award".

Danish Atlas Khan is Asian Games Gold Medalist and 5 times Asian Squash Champion he has won 35 Gold Medals, 20 Silver Medals, 16 Bronze Medals for Pakistan. Danish who was the nephew of former world squash champion Jansher Khan, had also offered his unconditional services for the country.

"Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) was mak-

ing all-out efforts to promote and encourage the game. PSF was providing players with squash facilities and spending hefty amounts on making squash courts," he told APP. Danish, who won the silver medal in the World Junior team championship in Ecuador in 2010 as a team captain and bronze medal in World Junior Championship, said, "The more courts and academies there will be, the more talent will come to fore," he said.

Five potential limelight stealers at World Athletics Championships

PARIS (AFP/APP): Established stars like Karsten Warholm and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce headline the World Athletics Championships in Budapest which get under way on Saturday but the limelight also beckons for others a year out from the Paris Olympics.

AFP picks out a quintet who could ruffle the feathers of the present status quo:

Julien Alfred (LCA)

The 22-year-old hails from St Lucia, an unlikely setting for a potential sprint champion.

However, Alfred has the talent to become the first non-Jamaican or American woman to be crowned world 100 metres champion since Ukraine's Zhanna Pintusevich-Block in 2001. She won Commonwealth Games silver behind two-time Olympic 100m champion Elaine Thompson-Herah last year confirming the promise she showed when winning Youth Olympic Games silver in 2018.

The YOG medal reflected a strength of character -- an aunt she was close to had died just prior to the Games -- which should stand her in good stead. "I've been through things that have broken me down and I've got over it," she said at the time.

Medals in both sprints might not even be beyond her: she beat American 100m champion Sha'Carri Richardson in Hungary over the distance and finished second behind Shericka Jackson in the 200m at the Monaco Diamond League meet.

Jaydon Hibbert (JAM)

He was just three when compatriot Usain Bolt won his first Olympic 100m title and whilst the triple jump lacks the glamour of the sprints, the world under-20 champion has the potential to become as dominant in the event. The worlds represent a huge

step up for the 18-year-old but he has had a stellar 2023 so far, breaking Germany's Volker Mai's 38-year-old under-20 world outdoor record in March with a mark of 17.54 metres.

Hibbert, who only took up the triple jump in 2020, improved on that with a leap of 17.87m in May. "That's a mark amongst the greats," he said.

Hibbert then gave himself a test against the seniors and caught the eye with a fine second in the Monaco Diamond League meet.

Travis Geopfert, his present coach at the University of Arkansas, has no doubts about his ability to cope at the top level. "He is very coachable, happy, excited to train and humble at the same time," Geopfert told Sportsmax TV. "He is just a fantastic young man and truly a coach's dream in every way."

Shericka Jackson (JAM)

Jamaica's men may have faded from the top table of 100/200 metres sprinting, but Jackson has only added to the armoury of their women sprinters. This despite switching to them relatively late after a successful career in the 400m. She won bronze medals in the 2015/2019 world championships and the 2016 Olympics in the one-lap race. The 29-year-old arrives in Budapest as the defending 200m champion, but targeting a sprint double to displace the seemingly ageless Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce as Jamaica's number one. She comes into them on the back of impressive performances in her national championships and in Monaco.

Blessed with a stubborn streak, she has taken pleasure in constantly surprising people. "I am a fighter. I am very strong and very determined. If you say I can't do something I will prove to you that I can," she said in July.

Keely Hodgkinson (GBR)

The British 800 metres runner seems to have been around for years, but she is still only 21. An European outdoor title last year ended a run of three successive silvers in major outdoor championships. She lost out to the slightly younger Athing Mu in both the Olympic and world finals in 2021 and 2022 respectively and was denied at last year's Commonwealth Games by an astonishing late charge from Kenya's Mary Moraa.

The prodigiously talented Mu has hinted at eventually taking on the 1500m and even the 400m but before then Hodgkinson would dearly love to emerge from her shadow and get the better of her in a final.

"It would mean a lot," Hodgkinson told the BBC on the possibility of beating Athing. "I would probably cry, actually, after two years of dedication and so much hard work."

Letsile Tebogo (BOT)

Probably not since Namibian great Frankie Fredericks in the 1990s has there been as much excitement over an African sprinter as 20-year-old Tebogo. "It's time for Africa to take charge of the sprints," he told Runblogrun.com.

A two-time world under-20 100m champion -- taking silver in the 200m on both occasions -- he broke Fredericks's 27-year-old African 200m record when he timed 19.50sec in finishing second to Noah Lyles in the London Diamond League meet in July. The 200m is his preferred event in a sport he saw as a way of improving the life of his mother Seratiwa, who brought him and his brother up on her own.

"I saw (that) I am able to put food on the table for my family from that," he said.



In brief

World Humanitarian Day on Aug 19

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Humanitarian Day would be marked on August 19 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan, the day honors all humanitarians who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause, and those who have lost their lives in the cause of duty. It aims to increase public awareness about humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation. World Humanitarian Day is a day dedicated to humanitarians worldwide, as well as to increase public understanding of humanitarian assistance activities. The day aims to honor humanitarian workers who have lost their lives or injured themselves in the course of their work and to acknowledge the ongoing work of humanitarian staff around the world. Many communities and organizations try to increase the importance of humanitarians by distributing publicity and information material. Additionally, some try to speak to the press to help spread these key messages of World Humanitarian Day, while other groups organize public events worldwide that feature humanitarian work.

11 drug peddlers, bootleggers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers and other law-breakers here on Thursday arrested 11 accused besides recovering over 2 kg charras, 112 bottles of liquor, 12 liters of liquor and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesperson, Taxila police held Asadullah for having 1200 grams charras. Race Course police rounded up Abdul Rehman for carrying 1200 grams charras. Gungmandi police in their operation netted Shahid for possessing 220 grams charras. Sadiqabad, Kahuta, Wah Cantt, R.A.Bazar and Gungmandi police held Imran, Zeeshan, Muhammad Husnain, Muhammad Naveed, Yasir Mehmood, Amjad, Tamoor and Afsar Khan and recovered 112 bottles of liquor and 12 liters liquor. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway.

Al-Nisa Secretariat inaugurated

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Secretariat of the Al-Nisa Forum has been formally inaugurated at Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Headquarters here on Thursday. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesperson, other vital initiatives by ANF to protect gender equity in all its facets include the construction of women's hostels, day-care centres, exclusive Ladies' Common Rooms in all establishments, the constitution of an Anti-Harassment Committee headed by the Senior Most Lady Officer, the establishment of Women's Career Planning Cell and focused efforts to enhance their professional capacities. He informed that in its journey towards women empowerment, ANF has also acknowledged the contributions and support rendered by the U.S. Embassy Islamabad Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) and UNDP in formulating "ANF Gender Strategy & Advocacy Plan 2022-2027" and other related initiatives. ANF looks forward to undertaking multifaceted initiatives on women's empowerment through its strong partnership with INL and other international partners, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Algeria, Khalid Hussain Khan Gudaro called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Call to conduct impartial investigation into Jaranwala incident

RAWALPINDI (PPI): Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Thursday demanded impartial investigation into Jaranwala incident. In his message on the social networking site X (formerly Twitter), Rashid said the provocation and burning of worship places in Jaranwala was extremely regrettable

and condemnable.

He said, "I strongly condemn this incident and expect the Punjab government to arrest the suspects as soon as possible and give them severe punishment, provide protection to minorities and their places of worship and hold an impartial inquiry".

In an earlier tweet, the AML chief said the Election Commission of

Pakistan (ECP) had made it clear that the task of the caretaker government was to conduct elections only. He said it's a week of decisions. The senior politician said, "An important decision on NAB amendments is expected from the Supreme Court on Friday and whatever decision is taken by the Supreme Court on Friday is usually of vital significance."

CDA plans to develop several new parks in capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is planning to develop several new modern parks in the federal capital to provide better recreational facilities to the residents of the city. "The civic authority has already developed around 37 public parks in the federal capital during the last ten years and is working on a policy to increase their number in the coming years," official sources in the CDA told APP. "We need three to four months to develop a new park after completion of the codal formalities."

At present, they said the federal capital had six amusement parks, which were considered sufficient to cater to the recreational needs of Islamabad residents. "But the policy has been made that whenever a new sector will be developed, an amusement park will be constructed along," they added.

The sources said that the CDA was developing several new sectors, including I-11, I-12, I-14, I-15, I-16, D-12, and Park Enclave, adding that Model Villages and parks were also being developed in the said areas.

"As and when these areas are developed and completed, the new parks will be there to meet the demand and requirement of the general public as per CDA approved layout plan," they added.

Railways earn over 5mln from salons in last three years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has generated revenue worth Rs 5,269,315 through utilizing its 23 salons and inspection coaches for commercial purposes, during the last three years.

"At present, Pakistan Railways has only 23 salons and inspection coaches with different dignitaries of the country who are entitled to use these salons when needed," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP on Thursday.

Giving the details, he said, "Two highly luxurious coaches have been allocated for the Prime Minister's Secretariat while four coaches have been allocated for the Minister for Railways, Secretary/Chairman of Railways, and another senior official in the ministry."

The official said, "Only one salon has been allocated to the federal government while one each has been allocated to the Governors of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and the provincial governments."

In addition, eight salons had been allocated for the Railway Headquarters Lahore, in which one each would be marked to Chief Executive Officer/General Manager

(BS-22), Additional General Manager BS-21, Inspector General Railway Police, Federal Government Inspector, and four salons were allocated for Principal Officers, he added.

The official said six salons had been allocated for Divisional Superintendents of Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Sukkur, Lahore, and Karachi.

He said that the Principal Officers of Pakistan Railways were entitled to travel at these salons or inspection coaches only when they were travelling on duty.

Above all, they said luxury salons were also available for private travel on a rental basis. The official said the salons were very luxurious and had two rooms, a bath, a dining area, and a kitchen like a tiny house on wheels with the availability of every facility. He said some of these salons were inspection coaches and their back wall was made of glass from where officers could view the track and surrounding area.

"Pakistan Railways officers are not entitled to use this facility other than duty and all these salons are mostly 40-50 years old," he added.

Crackdown on reckless driving

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police is taking a resolute stance against traffic violations, demonstrating its commitment to road safety and it revoked 175 licenses over repeated violations.

Amidst a wave of strict actions against traffic rule violators this year, the licenses of 175 habitual offenders have been revoked, alongside the suspension of 217 public service vehicle permits for severe infractions, stated a spokesperson for the police. This robust initiative follows the precise directives of Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO). The police have diligently issued numerous challan tickets for a range

of infractions, including overspeeding, signal jumping, lane indiscipline, zebra crossing violations, and one-way transgressions. Employing the e-challan system, 175 driving licenses have been suspended due to the deduction of 10 demerit points from their respective records.

Additionally, 217 public service vehicle permits have been suspended due to serious breaches of traffic rules. These suspended licenses encompass not only Islamabad but also licenses from other districts. In tandem, legal notices have been dispatched to these repeat offenders for their serious traffic rule violations. Should they fail to respond,

their driving privileges will be temporarily revoked.

The proficient strategy of the e-challan system, synergized with the Excise and Taxation department's database, has led to a considerable reduction in fatal accidents and traffic violations. To underscore the significance of timely payment, a notice for non-payment is being affixed to the vehicle's master file in collaboration with the Excise and Taxation office.

This stringent measure ensures that vehicle or motorcycle owners cannot transfer ownership until fines are settled. The Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad praised the efficacy of the safe city e-challan system, attributing its success to meticulous monitoring.

15 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 15 outlaws from different areas of the city and recovered drugs 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 have intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate crime from the city. Following these directives, the Aabpara police team arrested an accused namely Imran and recovered 25 liters of liquor from his possession. The Karachi Company police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Hussain and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession.

Likewise, the Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Abdul Rehman and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Ramna police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Adnan and recovered 220 gram hashish from his possession.

Similarly, the Tarnol police team arrested an accused namely Abbas and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. The Sangiani police team arrested an accused namely Ijaz Ahmed and recovered 580 gram heroin from his possession. Moreover, the Shams Colony police team arrested two accused namely Aneel and Ghazi Muhammad and recovered 12 liters of alcohol and one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from their possession.

Main Islamabad highway to be named after Dr Ruth Pfau

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Islamabad administration has decided to name the main highway in the federal capital after Dr Ruth Pfau, a German-Pakistani physician who devoted more than 55 years of her life to fighting leprosy in Pakistan.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) chairman asked for suggestions about various highways for Dr Ruth Pfau Road. There are around 120

unnamed roads in Islamabad.

Ruth Katherina Martha Pfau, FCM (9 September 1929 – 10 August 2017) was a German-Pakistani Catholic Christian religious sister and physician who was a member of the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary.

She emigrated from Germany in 1961 and devoted more than 55 years of her life to fighting leprosy in Pakistan.

Pfau was honoured with the Hilal-i-Pakistan, Hilal-i-Imtiaz, Nishan-i-Quaid-i-Azam, and Sitara-i-Quaid-i-Azam awards.

Pfau contributed to the establishment of 157 leprosy clinics across Pakistan that treated over 56,780 people. Fazaia Ruth Pfau Medical College and Dr Ruth Pfau Hospital are named after her in Karachi. She died in August 2017 and was buried with full state honours.

Policy dialogue stressed for clean energy transition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China Naghmana Hashmi on Thursday said developing an expert-led long-term strategic energy plan and monitoring mechanism was crucial to ensure just energy access and eradicate energy poverty. She was speaking at policy dialogue on "Transforming the Power Sector: Exploring the Prospects of China-Pakistan Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETPs)", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Pakistan China Institute (PCI), a news release said.

She expressed that by reforming economic and energy policy structure, energy access for industry and rural economies could be improved and export and economic growth could catalyzed. Head of Political and Press Section, Embassy of People's Republic of China in Pakistan, Wang Shengjie said that energy inflation during Russia-Ukraine conflict triggered a global shift in energy policies for "just" and "adjust" energy transition.

He suggested that currently Pakistan needed moderate and flexible energy policies to ensure adjust energy transition, introduce supply-side reforms, and diversify the power generation for sustainable energy supply. He added that Biomass and Waste to Energy were overlooked areas with immense energy generation potential.

Energy efficiency was essential to address the circular debt issue which was the biggest hurdle in foreign investment, he said.

Senior Advisor and Research Fellow, SDPI, Dr Hassan Daud Butt highlighting the immense energy financing opportunity for BRI countries urged the government to leverage it to increase access to clean and affordable energy as well as for international financial institutions to introduce cheaper clean energy technologies in developing countries. He added that Pakistan must address the headwinds to create a true, sustainable easy-of-doing business environment to attract foreign investors in Pakistan. Director Green Finance and Development Centre, Fudan University, Dr. Christopher Nedophil said that Pakistan was among top 5 recipients of China's energy financing which had expanded coal-powered generation from 0.15 GW in 2015 to 7.2 GW in 2023 under CPEC, reducing import dependency and foreign exchange reserve outflows.

Executive Director, PCI, Mustafa Hyder Sayed stressed that political will, bold decision-making and concrete policy actions were crucial to catalyze clean energy transition.

He further added that attracting foreign investments in energy and meeting climate and delivering on the 30% emission reduction commitments required developing technical

capacity of public bodies in energy sector to formulate policies for competitive tariff structures. He stressed that the gap in policies and follow-up actions must be bridged by launching pilot project on transition from fossil fuels to renewables and using the data to incentivize Chinese investors to relocate their industries amidst increasing global competition.

Chief Executive Officer, Moony Holdings, Moeen Abbas highlighted that the biggest challenge in energy transition was misalignment of risks and rewards for power companies as generation reward was 73% while distribution reward was 10%. The low recovery on investment in energy sector and issues with payments of generation companies were tarnishing Pak-China relations, he added. Research Fellow, SDPI, Dr Khalid Waleed highlighted that Pakistan needed US\$50 Billion by 2030 and US\$80 Billion by 2040 for clean energy transition with an additional US\$30 billion required for coal phaseout and suggested to add Pak-China Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) into Pak-China strategic partnership to bridge financing requirement.

He suggested strengthening inter-ministerial collaboration along with academia and private sector and integrated and indicative energy expansion plan that was not solely focused on power sector but to entire energy landscape.

Indonesian Ambassador, EO explore avenues for collaboration between young entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indonesian Ambassador to Pakistan Adam M. Tugio and a delegation from the Islamabad chapter of the Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO) have explored avenues for collaboration between the young entrepreneurs and business communities of Indonesia and Pakistan.

During a meeting, the ambassador hailed the EO Islamabad chapter's proactive approach to strengthening bilateral trade relations said a news release issued here on Thursday.

The discussions encompassed diverse topics including trade and investment, entrepreneurship, economic empowerment of women, and innovation.

The envoy extended an invitation to executive members of EO to participate in the upcoming Trade Expo Indonesia (TEI) 2023 and Halal Expo in October.

"TEI will be showcasing Indonesia's vibrant and diverse manufacture products attractive to the Pakistani business community," added Tugio. He also underscored the importance of fostering partnerships at the entrepreneurial level as it could pave the way for a more comprehensive cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan.

In light of this, the Embassy offered to facilitate B2B meetings of EO with the young entrepreneurs' Association of Indonesia (HIPMI) and Indonesian Chamber of Commerce on the margin of the EO visit to participate in TEI.

President of EO Islamabad Chapter Taimur Adil thanked the Indonesian Ambassador for the meeting and expressed enthusiasm for the collaborative endeavors.

"We are excited about the potential for cooperation with the Indonesian Embassy and EO

Islamabad Chapter is committed to exploring opportunities that drive economic growth and cultural understanding," said Taimur.

He further added, "EO is interested to visit and participate in Trade Expo Indonesia 2023."

Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO) is a global network of influential business leaders and entrepreneurs.

With chapters located in over 75+ countries, EO aimed to empower entrepreneurs through learning, collaboration, and personal growth.

Indonesian chapters of Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO) are dedicated to empowering entrepreneurs for promoting positive change in the business and the broader community.

EO Indonesia offered a unique platform for like-minded individuals to connect, share experiences, and drive positive change in the wider society.



ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Islamabad Expressway during rain that experienced the Federal Capital.

Qatar’s envoy meets UN reps

KABUL (Khaama Press): Qatar’s Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Counterterrorism and Mediation in Conflict Resolution, Mutlaq bin Majed al-Qahtani met with Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Afghanistan Roza Otunbayeva, who is visiting the country. The two diplomats held an extensive discussion that covered the collaborative initiatives between Qatar and the United Nations.

Military vehicles repaired

KABUL (Agencies): The technical team of the Ministry of National Defense repaired and reactivated dozens of damaged military vehicles. 56 military vehicles and several weapons, which were destroyed in previous years, were repaired by efforts of the technical team and artillery commanders of the 2nd brigade of 221 Shahid Aftab corps. These vehicles include 27 Tak Humvee vehicles, 22 International military vehicles, and 7 ambulances.

New Kabul housing project:

Construction gets underway: IEA officials



KABUL (Agencies): Practical work on the New Kabul project got underway on Thursday in the presence of high-ranking Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) officials.

The project involves two 15-year phases. Phase one will include the construction of 250,000 residential units that will house an estimated 1.5 million people. This phase also includes the building of commercial, agricultural, recreational and industrial areas.

The head of administrative affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Sheikh-ul-Hadith Noorul Haq Anwar, said at Thursday’s ceremony: “It is a pleasure that these days, instead of bad news, the news of the start of big economic projects is published every day.”

“The time has come for the Islamic Emirate to speed up its efforts for the economic self-sufficiency of the country and make Afghanistan self-sufficient economically,” Anwar added. At the same time, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, first deputy prime

minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), said at the ceremony: “The New Kabul project will include all the modern facilities, and with the start of this project, a large number of citizens will be able to invest and employment will be provided.”

Speaking at the ceremony, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister of the IEA, said that with the implementation of this national project, the challenges, traffic and environmental problems will be lifted to a great extent.

“It is the responsibility of the businessmen and investors of the country to participate in the development of the country together with the regime, and we invite the investors of the region and the world to invest in Afghanistan,” Hanafi said.

Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the political deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also participated in the ceremony and said that the Islamic Emirate has taken important economic steps in a short time and has proven

in practice that it is committed to the settlement, development and progress of Afghanistan.

“Afghans have made unprecedented sacrifices to preserve the dignity, honor and freedom of their country, and they are still ready for any sacrifice, and the Islamic Emirate is committed to freeing Afghans from economic problems just as it saved them from occupation,” added Stanikzai.

According to him, those who fuel ethnic, religious and linguistic prejudices have no place in Afghanistan. He said “if he [opposition] cannot help and cooperate with Afghanistan, then let Afghans settle their country and live a peaceful life.”

Sheikh Nada Mohammad Nadeem, Acting Minister of Higher Education, also addressed the event and said the time has come for the Islamic Emirate to start working to fulfill the aspirations of the martyrs and the people of the country and stabilize Afghanistan.

Acting Minister of Economy, Qari Din Muhammad Hanif, said that those who invest in

Afghanistan today are committed to the development of their country.

“Investors who have invested billions of dollars outside of Afghanistan, if they transfer 20 percent of their capital to Afghanistan, without a doubt, they will help a lot to solve Afghanistan’s economic problems,” added Hanif.

He also added that the Islamic Emirate gives priority to domestic businessmen and investors in large economic projects. Sheikh Mohammad Qasim Khalid, the governor of Kabul, said businessmen and investors who invest in Afghanistan are national heroes in the economic sector.

Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, has said that in the near future we will see a better interaction of the Islamic Emirate with the world and a solution to the current problems in Afghanistan. “It is clear that there are problems in the political sector, especially in recognition, but the Islamic Emirate has made considerable progress in other fields,” Muttaqi said.

15.5m in Afghanistan face food insecurity

KABUL (TOLOnews): The International Federation of Red Cross expressed concern in a report about the economic crisis in Afghanistan and said that 15.5 million people in the country are facing severe food insecurity. According to the report, 2.7 million people in Afghanistan are facing famine.

The report added that the drought in the past three years in Afghanistan and the economic crisis in the past two years have increased the needs of the people of the country.

“In the short term, the Islamic Emirate should talk with the international community for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan continues and prevent a humanitarian crisis,” said Seyar Qureshi, an economist.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Economy said that international aid has not been given to the development sector, and to solve the economic challenges in the country the ministry has launched large economic projects. “The aid of the international community has been humanitarian until now, and no significant development aid has been provided. Our effort is to help reduce poverty and provide employment for the people of Afghanistan by attracting development aid and launching large national projects,” said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy of the Economy Ministry.

Some Kabul residents said that they are facing economic problems and there is a need to pay more attention to entrepreneurship for people. “Organizations that make these donations distribute to those who deserve it. Winter is coming and how will people get their fuel?” said Dawood, a Kabul resident. It has been two years since the takeover of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan, and during that period aid organizations have repeatedly expressed their concern about the increase in poverty and lack of funds to help the people of Afghanistan.

Russia: West ramping up interaction with armed groups in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Russia’s Defense Minister, Sergey Shoigu, has claimed that the primary threats to the region originate from within Afghanistan. He highlighted the escalating influence of international terrorist organizations within the country.

“The security of Russia’s CSTO [Collective Security Treaty Organization] allies in Central Asia is a key priority for the work of Russia’s defence agencies. Today, the main challenges and threats to the region are emerging from within Afghanistan, which is seeing growth in the influence of international terrorist organizations after [the collapse of] the decades-old US protectorate,” Shoigu said at the 11th Moscow Conference on International Security, TASS news agency reported.

The defence chief pointed out that Western countries are intensifying their interaction with various ethnic-based, non-Pashtun armed groups.

According to Shoigu, their explicit intent is to create border conflicts and then offer military aid to neutralize the result-



ing turmoil, disregarding civilians and government stability.

“The intent of their actions is clear. On the one hand, a conflict hotspot is created in the border zones of our partners. On the other hand, military assistance is offered to neutralize the conflict [thus artificially created]. All the while, the interests of the civilian population and the stability of government authorities are not duly taken into account,” Shoigu added.

Mujahid: Govt budget, development financed by revenue not aid

KABUL (TOLOnews): Officials of the Islamic Emirate said that the cost of all the regular government expenses and development projects of the country in the last two years have been financed from domestic revenue.

Zabullah Mujahid, a spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, said that in order to achieve self-sufficiency, the current government is trying to develop the agricultural and mining industry.

“Afghanistan’s mines are considered a good source for Afghanistan’s progress and self-sufficiency. Afghanistan’s trade and industry is a very important resource...,” said Mujahid.

Meanwhile, the spokesman of the Ministry of Finance emphasized that no country or institution has cooperated with the current government in providing

for its operating funds during the two years of the Islamic Emirate’s rule.

“All the expenses of the government in the field of salaries and administrative issues as well as the expenses of development projects have been financed from the main sources of domestic revenue. In the last two years, no one has contributed to the budget for the government one Afghani,” said Ahmad Wali Haqmal, spokesman for the Ministry of Economy.

Some economists call it a positive step to prepare a budget based on internal revenue for the Islamic Emirate government.

Some people also said that domestic revenue is not enough to finance the normal and development projects of the country.

“I agree with the fact that the government of

Afghanistan finances its normal budget and development budget from its internal revenues. One of the reasons is that there is no foreign aid and in the past foreign aid was great and the development budget was taken from foreign aid up to 80%,” said Sayed Masoud, an economist.

“Our existing economy does not rely on foreign aid it relies on resources, it is an austerity economy because our domestic revenue is not enough to solve our problems,” said Azrakhsh Hafizim, an economist.

According to the information from the Ministry of Finance, non-tax revenues, including mining and government service fees, and tax revenues, including customs products, are among the most important sources of income in the Islamic Emirate.

80% population lacks sufficient water access

KABUL (Khaama Press): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has issued a warning highlighting that a staggering 79% of people in Afghanistan lack sufficient access to water for essential needs such as drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing.

The water crisis in Afghanistan is further exacerbated by concurrent challenges, most notably the most severe drought in thirty years, a deepening economic turmoil, and the enduring impacts of four decades of warfare.

These compounding factors have resulted in an alarming situation where half of the population is experiencing acute hunger, with an alarming six million individuals teetering on the edge of famine.

Recently the organization tweeted that in 2022, they successfully offered water, sanitation, and

hygiene aid to 160,000 individuals in Afghanistan. The post emphasized the urgency of further action to tackle the ongoing water and hygiene crisis.

The organization has urgently appealed for \$33 million to deliver essential water, sanitation, and hygiene assistance to 2.3 million people in Afghanistan throughout 2023. They emphasize that “time is running out, and Afghanistan cannot wait.”

Earlier this month, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) issued a dire report revealing Afghanistan’s deeply concerning state of affairs.

According to the report, 25 of the country’s 34 provinces are currently experiencing either “severe” or “catastrophic” drought conditions. This distressing shows the urgent need for international attention and

concerted efforts to address the escalating humanitarian crisis in these drought-stricken regions.

Moreover, Afghanistan is currently grappling with the most extensive and severe humanitarian crisis globally, where 29.2 million people need humanitarian assistance for their survival.

The nation is confronted with one of the most alarming malnutrition rates globally. Around 3.2 million children and 840,000 pregnant and nursing mothers are grappling with the harsh reality of malnourishment, showing the scale of the issue in the country.

The updated 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan by OCHA requires \$3.23 billion in funding to assist millions of vulnerable individuals in Afghanistan. However, only 23% of this required funding has been received up to this point.

200 media outlets shut down in past 2 years

KABUL (Khaama Press): Since the Taliban regained control of the country two years ago, over 200 media outlets have closed down, with many of these closures being attributed to financial issues exacerbated by the ongoing economic crisis.

According to the latest findings by the Afghanistan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA), over the past two years, more than two hundred recorded cases of violence and arrests involving journalists have occurred. Currently, 13 journalists remain incarcerated.

The AIJA finding says that more than 7,000 media professionals, including many women, have faced the distressing consequence of job loss, compelling many to seek overseas opportunities.

This unsettling trend has overshadowed the media landscape as the once-vibrant workforce is uprooted and dispersed due to the changing political circumstances.

The departure of these skilled individuals not only represents a significant loss to the domestic media industry but also raises concerns about the diversity of voices and perspectives that have been a hallmark of a thriving media ecosystem.

“Before the victory of the Islamic Emirate, we had 600 media outlets in Afghanistan, of which 213 media outlets are currently closed; most of them were print media outlets,” according to Hujatullah Mujadidi, head of the Afghanistan Independent Journalists Association.

“We have 13 or 12 journalists under arrest, one of whom is [Afghan-French journalist Morteza] Behboodi; another one [is in custody], but his media [employer] has not confirmed his employment; and eight other people who were arrested in the last two or three days,” Mujadidi stated.

Still, many journalists assert that media restrictions and a lack of



timely information from government institutions have created challenging working conditions. They also note that the recent arrests of several journalists by the Taliban forces have sparked fear and despair among their colleagues.

Over the past two decades,

media and freedom of expression were significant accomplishments within the republic. However, following the previous government’s downfall, there has been a noticeable decline in freedom of expression and media engagement within the country.

Afghanistan’s automotive graveyard: A looming environmental crisis

KABUL (Khaama Press): Nestled within Afghanistan’s rugged terrain and enigmatic history lies a paradoxical tale that intertwines geopolitics, conflict, and a burgeoning environmental crisis. Affectionately known as the graveyard of old cars, this moniker reveals a story that transcends rusting hulks and abandoned vehicles; it’s a narrative of unintended consequences, ecological degradation, and the urgent need for sustainable solutions.

The genesis of Afghanistan’s status as an automotive graveyard is intertwined with a tumultuous history. The late 1970s marked a pivotal moment as the country became embroiled in conflict, setting the stage for a series of events that would reshape its destiny. The Soviet invasion in 1979 triggered a cascade of turmoil, leading to war, occupation, and resistance that would last for decades. Amid this upheaval, Afghanistan’s once-vibrant auto industry ground to a halt, factories dismantled by the relentless wave of conflict.

This decline in domestic manufacturing dovetailed with the influx of international aid and military presence, creating a perfect storm of circumstances that birthed the auto-

motive graveyard. Foreign entities flooded the country with vehicles—donations, aid provisions, and military hardware—resulting in a burgeoning population of outdated automobiles. Unbeknownst to many, this influx carried with it a dire consequence: severe air pollution stemming from the outdated and poorly maintained vehicles.

The majority of these vehicles, a significant portion dating back to the pre-2000 era, lack modern emissions controls and fuel efficiency measures. As they churn out thick plumes of noxious exhaust, they contribute disproportionately to Afghanistan’s air pollution crisis. This pollution, laden with harmful particulate matter and toxic gases, poses a severe threat to public health, particularly in urban centers where these vehicles are concentrated.

The environmental repercussions of this automotive legacy are dire. The dense smog blanketing cities like Kabul is more than an aesthetic concern; it’s a harbinger of health problems ranging from respiratory ailments to cardiovascular diseases. Children, the elderly, and those with preexisting conditions are particularly vulnerable,

their well-being compromised by the very air they breathe.

But the story doesn’t end there. The impact of these aging vehicles extends beyond the immediate health implications. The polluted air seeps into the soil and water, contaminating precious resources and endangering fragile ecosystems. Afghanistan’s unique biodiversity faces an additional burden, as the unchecked release of pollutants threatens to disrupt delicate ecological balances.

Efforts to address this crisis have been as varied as the vehicles themselves. Local initiatives and international collaborations have sought to clear the landscape of abandoned cars and promote proper disposal. While these endeavors are commendable, they must be bolstered by comprehensive policies that prioritize air quality and sustainable transportation solutions. Transitioning to cleaner fuels, implementing emission controls, and promoting electric and hybrid vehicles could help mitigate the ongoing ecological damage.

The narrative of Afghanistan as the graveyard of old cars serves as a cautionary tale with far-reaching implications. It underscores the

urgent need for sustainable urban planning, transportation policies, and environmental regulations. A country once hailed for its breathtaking landscapes and cultural heritage risks being overshadowed by the specter of environmental degradation.

As Afghanistan grapples with the legacy of its past, there is a glimmer of hope. The very same resilience that has defined the nation’s history can be harnessed to address its pressing environmental challenges. By adopting forward-thinking strategies, investing in green technologies, and embracing international collaboration, Afghanistan can transcend its role as an automotive graveyard and pave the way toward a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future.

The transformation won’t be easy, but it is necessary. The graveyard of old cars need not be a permanent epitaph for Afghanistan’s potential. Instead, it can serve as a rallying cry—a reminder of the importance of safeguarding the environment and ensuring that future generations inherit a country where clean air and thriving ecosystems are more than just distant dreams.

Grape, honey and fig festival held in Herat



HERAT (Agencies): Farmers in Herat province this week showcased their grapes, honey and figs at a local expo which was organized by the local chamber of agriculture and livestock.

Herat’s department of agriculture and livestock said this year grapes and

figs harvested were 40% and 80% less respectively due to the severe winter and the ongoing drought.

Farmers said that they hope to increase export opportunities but need cold storage facilities. They say currently they sell only to the domestic market, at very low prices.

This was the 7th annual grape, honey and fig festival in the province. The produce was displayed at 40 stalls.

Grape farmers said they expect to collectively harvest about 100,000 tons this year, despite the volume being substantially less than in the past.



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Donald Blome called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force.

Tessori administers oath to Interim CM

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Thursday administered oath to Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar.

Outgoing CM Murad Ali Shah and his cabinet members were also present at the oath-taking ceremony held at the Governor House. Before attending the oath-taking ceremony, the former chief minister was given a guard of honour as he was leaving the provincial chief executive's residence.

Earlier this week, after days of deliberation about who will be the next interim Sindh chief minister, the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the province and leader of the opposition of the dissolved assembly Rana Ansar, representing the Muthahidda Qaumi

Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), had agreed on naming Justice (ret'd) Baqar for the post.

Justice (ret'd) Baqar last served as a senior judge at the Supreme Court of Pakistan after receiving elevation from his post as the Sindh High Court chief justice on February 17, 2015. He was appointed as the top provincial judge of Sindh in September 2013. Justice (ret'd) Baqar retired from the apex court in April 2022.

He garnered praise for his works as an excellent and brave jurist, particularly following a targeted attack on him by a terrorist outfit due to his judicial verdicts against terrorists. Justice (ret'd) Baqar was also known for his critique of the judiciary. Following his retirement in April 2022, he once publicly pointed out severe flaws in

the country's judicial affairs.

Born on April 5, 1957, the senior SC judge began his legal career with his enrollment as an advocate in May 1981 after completing his LLB from the University of Karachi. He was appointed as an additional judge of the Sindh High Court (SHC) on August 26, 2002, and confirmed as an SHC judge the following year.

While he was serving at the SHC, Justice Baqar's judgments in terrorism cases irked terrorist outfits, after which he was targeted by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi terrorists in a bomb explosion on June 26, 2013, in Karachi. He, along with personnel of law enforcement agencies, suffered injuries in the attack. But the judge returned to work after months of rehabilitative surgery.

Pak Navy Ship Saif visits Dubai

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship SAIF visited Dubai, UAE during deployment on Regional Maritime Security Patrol. Upon arrival, Pakistan Navy Ship was received by Defence Attaché of Pakistan at Abu Dhabi and Senior Officials of UAE Navy.

During the port visit, Commanding Officer of PNS SAIF called-on Deputy Commander UAE Naval Forces and other senior Officials of UAE Navy. During the interactions, matters of mutual interests were discussed and enhancement of bilateral ties in all spheres was re-affirmed. The Commanding Officer of PN ship conveyed well wishes from Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the people of UAE in general and UAE Navy in particular. PNS SAIF celebrated Independence Day of Pakistan at UAE. In this connection, a flag hoisting ceremony was held onboard the ship which was attended by DA (P) and children of Pakistani School at UAE.

During the port stay, various bilateral activities including exchange visits onboard UAE Naval units, orientation visits of military installations and coordination meetings were undertaken. Upon culmination of port visit, PNS SAIF conducted bilateral naval exercise with UAE Navy Ship SALAHA to enhance interoperability between the two navies. Visit of PNS SAIF to UAE provided an opportunity for both brotherly countries to further enhance the existing close diplomatic ties and cordial relations.

Water level swelling in Sutlej

LAHORE (INP): The water level surging in Sutlej River, which has been in low flood at Ganda Singh Wala, PDMA reported on Thursday. India has recently released surplus water from its water reservoirs in Sutlej swelling water flow in the river. "A flood flow of 69,220 cusecs currently passing through Ganda Singh point," a spokesperson of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab stated. "The water level at Ganda Singh is expected to reach to medium to high flood," PDMA cautioned.

India could discharge more water to the river by August 20, spokesman said. The PDMA has apprehended submerging of farmlands of Bahawalnagar, Lodhran, Kasur, Okara, Pakpattan, Multan, Bahawalpur and Vehari district in flooding. PDMA control room monitoring water flow in rivers and at barrages round the clock, according to spokesperson. The PDMA has issued instructions to departments and district administrations to keep preparations to tackle any emergency situation. India had also discharged 2,08,597 cusecs water from Harike and 1,10,568 cusecs from Ferozepur in River Sutlej in July.

The water level being surged in Pakistan with discharge of water from India in Sutlej, officials said. All dams on Sutlej and Beas in India have been filled to the capacity and more rainfall expected in upper catchment areas of Sutlej and Beas rivers, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) spokesman earlier said.

slumped near the Rs299 level. Currency dealers were of the view that the demand for the US dollar was high but the fear was too strong that the dollar would keep increasing under the interim government. Money dealers expressed no surprise over the exchange rate trend as it was expected since the PDM government relaxed curbs on imports under IMF pressure which could further erode the rupee's value in a few weeks since the country's foreign exchange reserves are not enough to meet its external obligations.

Iran FM touts unity on first Saudi visit

RIYADH (Agencies): Iran's top diplomat preached unity and dialogue during a visit to Saudi Arabia on Thursday, his first since the two Middle East rivals announced a surprise rapprochement in March.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian also took the opportunity to reiterate the Islamic Republic's support for the Palestinian cause at a time when Riyadh is in discussions with the United States about potentially normalising ties with Israel. Ties between Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia and Shiite-majority Iran "are progressing in the right direction," Amir-Abdollahian told reporters at a press conference with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan, touting economic and security cooperation without announcing any new agreements.

Thursday's meeting in the Saudi foreign ministry's Islamic Solidarity Hall "will be a prelude to the meeting of the heads of the two countries", he added, without specifying when President Ebrahim Raisi would visit Saudi Arabia at King Salman's invitation. "We are sure that these meetings and cooperation will help the unity of the Islamic world." The foreign ministers did not take questions.

The two countries severed ties in 2016 after Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran were attacked during protests over Riyadh's execution of Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr. But in March, a China-brokered deal saw the long-time rivals agree to restore diplomatic relations and reopen their respec-

tive embassies. In June, Iran reopened its embassy in Riyadh with a flag-raising ceremony. Its new ambassador, Alireza Enayati, travelled with Amir-Abdollahian to Riyadh on Thursday.

Earlier this month, Iran said the Saudi embassy in Tehran had begun operations, but Riyadh has yet to confirm this or announce an ambassador of its own. Amir-Abdollahian's one-day stop in Riyadh came two months after Prince Faisal became the first Saudi foreign minister to travel to Iran since 2006. The visits and the reopening of embassies represent "important confidence-building measures", said Anna Jacobs, senior Gulf analyst for the International Crisis Group.

"Saudi-Iran rapprochement is still in its early phases, and it's still very unclear how the two sides will address their many points of friction," Jacobs said. "Resuming diplomatic ties and engaging in more dialogue is a good start, but it's difficult to tell if this will be enough to resolve the long-standing issues in their relationship," she added.

Iran and Saudi Arabia have backed opposing sides in conflict zones across the Middle East for years, including in Yemen, where in 2015 Riyadh mobilised an international coalition against Iran-backed Huthi rebels who had toppled the internationally recognised government the previous year. Since the March deal, Saudi Arabia has ramped up a push for peace in Yemen, holding direct

talks with Huthi leaders in April in the Yemeni capital Sanaa. It has also championed the return of key Iran ally Syria to the Arab fold at a summit in May.

Iranian state media said Iranian and Saudi military officials met in Moscow on the sidelines of a security conference. At the same time, the two sides have exchanged competing statements over a disputed gas field that Saudi Arabia plans to develop jointly with Kuwait. Iran also wants to explore and exploit the field, known as Arash in Iran and Dorra in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which has long been a point of contention between the three countries.

"The dispute over the Dorra/Arash gas field shouldn't be a major obstacle to improving ties, and it could even be an opportunity for dialogue," Jacobs said. "But from the Saudi perspective, they are more concerned about Yemen, threats to maritime security in the Gulf, and regional files like Syria." Riyadh is also engaged in negotiations over a possible deal — still widely seen as a long shot — that would see it recognise Israel in exchange for conditions including security guarantees from the United States and concessions from Israel on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Standing next to Prince Faisal on Thursday, Amir-Abdollahian described the conflict as "the most important issue in the Islamic world", adding: "We continue to support Palestine."

PHC orders submission of reply in detention for waving black flags

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Fazal Subhan ordered submission record regarding arrest of two persons under section-3 of Maintenance of Public Order (3MPO) on 14th August for waving black flags, on Thursday.

Additional Advocate General Danyal Khan informed PHC that two persons were arrested by district administration Swat on 14th August by waving black flags as well as spreading hatred on social media platforms. Additional Advocate General further argued that detainee under 3MPO had started agitation among masses to create law and order situation in the area.

The counsel Shahab Khattak advocate argued that the arrest of applicants is illegal and based on political victimization while requested that PHC should declare administrative arrest warrant as well as to order release of petitioners. PHC has issued notices to provincial government and Deputy Commissioner Swat for sub-

mission of reply while adjourned further hearing till 24th August.

Similarly, PHC has granted status quo against re-advertisement of Assistant Professor Community Medicine at Khyber Girls Medical College and ordered to submit comments.

The counsel Saqib Rehman advocate argued that petitioner had applied for post of Assistant Professor at KGMC while called for interview while stood at top in merit list but the process didn't proceeded since February 2023 while two others Assistant Professors are appointed announced in the same advertisement.

The counsel further argued that the petitioner is suffering due to nepotism and favouritism of the concerned authorities, however, Justice Arshad inquired regarding appointment on the position. The counsel informed that no appointment has been made but the petitioner is victimized by the process and added that applicant had obtained information regarding re-advertisement for the post.

In the meantime, Additional Advocate General Danyal Khan Chamkani appeared before court while PHC directed him to submit comments as well as KGMC's administration and granted status quo against re-advertisement of the post.

ATC grants bail to former MPA: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar has granted bail to former Member Provincial Assembly Arif Yousaf in 9th& 10th May vandalism after the arrest of Imran Khan by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on corruption charges.

According to prosecution, former MPA Arif Yousaf was booked in First Information Report registered at Khan Razzaq Shaheed police station for his involvement in 9th& 10th May vandalism.

However, petitioner's counsel Ali Zaman Advocate argued that allegations placed against Arif Yousaf is baseless while co-accused already obtained bail in the case. Special Judge ATC Peshawar has ordered release of former MPA Arif Yousaf on bail after conclusion of arguments.

US envoy calls on Air Chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Donald Blome called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office today. The discussion underscored matters pertaining to geo political environment leading to emerging regional security challenges, augmenting the already fortified bilateral ties and fostering collaborative endeavours within the realms of defence and aviation.

The Air Chief accentuated the cordial relations that exist between the two nations while emphasizing his steadfast determination to elevate the existing synergistic partnership between the two key allies. Chief of the Air Staff further said, "Pakistan deeply values its robust diplomatic, economic and defence ties with the United States of America which are firmly rooted in mutual consensus concerning all important matters pertaining to regional peace, security and stability."

During the meeting, the visiting envoy extolled the commendable level of professionalism of Pakistan Air Force personnel and acknowledged the remarkable strides made by PAF through indigenization under the current leadership. Recognizing the importance of rigorous and comprehensive training, he assured to play his role to address the gaps in the training domain so as to ensure that PAF personnel receive the highest quality training, enabling them to meet the evolving challenges of modern warfare. The US Ambassador also expressed his admiration for Pakistan's unwavering commitment to facilitate regional peace and stability. Both sides concurred to further optimize the existing military-to-military relationship between the two countries with specific focus on enriching training and bolstering operational competencies.



DUBAI: Commanding Officer PNS Saif being briefed on capabilities of UAE Navy during visit to UAE Naval Forces Headquarters.

15th NA passed bills record totally disordered

ISLAMABAD (INP): The bills passed by the 15th National Assembly (NA) has become a mystery for many as the record unveiled by the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) regarding National Assembly passed bills has great difference with NA's record appeared on website.

The record of National Assembly not even match by its own record and on the other hand National Assembly related department high-ups given confusions justifications. How many bills were passed by the 15th National Assembly became a mystery, the difference between the records of Fafan and the National Assembly has great difference.

On inquire the concerned Law department affirmed that their record was absolutely correct and advised the journalists to collect information form website and totally refused to provide related data. Related journalists even mentioned the names of the bills presented and passed in the National Assembly along with the dates and questioned where these bills are on the website. On this they

replayed, "We will place these bills on the website soon".

According to the information gathered by this News Agency and FAFAN the 15th National Assembly has passed a total 322 bills, of which 223 were government bills and 99 were private members' bills, while the National Assembly Secretariat's law department presented to the journalist on two pages, one page of which was presented by private members in five years. The number of bills passed was given on the second page of the bills presented by the government in the National Assembly and the number of bills passed. Accordingly, in five years, the National Assembly passed a total of 267 bills, out of which 199 were government bills and 68 were private members' bills. The secretariat does not have an authentic record of how many bills were passed in the National Assembly and even on inquire they are totally confused in this respect.

When a journalist asked question to the high-ups of above mentioned department of the NA regarding the dif-

ferent between records, in replay he totally mum and given confused answers. 'Reporter questioned, "That there is a world of difference between the record of Fafan and the National Assembly. According to Fafan, more bills have been passed, while the record you are giving few of them have been passed. Even your website does not have complete data'.

The journalist even asked the authorities of the legislative department of the National Assembly for an authentic record in this respect. The officials of the NA legislation Department replied, "You are challenging our record, all the data is available on the website and it is complete. It has been made and this list has been given to Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf". On this a journalist gave the name of a bill as evidence and said "where in your record is it that this bill was presented and passed in the National Assembly, after which the journalist was advised to go to the research wing and said that we have included this bill in our record'.

Political parties asked to submit accounts statement

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) reminds all the heads of Political Parties, in terms of section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 read with section 204 of the Act ibid and rule 159 & 160 of the Election Rules, 2017, thereof, that they are required to file with Election Commission their Consolidated Statement of Accounts for financial year, 2022-23 ended on 30th June, 2023 on or before 29th August, 2023.

It may be recalled that Section 210 of the Elections Act, 2017 provides that a Political Party shall, in such a manner as may be prescribed, submit to the Commission, within sixty days from the close of a financial year, a consolidated statement of its

accounts audited by a Chartered Accountant on Form-D containing Annual income and expenses, Sources of its funds and Assets and liabilities.

The statement to be submitted to the Election Commission shall accompany the report of a Chartered Accountant with regard to the audit of accounts of a political party and a certificate signed by an office-bearer authorized by the party Head stating that:- No funds were received by the party from any source prohibited under the Elections Act, 2017, The statement of accounts contains an accurate picture of the financial position of the party. The information given above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, The above state-

ment is audited by the Chartered Accountant and detailed report thereof is annexed.

The statement of accounts is to be submitted on Form-D as provided in the Elections Act, 2017. Printed Forms are available, free of cost, in the Election Commission Secretariat, Islamabad and in the offices of the Provincial Election Commissioners, Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Form-D / Proforma for source of funds are also available on ECP's Website. Overwriting should be avoided. The Membership / Certificate issued by ICAP in respect of Auditor engaged shall be annexed to the Form-D alongwith last valid renewal certificate.

Rupee shows stability

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani rupee after remaining under pressure from the US dollars during the last two days showed some stability on Thursday in the interbank trading amid strong demand for the greenback.

According to the data extracted from the money dealers, the local currency appreciated by 43 paisas against the greenback and was currently being traded at Rs294.50 On Wednesday, the Pakistani rupee had settled at Rs294.93, a decline of Rs3.42.

This was rupee's weakest closing since May 11 this year, when the local currency