

#### Sub Inspector shot injured F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The In charge of Police Assistant Lines was injured when an unknown assailant riding a motorcycle fired at him in the vicinity of Mathra police station here on Friday. Police said Sub Inspector, Haji Gul of PAL, was shot and injured by a motorcycle rider, who managed to escape after shooting. The SI was shifted to a nearby hospital where his condition was stated to be out of danger.



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# Caretaker PM vows to ensure rule of law

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar vowed on Friday to comply with the commitments made by the previous government on national and international levels with different forums, besides ensuring rule of law and financial discipline during the interim period.

"We do not have perpetual mandate to serve the nation but during the given allocated time we will try to lay foundation where we have sense of continuation of national and international commitments that the previous government has made with different forums," he said while talking to the cabinet members here during the first cabinet meeting of the caretaker government.

With respect to a new initiative-Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), launched by former government, the prime minister said the caretaker government would fully support it. He said SIFC was a dream comes true project as Pakistan was an agriculture country and rich with mineral resources. He said in fact SIFC was not a new idea but it was an old national dream that was going to be materialized now.

"Day has arrived when with the support of all institutions including Pakistan military leadership, we support, facilitate, encourage, and realize this old national dream." He said this initiatives was not held by any institution but it was collectively owned by around 250 million people of the country. "We all own it and we will contribute towards it."

During the meeting, he individually acknowledged the services of all the cabinet members saying "I am very proud that we have got one of the best team". He hoped that the Almighty Allah would enable them to lead and steer this nation during the interim period. "With our utmost duty, may be it is a month, two or three, or three and a half, whatever the allocated time is, we will demonstrate through our actions not by our words," he added.

With regard to the economic situation in the country, the prime minister said he was well aware of the huge economic chal-

lenges but with an able team, the government would ensure the financial discipline. "We have a sense of sanctity of tax payers' money. This money on which we are having today's meeting, using resources or traveling, is paid by the people of Pakistan," he added.

He said either it was an ordinary venter, shopkeeper, teacher, lawyer or any other person, all were contributing in this regard. PM Kakar said in this polarized environment, the government would try to differentiate between politics and law.

He said the government would ensure that rule of order was not compromised in any way and the rule of order would lead us towards the rule of law. "We know the sanctity of the order that will be kept at any cost. Pakistan is owned and shared by all ethnicities, all creeds, and all religious background," he added.

He highlighted that the rigidity, be it in any form in the society, would be strongly discouraged. He said rigidity might come in the garb of religion or secularism or in any other form, these extreme attitude would be discourage and would be controlled by the law.

He said the minorities would stay protected in this country and any attempt to harm them from a section of marginalized group of people would be responded strictly by the state and the society. He said the miscreants might be from us but we must have to divorce them and keep distant from them. He said Pakistan was created on noble principles and the country was the product of noble idea.

Speaking about the incident of May 9, the prime minister explicitly expressed disappointment and discomfort over the sabotage activities happened on the day. He said attack on the military installation was like the country's immune system was attacked which could lead towards fatality. "We do not just condemn it but we also will ensure that justice will be done and whosoever violated laws on those days will be treated according to law and there will not be any favor to anybody", he added. On Kashmir issue, the prime minister "It was the core issue which could not be ignored. "It lies in our soul, for us Kashmir is eternal."

## Pakistan says India involved in Jaranwala incident

LAHORE (INP): Agencies have detected alleged involvement of Indian intelligence agency in the Jaranwala incident.

According to media reports, startling revelations were made during the investigation of attack on churches in Jaranwala. Christian locality, churches and public property were put on fire in a tragic incident which took place in Jaranwala two days ago. The role of notorious intelligence agency of India was found in the unfortunate incident.

It was a well-planned conspiracy to spread Muslim-Christian riots and concrete evidence has also been found. A heinous conspiracy was hatched to sow the seeds of discord and hatred among the minorities and Muslim population living peacefully in Pakistan. Some people were used against the Christian community under a well-organised plan hatched by the Indian intelligence agency.

According to sources, derogatory remarks were

written on the papers by the proxies of enemy forces. Those papers were thrown near the religious places with names and phone numbers of Christians written on them. The churches, residences of Christians and properties were damaged by involving the local Muslim population. It was a deep conspiracy by India to divert the attention from its atrocities in the Occupied Kashmir. The sources said that investigation is underway and all the suspects are linked with India.

**SCBA demands judicial commission to probe Jaranwala incident:** Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) on Friday demanded the formation of a judicial commission to probe the Jaranwala incident.

On Wednesday, a mob attacked, vandalized multiple churches and torched homes belonging to the Christian community in Jaranwala, Faisalabad over blasphemy allegations. In a press statement, SCBA, while strongly condemning

the Jaranwala incident, demanded the arrest of the culprits involved in the heinous crime of ransacking on the charges of blasphemy.

Attacks under the name of blasphemy are worrying act, the statement said and added Islamabad give equal rights to minorities. "Such attacks are damaging the religious harmony." The SCBA demanded the formation of a judicial commission to probe the incident and urged the government to compensate the affectees of the Christian community for their losses.

Earlier, the Jaranwala police registered terror cases against more than 600 people for "vandalizing multiple churches and torching homes belonging to the Christian community". Caretaker PM Anwaarul Haq Kakar also took notice of incidents that took place in Jaranwala city of Punjab's Faisalabad district. In a message on X (formerly Twitter), PM Kakar wrote, "I am gutted by the visuals coming out of Jaranwala, Faisalabad."

## Justice Shah suggests CJP to form full court in NAB amends case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Supreme Court's Justice Mansoor Ali Shah on Friday raised an objection to the bench hearing a petition filed by PTI Chairman Imran Khan against the NAB amendments, suggesting the Chief Justice of Pakistan form a full court.

A three-judge SC bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah was hearing the petition. During the hearing, Justice Shah who is part of the bench objected to it, remarking that the NAB amendments case would have its own impact. He observed that the Attorney General for Pakistan had raised the objection in the military courts case. "I think this case should be heard by the full

court. I suggest that the Chief Justice of Pakistan form the full court," Justice Shah added.

He went on to remark that in the presence of Sections 3 and 4 of the Practice and Procedure Act, this case should be heard by at least five members. "Either the Supreme Court should decide the Practice and Procedure Act case or constitute a full court," Justice Shah suggested.

The judge also referred to his note written during the military courts case. He said his objection was that such cases could be heard only by the full court. After the objection raised by the member of the bench, the Supreme Court adjourned the case till August 28.

Earlier, Dr Yasir Aman, assistant lawyer of Khawaja Haris (PTI chairman's

lawyer) appeared before the court. He told the court that Khawaja Haris was unwell and the latter allowed him to appear before the court in his stead. The court allowed the assistant lawyer of Khawaja Haris to present his arguments.

### Panama papers: SC fixes plea

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) on Friday fixed the plea for hearing seeking to issue classified part - volume 10 - of the report compiled by a six-member JIT constituted by the SC to investigate into the Sharif family's offshore assets as revealed by Panama Papers.

### PTI to challenge ECP's delimitation schedule

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Friday announced to challenge the delimitation schedule announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). PTI spokesperson in a statement announced that the decision of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) regarding the new census will be challenged in the Supreme Court tomorrow.

The statement termed the statement of ECP regarding delaying elections, a 'violation of the constitution' and added new elections should be held within 90 days. The statement noted that caretaker chief ministers of Punjab and KP do not have the authority to okay the census results in the CCI meeting.

The ECP's delimitation schedule is an attempt to prolong the caretaker setup, the PTI statement said. Earlier on Thursday, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced that general elections were not possible within 90 days. As per details, the Election Commission of Pakistan decided to hold the upcoming general election on the census 2023.

The ECP stated that the commission is bound to carry out the delimitation process. The first publication will be on October 9 while the final publication will be on December 14. The ECP meeting decided to seek assistance from the provincial governments and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in the delimitation process.

### Crops wash away as India releases water

SIALKOT (INP): India has released water in Nullah Ek which destroyed standing crops over a vast area. According to sources, torrential monsoon rains caused floods and destruction in India after which authorities released water in Nullah Ek. There is high flood at Sambaryal and Naduki Cheema in Sialkot district, they added.

Due to the floodwater, embankment of the Nullah broke due to which standing paddy, fodder and vegetable crops were destroyed over hundreds of acres. The gushing floodwater also damaged roads as a result of which link of many villages with main city was cut off.

Meanwhile, three major water reservoirs have filled up to their capacity after heavy rains in Pakistan, said Indus River System Authority (IRSA) in a statement. The authority said the total water stored in Tarbela, Mangala and Chashma reservoirs is 13.4 million acre feet.

Meanwhile, there is a high-level flood at the point of Ganda Singh in Kasur after the release of 150,000 cusecs of water by India into the Sutlej River, reported on Friday.

The land connection between dozens of villages was disconnected as three temporary embankments were breached. Standing crops and gardens were also severely affected due to the breach in the embankments.

### Pak Army rescues foreign mountaineers

GILGIT (PPI): Pakistan Army has rescued the foreign mountaineers stranded at Concordia and Shigar points near K2 base camp in Gilgit Baltistan, according to a report on Friday.

On August 17, 2023, a team of mountaineers including a local guide and one Polish and four British climbers were stranded at Concordia and Shigar points. Four British mountaineers were rescued from snow-capped Concordia while one Polish climber and a local guide were rescued from Shigar, which is at an altitude of about 17,000 feet.

George Hurst, David Cope, Stephen Ryan and Darren Corby were the British climbers while Adam was the Polish climber who was accompanied by local guide Muhammad Iqbal.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing the first meeting of the federal cabinet.

## Caretaker govt to assist ECP in holding free & fair polls: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that holding general elections was the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Federal Government would fulfill its duty to assist the watchdog in that regard.

Addressing his maiden press conference as information minister, he said the entire caretaker cabinet would try hard to fulfill responsibilities under the oath and in accordance with the law and Constitution. The minister spoke with the media to inform them about the first meeting of the Federal Cabinet chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Murtaza Solangi said he had held a meeting with Chief Election Commissioner Raja Sikandar Sultan and apprised him about the commitment of the Federal Cabinet regarding assistance in holding free elections in the country and implementing the ECP recommendations for necessary transfer and posting of officials in that regard. He said the cabi-

net decided that on the election day, the first vote would be cast by the caretaker prime minister and then by the ministers.

The minister said the country would be ultimately run by the elected representatives of the people as was envisaged in the Constitution of Pakistan and the caretaker government would look after the affairs only till the elections. He said that the cabinet decided to reduce the government's spending in view of the prevailing economic conditions, and it was also the government's responsibility not to waste taxpayers' money.

"We cannot afford to buy petroleum products at high prices and sell them at low prices," he said, adding as per the agreement with International Monetary Fund, the government could not subsidize commodities. Solangi said the state with its power stood with the minorities and no one would be allowed to victimize them in the name of religion, colour or caste. Islam granted special rights to the minorities and those responsible for the Jaranwala incident would be brought to justice, he vowed.

Pakistan, he said, was a country of

250 million people, who all had equal human rights. The cabinet stressed on promoting Sufism in the country to counter extremism, narrow-mindedness and intolerance prevailing in the society, he added. He said everyone expressed grief and sorrow over the Jaranwala incident and steps were being taken to ensure protection of the minorities.

The minister said Prime Minister Kakr emphasized on building infrastructure in the country. Replying to media persons' questions, Solangi said poverty and inflation were a reality and nobody could deny that fact. It was also a fact that hike in the petroleum products' prices also caused inflation but the government's hands were tied due to the IMF's standby arrangement.

He assured the media that the government would cut its expenditure to reduce burden on the national exchequer. Answering a question about the ongoing legal cases against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership, he said the matter was sub judice. The government was not a party to those cases and the relevant institutions were performing their duties as per law.

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## Diesel smuggling, gutka supply foiled, two held

KARACHI (APP): The Mochko police station of district Keamari on Friday foiled the smuggling bid of Iranian diesel and gutka supply and arrested two involved accused.

According to a spokesman for Keamari Police on Friday, the Mochko police station team during checking at the Hub River Road intercepted a motorcyclist and recovered 70kg gutka from his possession. Arrested was identified as Abdul Majeed.

In another action, the said police station intercepted a truck coming from Balochistan to Karachi at the Hub River Road. During checking the police recovered 2600 liter smuggled Iranian diesel from the hidden cavities of the truck. The driver of the truck was also nabbed.

Cases had been registered and further investigations were underway.

9 die, 1,165 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least nine persons were killed and 1,165 others injured in 1,154 road traffic crashes in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 609 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 556 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that 565 drivers, 46 underage drivers, 152 pedestrians, and 457 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes.

The statistics show that 281 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 291 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 76 in Faisalabad with 68 victims, and at third Multan with 72 road accidents and 67 victims.

According to the data, 1,002 motorbikes, 63 auto-rickshaws, 91 motorcars, 21 vans, nine passenger buses, 26 trucks and 122 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road traffic accidents.

## PUC, IIHC observe condemnation day

LAHORE (APP): Under the auspices of the Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) and the International Interfaith Harmony Council (IIHC), the condemnation day was observed here on Friday.

In his Juma sermon at the Grand Masjid Bahria Town here, Chairman of the PUC and President of the IIHC Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi said a delegation of Muslim and Christian leaders would visit Jaranwala on Saturday. He added the next week, an interfaith conference would be held in Islamabad.

The scholars, clerics and preachers demanded that criminals involved in the Jaranwala incident should be punished through a speedy trial. The attackers had violated the laws of the country, they added.

# ‘If any police officer found involved in water theft, he will face action’: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that he is in touch with the higher authorities of the police and if any police officer is found involved in water theft and action will be taken against him.

He expressed these views while addressing the event organized under the auspices of Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation. Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, People's Party Parliamentary Leader in the City Council Najmi Alam, Mayor Karachi Spokesperson for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, District Central General Secretary Dil Muhammad, Chairman of various UCs, CEO, MD Water Board Syed Salahuddin, Chief Operating Officer Asadullah Khan and other officers were also present on the occasion. The water board has come up with a solution that they will produce man-

hole covers, manhole rings and slabs. A manhole cover which weighs 10 to 12 kilograms was available for Rs 3500 in the market, the same cover will be ready in the factory for Rs 2700 and its weight will be 35 kg. He said that 150 manhole covers will be given to every UC without discrimination and this process will be started from Monday.

He said that all parties should work together to make this city better and everyone should work together, he said that the people of Karachi do not want their water to be stolen, so tough decisions have to be made. In response to a question, Mayor Karachi said that the black sheep in the water board will not be able to work with him. He said that he will take action again in Janjal Goth, and he will stand with the officials, so far more than 30 FIRs have been registered against the water thieves and we are working and fighting with the mafia.

## Caretaker Health Minister receives briefing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan on Friday took charge of office and received a briefing on various national health programmes.

On reaching the ministry, Federal Health Secretary Ifthikhar Ali Shallwani and other officials welcomed the minister. Dr. Nadeem Jan held an introductory meeting with Ministry of Health's officials and heads of various departments.

On the occasion, the

minister said, "We will make efforts to meet the challenges in the health sector. We have to work round the clock for the welfare of the people of this country." "Health sector is our first priority and improving the health sector is my mission," Dr. Nadeem Jan added. He assured that he would try his level best to resolve the problems of the people in a short period of time on priority basis.

He expressed his resolve to serve the country and the

# Naqvi commends services of outgoing US consul general for bilateral ties

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday held a farewell meeting with outgoing United States (US) Consul General William K Makaneole and discussed with him bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

The US consul general paid a tribute to the people of Punjab and expressed his thoughts about his visits to 32 districts. "William K Makaneole rendered valuable services for the promotion of bilateral relations," Mohsin Naqvi said.

"The cooperation of the US institutions including USAID in health and other sectors is worthy of praise," he added. "The Central Business District Authority is working for the establishment of a diplomatic enclave. The matter of the establishment of a diplomatic enclave in Lahore was pending for many years," he stated. On the occasion, the US consul general said that Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his team had been doing excellent work.

"The charm of Punjab and remote areas will always be remembered. [My] participation in the Independence Day celebrations with wife will be a memory," he added. Provincial Information Minister Aamir Mir, Punjab chief secretary, inspector general of police (IGP), political chief of the US consul general and others were present on the occasion.

CM Naqvi vows responsible for Jaranwala incident to face justice: A delegation representing the Christian community's leaders held a significant meeting with Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi at the Chief Minister's Office. Addressing the Christian community representatives, Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemned the distressing incident in Jaranwala, underscoring that Friday sermons have consistently emphasized the rights of minorities in accordance with Islamic teachings and the wisdom of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). He reaffirmed that Pakistan, envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam, stands unwavering against such tragic occurrences. In order to ensure the lasting prevention of such incidents, a comprehensive policy is being formulated.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi assured the delegation of proactive efforts to swiftly restore the affected churches to their original condition. "Additionally, assessments are being made to gauge the extent of damage to destroyed homes, and financial assistance will be provided to affected families."

The chief minister expressed resolve, citing the presence of evidence and video footage, to apprehend and bring the culprits of the tragedy to justice. He pledged determined action to ensure justice for the Jaranwala tragedy, asserting

the responsibility of safeguarding the lives and property of the Christian community.

Highlighting the imperative to prevent future tragedies, the CM stressed that collective measures must be taken to cultivate tolerance, necessitating curriculum amendments to propagate awareness. He noted that scholars from diverse schools of thought have unequivocally denounced the Jaranwala incidents. The chief minister affirmed unwavering commitment to protect Christian families and restore the churches, underlining the importance of erasing the stain cast by the incident through united efforts.

Detailed briefings regarding the Jaranwala incident were provided by IG Punjab and Additional Chief Secretary Home. The delegation of minority leaders, comprising Senator Kamran Michael, Bishop Azad Marshall, former MPA Shakeel Marcus Khokhar, Shahzad Gull, Pastor Jameel Nasir, Colonel McDonald Chandy, Pastor Anwar Fazal, Pastor Waseemullah Khokhar, Bishop Sebastian Shah, and others, conveyed their perspectives on the matter.

Present at the occasion were Inspector General Police, Additional Chief Secretary Interior, Secretary Auqaf, Secretary Human Rights and Minority Affairs, Nadeem Raza and concerned authorities.

## Jamal Shah visits Lok Virsa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah on Friday visited Lok Virsa - National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage soon after assuming charge.

He was warmly welcomed by the senior officials. Later, the minister also chaired a meeting which was attended by Secretary National Heritage and Culture Fareena Mazhar and other senior officials of the Division and Lok Virsa.

Detailed briefing was given to the Minister regarding Lok Virsa and its cultural activities.

Federal Minister Jamal Shah said that our land is blessed with the diversity of cultural and folk heritage, adding that inclusive cultural narrative would help reshape our society as a peaceful place for all segments. He said that the cultural narrative should be based on our rich cultural heritage, he added.

He said that Pakistan's culture, art and society are heavily influenced by its diverse historical background, starting from the ancient Mohenj-o-daro to the more recent Mughal era and added along with the linear cultural richness gamered over time, we have a bouquet of diverse and vibrant cultural heritage.

## World Humanitarian Day to be marked today

LAHORE (APP): World Humanitarian Day would be marked on August 19 (Saturday) across the country including Lahore. 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 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.

# Free-of-cost treatment for dengue patients being ensured: Dr Jamal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr Jamal Nasir Friday said that special counters were being established at all the district and tehsil headquarter hospitals for providing free of cost treatment facilities to dengue patients.

Chairing a meeting to review the dengue situation here, he said that people can get a slip for a free checkup by showing their national identity card.

The minister said that after checking the patient's pulse, fever and blood pressure at such counter, a blood sample will be taken and a CBC blood test would be done.

In case of a positive blood test report and the presence of symptoms, the dengue patient would be admitted to the hospital for further treatment.

Dr Jamal said that qualified and trained doctor presence was also being ensured for dengue patients at the health facilities.

He said that preventive measures were being taken to control the spread of

dengue in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan, adding the surveillance for tracing larvae had been intensified across Punjab and the relevant deputy commissioners had been assigned the responsibility of monitoring the anti-dengue activities. Dr Jamal informed that the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department had prepared new SOPs for dengue prevention, while strict action would be taken against violators and those neglecting their duties during the anti-dengue campaign.

"Show-cause notices will also be issued to officials involved in bogus activities," he warned. The minister said that anti-dengue activities were being carried out on a scientific basis. As a result of repeated spraying in the past years, mosquitoes had developed immunity against insecticides, he said and added that different allergic diseases had been spread due to fogging.

He said that environmental factors were also being taken into account while carrying out anti-dengue activities.

## PSCA providing crime heat map to Lahore Police

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Safe Cities Authority has taken a proactive measure to curb criminal activities by providing a visual representation of crime data, called a 'crime heat map' to the Lahore police.

This heat map allows police officers to identify areas and times with higher crime rates within each police station's jurisdiction. Additionally, the Safe City initiative is equipping the police with information about crime patterns and the locations of suspects.

The crime heat map assists law enforcement in better understanding crime trends. This knowledge enables them to strategically

allocate resources, such as patrolling and personnel deployment, to effectively address the issue.

SP Arslan Zahid stated that they are conducting targeted operations to prevent activities like theft and robbery using insights from the heat map.

The data from the PSCA initiative is proving invaluable in creating the crime heat map and identifying crime hotspots. It aids in promptly responding to emergency calls via the 15 helpline, efficiently deploying officers in the field, and utilizing surveillance cameras to deter criminals.

# PTA & PITB inaugurate Lahore IXP to boost digital connectivity

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) marked a historic milestone on Friday with the inauguration of the Lahore Internet Exchange Point (IXP).

This state-of-the-art facility stands poised to revolutionise digital connectivity across the region.

The inauguration ceremony was held at Arfa Software Technology Park (ASTP) with esteemed industry leaders, government officials, vital stakeholders and prominent Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in attendance. International stakeholders namely Internet Society (ISOC), Asia Pacific

Information Centre (APNIC) and Japan Registry Services (JPRS) attended the event remotely.

The launch event featured presentations and insightful speeches from key industry figures, emphasizing the IXP's potential to enhance digital infrastructure and support the growth of Pakistan's internet economy.

Speaking at the event, Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman emphasized the critical importance of the Lahore IXP, highlighting its multifaceted benefits.

He lauded the IXP's potential to galvanize economic growth, facilitate greater access to digital services and enhance network efficiency.

Chairman PITB, Faisal

Yousaf said, "Launching IXP locally would reduce our dependency on international data routes. Additionally, it would ensure a rather reliable and robust internet connectivity."

Key speakers at the ceremony also included Chief Information Officer PITB Sajjad Ghani, Director General CVD PTA, Dr. Muhammad Mukaram Khan; Regional Director ISOC, Mr. Naveed Haq; IXP Specialist ISOC, Mr. Aftab Siddiqui; Director General APNIC, Mr. Paul Wilson, and GM JPRS, Mr. Kazuhiro Kitamura.

The Lahore IXP reflects a commitment to bolstering digital infrastructure. The launch underscores PTA & PITB's dedication to

advancing the telecom and IT sector. This initiative paves way for a more competitive landscape, enabling both established entities and smaller operators to share the benefits of enhanced connectivity.

PTA remains committed to facilitating collaboration and innovation in the digital domain.

**نوٹس (مشتري هوشيار باش)**

برادر نوٹس ہذا مشتري کيا جاتا ہے کہ چائين لائبري نمبر 4152 هجوي بگوزي کيٹ، پشاور کيٹ، جو کہ کيٹو نمٹ برادر کے پکارتا ہيں کي: حبيب اللہ، دلوات اللہ کے ہم موجود ہے۔ یہ کہ کي: حبيب اللہ، دلوات اللہ نے ڈکڑوہا چائين لائبري نمبر 1: محمد اللہ خان ولد جوہان (270 مرچ 20) 2: محمد يال ولد عبد الرشيد خان (135 مرچ 2) 3: اور 3: سلمان ولد عبد الرشيد خان (135 مرچ 2) 4: پر برادر رنڈر شدو دستاويں نمبر 1888، ہی نمبر 1، جلد نمبر 364 مورثو 26/06/2023 کو فروخت کر دی ہے۔ سب سمسان: محمد اللہ خان محمد يال اور سلمان نے ڈکڑوہا چائين لائبري نمبر 1: اپنے ناموں پر منتقل کرنے کے لئے ایک عود درخواست میں رنڈر یختر پشاور گزاری ہے۔ اگر کسی شخص، چنگی یا اور کے ڈکڑوہا چائين لائبري نمبر 1 پر کوئی اعتراض ہو تو مشتري ہذا کی اشاعت کے پندرہ (15) دن کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض منجھوتہ پیش کریں۔ بعد ازاں منتقلی کی کارروائی مندرجہ بالا درخواست گزاروں کے ناموں پر عمل میں لائی جائے گی اور کيٹو نمٹ برادر کے لئے ہوگا۔

**المشتري: کينٹونمنٹ ايگزيکيوشيو آفيسر پشاور**

**NOTICE FOR AUCTION OF MINOR MINERALS OF DISTRICT KARAK**

The District Auction Committee of District Karak invites applications from registered contractors of Minor Minerals for participation in auction and grant of Minor Mineral lease of each area independently for a period of one year on the basis of "As is where is" as per The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines & Mineral Act, 2017 in the office of the Deputy Commissioner Karak on 12/09/2023 at 11:00 AM.

In case of non-auction due to any reason, next date of auction will be 13/09/2023 at 11:00 AM.

S.No.	Extent & Location of the area	Reserve Price (Rs)	Call Deposit (Rs)	Time Period
1	2296.15 ACRES NEAR VILL: KHADDA BANDA MALANG KHEL TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	683,650/-	170,913/-	-do-
2	1507.686 ACRES NEAR VILL: CHAMBAI DISTT: KARAK	382,844/-	95,711/-	-do-
3	716.23 ACRES NEAR VILL: MIRZA KHEL LAKKI GHUNDAKI DISTT: KARAK	226,972/-	56,743/-	-do-
4	3195.08 ACRES NEAR VILL: AHMAD ABAD ZARKHAN KILLA TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	1,394,646/-	348,662/-	-do-
5	950.40 ACRES NEAR VILL: KHAN MERI BANDA TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	2,461,140/-	615,285/-	-do-
6	588.947 ACRES NEAR VILL: METHA KHEL TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	246,114/-	61,529/-	-do-
7	606.21 ACRES NEAR VILL: REHMAT ABAD TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	232,444/-	58,111/-	-do-
8	2070.53 ACRES NEAR VILL: KAMALI ZARA KHEL, MONRHAKA, WALAKAI MOHABAT KHEL TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	13,673,000/-	3,418,250/-	-do-
9	360.767 ACRES NEAR VILL: MANSOOR GHAR TEH: BANDA DAUD SHAH DISTT: KARAK	475,821/-	118,956/-	-do-
10	2517.68 ACRES NEAR VILL: AHMAD WALA, GHUNDI KILLA TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	422,496/-	105,624/-	-do-
11	2055.36 ACRES NEAR VILL: CHOKARA TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	512,738/-	128,185/-	-do-
12	2210.31 ACRES NEAR VILL: TOOR DHAND TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	232,441/-	58,111/-	-do-
13	1045.947 ACRES NEAR VILL: SHERIF WALA LATAMBER TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	246,114/-	61,529/-	-do-
14	923.12 ACRES NEAR VILL: REHMAT ABAD TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	325,418/-	81,355/-	-do-
15	416.69 ACRES NEAR VILL: BRAGA GALLA TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	10,820,813/-	2,705,204/-	-do-
16	772.948 ACRES NEAR VILL: MIANKI TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	592,315/-	148,079/-	-do-
17	205.41 ACRES NEAR VILL: MIR KALAM BANDA TEH: BANDA DAUD SHAH DISTT: KARAK	2,201,353/-	550,339/-	-do-
18	449.32 ACRES NEAR VILL: GURGURI EDEL KHEL TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	246,114/-	61,539/-	-do-
19	219.021 ACRES NEAR VILL: TERI TEH: BANDA DAUD SHAH DISTT: KARAK	225,605/-	56,402/-	-do-
20	378.6 ACRES NEAR VILL: KABEER KILLA TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	225,605/-	56,402/-	-do-
21	140.264 ACRES NEAR VILL: TANGORI, JAMA TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	348,040/-	87,010/-	-do-
22	1137.52 ACRES NEAR VILL: SHAHEEDAN BANDA TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	3,425,087/-	856,272/-	-do-
23	213.042 ACRES NEAR VILL: GHOL BANDA TEH: BANDA DAUD SHAH DISTT: KARAK	267,991/-	66,998/-	-do-
24	141.415 ACRES NEAR VILL: ALI KHAN KHEL TEH: TAKHTI NASRATI DISTT: KARAK	1,153,455/-	288,364/-	-do-
25	131.297 ACRES NEAR VILL: REHMAT ABAD TEH: & DISTT: KARAK	376,008/-	94,002/-	-do-
26	1102.55 ACRES NEAR VILL: KHOOL BANDA TEH: BANDA DAUD SHAH DISTT: KARAK	287,133/-	71,784/-	-do-
27	75.058 ACRES NEAR VILL: MALIK RIAZ KORONA TEH: BANDA DAUD SHAH DISTT: KARAK	216,034/-	54,009/-	-do-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Only those persons or firms registered with Directorate General Mines & Minerals Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as Minor Minerals Contractors can participate in auction. Interested parties can register themselves in the Directorate General Mines & Minerals Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- The registered parties/individuals shall submit application form at the cost of Rs. 10,000/- (Ten Thousand Only) non-refundable alongwith 2% Sales Tax under Second Schedule (S.No. 16) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sales Tax on Service Act, 2022 on any working day at least three (03) days before the auction. Last date for submission of application form is 08/09/2023
- Blacklisted/Defaulter persons or those persons who are not registered with Directorate General Mines and Minerals Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are not allowed to participate in the auction.
- The interested parties can visit and check the advertised areas before auction. The sketches of the 27 areas are available for the interested parties in the office of Assistant Director (Tech) Minerals Development Karak.
- Call deposit shall be deposited under account No.0066-2008140092 and application fee under account No.0066-2008209319 in any branch of Bank of Khyber.
- The registered applicants/parties shall also submit attested copies of CNIC, income tax registration certificate (NTN) and partnership deed/article & memorandum of association along with evidence of paid up capital (if applicant is partnership firm/company).
- The successful bidder shall deposit 1/4th of the total bid money as security within three days from the date of auction, otherwise, call deposit shall be forfeited in favour of the Government and the bid of second highest bidder shall be considered as highest bid, subject to condition that the difference between the first and the second highest bids is not more than 10 percent of the highest bid.
- The successful bidder shall demarcate his leased area within fifteen days from the issuance of Allotment Letter on his own expenses.
- The successful bidder shall be bound to pay Excise duty to Commissionerate of Mines or its approved excise duty collection contractor on government notified rates.
- The successful bidder before issuance of allotment letter shall be bound to deposit withholding tax under Rule-236-A of ITO2011 with Income Tax Department and Professional Tax as per rules to the Excise & Taxation Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- The successful bidder will be bound to pay surface rent to the land owner under The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Minerals Act, 2017.
- The successful bidder shall be responsible to work in leased area strictly in accordance with the provisions of The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Mineral Act, 2017.
- The successful bidder shall be bound to use only verified challans for transportation of minor minerals duly verified by the concerned Assistant Director. Transportation without a verified transit challan shall be considered as un-authorized transportation and action under Section-56 of the Ibid Act shall be initiated against the lessee as well as other offenders.
- The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any bid with cogent reason.
- In case if party is interested in more than one areas, separate application be submitted for each area.
- Other Section of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Minerals Act, 2017 shall apply.
- Other information in this regards can be obtained from the office of undersigned during office time i.e. 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM on any working day.

**Assistant Director (Tech)**

**Minerals Development Karak**

**INF(P) 1982/23**





## Time to address Regi Model Town issue: Govt

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division, Muhammad Zubair has said that we wanted to settle the 37 years old dispute of Regi Model Town according to the norms of Pushtoon culture and unanimity of the all respondents so that no injustice is made in this regard.

It was the high time to address this long-standing issue as all the respondents seriously wanted a way out for this dispute through an amicable solution. The Commissioner said this while presiding over a jirga held between the Kokikhel tribe from Khyber district and respondents from the Peshawar Development Authority (PDA). The jirga was also attended by DC Peshawar Shah Fahad, DC Khyber, Abdul Nasir, Collector PDA, Mujahid and representatives of the tribal tribe of Kokikhel including Malik Barkat Afridi and Malik Yusuf Afridi.

The Commissioner on the occasion listened to the stance of both respondents and directed the PDA officials to present the complete record of the matter next week. The Commissioner also called in a meeting next week with the members of the earlier jirgas held to address the Regi issue. The Commissioner Peshawar Division said a jirga on a weekly basis will be held to sort out a lasting solution to this 37 years old issue.

It merits a mention here that a dispute over the ownership of Zone-I, Zone-II and Zone-V of Regi Model Town was continuing between the Kokikhel tribe of Khyber district and Peshawar Development Authority since 1986 that has stopped the construction activities in these zones. Hundreds of buyers of plots in these zones were faced with multiple problems and had requested the Commissioner to take personal interest in addressing this issue.

## Hot, humid weather likely in KP

F.P. Report

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

However, it said that scattered rain-thunderstorm associated with gusty winds is likely to occur over Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Battagram, Torghar, Shangla, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera districts.

It added that isolated rain-thunderstorms associated with gusty winds are also likely to occur over Kohistan, Chitral, Bajaur, Mohmand, Charsadda, Peshawar, Khyber, Kohat, Hangu, Karak, Orakzai and Bannu districts.

During the last 24 hours, hot and humid weather prevailed in most districts of the province. However, rain-thunderstorms with gusty winds occurred in Kurram, Peshawar, Dir, Swat, Buner, Bajaur, Nowshera and Kohat districts. Rain recorded (in mm): Parachinar 12, Buner 07, Bajaur (Khaar 06 & Pashat 05), Peshawar (PAF Base 03, Airport 02 & City Trace), Malam Jabba & Raisalpur 01(each), Upper Dir & Kohat Trace, Maximum wind recorded (in Km/hr :- Peshawar Airport 70 from South West direction.

# Governor KP chair PRC merged area meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The meeting of Pakistan Red Crescent merged districts under the Chairmanship of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali here at Governor House on Friday. The meeting was attended by the Chairman of the Red Crescent for the combined districts, Imran Khan, members of the managing committee, Principal Secretary to the Governor, Mazhar Irshad and others.

In the meeting, a detailed briefing was presented regarding the overall performance, aims and objectives, community services of Red Crescent

District Branch. Briefing regarding the provision of health services to the local population of the merged districts including natural disasters, earthquakes, floods and aid to refugees.

The meeting also approved the nomination of 11 members for the managing committee of Pakistan Red Crescent. Pakistan Red Crescent is a great name and position in humanitarian services, Haji Ghulam Ali said. He said the services of the Red Crescent in the service of suffering humanity are commendable.

The Red Crescent should involve the local community in humanitarian services,

Haji Ghulam Ali said. The Red Crescent should establish strong links with benefactors at the local level, Haji Ghulam Ali further added.

At the local level, philanthropists and local communities are helpful for services and cooperation in natural disasters, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said. The Red Crescent should prepare a list of volunteers at the Tehsil and District level in all the merged districts so that each and every work related to the people of merged areas should be accomplished in an appropriate manner, Haji Ghulam Ali said.



PESHAWAR: Members of Christian's community holding a banner and placards during a protest rally to condemn Jaranwala incident.

## Int'l moot for Capacity building, linkages held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In an effort to promote international collaboration in countering violent extremism and fostering mutual relationships to address the challenges posed by extremism, a one-day international conference was held under the auspices of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism. The conference aimed to shed light on strategies to combat extremism and enhance global cooperation.

Secretary Higher Education, Anila Mahfooz Durrani, , Dr. Ayaz, Chief Coordination Officer, and Dr. Qasim, Director General, welcomed all participants on behalf of the center. Notable personalities from various sectors, including Dr. Faisal Kareem Kundi, Former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Dawood Khan former secretary of higher education department, Prof. Dr. Usman Ghani, Director IM Sciences, Ms. Musarrat Qadeem, Senior Advisor to the Center for Combating Extremism, and Javed Iqbal, Deputy Commandant Frontier Corps, among others , also participated in the conference.

Highlighting the significance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Center of Excellence, Anila Mahfooz Durrani stated that it is the first Excellence Center in South Asia specifically dedicated to countering violent extremism. She emphasized that the center

will function as a think tank to tackle the challenges effectively, posed by extremism.

During the international conference, Mr. Faisal Kareem Kundi addressed the audience, highlighting the province's focus on climate change and extremism. He urged the Pakistani government to review its policies concerning Afghanistan due to the shared, long border, which exposes the region to additional risks. Khalid Kauser, Executive Director of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GGERF), based in Geneva, participated in the conference, expressing his support and collaboration. A memorandum of understanding was also signed between GGERF and the center to enhance collaboration for countering extremism.

Dr. Musarrat Qadeem, Senior Advisor for the Center to Counter Extremism, stressed that the establishment of this center was long overdue and that research and dialogue are essential on the international level to combat extremism. She highlighted the need to involve women in countering extremism and encouraged their active participation.

Former Deputy Inspector General, Counter Terrorism Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Javed Iqbal, also addressed the conference, emphasizing the importance of setting up a framework to tackle extremism through conversations and policies

parallel to active anti-terrorism measures.

Professor Dr. Usman Ghani shed light on the role of political extremism, stating that it has gained momentum and adversely affected the youth. He suggested incorporating a dedicated chapter on countering extremism and promoting tolerance in educational curricula.

Former Secretary of Higher Education, Mr. Dawood Khan, highlighted the role of think tanks in developed countries as policy-making and awareness-raising bodies. He suggested that the center aims to fulfill a similar role, guiding governments and addressing various issues internally and externally.

Mr. Khalid Kauser, Executive Director of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, appreciated the establishment of such a center in a province significantly affected by extremism. He expressed his intention to collaborate closely with the center to combat extremism in the region, addressing challenges posed by climate change and extremism.

The conference marked a significant step towards fostering collaboration in countering extremism and building resilience against its threats. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism's establishment reflects the commitment to effectively combat extremism through research, dialogue, and international cooperation.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of Mardan Chamber called on KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

## Excise Police arrests drug smuggler

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Excise Department is tight around drug smugglers and launched an operation, said Akif Nawaz Khan SHO Police Station Excise Mardan Region on Friday.

An attempt to smuggle large quantities of drugs in the Ring Road near the Railway track in Mardan failed, SHO Excise Mardan said. He said 12000 grams (12 kg) of hashish was recovered from the diesel Tank of the Datsun Pickup. One alleged accused Saifullah, son of Akbar Khan, resident of Akashirkhel Bara, arrested on the spot. A case has been registered in Mardan Excise Police Station for further investigation and legal action, the SHO added.

## RPSC directs police to register FIR

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Right to Public Services Commission (RPSC) here Friday ordered the Bajaur Police to submit an inquiry report within 14 days regarding registration of FIR of a female.

"Timely access to all basic services is the constitutional right of every citizen of the province and negligence of the government officials will not be tolerated," said Judge Muhammad Asim Imam. Right to Public Services Commission heard the complaint of two citizens.

Commissioner RPSC Judge Muhammad Asim Imam heard the complaints of two citizens. A female citizen from Bajaur had applied to the commission that the police was not registering her FIR. The woman was heard online through video call. Judge Muhammad Asim Imam issued orders to the police to complete the inquiry within 14 days and report of the matter should be submitted to the commission.

## FIA arrests three people

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Commercial Banking Circle in Peshawar arrested three people on Friday for illegal money exchange. The accused were identified as Liaqat, Shahzad, and Hatim Gul. They were arrested during raids conducted in the Chowk Yadgar area.

The FIA team recovered 12.473 million Pakistani rupees, 3070 British pounds, and 1000 Saudi riyals from the accused. The accused could not produce the required documents regarding the money. The FIA has registered cases against the accused under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act and is investigating the matter. The FIA has warned people against engaging in illegal money exchange activities. Such activities are punishable under law. I hope this is what you were looking for. Let me know if you have any other questions.

# JI for efforts to make a real welfare state

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Information Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Youth and senior vice-president of Pakistan Business Forum Mushtaq Khalil has said that closure of business due to inflation is equivalent to economic murder of businessmen.

JI Info Secretary has said that business centers have started closing all over the city due to which hundreds of employees are being laid off. He said that the problems of the country and the nation can be solved only by making Pakistan an Islamic ideological and welfare state in the true sense. Due to the slavish policies of the incompetent and self-interested leadership, the dear country is suffering from economic, political and moral crises.

Unfortunately the ruling clique and the elite class that have imposed on the country for years have destroyed the country. Overall the last five years were the bitter experience in the country's history for the nation. The country needs accountability and a flawless system of justice. The nation should cooperate with Jamaat-e-Islami. The value of the

dollar is increasing continuously. The IMF has made the nation a slave.

The prices of electricity and petrol have increased sharply. Unaffordable electricity bills have become the death knell for the poor and middle class. There is no such instance in the past that consumers have had heart attacks due to heavy electricity bills or someone has committed suicide, but it may happen now due lack of earnings. Payment of electricity bills has become difficult for more than ninety percent of consumers. Half of the total income of most low-income people is being spent on electricity bills. As a result of the most expensive electricity and petrol, the business is having a devastating effect.

All taxes in electricity bills immediately be terminated. Increase in petrol prices should be withdrawn. The government should not privatize PIA. Hundreds of employees will be laid off due to the privatization of PIA. There is already unemployment in the country and peace and order has become a problem due to unemployment. Electricity and gas problem should be solved in Peshawar. Due to load shedding of electricity and

gas domestic and commercial consumers are facing the most serious problems.

Despite huge bills of thousands of rupees, load shedding of gas and electricity is happening. Printing work of text book board should be transferred back to Peshawar. Injustices with Peshawar should be ended. The PTI and PDM governments have done injustice to the people of Peshawar because the youth of Peshawar could not get employment. Employment quota of youth of Peshawar was given to other districts. Which is injustice to Peshawar. The nation cannot bear more inflation.

The economy did not improve with the previous government, the assemblies also did not make any law to give relief to the people. The destruction that occurred during the tenure of two former prime ministers the people will have to bear its consequences for decades. Condemned. The prices of LPG are continuously increasing due to the incompetence of the government and the purchase of LPG has also become a big test for the white-clad class. Jamaat-e-Islami will sweep the entire province including Peshawar in the general elections.

## PRCS distributes aid among flood's victims

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa branch of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has successfully completed the distribution of essential aid to families affected by the recent floods in Chitral District, following heavy rainfall. This assistance includes 118 families in various areas of Chitral, including the Kalash Valley. Relief items such as tents, blankets, and family hygiene kits were provided.

In this regard, Habib MalikOrakzai, Chairman of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society , stated that Chitral District is cur-

rently facing the effects of natural disasters in both the summer and winter seasons. These adversities have not only affected the region's infrastructure but have also deeply impacted the homes and fields of its residents. Our mission is to assist people in such situations as a Auxiliary body to the Government.however, it's imperative that we also play a role in mitigating the impacts of climate changes emerging in Chitral.

During the distribution of relief items, our efforts have been supported by the German Red Cross. At this time, the Pakistan Red Crescent KP, in collaboration with the German Red Cross, is working to reduce

the effects of climate change and to maintain the safety of local populations during disasters in various areas of Chitral. In this context, it's crucial for other organizations to also support the PRCS.

On the other hand, during the relief distribution, Ali Hassan, Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, informed media representatives that the recent heavy rainfall has severely affected Lower Chitral and Upper Chitral. Relief operations have been completed in Lower Chitral, but access to some areas in Upper Chitral remains difficult. Work will begin as soon as the roads are cleared.



PESHAWAR: A view of rickshaw emitting smoke at Sher Shahsori Road creating problems for polluting environment.

# Plant for Pakistan: A key initiative to control rising temperature

PESHAWAR (APP): Environmentalists here Wednesday said the climate change-induced weather conditions including rise of temperature, heatwaves, floods and sea cyclones were posing serious threats to human beings and underlined the need for whopping plantations under 'Plant for Pakistan' initiative to offset negative effects of the global warming.

Niaz Ali, former Chief Conservator of Forest KP told APP that recent Biporjoy cyclone, heatwaves and last year devastated floods have made Pakistan highly vulnerable to climate change and global warming. Besides 2010 and 2019 floods, glacial lake outburst floods (GOLF) formed Atabad lake in Gilgit Baltistan and Muree snow-fall tragedy 2021, he said the heat

wave and Biparjoy cyclone was apparently occurred due to climate change-induced weather vulnerabilities and rise of temperature in air and Arabian sea.

"The average annual temperature of Pakistan was about 24.6 °C in the years after 1980 and about 25.6 °C in the last years before 2022. So in less than 43 years, it has increased by about 1.0 °C. This trend only applies to the selected 4 weather stations in the country besides signifying climate changes' negative effects in the region," he said.

He said Plant for Pakistan was a key initiative of the government to bring maximum areas under afforestation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 1.5 million saplings would be planted during monsoon season. From Khyber to Kohistan and

Waziristan to Chitral, the Plant for Pakistan campaign was continued where farmers, general public and officials of forest department officials were planting trees of different species.

Besides national building departments, the students actively participated in the campaign in the province and planted sapling of different species. Ibrahim Khan, Deputy Project Director, 10 billion trees told APP that monsoon plantation was underway in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 180,000 saplings would be sown through farm forestry, mass plantation and rehabilitation of the existing forests resources.

As per National Forest Policy 2018, Pakistan was losing about 27,000 hectares of forests per year

mostly in community and private lands in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan. Ibrahim said that Pakistan was among 10 countries which was highly vulnerable to the climate change and the last year devastating floods had substantiated to this fact.

The government while taking cognizance of increasing incidents of climate change and high rate of deforestation had launched first phase of billion trees afforestation project (BTAP) in 2014 in KP under the green growth initiative (GGI). Under GGI, he said focusing on six sectors namely forestry, protected areas, national parks, clean energy, climate resilience, sanitation and water management were made.

About 1.208 billion saplings were planted under BTAP's first phase

with an estimated cost of Rs14.364 billion, registering six percent increase in KP's forest cover areas i.e. 26.6percent in 2018 from 20.6 percent in 2013-14 by surpassing international standard of 25percent. The project was later extended to the entire country including Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan in 2018 with a plantation target of 10 billion trees including additional one billion saplings set for KP by June 2023 under the 10 billion trees afforestation project (10BTAP).

10 BTAP was launched by the Government of Pakistan with the total cost of 125.1843 billion on September 2, 2018 during Plant for Pakistan Day by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan. The project is being implemented across Pakistan by the Ministry of Climate Change

along with Provincial and territorial Forest departments, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. Ibrahim said the first phase of 10 billion trees afforestation project (10BTAP 2019-23) has been extended upto July 2024 by the government in order to achieve the set plantation target of 10 billion saplings in the country.

He said approximately 700 million saplings against a set plantation target of one billion were planted during the last four years under the 10 billion trees afforestation project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that remaining 300 million saplings would be planted in the extended year. He said that 500 million saplings would be achieved through forest enclosures and 500 million through farm forestry and the general public under 10 BTAP.





## In brief

### Two family members die F.P. Report

SHANGLA: Two members of a family were died and three others were shifted to hospital a precarious condition when they consumed poisonous mushrooms in Union Council Dheri of Shangla. According to details two members of a family in village Dolozra were died and conditions of three other deteriorated after eating poisonous mushrooms. The three persons including Misbah, Imtiaz and Bakhshi were rushed to Saidu Sharif Hospital among which two are still in a precarious condition.

### One hurt in gas cylinder blast

SARGODHA (INP): A teenage boy was injured when a gas cylinder burst at a gas refilling shop in Deen Colony, Sargodha on Friday. According to the rescue authority, the victim, Azam Khan, 16, was taken to Faisal Masood Teaching Hospital for treatment. He is said to be in stable condition. The police said that the incident occurred when Azam was getting his gas cylinder refilled. The cause of the blast is not yet known, but the police are investigating. The heirs of the victim have demanded that the authorities take stern action against illegal gas refilling mafia. I hope this is what you were looking for. Let me know if you have any other questions.

### Murtaza tops Advance Course F.P. Report

KOHAT: Inspector of Kohat police, Murtaza Khan has achieved top position in Advance Course 2023 from Hangu Police Training College, office of the Regional Information informed on Friday. Murtaza Khan had also grabbed the first position in PSI Course 2007 across the province while in 2013, he had topped the Upper Course from the province. He completed his MA Political Science Degree from Kohat University in 2004 and had also represented the Pakistan police on an international level in the United Nations Mission. After completing his Advance Course, Murtaza Khan was now eligible for conferring some important responsibilities.

### Five electrocuted

NASIRABAD (INP) Five people were electrocuted in Dera Murad Jamali, Balochistan Friday, police said. As per details, five people including a couple, two children and a guest lost their lives after receiving an electric shock. The bodies were moved to a nearby hospital, while as per initial reports, the identity of the deceased could not be ascertained. Earlier, three people including a toddler died from electrocution in separate incidents as rain struck Pakpattan, Punjab. According to details, a 30-year-old youth lost his life after an electric shock in Sabzi Mandi area of Pakpattan, while a two-year-old girl received shock after she touched a power cable. Separately in village 67, a 32 years old man lost his life after receiving electric shock.

### Man killed in tribal clash

QUETTA (PPI) A man of Lehri tribe died and another injured in an armed clash between Lehri and Rind tribes in Tehsil Munjho Shori area of district Naseerabad on Friday. According to rescue sources, a trivial issue led to an armed clash between Lehri and Rind tribes in Munjho Shori city area of district Naseerabad in the precincts of police station Munjho Shori.

# JI hold protest against increase in PoL products prices

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Jamaat-e-Islami here on Friday held protest demonstration against the increase in Petroleum products. The protesting Jamaat-e-Islami activities led by the party district Ameer Ghulam Rasool blocked main Shamsi road for hours.

The JI district Ameer and other party leaders addressed on the occasion. They rejected and condemned the intern government decision to make illegal increase in Petroleum items as they were of the view that the caretaker rulers had no mandate to make increase in prices of petroleum products.

They claimed that the acting rulers had only to deal the affairs related to holding of general elections. They blamed that the country was run by the IMF officials' orders. They said that masses were fed up of the policies of previous and incumbent caretaker rulers. The JI leaders were of the view that general public were compelled to commit suicide owing to unemployment, sky-rocketing price-hike and deteriorating law and order situation.

They warned the incumbent government and authorities concerned to withdraw the increase in

Petroleum products as well as to take effective measures to control the speeding price-hike, otherwise, they would be forced to began an aggressive anti-government agitation till fulfillment of their demand.

**Meeting to promote CWIS policy held:** In a major effort to promote Citywide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) policy, a District-level consultative meeting was held, bringing together key stakeholders and decision-makers.

The objective of the meeting was to identify sanitation-related gaps and solutions to the identified gaps and identify the necessary actions to ensure the effective implementation of CWIS for the betterment of the city's sanitation system. The interactive meeting which was held the other day, organized by FANSA Pakistan-IRSP, aimed to foster collaboration and cooperation among various stakeholders to address the critical sanitation challenges faced by our district/city.

Recognizing the significance of inclusive and sustainable sanitation practices, the event drew participation from representatives of government relevant bodies, local authorities, civil society organizations, and Media. During

the consultative meeting, a detailed mapping exercise was conducted to identify the gaps in sanitation policy.

This mapping will play a crucial role in developing a comprehensive approach that encompasses the diverse perspectives and expertise required to achieve the desired outcomes. By engaging all relevant stakeholders, the district/city local government hopes to build a strong alliance that can effectively address issues related to sanitation infrastructure, waste management, hygiene practices, and access to sanitation services.

The collaborative efforts will facilitate the implementation of inclusive policies that prioritize the needs of marginalized communities and promote equitable access to clean and safe sanitation facilities.

A Wide range of multi sectors representative attended the interactive meeting such as Aqela Sumbul President Women's Chamber of Comers, Jonaid Mandori Chairman District Coordination Council, Nusrat Ara Coordinator District Reconciliation Committee, Advocates and representatives from civil society and trade unions.

# Fatima case: Police picket setup near her grave

RANIPUR (PPI): After the court granted permission to exhume the grave of the minor maid Fatima, a police picket was established near the girl's grave.

According to the details, the local police swung into action on the report of the unusual activity near the victim's grave. Following a plea to the court for permission to exhume the grave, the family members are concerned that the victim's Fatima's resting place could be tampered, and her remains might disappear.

In an effort to secure the scene and ensure the integrity of the grave, a

temporary police picket was established at the burial site. The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rohail Khoso emphasizing the need to preserve any potential evidence and maintain the sanctity of Fatima's grave.

Earlier to this, Khairpur's judicial magistrate on Thursday granted 4-day physical remand of Pir Asad Shah Jeelani, a member of the influential Pirs of Ranipur, in a case pertaining to the alleged torture of an underage domestic worker in Sindh's Ranipur.

The prime suspect Pir Asad Shah Jeelani was

arrested by the Khairpur Police after he was accused of torturing his 10-year-old maid Fatima Furro to death. The suspect was produced before Judicial Magistrate Sobho Dero as police sought 15-day physical remand of the accused. The magistrate police plea and send accused to jail on 4-day physical remand.

The issue initially came to light after video clips of Fatima's body bearing severe torture marks went viral on social media. In the video, the seriously injured girl is seen struggling to sit up on her bed but soon collapses.



**HYDERABAD:** Members of Christians Unity Council of Pakistan holding a protest rally to condemn Jaranwala incident.

# CDM concerned over substandard quality work in construction of road

## F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Widening and construction work has been started on Chitral to Booni Shandor road two years ago and this developmental work has begun after 75 years, on which the people of this tourist area are very happy. Thousands of domestic and foreign tourists also pass on this road every year to see the Qalasht, Broghal and Shandor festivals. However, the public complains that the work standard on this road is very poor. CDM (Chitral Development Movement) a non political organization whose members working on volunteer basis they visited the road and reviewed the work on it.

CDM members told the media that the protection wall walls on the road side were being made of very poor and sub-standard quality materials. Construction work is not of the standard according to its specification as well as cement work, concrete portion not poured water and

there is no proper curing of the work, which is causing the cement work to be damaged and harassed in a few days.

During the CDM's visit, it was also revealed that the contractor Umar Jan & Company had illegally sublated contract to PT contractors and divided the work of different portions to small contractors and ordinary laborers, which further causing of substandard quality of the work. At the time of the collapsing of the mountain, they drilling a hole some 29 feet long and fill them with ammunition, and then explode it with blasting which caused the whole mountain to become extremely horrible and crack it can fell down any time I case of earthquake or rain, snowfall to cause any major casualty.

Some 150 culverts are building in 75 km road from Chitral to Booni, most of which are unnecessary, but since it gets more money, the contractor is deliberately making maximum culvert. Often the

level of the pipe holding in these culverts is not equal where the water comes that edge is down and where water goes out that edge is above as well as the contractor also not curing the concrete layer on these pipe as a result after a few days it will be damaged and become a pile of ash.

The CDM team also met with Deputy Commissioner of Upper Chitral Mohammad Khalid Zaman in his office and told him their grievances on substandard quality of work on Booni road. DC Upper Chitral assured that he would bring their reservations into the the notice of federal government.

During the visit, it was also observed that the resident engineer from Nespak continued to sit in his office instead of to check the quality of work on the road and he never inspected it even he retired from his service but his seat is still vacant. No other engineer has yet been replaced, which has caused the contractor to be given free hand.

# Police arrest suspect in journalist murder case

SUKKUR (PPI): One more suspect involved in the murder of Senior Journalist Jan Mohammad Mahar was arrested, after which the number of arrested suspects increased to three, police said on Friday.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sukkur stated that after the arrest of accused Munawar Mahar, the number of arrested suspects increased to three, meanwhile, 12 known and three unknown persons have been nominated in the case.

On the other hand, the investigation officer of the case has been changed, the police said that instead of ASI Ghulam Nabi Sheikh, Inspector Muslim Sheikh has been appointed as the investigating officer of the murder case. The police said that Inspector Muslim Sheikh is posted as Station House Officer (SHO) at Police Station, A-Section. The case has been filed under terrorism section in the complaint filed by the victim's brother.

# DC distribute prizes among players M Alam Khan

BANNU: Deputy commissioner Bannu Manzoor Ahmad Afridi distributed prizes among the players on the occasion of 76 anniversary of Pakistan.

As per details, in an event organized by the administration, DC bannu Manzoor Afridi distributed prizes among the winners players. DC praised the thoroughly effects of the administration members involved in organizing such event and vowed that the youth is the future of Pakistan. He advised the youth of the society to be involve in healthy activities as they are the future of the nation.

# Varius depts of hospital inspected F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warraich has visited District Headquarter Hospital Hafizabad, on Friday. He inspected children emergency, general emergency, medicines store and other department in the hospital and reviewed availability of treatment facilities to patients, cleanliness, and other arrangements. He directed the hospital management to increase staff of (Parchi) ticket counter and improve waiting room and be expanded in view of increasing numbers of patients and their attendants.

Assistant Commissioner HR and Coordination Ishfaq Rasul, Medical Superintendent Dr. Shakeel Shahid was also accompanied by DC. DC also directed to improve cleanliness standard in the hospital including canteen and stressed the need of providing special guidance to patients regarding Health Cards introduced by the government for providing free of cost treatment facilities in DHQ Hospital.

DC further said that thousand of rupees were being spent to ensure provision of free of cost medicines in hospitals of the district Hafizabad. He said that better healthcare facilities were right of people and provision of better treatment facilities to patients was top priority of the government. He said that new nursery ward was established and modern equipments provided for treatment of newborns.

# Four arrested F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Dera police during a successful operation against criminal elements arrested four accused and recovered weapons and stolen items from their possession in the limits of Parowa and Choudwan police stations.

SHO Parowa police station Mukhtar Ahmed, while taking action against the criminal elements, recovered 01 gun with 12 bore ammunition and two stolen batteries from the possession of Gul Muhammad son of Gul Hussain resident of Gadiwala and arrested the accused as per the rules.



**MIRAN SHAH:** An Army doctor examining a patient at a free medical camp in North Waziristan.

# Solidarity with Christians expressed

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Condemning the ransacking and torching of churches in Jaranwala town, Faisalabad, participants of a gathering of different communities urged people to respect all religious places across the country irrespective of faith, caste, and color.

The Center of Excellence for Rural Development (CERD), a nongovernmental organization working in several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for gender and human rights' protection, food security and human resource development, arranged a district level dialogue at the district council hall Timergara here on Friday, to promote tolerance and interfaith harmony among different religious communities.

Representatives of different religious groups includ-

ing Christian and Hindus, officials of district administration, representatives of local government, human rights' activists, members of district interfaith committee, male and female members of the district forum, local journalists and area elders attended the dialogue.

The Awaz II programme focal person, former minority district councillor Shehzad Kokhar, member of district inter faith committee Ms Lakshmi Naina, assistant social welfare officer Bahrawar Shad, district vice president Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Akbar Khan, social activist Ibrash Pasha, village council chairman and prayer leader Maulana Nabi Shah, religious scholar Hafiz Yaqub ur Rahman, prominent poet Qasim Hasrat, Farman Ali, journalist Abdullah Madani and civil society representative

Ali Shad spoke on the occasion. The speakers expressed solidarity and sympathy with the Christian community and condemned the Jaranwala, Faisalabad incident.

They said that none of the religions permitted desecration and disrespect of Holy places of other religious groups. They hoped the government would bring the elements involved in torching and ransacking of five churches in Jaranwala. The speakers also urged communities to work collectively for interfaith harmony and respect each other for a peaceful living. The dialogue, according to CERD project coordinator advocate Riaz Muhammad, was designed to enhance mutual understanding among different religious communities and promote interfaith harmony so that peace could not be sabotaged.

# Samina flays Jaranwala incident

## F.P. Report

QUETTA: The most dangerous process in the deterioration of our society, which is consuming our society like fire, is "intolerance and extremism". There is complete contradiction in which the homes of the Christian community and their holy churches were burnt. These views were expressed by Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri further said that the recent incident in Jaranwala is very sad and highly condemnable. She said that the incident should be investigated with complete impartiality and whoever is found to be involved in this heinous act should be severely punished so that such incidents do not happen in future. She also said that such incidents have been happening before but no effective measures have been taken to prevent them and that is the reason why such incidents are happening day by day.

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If it is said that our society is constantly and rapidly deteriorating, then probably the majority will agree with us. There are many factors that are rapidly growing in our society which are leading to rapid degradation of our society, the biggest factor being

intolerance and extremism. How many homes have been destroyed by this disease? Incidents of intolerance and extremism are happening so regularly that the heart cries tears of blood, but it is sad to say that no concrete steps are being taken to reduce and prevent it.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri further said that the recent incident in Jaranwala is very sad and highly condemnable. She said that the incident should be investigated with complete impartiality and whoever is found to be involved in this heinous act should be severely punished so that such incidents do not happen in future. She also said that such incidents have been happening before but no effective measures have been taken to prevent them and that is the reason why such incidents are happening day by day.

She said that it is very important that Let us all together discourage this growing trend of intolerance and extremism.

The best way is for everyone to start showing patience and tolerance from themselves. As far as scholars and religious figures are concerned, the most responsibility is imposed on them because it is their duty to promote the religion of Islam and to convey the teachings of the last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (SAW).

She said that to get rid of the scourge of extremism and intolerance, we all have to play our own role. Be it a Maulvi of a street mosque or a professor of a university, a politician or a journalist. Be it a lawyer or a civil servant, a doctor or a common man, we all will do our part in promoting tolerance and tolerance, only then will the society change because if we protect our future generations from diseases like intolerance and extremism. If we want to save our children from Intolerance, we have to include subjects on this subject in the curriculum.



**QUETTA:** School students taking interesting in various items during their visit to Mehar Ghar Museum.





# NK blasted at UN for arms buildup while people suffer

NEW YORK (AFP): North Korea was accused at the UN Security Council of spending heavily on its nuclear arms program while its people go hungry and lack basic necessities. Volker Turk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told the council that people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have experienced increasingly severe political repression while economic conditions have worsened, with widespread systematic human rights violations.

"Many of the violations I have referred to stem directly from, or support, the increasing militarization of the DPRK," he said. He cited widespread use of forced labor, including by children, to "support the military apparatus of the state and its ability to build weapons." The hearing, requested by the United States, was the first in the Security Council on human rights in North Korea in six years, and came as Pyongyang has sped up its testing of nuclear-capable missiles in the past year, heightening tensions across East Asia.

Surrounded by diplomats from more than 50 countries, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield denounced in a joint statement "human rights violations and abuses" that she said were "inextricably linked with the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile development." Elizabeth Salmon, the UN Human Rights Office's special rapporteur on North Korea, said the prolonged shutdown of the country's borders, the result of global sanctions, has led to increased hardship for the people, including food shortages.

"The frozen conflict is

being used to justify continued militarization within the DPRK with devastating effects on its people," she said. Salmon said Pyongyang's policy is to prioritize resources for the military. "The leadership in the DPRK continues to demand its citizens to tighten their belts, so that the available resources could be used to fund the nuclear and missiles program," she said.

Ilhyeok Kim, a North Korean defector, told the council that he had been forced at a young age to work in fields without compensation, and that the grain they grew all went to the military. "The government turns our blood and sweat into a luxurious life for the leadership and missiles that blast our hard work into the sky," he said. "The money spent on just one missile could feed us for three months," he said.

In the hearing most council members decried the deterioration of living conditions and human rights in North Korea, which lives under stiff sanctions instituted by the council and major countries over its nuclear weapons program. While there was no delegate from Pyongyang present at the Security Council, representatives from China and Russia argued that it was not the place to review North Korean human rights issues. Dmitry Polyansky, Russia's deputy ambassador to the UN, denounced what he called "a cynical and hypocritical attempt by the US and its allies to advance their own political agenda."

The two countries said the discussion was unconstructive and offered no solutions to bring down strategic tensions in the region. Meanwhile, the

United States slammed North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the United Nations for using "repression and cruelty" and totalitarian rule to unlawfully develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. "We cannot have peace without human rights," US Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told the Security Council, which met to publicly for the first time since 2017 to discuss human rights abuses in North Korea.

"Kim Jong Un's repressive, totalitarian control of society – and the systemic, widespread denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms – ensures the regime can expend inordinate public resources developing its unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs, without public objection," she said. North Korea (DPRK) has repeatedly rejected accusations of abuses and blames sanctions for a dire humanitarian situation. Since 2006 it has been under UN sanctions over its ballistic missiles and nuclear programs, but there are aid exemptions.

China said it opposed the public meeting of the 15-member council on abuses in North Korea, but it did not attempt to block it. China failed four times between 2014 and 2017 to stop public meetings on the issue. "The council should play a constructive role in resuming talk and easing tensions," China's Deputy UN Ambassador Geng Shuang told the meeting, which was requested by the United States, Albania and Japan. "Pushing the council to consider the human rights situation in the DPRK will not only not help to ease, but escalate the situation."

# US sanctions Russian operatives

WASHINGTON (AP): The US imposed sanctions and visa restrictions on four Russian intelligence operatives accused of direct involvement in the 2020 poisoning of Alexei Navalny, a Russian politician and corruption investigator who is one of President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics.

Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned Alexei Alexandrov, Konstantin Kudryavtsev, Ivan Osipov and Vladimir Panyayev. All are operatives of the Federal Security Services, known as the FSB, the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB. Panyayev is reported to have tailed Navalny prior to his poisoning; the others are operatives of the FSB's Criminalistics Institute, a secret laboratory which is reported to work with poisons. Navalny fell ill on a flight back to Moscow from the Siberian city of Tomsk in August 2020 and was taken to a hospital after the plane made an emergency landing in Omsk. He was transferred to Berlin, where

he spent weeks hospitalized in a coma and recovered. The US government is among those that believe the FSB officers used the nerve agent Novichok to poison Navalny.

He was subsequently imprisoned when he returned to Russia in January 2021, and this month a Russian court sentenced Navalny to an additional 19 years in prison. Matthew Miller, a spokesperson for the US State Department, said the US condemns "the latest injustice against Navalny" and renews its call for his immediate release.

Brian E. Nelson, Treasury's undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, said the attempt to kill Navalny "represents the Kremlin's contempt for human rights, and we will continue to use the authorities at our disposal to hold the Kremlin's willing would-be executioners to account." Treasury had already sanctioned the four men two years ago. The sanctions announced were under the Magnitsky Act

"for having acted as agents of or on behalf of a person in a matter relating to extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against individuals seeking to expose illegal activity carried out by officials of the Government of the Russian Federation."

The sanctions block any property they may own in the US and bar them from doing business with US citizens and companies. Separately, the State Department banned them and their immediate family members from entering the US. Navalny is the most prominent member of Russia's opposition. He campaigned to challenge Putin in the 2018 presidential election, but was barred from running. Like other opposition politicians in Russia, he had been frequently detained by law enforcement and harassed by pro-Kremlin groups. In 2017, Navalny was attacked by several men who threw antiseptic in his face, damaging an eye.

# Iran reporter defiant after latest jail release

TEHRAN (AFP): An Iranian journalist said she had no regrets over posting a picture of herself without a headscarf in defiance of Iran's dress laws, sharing a similar image following her latest release from jail. Nazila Maroufian last year interviewed the father of the young Iranian woman Mahsa Amini whose death in police custody sparked months of protests.

She walked out of Tehran's Evin prison after more than a month behind bars, posting on social media a picture of herself without a headscarf and the slogan "Don't accept slavery, you deserve the best!". She was promptly detained again and moved outside of Tehran to Qarchak women's prison, where conditions have been criticised repeatedly by human rights groups. But Maroufian, whose age is given by Persian media outside Iran as 23, was

then released from Qarchak, she posted on social media.

"Do you regret the photo you posted when you were released? Do you admit you made a mistake?" she asked herself in a rhetorical question in the post. "No; I didn't do anything wrong," she added in reply, posting a similar image of herself bareheaded in a white shirt with her right arm stretched up in a 'V' for victory sign. Last October, Maroufian published an interview on the Mostaghel Online news site with Amjad Amini, the father of Mahsa Amini whose death in custody last September after she allegedly violated the dress rules sparked months of protests.

In the interview, Amjad Amini accused authorities of lying about the circumstances of his daughter's death. Iranian authorities have indicated she died

because of a health problem, but the family and activists have said she suffered a blow to the head while in custody. Maroufian, a Tehran-based journalist from Amini's hometown of Sazej in Kurdistan province, was first arrested in November. She was later released but in January said she had been sentenced to two years in jail, suspended for five years, on charges of propaganda against the system and spreading false news. Her rapid return to prison after posting defiant images on her release recalled the case of labour activist Sepideh Gholian. In March, Gholian was rearrested hours after she walked free from jail bareheaded and chanting slogans against Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Gholian, one of the most prominent female activists detained in Iran, remains in prison.

# UN says militants are occupying a school complex

BEIRUT (AP): Two weeks after clashes between armed factions in Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp ended, militants are still occupying a United Nations-run school complex, UN officials said.

Dorothee Klaus, director of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, or UNRWA, in Lebanon, said in a statement that the agency has "received alarming reports that armed actors continue to occupy its installations including a school compound" in the Ein el-Hilweh camp. The compound provides education to 3,200 out of a total of 6,000 students in the camp, which is home to more than 50,000 people. Earlier this month, Klaus said that the start of the school year might be delayed for students in the camp due to damages to the school facilities.

Klaus said the continued presence of militants is a "grave violation of the inviolability of UN premises under international law, which compromises the neutrality of UNRWA installations and undermines the safety and security of our staff" and of the refugees living in the camp. A local Palestinian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said militants from both of the opposing sides had taken over different schools, using them as a "safe haven," and had looted computers and equipment.

The school buildings had been heavily fortified to protect children in the event of clashes, after previous outbreaks of fighting in the camp. Several days of heavy street battles broke out between the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the Islamist groups Jund al Sham and Shabab al Muslim after Fatah accused the Islamists of gunning down a Fatah military general, Abu Ashraf al Armoushi, in the camp on July 30. The fighting killed at least 13 people, injured dozens more and caused millions of dollars of damages in the camp, according to UNRWA officials.

# Yoon heads to US

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol departed for the United States for a summit with US and Japanese leaders as the three countries seek to step up cooperation amid mounting shared concerns about China and North Korea. Yoon, a conservative, has made improving relations with Tokyo a central foreign policy goal after relations soured under his predecessor amid legal spats over Koreans forced to work in Japan's wartime factories, trade disputes, and longstanding tensions over a disputed island.

Ties between South Korea and Japan have long been strained by disputes dating to Japan's 1910-1945 occupation of the Korean Peninsula. The summit will set a "new milestone" in trilateral cooperation, Yoon said. He is set to meet with US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland on Friday, where they will launch a series of joint initiatives on technology, education and defence, senior US officials said.

The meeting will lead to at least two joint statements by the leaders, South Korea's deputy national security adviser Kim Tae-hyo said. The United States, which has separate alliances with South Korea and Japan, has been pressing both countries to improve ties to ensure better cooperation on issues such as North Korea and China. North Korea's state media said its leader Kim Jong Un has called for an increase in missile production to secure "overwhelming military power" and be ready for war, as South Korea and the US gear up for annual military drills. Yoon departed hours after wrapping up several days of funeral rites for his father, who died at age 92.

# Moscow shows off seized Western military equipment

MOSCOW (AFP): In the Moscow region's Patriot Park, dedicated to the achievements of the Russian army, an officer wearing a green cap stood in front of a captured US MaxxPro armoured vehicle. "It was abandoned on a battlefield because it stopped working," the serviceman told Russian state-run agency TASS.

He then turned to a British Husky vehicle, whose windshield was riddled with what seemed to be bullet holes. Around him, more Western military equipment was on display, an opportunity for the Russian army to flaunt its achievements and mock the counteroffensive that Ukraine launched in June. A few metres away, another Russian officer was showing off a French AMX-10 RC and its famously long anti-tank gun.

The collection of "trophies" that AFP journalists saw also included an Australian Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle, a US M113 personnel carrier and a Swedish CV90 combat vehicle. "A large part" of the show consisted of British equipment, including Husky and Mastiff vehicles as well as a Saxon personnel carrier, according to the defence ministry press service. Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, who now deals with questions related to the country's military industry as the deputy head of the Russian security council, visited the exhibition.

"Advanced technologies, that's worth looking at," he said while inspecting a military vehicle purportedly from Australia, according to footage from Russian state-run agency RIA Novosti. Medvedev also looked at items supposed to show the "ideological indoctrination" of the Ukrainian youth, including clothes with national



slogans and emblems of the Azov regiment -- considered an extremist organisation in Russia. The exhibition also featured Ukrainian-made weapons allegedly seized since the start of the military campaign in February 2022.

Last summer, the Russian army had already presented equipment it said it brought back from Ukraine. The display is one of the attractions at the Army-2023 Forum, which runs until August 20 and is attended by military delegations from countries deemed "friendly" by Moscow. After the setbacks last year -- with the withdrawal from Kherson and the northern Kharkiv region -- the Russian army wants to show it has recovered.

Ukraine launched another counteroffensive in June but its troops are now contending with well-entrenched Russian positions. Ukrainian troops' slow progress provided the Kremlin with a new talking point: the counteroffensive, it says, is a failure.

# US imposes sanctions on two Syrian militias

BEIRUT (AP): The United States imposed sanctions on two Turkey-backed Syrian militias and the groups' leaders accused of human rights abuses in Syria's northwestern, opposition-held enclave. The groups are operating in the town of Afrin, which has been under Turkish-backed opposition forces since 2018, following an Ankara-backed military operation. That offensive pushed Syrian Kurdish fighters and thousands of Kurdish residents from the area.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned The Suleiman Shah Brigade and The Hamza Division, as well as their leaders, Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim, Walid Hussein al-Jasim, and Sayf Boulad Abu Bakr. The Suleiman Shah Brigade was accused of abductions

and extortion of residents, especially Afrin's Kurdish residents, to force them to abandon their homes and flee or to "pay large ransoms for return of their property or family members".

The Treasury said The Hamza Division was also involved in running detention centers where it held abducted victims for ransom who were tortured and sexually abused. Mohammad Hussein al-Jasim, who leads The Suleiman Shah Brigade, allegedly ordered his forces to displace Kurdish residents and give their property to Syrians from outside the area "often related" to fighters of the brigade. The Treasury estimated that al-Jasim was "likely generating tens of millions of dollars a year" through abductions, confiscations, and ransoms.

Al-Jasim's Turkey-based

car dealership Al-Safir Oto was also listed, because he allegedly invested his money there. According to the announcement, commanders of his brigade managed the dealership's different branches. It was co-owned by sanctioned militia leader Ahmad Ihsan Fayyad al-Hayes, who heads the Ahrar Al-Sharqiya group. His younger brother, Walid Hussein al-Jasim, was accused of several cases of sexual assault, as well as killing a prisoner unable to pay ransom in 2020. Meanwhile, the head of The Hamza Brigades, Sayf Boulad Abu Bakr, was sanctioned for the "brutal repression of the local population." The statement said he had been involved in the kidnapping of Kurdish women and severely abusing prisoners, sometimes killing them.

# ‘Putin not pushing Belarus to enter war’

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian President Vladimir Putin is not trying to push Belarus into joining the war in Ukraine, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said in an online interview published. "To involve Belarus... what will that give? Nothing," said Lukashenko, one of Putin's closest allies, whose country borders Ukraine, Russia and three NATO countries including Poland.

"If you Ukrainians do not cross our border, we will never participate in this war. In this hot war. But we will always help Russia - they are our allies," he said in the interview with Diana Panchenko, a pro-Russian Ukrainian journalist.

Lukashenko also said he believed Putin had already achieved his goals in what Russia calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine, and said the two sides should sit at the negotiating table and be ready to discuss all the issues, including the future of Crimea and other Ukrainian territories Moscow claims. "Its (Russia's) goals have already been fulfilled to date. Ukraine will never behave so aggressively towards Russia after the end of this war, as it did before the war," Lukashenko said.

Putin said Russia had to send tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine last year to protect its own security and that of native

Russian-speakers, especially in eastern Ukraine, from what he said were "neo-Nazis" and ultra-nationalists in power in Kyiv. Ukraine and its Western allies say this is nonsense and cast Russia's invasion as an imperial-style land grab. Lukashenko warned that Belarus would respond in the event of external aggression, including through the use of nuclear weapons that Moscow has stationed on its territory. "There can be only one threat - aggression against our country. If aggression against our country starts from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, we will respond instantly with everything we have," he said.

# ‘UN says it will block road construction’

NICOSIA (AP): The UN mission in ethnically divided Cyprus said it will block construction by breakaway Turkish Cypriots of a road that would encroach on a UN-controlled buffer zone and likely raise tensions on the Mediterranean island nation.

The world body plans to "block or frustrate construction of the road by non-violent means," said Aleem Siddique, spokesman for the UN peacekeeping force, known as UNFICYP. The road would violate the forces' mandate of maintaining the status quo inside the buffer zone, he added. Work began earlier in the day on the road to connect the village of Arsos in the Turkish Cypriot north with the mixed Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot village of

Pyla, just south of the buffer zone and inside the Greek Cypriot south, where the island's internationally recognized government is seated.

The road would give Turkish Cypriots direct access to Pyla by circumventing a checkpoint on the fringes of a British military base, one of two bases that the U.K. retained after Cyprus gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960. Greek Cypriots perceive the road construction as a move with a military purpose at a sensitive spot along the buffer zone spanning 180 kilometers (120 miles).

Maintaining the status quo of the buffer zone is enshrined in the UN mission's mandate since 1974, when Turkey invaded in the wake of a coup mounted by

Greek junta-backed supporters of union with Greece. The UN says there have been numerous infringements of the buffer zone by both sides over the years. But this road construction is seen as "an attempt at a very serious violation of the status quo," according to Cyprus government spokesman Constantinos Letymbiotis.

Letymbiotis added that the Cyprus government is working with the UN peacekeepers to thwart the road construction. The Cypriot government has been pushing hard to restart moribund negotiations to resolve the island's division and warned that construction of the road would entail "negative repercussions" on efforts to resume talks and on Turkey's relations with the EU.

# Lebanon's Hezbollah rises from shadows into regional force

BEIRUT (Reuters): Hezbollah has risen from a shadowy group established during Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war to a heavily armed force with big sway over the Lebanese state. Governments including the United States deem it a terrorist organisation.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards founded Hezbollah in 1982 to export its Islamic Revolution and fight Israeli forces that had invaded Lebanon. Sharing Tehran's Shi'ite Islamist ideology, Hezbollah recruited among Lebanese Shi'ite Muslims. Groups that Lebanese security officials and Western intelligence have said were linked to Hezbollah launched suicide attacks on Western embassies and targets and kidnapped Westerners in the 1980s. One group, Islamic Jihad, was thought to be led by Imad Moughniyah, a top Hezbollah commander who was killed in a car bomb in Syria in 2008.

The United States holds Hezbollah responsible for a suicide bombing that destroyed US Marine headquarters in Beirut in 1983, killing 241 servicemen, and a suicide bombing the same year on the US embassy. A suicide bombing also hit a French barracks in Beirut in 1983, killing 58 French paratroopers. Referring to those attacks and hostage-taking, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in a 2022 interview they were carried out by small groups not linked to Hezbollah.

Hezbollah kept its weapons at the end of the civil war to fight Israeli forces that were occupying the predominantly Shi'ite south. Years of guerrilla warfare led Israel to withdraw in 2000. Hezbollah demonstrated its military advances in 2006 during a five-week war with Israel, which erupted after it crossed into Israel, kidnapping two soldiers and killing others. The war killed 1,200 people in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 158 Israelis, mostly soldiers. Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Israel.

Its military power grew after deploying into Syria in 2012 to help President Bashar al-Assad fight mostly Sunni rebels. Hezbollah boasts precision rockets and says it can hit all parts of Israel. In 2021, Nasrallah said the group had 100,000 fighters. Iran gives Hezbollah weapons and money. The United States estimates Iran has allocated it hundreds of millions of dollars annually in recent years. Hezbollah has fought and trained Iran-backed groups in Iraq, Saudi Arabia says. Hezbollah has also fought in support of the Iran-allied Houthis in Yemen. Hezbollah denies this.



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## Good luck new custodians, arena is yours

**P**RESIDENT Arif Alvi on Thursday administered oath to 19 members of newly appointed interim cabinet of the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, who would steer the country during the election season. According to a list of cabinet members issued by the Presidency, 16 federal ministers took oath while the interim Chief Executive also appointed three advisers for his ease.

A glimpse on the list of caretaker Ministers and advisers of the newly crowned Prime Minister gave a gust of satisfaction to every Pakistani that except a few individuals rest of the aides of Mr. Kakar have a nonpolitical background, despite the fact that all appointed former bureaucrats served as a yes man with the past rulers once in the country's history. A majority of the appointees are well known to the public because of their regular appearance in prime time talk shows on private TV Channels, scholarly work and reporting on the media. Interestingly, a few individuals only took benefit of their relationship with top political figures or intimacy with powerful quarters in the national capital. Thus, along with some genuine nation saviours, several opportunists and persons of no character/value reached top slots for the sake of their hidden motives, political and monetary gains or to serve as a pawn for their facilitators.

Previously, the caretaker Prime Minister and his cabinet was only assigned with the task of holding peaceful and smooth elections, maintenance of domestic law and order, and fulfilment of routine governance tasks at the centre and provincial levels. However, the PML-N led coalition government introduced multiple amendments to the Election Act-2017 before leaving the office, that empowered the caretaker setup to make important decisions like elected administrations regarding country's long term foreign and monetary policies, dealing with global institutions and signing of bilateral/ multilateral contracts at the global level. Although, it was the genuine need of the country, yet that legislation was not time bound or case specific and likely to remained effective and all future interim governments would enjoy unlimited powers, while the coming generations will pay price for self motivated decisions of non elected and foreign imported leaders as it did in the past.

Realistically, Pakistani politics and state affairs revolve around the party policies of the major civic groups, who introduced the legacy of compromise, give and take, and win win strategy regarding important state affairs such as appointment of NAB Chairman, selection of Chief Election Commissioner, nomination of caretaker Prime Minister and many other important portfolios including Chairman Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament for the so-called purpose of ensuring merit and promoting transparency in the governmental affairs. All that has been done in good political sense yet it caused serious issues with respect to across the board accountability, weakened national institutions, undermined rule of the law and gave birth to multiple social, political and governance problems in the country.

Currently, an interim setup has sworn into the office amid highly volatile political and economic landscapes in the country. The public has good belief in caretaker Prime Minister and his newly crowned advisers, who recently took over a delicate national responsibility to smoothly, safely, and impartiality sail the country through a brief but very crucial election period. Hopefully, the entire team would religiously undertake its official obligations without indulging in political biases, lust for power and monetary gains or political agenda of either group in the country. Seemingly, the caretaker leaders would have no other manifesto except to think about Pakistan and work for the betterment and well being of the Pakistanis. The public and media is specially focused on performance of the short-term government, whereas, cabinet as a whole and each member individually would be gauged for his conduct and service to the nation. Although, task is difficult and situations are inimical yet nothing is impossible and the Pakistani nation has a history of doing miracles in difficult circumstances throughout in the past. Good luck new rulers, you got an opportunity to serve the nation and leave an inspiring legacy. After all, the nation will remember you for good deeds or otherwise throughout in the Country's history.

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## Conservative group aims to persuade Republicans to support Ukraine

Rob Garver

**A** new organization in Washington will spend \$2 million in an advertising campaign aimed at shoring up Republican lawmakers' support for Ukraine. The effort is being launched ahead of a spending fight in Congress that is likely to endanger continued US funding for that country's fight against a Russian invasion.

Republicans for Ukraine, a project of the larger organization Defending Democracy Together, is spearheaded by Republican pollster Sarah Longwell and conservative pundit Bill Kristol. The campaign takes shape as support for continued US aid to Ukraine is waning among all US voters, but especially among conservative Republicans.

The group has solicited video testimonials from more than 50 Republican voters across the country, in which they outline their reasons for continuing to support US aid to Ukraine. Republicans for Ukraine will use those videos in a series of advertisements directed at GOP voters and lawmakers, including commercials scheduled to air during the party's first presidential primary debate next week.

John Conway, the director of strategy for Republicans for Ukraine, told VOA that support for democracy abroad has historically been a core value of the Republican Party, and that the aim of the group is to showcase the voices of GOP voters who still feel that way. "We're elevating the voices of real Republicans and conservatives who want the United States to continue to fight for Ukrainian democracy," Conway said. "We're going to use the testimonials of these Republicans and conservatives to counter a lot of the loudest voices in the Republican Party who are willing to let Ukraine democracy fall and are willing to appease [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, in his fight in Ukraine." Conway said that during the coming negotiations over spending bills, his group will target Republican lawmakers in a position to exert influence on decisions about aid to

Ukraine. However, he said the group is also trying to create a "permission structure" that helps rank-and-file Republican voters to see that membership in the party and support for Ukraine are not mutually exclusive.

"Showing these messengers, people like themselves, creates these permission structures where it's acceptable to be a mem-

ber of the Republican Party - it might even be fine to be a Trump supporter and to have the MAGA hat - and to still support the United States' efforts in Ukraine," he said.

US support for Ukraine since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022 has included military, financial and humanitarian assistance. Combined, that support has totaled more than \$113 billion, according to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Currently, the administration of President Joe Biden says that it has enough funds to continue supporting Ukraine at current levels for a few more months. Last week, Biden requested that Congress approve an additional \$24 billion in order to maintain support into fiscal 2025, which begins in October.

When lawmakers return to Washington after their August recess, they will have until the end of September to agree on a broader spending bill or risk a government shut-

down beginning as early as Oct. 1. Among prominent figures in the Republican Party, there are a wide range of positions on continued support for Ukraine. Former President Donald Trump, currently the front-runner for the party's presidential nomination in 2024, refused to commit to supporting Ukraine in an interview in May. In the past, he has referred to Putin's inva-

sion as "genius." In the Senate, Minority Leader Mitch McConnell recently reaffirmed his support for Ukraine, calling the war there "the most important thing going on internationally right now" in an interview with Politico. Senator Lindsey Graham, a vocal advocate of Ukraine's bid to join NATO, has also continued to voice support.

However, other Republicans in the Senate, such as Josh Hawley of Missouri and J.D. Vance of Ohio, have been openly skeptical of continued assistance. In the House of Representatives, where Republicans have the majority, the number of GOP members opposed to continued funding for Ukraine is significant among the party's base. That means that it will be difficult to pass a bill that includes more funding without extensive Democratic assistance.

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has said that he will not bring a supplemental Ukraine funding bill to the floor for a vote, meaning that any such funding

could only find its way to the floor of the House if it is part of a larger spending bill.

Popular support for providing aid to Ukraine was high and bipartisan in the early days of Russia's invasion but has fallen as the war has dragged on and costs have mounted. Significant differences between Democrats and Republicans have also emerged. A recent poll conducted by CNN and the research company SSRS found that 51% of Americans believe that the US has done enough to support Ukraine, while 48% say it should do more. The same survey found that 55% believe Congress should not authorize additional funding for Ukraine, while 45% believe lawmakers should. The results show significant differences depending on how respondents identified politically. Among those who identified as Republican, 59% said that the US has done enough to support Ukraine, and 71% said that Congress should not authorize more funding.

Among Democrats, only 38% of respondents said that they believe the US has already done enough, and the same percentage were in favor of cutting off funding. Respondents who identified as politically independent were more likely to oppose continued support for Ukraine, with 56% saying the US has already done enough and 55% in favor of blocking additional funding. Despite public polling that shows a majority of Republicans believe the US has already done enough for Ukraine and that funding should be cut off, Conway, of Republicans for Ukraine, says he believes there is an opportunity to change some minds.

"We think that public opinion is still a little bit malleable right now," he said. "So we're not ready to give up the fight. We think that there's still a portion of the Republican Party - and a substantial one - that is receptive to this message. We're going to do the hard work of bringing folks back to that kind of traditional Republican value of supporting democracy around the world."

VOA

## New PM is no panacea for Tunisia's economic woes

Talmiz Ahmad

**O**N Aug. 1, Tunisian President Kais Saied dismissed Prime Minister Najla Bouden and appointed Ahmed Hachani, a human resources director in the country's central bank, in her place. The new prime minister is charged with immediately addressing Tunisia's serious economic situation, even as the country remains engulfed in a political impasse, largely created by the president himself.

Tunisia has been experiencing economic problems since 2011 when popular uprisings toppled the long-standing president Zine el-Abidine ben Ali and took the country on a democratic path. However, while Tunisia acquired a democratic constitution, the country's politicians remained neither capable of, nor interested in, enacting the sweeping economic reforms so desperately needed. The 2011-19 period is recalled as the lost decade of growth, when gross domestic product declined to 1.7 percent on average. In the absence of economic reforms, the country had sluggish economic activity, low investment, reduced trade and slow job creation. In October 2019, the people voted Saied in as president. Although their new leader was an academic with no political experience, the people responded enthusiastically to his promise to end corruption and reform the economy.

But Saied's two years in power saw no change; the economy remained in an abysmal state. Saied blamed the country's politicians and concluded that the national political order needed to be uprooted. In July 2021, he effected a constitutional coup by suspending the national assembly and constitution, and assumed all legislative and executive authority. A year later, a new constitution was approved, effectively doing away with Tunisia's brief encounter with the democratic process. But while the president exercises unquestioned authority, he has not been able to bring about the far-reaching changes required. Observers have pointed out that the business system remains inefficient, posing severe difficulties for investment and trade, with the state retaining the principal role in the economy.

The Ukraine war has wreaked havoc on the already-vulnerable economy. Tunisia imports over 60 percent of its wheat and barley from Russia and Ukraine. As grain prices shot up in the wake of the conflict, the country began to experience shortages of flour and other food items, such as rice, sugar, semolina, cooking oil, coffee, milk, medicines and fuel. In February 2023, the inflation rate increased for the 18th consecutive month to 10.4 percent, the highest since December 1984. Tunisia also experienced sharp increases in the price of gas imported from Algeria. The country's 2022 budget suffered losses of \$1.3 billion on account of the Ukraine war. Economic recovery has been slow: GDP grew by 2.5 percent in 2022, with the services sector seeing a 4 percent growth, largely due to a pick-up in

tourism and transport. But unemployment remains high at about 15 percent, the same as in 2019, though joblessness among women is much higher at over 20 percent. The informal sector has 45 percent of the country's total employment - 1.6 million out of a total workforce of 3.6 million. The youth make up 23 percent of the workforce, but constitute 32 percent of the informal sector.

In October 2022, Tunisia negotiated a four-year agreement with the International Monetary Fund for \$1.9 billion to support economic reforms. The IMF conditions included gradual elimination of subsidies, fair taxation, improved governance and transparency in the public sector, and wide-ranging structural reforms. However, the agreement was left in limbo in April 2023 when the president rejected foreign "diktat" on national economic policies. Saied fears that the conditions proposed by the IMF would encourage street protests of the kind that had brought down Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali's government in 2011. He asserts, instead, that the economic malaise is due to corruption, thus justifying a further crackdown on opposition figures. He has also blamed the presence of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, with his sharp words leading to attacks on asylum-seekers and even black Tunisians.

Tunisia's political and economic situation has reverberated in both the US and EU. In 2022, in response to the country ending its democratic order, the US suspended a multibillion-dollar loan from the IMF and a \$500 million infrastructure grant from the Millennium Challenge Corporation foreign aid agency. However, Washington's official position has remained ambivalent, responding to the end of the democratic order with only relatively mild diplomatic criticisms. The US values Tunisia as its strategic partner in North Africa, despite the authoritarian system in place today. In July, the World Bank announced it would provide about \$270 million for a green energy project in Tunisia. Restoration of further US financial support in the near future cannot be ruled out.

In June, Tunisia hosted an EU delegation that included the Italian and Dutch prime ministers, as well as European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Later, on July 16, Tunisia and the EU signed a "strategic partnership" agreement, with Brussels agreeing to provide one billion euros (\$1.1 billion) to promote Tunisia's economic recovery and upgrade facilities to control the movement of illegal migration. This year alone about 400,000 migrants are expected to enter Italy. Saudi Arabia has also announced a soft loan of \$400 million and a grant of \$100 million for Tunisia. However, even with a new prime minister, these palliatives are unlikely to bring about the changes the country needs. Having no plans to pursue economic reforms, Saied has chosen the more perilous authoritarian path. The outlook for Tunisia is dismal.

The Telegraph

## Liberals are oblivious to their hypocrisy over the Channel migrant crisis

Michael Deacon

**T**HE row over small boats has been raging for a very long time. Yet there's still one aspect of it that I don't understand. Since 2016, British liberals have given the consistent impression that the EU is an earthly paradise: prosperous, stable, forward-looking and inclusive. By contrast, they fume, Brexit Britain is a hateful, backward, crumbling, economically doomed dump.

Their position is clear. Yet, whenever anyone suggests that migrants should stay in France - the largest country in the EU - rather than cross the Channel to Britain, liberals are appalled. They react as if it's unspeakably cruel and inhumane. Logically, however, they should take the opposite view. They should think it's cruel and inhumane to make the migrants stay in nasty old Britain, rather than

the heavenly EU. If anything, British metropolitan liberals should be gathering in their tens of thousands to form a human barrier all the way along the Kent coast, in order to prevent migrants from entering - for their own good. "Turn back immediately!" they should bellow through their loudhailers at every approaching dinghy. "Do not, repeat not, seek sanctuary in Britain! This country is a failing, bigoted, corrupt, austerity-ruined, sewage-sodden, virulently Islamophobic hell-hole populated by ghastly Tory-voting gammon who worship statues of slave traders and despise anyone whose skin is any colour but crimson! So for pity's sake, turn your boats around, to enjoy a glorious new life in elegant, cultured, joyously cosmopolitan France! We'd leap aboard and join you ourselves, if only the stupid Brexiters hadn't ended our

freedom of movement!"

That at least would be logically consistent. Instead, however, British liberals are still outraged by Lee Anderson's suggestion that migrants return to France. But why? Don't they think these poor migrants have already suffered enough, without having to endure the misery of life in Brexit Britain? What makes liberals so eager to inflict this fresh horror upon these desperate, vulnerable people? It seems dreadfully callous of them. I think it's time they showed some compassion - by campaigning to shut our borders straight away. Shopkeepers are living in fear. After a horde of youths caused mayhem on London's Oxford Street last week, inspired by videos on TikTok about shoplifting, there have been constant rumours of teenage

flash-mobs plotting to loot high streets across the South East. Clearly something must be done. But what?

One person who thinks she knows the answer is Mariana Mazzucato. A professor in "the Economics of Innovation and Public Value" at University College London, she is, according to The New Republic magazine, one of the world's "most important thinkers about innovation". And her proposal is as follows. Open some youth clubs. This is the key, she told her 250,000 followers on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter: we must "care for youth". To this end, the Government must "invest in public swimming pools, well-run youth clubs, community centres, mental health programmes, summer activities..."

Mental health programmes are one thing. The other items on her list, however, imply that young people turn to crime largely because they're bored. But this is nonsense. It isn't even new. It's a decades-old cliché. When I was a teenager in the 1990s, I remember commentators claiming that we would stop joyriding, shoplifting and mugging old ladies if only we had youth clubs to go to, where we could play nice wholesome games of ping-pong and Boggle. Where this naive notion comes from, I don't know. But it's only ever applied to criminals who are young. Never older ones. No one says, "Harold Shipman would never have murdered all those patients if the Government had opened more lawn bowls clubs." Or: "If only Jack the Ripper could have joined a local book group."

In any case, today's



# Harnessing the power of youth to drive climate action

Eugene Willemsen

**YOUTH is wasted on the young, so the old saying goes. When we are young, we have not been around long enough to experience the ravages of time on things we hold dear (for example, our health), nor have we gained the wisdom that comes with time to look after those things that are priceless.**

But time is the resource that is all upside down for the youth of today. Growing up on a rapidly warming planet, they have seen the damage to our environment without having to look far. And while they have not had the decades of developing solutions and implementing action that previous generations had, they have been promptly ushered into the starting stalls of the climate regulating race, with the hopes of the world pinned on them. It would be daunting for anyone to "save the world," so no wonder that eco-anxiety is a genuine concern. "Great Expectations: Arab Youth's Sustainability Priorities," an Economist Impact report supported by the Arab Youth Center, notes that 70 percent of Arab youths have felt anxious about the future of the environment and the impact of climate change. But they are also taking action. Almost all (98 percent) young Arabs surveyed said that they have made environmentally conscious lifestyle choices over the past year, including reducing food waste, limiting water and energy use, and recycling household waste.

Their large share of this challenge is not fair, but it is true that the young individuals all around us, inspiring us, thinking differently about things, mandating urgency from the public and private sectors and driving positive impact in their personal capacity, are some of the strongest changemakers we have in the climate change fight. So, how do we come together to harness the power of youth and its ability to reinvent, renew and reshape to move climate action forward?

To start with, the simplest and

most straightforward first step, education, is critical. Education's key role in addressing climate change was emphasized when UNESCO launched its global youth survey report, which revealed that 70 percent of young people question the quality of the climate change education they receive. An even larger majority (77 percent) strongly agree climate change should be taught by people from various backgrounds, to address the complexity of the issue. Young people are bored of passive learning. They want to absorb skills in engaging, hands-on ways, including experiential, project-based activities. Increasing youth participation in society is among Vision 2030's key goals and Saudi Arabia is pouring investment into initiatives that can provide youths with more opportunities to drive positive change. Environmental education is already integrated within school curricula, university courses and related scholarships in Saudi Arabia. However, experts have pointed out that institutions should lead the transition to green jobs to support the move to a low-carbon economy and leverage existing research from universities to facilitate knowledge transfer. The private sector has a critical role to play in this - whether that is through investment in targeted programs, advancing sustainability infrastructure within educational institutions or raising ambitions for the jobs of the future, we have the power to shape mindsets and shift behavior patterns from a young age.

We already know that innovative climate technologies are necessary to slow down and adapt to the impact of climate change and extreme weather. Young people's willingness to question the status quo and think outside the box can lead to breakthrough ideas and solutions. It is important that we motivate, enable, incentivize and support them to come up with technological solutions that can be developed and

scaled up. To be successful, policies must enable bottom-up experimentation and learning from the youth and for the youth. Whether that is through youth-run platforms that share climate-related knowledge, partnerships that unleash innovation, funding that supports young people's entrepreneurial ambitions or platforms that spark dialogue, there are several priority accelerators to help build a green, inclusive future. Young people are often at the forefront of climate action, yet they cannot shoulder the responsibility for tackling the crisis alone.

The power of networks, contacts and collaborative efforts cannot be underestimated. If we want to extract the best thinking and innovation, we need to enable the youth to tap into a wider network of influence, including government ministries, private companies, community centers, business groups, universities, advocacy organizations, environmental, social and governance consultancies, thought leaders and sustainability champions. Through the Arab Youth Hackathon, young people have the opportunity to create smarter solutions for solving climate challenges and have their voices put to the forefront with stakeholders across the board, including universities, entrepreneurial networks, investors and private sector players, who, with their resources and influence, can then drive this innovation at scale. Empowering the participation and action of youth - in addressing climate change, managing disaster risks and promoting movements and campaigns - is vital. COP28 is determined to ensure that youth voices and ambitions are a focal point of the climate process and, within the COP28 team, nearly 70 percent of negotiators are under the age of 35.

A dedicated COP28 youth climate champion has also been appointed to lead the first International Youth Climate

Delegate Program cohort of 100 youth delegates, representing the world's least-developed countries, small island developing states, Indigenous peoples and minority groups, making the sustainability conversation more inclusive. Access to networks and diverse angles and experiences alone are not enough. We need to build a community of resources and support that is positioned for longevity, allyship and proactive support. When youths posit, we must prioritize the time to be open to their ideas, share our own insights and generate new connections so the process of discovery and innovation continues. Young people must have a say in the climate policies of the future and these policies must explicitly reference youth, be rights-based, address the specific risks they face in multiple sectors like education, health, water, food security, nutrition and energy, and, above all, be inclusive.

We need to create an environment where the uniqueness and diversity of youth's contributions, priorities and perspectives can thrive. For example, this can be through inter-generational dialogues to increase mutual understanding or by empowering them to be key stakeholders accountable for climate targets. Young people are comfortable in a world of dialogue and collaboration and, as the generation that will likely face the harshest outcomes of climate change, they are also motivated to contribute to solutions. They are already influencing behavior in their communities, urging policymakers to make formal changes and thinking innovatively about how to tackle environmental challenges. In the wake of Saturday's International Youth Day, we must face up to the reality that it is up to all of us to give this generation everything we can possibly give, to bring change that matters. It is a responsibility we must embrace. It is an opportunity we must make the most of. It is a chance for everyone to do what is right for the planet.

# Blackwater paved the way for Wagner

Ibrahim Al-Marashi

**IN the aftermath of the mutiny by the Wagner private military company (PMC) in Russia, many observers expected that its founder Yevgeny Prigozhin would pay dearly for his actions, perhaps with his life. Instead, the mercenary commander was sent into "exile" in neighbouring Belarus and his fighters continued operations outside Russia and Ukraine. Prigozhin eventually met with Russian President Vladimir Putin personally and then announced that his PMC would focus on its work in Africa.**

It is hardly surprising that Putin has decided to preserve a mercenary force that has proven quite effective in pushing forward his foreign policy adventures in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. He has likely learned a lesson or two from another great power - the United States - whose heavy reliance on PMCs paved the way for the growing privatization and outsourcing of war across the globe. For the US, Russia, and other powers, military contractors are serving as convenient means for proxy warfare which offer plausible deniability and mitigate potential domestic tensions over foreign wars.

The employment of contractors by the US government is not a recent phenomenon, but over the past two decades it has greatly expanded. While in World War II, 10 percent of American armed forces were privately contracted, during the "war on terror", launched in 2001, they reached some 50 percent, sometimes more. Needing hundreds of thousands of personnel to carry out military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere, but fearing domestic backlash, the US government had to turn to PMCs.

Since the start of the "war on terror", the Pentagon has spent \$14 trillion, with one-third to one-half of it going to military contractors in combat zones. A lot of this money has gone to contracts related to logistics, construction and weapons supplies, but a sizable chunk has also paid for "hired guns". During the height of the 2008 counterinsurgency effort in Iraq, the number of contractors reached 163,400 (including people in non-combat roles) compared to 146,800 US troops. In 2010, amid the "surge" in Afghanistan, when additional troops were deployed for a renewed offensive against the Taliban, there were 112,100 contractors (including people in

non-combat roles) compared to 79,100 troops. The pouring of trillions of dollars into PMCs has helped create a vast and powerful military contractor industry which has gone global and transformed how great and smaller powers engage in warfare and other violent foreign policy undertakings.

The use of contractors conveniently offers plausible deniability and can help governments pacify electorates reluctant to send national troops on risk foreign missions. They also help dodge responsibility for war crimes. For example, in 2007, Blackwater killed 14 Iraqi civilians in a melee in Nisour Square in Baghdad. They were not under the US military chain of command, as they had been privately contracted by the US Department of State to guard their staff. When the Iraqi government decided to revoke Blackwater's licence with the government, it found that the company never had one in the first place. Furthermore, the perpetrators of the massacre were not subject to Iraqi law, so they could not be tried on Iraqi soil.

In 2015, a US court sentenced three former Blackwater employees to 30 years and one to life in prison for the massacre, but just five years later, President Donald Trump pardoned them before he left office. The Nisour Square massacre was by far not the only atrocity American mercenaries committed. Ultimately, the violence PMCs were involved in contributed to wide-spread anti-American sentiments in Iraq which undermined US-led counterinsurgency efforts - a major factor that later enabled the rise of ISIL (ISIS). Despite these troubles, the US did not do away with PMCs and has continued to rely on them, even after it withdrew from Afghanistan and Iraq. The flourishing PMC industry today which enables the outsourcing of war and violence across the globe is one of the morbid legacies of the US "war on terror".

The Kremlin likely watched closely the US government's use of contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq and understood their utility. According to some observers, Putin likely wanted a Russian version of Blackwater to use in his foreign policy adventures. In following his patron's orders to create a mercenary group, Prigozhin went as far as emulating the American

PMC's aesthetics. "Wagner mercenaries in Syria and Africa played the part, wearing baseball caps and wrap-around sunglasses while totting serious guns," wrote Lucian Kim, NPR's former Moscow bureau chief, in Foreign Policy. Prigozhin's contractors were first used in 2014 to support Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine. They were then deployed in Syria to bolster the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, and to Libya, to fight for renegade general Khalifa Haftar. Throughout these conflicts, the Kremlin kept denying the involvement in and existence of Wagner, as PMCs were illegal according to Russian law.

The effectiveness of the Russian mercenaries encouraged political and military leaders from across Africa to resort to their services, which strengthened Moscow's international standing and foreign policy reach. When in February 2022, Putin decided to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, he also needed a large number of troops, which the Russian army did not have. Wagner was tasked specifically with providing fighters to throw into the bloodiest battles as cannon fodder. Quickly running out of volunteers, Prigozhin went as far as recruiting convicts, who were offered amnesty in return for military service. Thus, Wagner helped the Kremlin minimise the perceived cost of war for the Russian public which was rather uncomfortable with the full-scale invasion. But its forces were not under the direct command of the Russian army, which also turned into a major problem for the Kremlin.

The mutiny was perhaps an unexpected development for Putin, and it made him look weak, not only to the international community, but also to regime insiders. The fallout of Prigozhin's rebellion will likely continue to play out in the coming months. This is a role that the traditional Russian military cannot replicate. By relying on mercenaries, the US, Russia and other powers have weakened internationally accepted rules of engagement and undermined the international legal regime that seeks to protect civilians in times of war. This has allowed them to get away with violence and atrocities even more easily and misrepresent the true cost of war. Blackwater, Wagner et al ultimately are making the world a that much more dangerous place.

# Global refugee system is morally bankrupt

Sherelle Jacobs

**IT is tempting to dismiss the global refugee crisis as an "unsolvable" issue - a politically toxic but oddly immutable permacrisis that will continue to foam and seethe in dynamic equilibrium through endless political cycles. In fact, it is arguably escalating into a super-catastrophic risk to Western liberal democracy, on a par with Putin's Russia, the rise of China and global pandemics.**

For if there is a single volcanic problem that threatens to erupt into a populist uprising that reduces the European liberal tradition to ash, then it is the "unsolvable" issue of illegal immigration. It's strange, then, that politicians on neither Left nor Right have come up with anything that remotely resembles a serious solution. On the one hand, liberals continue to stick their thumbs in their ears, as they pompously spout 1950s refugee law and lecture on the need for "compassion" in a "global world". Even more disturbingly, the ruling class still hasn't got the memo that liberal democracies are existentially threatened by the rise of simple-wicked problems.

Simple-wicked problems are so explosive because, on the one hand, solving them appears scandalously simple. Stop the boats. Send them back to France. Crush the smuggling rings. Leave the ECHR. Take back control. On the other hand, solving simple-wicked problems is frustratingly complicated. Yet, instead of rising to the challenge, elites have, over the years, left these problems to fester in the "unsolvable" section of their in-trays. Until the recent economic downturn, they were hopeful they could take the sting out of anti-immigrant populism through distracting

redistributive policies rather than coming up with a proper plan to stop the boats. This, in turn, heightened suspicion that there is a conspiracy against democracy, with the ruling class refusing to carry out popular and seemingly straightforward policies because they offend cosmopolitan sensibilities.

Now some Conservatives, having finally woken up to the fact that the situation is politically unsustainable, are making a simple-wicked problem even more wicked by flipping wildly from lazy pessimism to born-again utopianism, preaching to those who are desperate to believe them that the situation can be magically remedied overnight, perhaps by sending immigrants to Rwanda. Yet as it stands, even if the UK withdrew from the ECHR and implemented its Rwanda plan, those crossing the Channel would only have a small chance of being sent to the African country - hardly a deterrent. The fact that nobody has a compelling plan is all the more disturbing given that the refugee crisis is reaching a turning point. Today, the West faces unprecedented flows of migrants. Covid's legacy is set to be a lost decade for international development, with tens of millions plunged back into extreme poverty.

Meanwhile, the uptick of violence across Africa and the Middle East - an ongoing trend since the drying up of Cold War military funding - is getting worse. The emergence of new regional hegemons was supposed to help keep a lid on things. Nigeria, for example, was expected to grow into a stabilising power, helping to consign African military coups and civil wars

to the past. Instead, Abuja's barebones military has become bogged down with the country's own endless peripheral conflagrations, which frequently spill over into neighbouring countries. It was also hoped that in the wake of America's distancing from the Middle East, the Gulf States would step up. But they have continued to flagrantly shirk their responsibilities towards Muslim refugees, while also proving powerless to prevent counter-hegemonic powers like Iran from fuelling proxy conflicts. Needless to say, as the developing world becomes more unstable, the West is becoming more tantalising. Thanks to the internet it has become easier to not only see how people live in wealthier countries, but also connect with traffickers who aggressively advertise their services on social media. Then, having reached one's destination in Berlin or London, it's straightforward for a migrant to wire money back home, and in doing so feed one's whole village.

Fixing the mess won't be easy. The whole refugee-legal-industrial-complex needs gutting. Yes, the ECHR is an overweening judicial leviathan that seeks to micro-manage individual cases and push a radically expansive interpretation of human rights. But unlike the EU, which in its enthrallment to the natural laws of harmonisation is unreformable by design, the ECHR can and should be reined in with some leadership from Britain. It is also time to bring a sense of reality to the UNHCR - a useless Cold War relic. It should be made to answer for the fact that the Refugee Convention continues to senselessly push a non-refoulement principle that

might have made sense when the West was anxious about refugees returning to Communist-controlled areas. But today, in a world where we need the educated and able of developing nations to make their own countries work, it is downright bizarre. Moreover, it's time to face up to the uncomfortable fact that the whole international refugee system has become morally deranged. Western resources are being spent on highly mobile and relatively well-educated men who can afford to pay thousands of pounds to people-traffickers, rather than the less fortunate, who are left festering in permanent camps. Activists pretend that granting citizenship to refugees is a saintly act - overlooking the brain drains that have made it impossible to rebuild and create opportunities in countries from Syria to Albania. Instead we should be changing international law so that educated migrants are obliged, once conflicts subside, to return to their countries.

All this is barely the start. Western powers must also decide on a reasonably fair international quota system - and stick to it. Processing needs to happen in a safe territory as close to the originating country of refugees as possible. International law should be changed so that those who try to cut the queue by eloping to Europe are automatically sent back to where they came from. We need a global campaign for Poverty Zero to match the clamour to end climate change. And we need to move from white saviour humanitarianism to tough love developmentism. Above all though, elites need to level with voters that illegal immigration is a simple-wicked problem - one that must be solved.

# Hezbollah still not willing to make concessions

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

**A truck last week overturned in the Lebanese town of Kahale. The vehicle was loaded with weapons. Residents of the area gathered around the truck, which Hezbollah gunmen tried to defend. This resulted in a clash, in which one Christian resident and one Hezbollah member were killed.**

The incident had a snowball effect. The death of a Christian led to increased anti-Hezbollah sentiment. Some people have asked to be armed so that they can confront Hezbollah, while others are asking for the country to be partitioned. The civil war is still in the collective consciousness of the Lebanese people and no one wants to repeat it. However, the situation is so dire that voices are now raising accepting that risk, as they perceive that there is no other way to regain the country from Hezbollah's dominance.

Until now, Hezbollah has had legitimacy due to its alliance with the Christian Free Patriotic Movement. But this alliance became strained earlier this year, when Hezbollah nominated Suleiman Frangieh for president, while the Free Patriotic Movement totally rejected him. The group is now in discussions with the Christian party in an effort to mend their relations. However, this task is now far more difficult as a result of last week's incident. Hezbollah is being blamed for the situation in Lebanon. Though the cause of the country's financial crisis is the corruption, Hezbollah is being accused of being the main protector of the corrupt regime. Incidents like the one at Kahale, which portray Hezbollah's prowess, make it very difficult for

Free Patriotic Movement leader Gebran Bassil to justify any deal with the group.

The day after Kahale, a convoy transporting the minister of defense, who is from Bassil's party, was shot at. Some described the incident as a warning from Hezbollah to its former ally to toe the line. Others explained it as a message to the army to release the truck that it had confiscated. However, the incident only increased the popular animosity toward the group. Lebanon is unraveling. It has no president and no functioning government. The central bank governor's mandate expired with no solid replacement in place. The General Security Directorate has no head and the head of the army will retire early next year. However, Hezbollah is still not showing any flexibility. It still has not announced that it is ready to negotiate with anyone other than Frangieh. Regionally, it is still not willing to discuss any withdrawal from Syria.

Hezbollah is hoping that, if it reaches an agreement with Bassil, they will have a comprehensive new settlement. However, a situation where Hezbollah strikes an agreement with the Free Patriotic Movement and everyone tags along is not realistic anymore. The anti-Hezbollah sentiment is very strong and the situation is different from 2014, when the end of the mandate of Michel Suleiman eventually led to the election of Michel Aoun two and a half years later. While Hezbollah is calling for dialogue, in reality the group still thinks it has the upper hand. The group is also trying to dis-

sociate its regional presence from its position internally. Hence, it is hoping that, due to the Saudi-Iranian reconciliation, its presence will be accepted. However, Hezbollah is guided by wishful thinking. It is hoping that its dominance will be accepted domestically and its presence will be tolerated regionally. It is playing the waiting game it has always played.

Hezbollah is also playing roles with the Iranians as part of its evasion strategy. The Iranians are very good at this. When Tehran is asked about its position on Lebanon and the presidential dossier, it throws it all on Hezbollah. The Iranians' answer is: We are fine with whatever Hezbollah decides. When Hezbollah is asked about its presence in Syria, its response is that the decision rests with the Assad regime. However, those answers are not convincing to anyone - not to the Lebanese factions and not to the Arab states. The party wants to preserve its internal interests and the security of its borders. It wants to achieve local stability and not get carried away by regional complications. However, this is currently hard to achieve. The Lebanese know that Hezbollah's agenda is tightly linked to Iran and the group's military presence in Lebanon is Tehran's first line of defense against Israel. This has pushed the factions that are against Hezbollah to describe its armed presence as an Iranian occupation of Lebanon. Arabs know that Hezbollah has a lot of influence in Syria and has leverage over Bashar Assad.

Hezbollah continues to train

Quwat Al-Ridha and the Islamic Resistance Forces in Syria. The party also has control over the movement of people and goods. It is mainly positioned in the areas bordering Lebanon, from the Arida crossing in the north that links Tartous to Tripoli, all the way round to Al-Jayusieh, which links Al-Qusayr to the Bekaa Valley. The party has also recently sought to expand its areas of influence in the Syrian coastal governorates. And it is active in the Iranian oil trade in Lebanon and Syria. Hence, Hezbollah has economic and military influence and can have leverage over the Assad regime. However, it still has the same tagline: We were invited by the Syrian state and we will leave when the state asks us to do so. So, the group is not willing to make concessions regionally or domestically, yet it is still hoping for national and regional acceptance.

But the situation is difficult and time is not on its side. There are several points of pressure on the group: The 2020 Beirut explosion; the refugee dossier, which is directly linked to its presence in Syria; UN Security Council Resolution 1559 that requires the disarmament of all militias and Resolution 1701 that prohibits armed groups from operating anywhere in Lebanon; and sanctions. More importantly, there is the increased tension inside Lebanon and the calls for the partitioning of the country. In short, Hezbollah is facing internal and external pressures and, unless it is willing to compromise, the situation is going to explode. Unfortunately, the group does not seem to realize that the situation is not sustainable.

# Japan can't shift onus of radioactive water

Wei Fangxin

**THE earthquake-triggered tsunami in March 2011 caused one of the worst nuclear accidents in the world - the destruction of Japan's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.**

A year later, the National Diet of Japan Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission found that it "was a profoundly man-made disaster" and the causes of the accident were foreseeable but the Tokyo Electric Power Company, the plant operator, didn't take measures to meet the basic safety requirements. The investigation commission also said the TEPCO had a history of integrity issues, and has been plagued with innumerable problems since the accident in 2011.

In the 12 years since the accident, the Japanese government has done little to deal with the serious issue. Instead, it has decided to discharge the nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, disregarding the huge damage it would cause to the marine environment and peoples' health. This is nothing but shirking responsibility in as serious an issue as nuclear contamination. By releasing the radioactive water into the sea, Japan is trying to transfer the safety risk to the rest of the world. It plans to first discharge more than 1 million cubic meters of the nuclear-contaminated water - claiming it is safe after being treated through the Advanced Liquid Processing System - and continue doing so for the next three decades.

An early study by the International Atomic Energy Agency showed that discharging the radioactive water into the sea and simply waiting until it has evaporated are both feasible options, but the second option will have less impact on the marine environment and neighboring countries. However, Japan has chosen to discharge the radioactive

water due to economic concerns and did not discuss other options with the IAEA. As for the TEPCO, it has said tanks containing nuclear-contaminated water need to be removed because they take too much space, which is an excuse because the company has a huge site where it can install additional tanks.

Japan cannot shirk its responsibility by claiming that the ALPS is a foolproof system, because its reliability has not been proved in real life practice. The radioactive water from Fukushima contains large amounts of radionuclides, salt and organic matter, which no country has dealt with on such a large scale. If discharged into the sea, the nuclear-contaminated water will increase the amount of radionuclides in the oceans, creating additional risks for the marine environment and ecology, and human health. Therefore, the Japanese government should try its best to solve the problem in a way that doesn't affect neighboring and other countries and without transferring the risk to the oceans and the rest of the world.

According to a TEPCO report, as of June 2022, even after being treated by the ALPS, 70 percent of the nuclear-contaminated water still exceeded the limit set by Japan itself. And the IAEA's 2022 Information Circular to Japan noted that adsorbent materials integral to the ALPS treatment process are consumables that decrease in efficacy over time. But the TEPCO had decided before May 2019 to temporarily reduce the frequency with which it replaced adsorbent materials in the ALPS adsorption towers. Besides, it has not been proved that the replacement of adsorbent materials on a large scale can actually reduce the concentration of radionuclides other than tritium below the regula-

tory levels. The reliability and effectiveness of the ALPS are questionable also because the TEPCO does not detail the ALPS' operation or allow other stakeholders to monitor the process. The amount and intensity of the radionuclides that will be discharged with the radioactive water and the discharge methods will have different impacts on the marine environment and ecology. So Japan needs to provide in detail the intensity of the radionuclides other than tritium before making a final decision on its discharge plan. In addition to tritium, many other radionuclides, including iodine-129 whose half-life is about tens of thousands of years, will be released with the radioactive water into the sea. The radioactive water, if not properly treated using advanced technologies and following reliable measures, will have unpredictable, long-term impacts on the marine environment and human health.

In fact, the IAEA has emphasized that Japan communicate with neighboring countries, which Japan has not done, except for informing them about its plan. If Japan releases the nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, it should be strictly monitored to ensure it meets the set standards, because the accuracy and authenticity of the standards are important to the marine environment and human health. As such, the international community, not the Japanese government and the TEPCO, should monitor the discharge process.

Japan has signed international treaties including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, which have strict rules on dumping waste into the sea. Hence, it should fulfill the requirements and obligations of those treaties.





# Weekly inflation up by 0.78 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.78 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on August 17, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 275.57 points as compared to 273.43 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 27.57 percent.

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

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.36 percent and went up to 280.67 points from last week's 279.66 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888, Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 0.43 percent, 0.51 percent, 0.64 and 0.98 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 32 (62.75%) items increased, 07 (13.72%) items decreased and 12 (23.53%)

items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) tomatoes (13.60%), cooking oil 5 litre (1.65%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.85%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.43%), firewood (0.42%), mustard oil (0.23%) and wheat flour (0.19%).

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included chillies powder (7.58%), rice irri-6/9 (7.48%), garlic (5.06%), sugar (4.02%), gur (3.23%), rice basmati broken (3.06%), chicken (2.83%), bananas (2.72%), diesel (7.29%) and petrol (6.40%).

The commodities that witnessed a decrease in price on a Year-on-Year (YOY) basis, included onions (28.85%), electricity for Q1 (21.96%), pulse masoor (14.85%) and vegetable ghee 1 kg (1.20%).

On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices included wheat flour (131.29%), gas charges for Q1 (108.38%), cigarettes (106.89%), tea packet (95.19%), rice basmati broken (88.76%), chillies powder (86.05%), rice irri6/9 (84.16%), sugar (74.71%), gur (63.00%), chicken (58.56%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), potatoes (56.30%) and salt powdered (49.09%).

## Uzbek Envoy expects bilateral trade with Pakistan to touch \$1billion in couple of years

KARACHI (APP): Pak-Uzbek bilateral trade with consecutive annual growth of over 50 percent is expected to touch \$1 billion in the next two years owing to transit and preferential trade agreements between both countries. Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan Oybek Arif Usmanov said at a meeting during a visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) on Friday.

He informed that trade between Uzbekistan and Pakistan has constantly grown at a pace of 50 to 55 percent annually during the last three years starting from US\$50 million to US\$240 million last year whereas.

The Transit Trade Agreement signed in 2021 and Preferential Trade

Agreement inked in 2022 facilitated growth while \$1 billion trade roadmap has also been signed by the joint ministerial commission on Finance, he stated and added "We, hence, expect trade volume to reach US\$400 million by the end of this year and hopefully, it would reach US\$1 billion in the next two years."

Uzbek Envoy said that Liberalization of economy, business-friendly policies and facilitation of banking & finance have resulted in industrial and agricultural growth along with technology and innovation and Uzbekistan has not just become an emergent economy of Central & South Asia but also in the global arena."

He mentioned that Karachi was always dear to the hearts and minds of the Uzbek people which can be gauged from the fact that after Uzbekistan's independence, the first flight arrived in Karachi while the first Consulate General of Uzbekistan was also opened in Karachi.

Regular flights between Tashkent and Karachi and the exchange of trade delegations helped to maintain good business relations, building trust and cooperation as well as diplomatic relations, he observed and assured: "Uzbek Government is always ready to adopt any model or mechanism which facilitates traders, industrialists and transport companies of both countries."

## Pak-Italy trade witnesses over 97% surplus during FY 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's goods and services trade with Italy witnessed a surplus of 97.11 percent during the fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Trade surplus during the period under review was recorded at \$624,518 million against \$316,995 million last year, showing 97.11 percent growth.

The overall exports to Italy were recorded at US \$1151.448 million during July-June (2022-23)

against exports of US \$1087.434 million during July-June (2021-22), showing growth of 5.88 percent, SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Italy witnessed a decrease of 18.57 percent from \$121.101 million in June 2022, against the exports of \$98.601 million in June 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Italy also dipped by 2.76 percent during June 2023 as compared to the exports of \$101.400 million in May

2023. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed a decline of 14.09 percent during the fiscal year under review, from US \$ 32,492 billion to US \$ 27,911 billion.

On the other hand, the imports from Italy into the country during the period under review was recorded at US \$ 526.930 million against US \$770.439 million last year, showing a decline of 31.60 percent in July-June (2022-23).

On a year-on-year basis, the import for Italy witnessed

also decreased by 44.56 percent from US \$57.944 million in June 2022, against the imports of US \$32.121 million in June 2023. On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Italy into the country declined by 58.375 percent during June 2023, as compared to the imports of US \$77.877 million during May 2023. The overall imports into the country witnessed a decrease of 27.32 percent, from \$71.542 billion to US \$51.993 billion, the data revealed.

## Launch of pre-departure briefing program at protectorate of emigrants offices

### F.P Report

KARACHI: Executive Director State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Mr. Akhtar Javed and Director General, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) Mr. Akram Ali Khawaja jointly launched the Pre-Departure Briefing Program for outgoing workers.

The program will be organized in all Protectorate of Emigrants (PE) Offices across Pakistan. The launch event was attended by the senior officials of SBP, PRI, BE&OE and representatives of the large remittance mobilizing banks.

The Pre-Departure Briefing Program has been developed by

Pakistan Remittance Initiative (PRI) in collaboration with Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) and banks. The program is the key initiative for domestic outreach for educating outgoing workers to use formal channels for sending home remittances. As the outgoing workers are required to register with PE Offices across Pakistan; therefore, the program presents an excellent opportunity, on ongoing basis, to educate outgoing workers for using formal channels for sending remittances back home and opening their own and their beneficiary's bank accounts.

The program aims to educate intending overseas

workers about formal channels for sending remittances, assist them in opening bank accounts, especially joint accounts, highlight the risks involved in using informal channels and update outgoing workers about government's programs / schemes as well as banks' products related to home remittances.

In his address, Mr. Akhtar Javed highlighted the significance of home remittances for the Pakistan's economy. He elaborated that the remittances provide stability to the country's economy by boosting foreign exchange reserves and supporting the balance of payments. Shedding light on the importance of the Pre-Departure Briefing Program, he hoped that it will play a crucial role

in raising awareness among intending overseas workers about formal channels besides informing them about the risks involved in the informal channels.

Head PRI Mr. Zulfiqar Khokhar provided details of the program, the activities to be undertaken and roles and responsibilities of banks, SBP/PRI and BOE&OE. While concluding the event, Director General Mr. Akram Ali Khawaja appreciated State Bank of Pakistan, PRI and banks for initiating the program for the overseas workers. He further assured that BE&OE will fully cooperate and provide platform to banks to successfully achieve the desired objectives of the program.



KARACHI: CFO PPL Mohammad Khalid Rehman (second left) receives the first position trophy for ICAP's Digital Technology Awards during AccountTech Innovation Congress.



RAWALPINDI: A blacksmith preparing iron tools at his workplace.

## Rupee sheds 86 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee on Friday witnessed an 86-paisa devaluation against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 295.77 against the previous day's closing of Rs 294.91.

However, according to

the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 301.5 and Rs 303.8 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 85 paisa to close at Rs 321.60 against

the last day's closing of Rs 320.75, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen went up by 02 paisa and closed at Rs 2.03, whereas an increase of 51 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound,

which traded at Rs 376.05 as compared to the last closing of Rs 375.54.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 23 paisa each to close at Rs 80.52 and Rs 78.86 respectively.

### PSX loses 107 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday shed 107.34 points, a negative change of 0.22 per cent, closing at 48,218.50 points against 48,325.84 points the previous trading day.

A total of 254,814,045 shares were traded during the day as compared to 48,146.44 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 10.414 billion against Rs 10.021 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 333 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 126 of them recorded gains and 186 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 21 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 40,458,173 shares at Rs 1.25 per share; Pak Petroleum d with 27,990,154 shares at Rs.76.15 per share and Oil and Gas Dev with 19,811,273 shares at Rs.99.29 per share.

## SECP seeks public consultation on proposed amendments to Listed Companies Regulations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), has notified draft amendments to the Listed Companies (Substantial Acquisition of Voting Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2017 soliciting public comments.

The proposed amendments are focused on creating a conducive environment for takeover transactions through the acquisition of shares of listed companies in a fair, transparent and competitive manner, said a press release issued here. As part of SECP's progressive review of regulatory requirements, the subject amendments also address key observations emanating from feedback provided by various stakeholders in relation to prevalent takeover regulatory regime. The subject amendments provide greater flexibility to the minority shareholders of the target company

in exercising their rights, whereby an option is being inserted for consideration to such shareholders to be paid either wholly in cash; or if consideration is being offered in the form of securities, the same to be accompanied with a wholly cash alternative.

Criteria for securities that can be offered as consideration is being improved, whereby only shares of listed companies, listed debt instruments, and government securities with remaining maturity of maximum of 364 days can be offered as a consideration during the public offer. The mechanism for valuing the securities to be offered as consideration is also being improved.

Moreover, only highly liquid securities would be admissible as security to be furnished to the manager to the offer by the acquirer for the performance of obligations under the public offer.

Efforts have also been

made to ensure that terms already used in the regulations but not previously defined are properly codified in the definitions section for clarity and to enable consistent interpretation throughout the regulations.

A consultation paper explaining the key considerations in drafting the proposed amendments inclusive of notification of draft amendments to subject regulations has been placed on the SECP website at <https://www.secp.gov.pk/document/consultation-paper-draft-amendments-to-the-listed-companies-substantial-acquisition-of-voting-shares-takeovers-regulations> - 2017/?wpdmdl=48882&refresh=64df383c84db91692350524. Comments can be submitted to the SECP within a period of fourteen days from the date of the notification by emailing at [takeover-feedback@secp.gov.pk](mailto:takeover-feedback@secp.gov.pk).

## Markets fall again as traders struggle to shake rate, China gloom

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets mostly fell Friday on growing worries of another Federal Reserve interest rate hike and deepening concerns about China's economy, with the country's property crisis once again adding an extra layer of jeopardy. Equity traders around the world have been spooked this month by a recent run of data suggesting that while US inflation is coming down, the economy remains robust and prices could remain sticky for some time.

That has led to a re-evaluation of the outlook for monetary policy, with optimism that July's rate hike could be the last giving way to bets on one more before the end of the year.

That view has been given legs by some decision-makers at the central bank, who have suggested its two percent inflation goal can only be achieved and maintained by pushing borrowing costs higher.

Inflation currently stands at 3.2 percent.

Expectations of another Fed hike have pushed 10-year Treasury yields -- a gauge of future rates -- close to their highest levels since the global financial crisis. Data on Thursday did little to dissuade investors, with unemployment benefit applications falling the most since last month, indicating the labour market remains in rude health.

The Fed has said softening the jobs sector was key to bringing down inflation.

"This week's data hasn't given them any reason to let their guard down," said Mike Loewengart of Morgan Stanley Global Investment Office.

"With housing starts, retail sales, and jobless claims all reinforcing the picture of a robust economy, another rate hike can't be ruled out, even if the Fed remains on hold next month," Fed chief Jerome Powell's speech at the

annual Jackson Hole economic symposium in Wyoming will be closely followed for clues about the bank's plans.

All three main indexes on Wall Street sank for a third straight session Thursday, while London, Paris, and Frankfurt also suffered heavy losses.

Most major Asian markets were well in the red, including Hong Kong, which was down for a sixth consecutive day.

Investors are also keeping an anxious eye on China, where authorities are struggling to get a grip on the economy as its recovery from Covid peters out. The country's property crisis was also back in the headlines, with big-name and massively indebted firms in danger of going under. On Thursday, Evergrande Group -- considered the poster child of the drama -- filed for bankruptcy protection in the United States, a measure that protects its US assets

while it attempts to push through a restructuring.

That comes days after Country Garden said there were "major uncertainties in the redemption of corporate bonds", suggesting it could default on a bond payment next month.

Meanwhile, there are now concerns about property firms that are backed by the government, with Bloomberg reporting that many are warning of widespread losses.

It said 18 of the 38 state-owned enterprise builders traded in Hong Kong and China posted preliminary losses in the first half of the year, compared with 11 that warned of full-year losses in 2022.

"China's property slowdown is already hurting all developers, including the large government-linked ones," said Zerlina Zeng, of CreditSights Singapore. "We do not expect the situation to materially improve in the second half."

## PPL receives first Digital Technology Award by ICAP

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a preeminent event organized by Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has been awarded "First Position", during Digital Technology Award Ceremony. The Award is linked to the "Advanced Robotic Process Automation (RPA)". PPL's RPA initiative is the Innovative Application of

Robotic Automation Technology in Joint Venture Accounting, by an E&P company in Pakistan. In total, Sixty National and Multinational Companies contested in three categories. Chief Financial Officer (CFO), of PPL, Mr. Mohammad Khalid Rehman received the award during Accounting Technology Innovation Congress, on August 12, held at Hotel Movenpick Karachi.

The initiative is in-

house digital transformation towards automation of cost allocation and reporting to Joint Venture Partners. It has contributed to efficiency while ensuring, accuracy and reliability of reporting, with minimum manual intervention.

The event organized by ICAP's Digital Assurance and Accounting Board, is the first of its kind Congress, aimed at recognizing innovations in use of latest technologies.

### Gold rates up by Rs 300 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 300 and was sold at Rs 225,300 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs 225,000 on the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 257 to Rs 193,158 from Rs 192,901 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 Karat gold went up to Rs 177,063 from Rs 176,826, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2750 and Rs 2357.68 respectively.





### In brief

#### Ahmer bag Azadi Cup Tenpin title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahmer Saldera won men's single titles of the Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Tournament-2023 at Leisure City Bowling Club, Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi. In Men Single results, Saldera won the men's single title with 3566 points while Faisal Feroz got 2nd position with 3394 points and Ijaz ur Rehman took the 3rd spot with 3364 points. In the amateurs event, Zahid Mehmood claimed the first position while Awais Rasheed and Haidar Aziz obtained 2nd and 3rd positions respectively. In the Master Doubles categories, Aleem Agha and Zahid Mehmood bagged 1st position with 817 points while Ijaz ur Rehman and Daniyal Ijaz secured 2nd position with 755 points and Ahmer Saldera and Afzal Akhtar finished 3rd position with 683 points. At the end of the event, cash prizes and trophies were distributed among the players.

#### Pakistan Green victorious

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Green beat Pakistan White by 2-1 in a special exhibition match organized here in connection World Throwball Day. President, World Throwball Federation, Maqbool Arian who was also the Secretary-General of the Pakistan Throwball Federation was the chief guest at the game and gave away the prizes to the players. Speaking on the occasion, he said throwball was being played in 32 countries around world and World Throwball Day is celebrated worldwide on August 17, every year. Arian said like the rest of the world, World Throwball Day was also celebrated with enthusiasm on August 17 in Pakistan. On the same day, throwball exhibition competitions were held across the country. He said Pakistan Throwball Federation had issued instructions to all the related organizations, provincial and regional associations associated with the federation in this regard. Throwball exhibition competitions were also organized in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, Peshawar, Muzaffarabad, Gilgit and other cities of the country.

#### Sri Lanka accepts Lahiru's retirement

C O L O M B O (Agencies): The Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Friday, accepted Lahiru Thirimanne's decision of retiring from all formats of international cricket. In a statement, the SLC revealed that the Executive Committee accepted Thirimanne's resignation during a meeting held recently. "Sri Lanka Cricket's Executive Committee accepted the resignation of Lahiru Thirimanne from playing all forms of International Cricket," said SLC in a statement. "This follows a resignation letter the player sent to Sri Lanka Cricket announcing his intention to retire from playing international cricket for his country. "The Executive Committee decided to accept the resignation letter of Thirimanne during a Meeting held recently." The CEO of SLC, Ashley de Silva acknowledged Lahiru Thirimanne's services while also wish him well for future endeavours. "We take this opportunity to wish Thirimanne the best in his future endeavours, and his services to Sri Lanka Cricket covering all forms of the game will be well remembered," said Ashley De Silva. It is worth mentioning here that Lahiru Thirimanne, who represented Sri Lanka in 44 Test matches, 127 ODIs, and 26 T20Is, announced to bid farewell to international cricket last month.

## Nahida appointed manager of Pakistan women's team

PESHAWAR (APP): Former international cricketer Nahida Khan has been appointed as the manager of Pakistan women's team for the forthcoming South Africa women's series, which is set to commence in Karachi from September 1, 2023.

Nahida has been appointed for the South Africa series only, while Ayesha Ashhar will return as the team manager for Asian Games.

The 36-year-old Nahida, who represented Pakistan in 120 matches, scored 2,014 runs and took one wicket, retired from international cricket in June this year.

In a brief coaching stint, Nahida worked as the assistant coach of



Blasters in the Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament held in Karachi from May 19 to June 4. Previously, she deputized head coach Taufiq Umar's Amazons side, which won the Women's League exhibition matches 2-1 against Super Women in March.

In the team management, Nahida will be

joined by another former international cricketer Kamran Hussain, who will replace Saleem Jaffar as bowling coach. Mauhtashim Rashid, who had previously worked as head coach of the women's team, is named interim head coach of the national side for South Africa and Asian Games after Mark Coles resigned from the post last week.

Player support personnel: Nahida Khan (manager), Mauhtashim Rashid (interim head coach), Kamran Hussain (bowling coach), Taufiq Umar (batting coach), Muhammad Asfand Yar (strength and conditioning coach), Zubair Ahmed (analyst), Rifat Asghar Gill (physiotherapist) and Syed Nazir Ahmed (media manager).

## Rania Qazi wins Azadi Cup Squash title in Abbottabad

### Abdullah, Nauman, Ahmad move in Asian Jr Squash C'ship semis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Abdullah Nawaz, Nauman Khan and Ahmad Khalil have moved to the semifinals of the Asian Junior Individual Squash Championship, 2023 at Dalian, China.

In the quarterfinal played on Friday, in Under 17, Abdullah Nawaz (Pakistan) beat Xia Ding Jun (Hong Kong) by 11/3, 10/12, 8/11, 11/6, 12/10.

In Under 13, Nauman Khan defeated Yelvanthan (Malaysian) by 11/4, 11/6, and 11/3 while Ahmad Khalil outplayed Aryaman Singh (India) by 4/11, 11/8, 11/2, and 11/5.

However, in Under 15, Ibrahim Zeb (Pakistan) lost to Aryavan deevan (India) by 8/11, 10/12, 9/11.

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Promising rising star Rania Qazi clinched the trophy of the Independence Day Squash in Jansher Khan Squash Complex played under the aegis of Regional Sports Officer Abbottabad with the collaboration of District Squash Association on Friday.

Azadi Cup Squash Championship played in three categories organized U13, U15 and Senior Veteran categories. In the final of the Girls singles Rania Qazi defeating Nimra Rehman in the final, the score was 11-9, 6-11, 11-8 and 11-9, in the U13 category Ryan defeated Anas by 3-2, the score was 11-6, 7-11, 10-12, 11-9 and 11-7 while in the Under-15 final Rohan recorded victory against Ismail in the final. The score was 11-9, 12-10 and 12-10.

In the men's final, Dr. Shakir Hafeez defeated Sulaiman. The score was 7-11, 9-11, 12-10, 13-11 and 11-7. Dr. Hafeez lost the first two sets, but Suleiman staged a strong comeback and defeated his strong

rival in a five sets battle.

Known businessman Amjad Quddus distributed prizes among the players. He said that providing positive activities to the youth is the most important need of the time and fitness is very important in squash because squash is very important.

He said that the new talent should focus on the game with hard work and dedication, then there is no reason why Pakistan's flag in squash should once again be raised at the world level.

On this occasion, Regional Support Officer Hazara Ahmed Zaman, former DG Sports Tariq Mehmood also spoke, while Secretary Squash Association Abbottabad Syed Abrar Shah welcomed the guests along with other personalities including Sardar Arif Nasir, Mahmood Shaukat Hussain, Muswal Rehman, and Tahir Naqash Malik and apart from them parents of the players were also present and witnessed the finals.

## Hasan Ali undergoes finger surgery during LPL

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Right-arm pacer Hasan Ali, underwent surgery on his finger after he suffered an injury while playing for Dambulla Aura in the Lanka Premier League (LPL) playoff game against Galle Titans.

Hasan Ali managed to bowl three overs and pick a solitary wicket of Tabraiz Shamsi while nursing a finger injury.

However, the injury brought an end to Hasan Ali's journey in the ongoing edition of LPL, as he won't be able to participate in the final of LPL.

Hasan shared the news on his official account on the social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter).

"Saddened to share that I suffered a finger injury during our qualifier yesterday and had to go through a surgery for it. A pretty unfortunate end to a great tournament for me personally however I will like to look at the positives and thank my team management and medical staff for looking after me. Big thank you to all the fans for supporting me and would now request you all to pray for my recovery," he posted.

Hasan Ali picked up eight wickets at an astonishing average of 16.12 in the five games he played this season.

His team Dambulla Aura thumped Galle Titans in the first playoff game by seven wickets,

thanks to Kusal Perera's half-century and Hayden Kerr's three-for, to qualify for the final against the winners of Qualifier 2, to be played tomorrow.

Qualifier 2 will see B-Love Kandy square off against Galle Titans to secure a spot in the final against Dambulla Aura.

B-Love Kandy thrashed defending LPL champions Jaffna Kings in the Eliminator yesterday, as captain Wanindu Hasaranga spun the web around Jaffna King's batting line to return with match-winning figures of 6-9.

He claimed the first five-wicket haul in this year's LPL and the best-ever bowling figures in the league's history.

## Djokovic dominates Monfils in Cincinnati, Alcaraz outlasts Paul

CINCINNATI (Agencies): Novak Djokovic extended his career-long domination of Gael Monfils with a 6-3, 6-2 victory on Thursday to reach the quarter-finals of the ATP/WT A Cincinnati Open.

The Serb second seed, a two-time winner in Cincinnati, won his 19th match against the French showman without a defeat.

He needed just 69 minutes to follow top-seeded Carlos Alcaraz into the last eight, the Spaniard withstanding a string of frustrating rain delays to beat Tommy Paul 7-6 (8/6), 6-7 (7/0) 6-3 and avenge a loss to the American last week.

Djokovic applied the pressure early against Monfils in the battle of 36-year-old veterans, denying the number 211 his first last-eight place here since 2011.

Djokovic will next take on American Taylor Fritz, who advanced after Dusan Lajovic retired with a toe injury trailing 5-0. Djokovic broke once to claim the first set and quickly ran up a 5-0 lead in the second. He faltered while trying to serve it out, dropping his serve only to complete the contest two games later.

"Gael is one of the most athletic guys on the tour and he showed that in the first set," Djokovic said. "Every ball comes back from him. I served well and made him play. After the first break I didn't look back and raised my level."

"I had an almost flawless second set," added Djokovic. "Hopefully I can keep it going." Things weren't quite so easy for Alcaraz against a player who had stunned him in the quarter-finals at Toronto last week.

Alcaraz had squandered three match points against Paul before the first of a string of rain delays that forced players off and on



the court in a logistics ballet that finally ended after more than three hours.

The Spaniard held on to book a quarter-final meeting with Australian Max Purcell, a 6-4, 6-2 winner over Swiss Stan Wawrinka.

After the final rain pause, Alcaraz, up a break in the third, came out and finished off the final few points, advancing with 40 winners and 61 unforced errors. "I really wanted to win after what happened against him last week," admitted Alcaraz, who reached his fifth Masters 1000 quarter-final this season.

Alcaraz brought out the best of his big game to tame Paul in a contest first interrupted at 4-3 in the deciding set by the weather.

The top seed came back from a break down four times in the first two sets, but he couldn't put it away when he had three opportunities in the 12th game of the second set. After the 15-minute game, Paul dominated the tiebreaker.

Alcaraz was up a break and serving at 4-3 in the third when rain stopped play for just over an hour.

Then came a stop-start scenario that saw the court dried and players warmed up only for rain to start again. "All of the starting and stopping was not easy," Alcaraz said. "I han-

worked, I got a different vibe in the second set -- thank you, coach." Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova beat Sloane Stephens 7-5, 6-3 to reach the quarter-finals of an event in which she was 0-3 in prior appearances.

"It has been really special this week. I came here not knowing how I would play," she said. "It's such a pleasure to be back as Wimbledon champion."

Third-seeded Jessica Pegula, last week's Montreal winner, was defeated in a match which concluded in light drizzle, losing 6-4, 6-0 to Marie Bouzkova. Fourth seed Elena Rybakina joined number eight Maria Sakkari in exiting.

Rybakina, last year's Wimbledon champion, retired at 6-4, 2-5 against Italian qualifier Jasmine Paulini while Sakkari went down 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 to Czech Karolina Muchova.



changed her dress after losing the opening set and came back a new woman, defeating China's Zheng Qinwen 3-6, 6-1, 6-1.

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changed her dress after losing the opening set and came back a new woman, defeating China's Zheng Qinwen 3-6, 6-1, 6-1.

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Croatia's Donna Vekic retired with viral illness, handing a 5-2 decision to three-time Grand Slam finalist Ons Jabeur. Seventh seed Coco Gauff won a battle of teenagers over Czech Linda Noskova 6-4, 6-0 in 62 minutes.



### Hamza gets clean chit as World Squash Federation finds no discrepancy in age

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The World Squash Federation (WSF) has given a clean chit to Pakistan's World Junior Squash champion Hamza Khan after Egypt had raised questions over his age.

The WSF said on Friday that it found no evidence that Hamza Khan's age was different from the one listed on his official passport.

Hamza had defeated Egypt's Muhammad Zakarya in the final to win the World Junior title in 2023. Following Hamza's win, the Egypt Squash Federation questioned the age of the Pakistani player and requested WSF to investigate the matter.

"After the Egyptian Squash Federation request, the WSF began extensive consultation with experts, including the WSF Medical Commission and the International Olympic Committee." "This consultation found no evidence that the age of 2023 WSF World Junior Squash Champion Hamza Khan of Pakistan is different from the one listed on his official passport," the WSF statement said.

The statement further added that it has been noted that Hamza Khan has competed in official international junior events for a number of years and has had the same date of birth registered on every occasion. "The WSF has been advised that there is no medically recognised procedure that can measure an individual's age without a significant margin of error," the statement highlighted. The WSF has further said that the Egyptian Squash Federation and the Pakistan Squash Federation have been informed of the outcome of this investigation, and the matter is now considered closed.

## Wapda, Army, Navy, Mari Petroleum move in Azadi Cup Hockey semis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wapda, Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy and Mari Petroleum have moved in the semifinals of the second Azadi Cup Hockey Tournament at Lt. Gen. Ashfaq Nadeem Hockey Stadium, Rawalpindi.

Two matches were played today on the fourth day of the tournament. In the first match, Pakistan Navy defeated Police team by a clear margin of 9-1 goals in a one-sided match.

For Navy, Busharat scored three goals while Rana Waleed, Mohammad Sabir, Mohammad Wasim, Zulqarnain, Akbar Ali, Essa Khan and Hamad Ali scored one goal each. Abuzar was the lone scorer for Police.

Irfan Sabir and Zahid Ali were the umpires in the game while Fahad Ali Khan as the reserve

umpire. Technical Officer Akhtar Ali along with Hamza Tofail and Yasir Lodhi acted as judges.

In the second match, Mari Petroleum beat Pakistan Army White by 12-0. For Mari Petroleum, Arbaz scored four goals while Umair Sattar three, Wasim Akram two, Arshad Liaquat two and Ali Raza scored one goal, respectively.

Yasir Khursheed International and Malik Safdar performed the umpiring duties in the match along with Rizwan Khan who was the reserve umpire. Yasir Lodhi, Gulfam Khokhar and Asif Shahzad were the judges along with Technical Officer Tahir Sharif.

On the occasion, Tournament Director Olympian Nasir Ali, Olympian Shahnaz Sheikh, Tournament Organizing

Secretary Colonel Muhammad Yameen, Assistant Tournament Director Major Tariq Wark, Assistant Tournament Director Raja Shuja Iqbal, Empires Manager Zulfikar Hussain, Assistant Empires Manager Kamran Shah, Assistant Empires Manager Mubarak Ali, Event Media Coordinator Zulfikar Baig, Assistant Media Coordinator Mohammad Hafeez and Haji Naem were also present in the stadium.

In Pool A, Wapda's team sits on top and Army Colors' team was second, while in Pool B, Mari Petroleum is at the top position followed by Navy second. In the first semi-final, Wapda would face Pakistan Navy, while the second semi-final will be played between Mari Petroleum and Pakistan Army Colors.

## Smith and Starc out of South Africa tour with injuries

M E L B O U R N E (Agencies): Australia batter Steve Smith and fast bowler Mitchell Starc have been ruled out of the white-ball series in South Africa through injuries, but both are expected to be back in action in India next month.

Smith is nursing a wrist injury, while Starc is recovering from a groin soreness, both injuries sustained during the Ashes series in England.

With regular skipper Pat Cummins nursing a fractured wrist, all-round-er Mitchell Marsh will lead the white-ball side, who will play three one-dayers and five T20 matches in South Africa. "The compacted Ashes series and the World Test Championship was a heavy load for the group, and we are taking a conservative approach to the build-up to the World Cup," chief selector George Bailey said



on Friday. "With the World Cup the priority of the squad, it was determined on advice that it was best for Steve and Mitchell to join the group in India by which time we expect them to be fully fit and available for the Indian ODI series, plus the World Cup warm-up fixture."

Australia will travel to India next month to play eight limited-overs matches before beginning their ODI World Cup campaign against the same opponents on Oct. 8 in Chennai.

To fill the void created by Smith's unavailability, Marnus Labuschagne has been added to Australia's ODI squad for the matches against South Africa, the country of his birth.

In Starc's absence, fellow left-arm quick Spencer Johnson, who was picked originally in the T20 squad, is now in contention to make his debut in both white ball formats. Australia begin their South Africa tour with the opening T20 in Durban on Aug. 30.





## In brief

### ANF foils bid to smuggle drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has foiled a major international drug smuggling attempt and recovered over 2.5 tons of drugs. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, a large quantity of drugs was recovered during a grand intelligence-based operation conducted in the Basohli area in Turbat. During the raid, more than 2.5 tons of drugs including 2080 kg hashish, 290 kg heroin and 195 kg Ice drug were seized from a house. The decorative writing of Afghani products is visible on the drug packets which were stored in the house to smuggle abroad, by sea. The spokesman informed that ANF has started investigation against the drug smugglers.

### Police arrest nine for illegal weapons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police have arrested nine accused for carrying illegal weapons and recovered nine 30-bore pistols and ammunition from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that Sadiqabad, Naseerabad, Race Course, Taxila, Dhamial and Chontra police conducted raids and held nine accused, namely Muhammad Dawood, Zohaib, Sami, Waleed, Hamad, Asadullah, Khurram Shehzad, Noor Muhammad and Saqib and recovered nine 30 bore pistols, and ammunition from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process, he added.

### 10 drug peddlers, bootleggers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers here on Friday arrested 10 accused besides recovering over 9 kg charras, 20 liters liquor and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesperson, Pirwadhai police held Aqeel, Yaqoob, Suleman, Abdul Razaq and Rafaqat for possessing over 6 kg charras. He informed that City Police rounded up Waqar for having 1260 grams charras while Rattamrall police netted Babar for carrying 1243 grams charras. Pirwadhai and Airport police nabbed Aftab Ahmed and Abdul Rehman on recovery of 1080 grams charras. R.A.Bazaar police arrested Seerat Mushtaq and recovered 20 liters liquor. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway.

### AIIOU to disseminate video clips

ISLAMABAD (APP): The annual meeting of the Board of Management and Review and Publishing Committee for Seerat-un-Nabi Chair was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIIOU). The meeting was presided over by the Head Seerat chair, Prof Dr Sahibzada Sajid Ur Rahman. The meeting presented the review report of the activities organized last year, books and manuscripts for publication and monographs and projects regarding Seerat un-Nabi was also presented. The board also discussed the issues related to the holding of the National Seerat Conference for Rabi-ul-Awwal. Speaking as a chief guest Vice Chancellor AIIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that keeping in view the popularity of social media, there is a need to record short clips of Seerat books and disseminate them on social media to connect the young generation with the teachings of Rasool-e-Kareem (Peace Be Upon Him) for reformation of the society.



ISLAMABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chauhdary calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## PUC, IIHC observe ‘Condemnation Day’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) and International Interfaith Harmony Council (IIHC) on Friday jointly observed a solemn ‘Condemnation Day’ nationwide, denouncing the shocking incidents of worship place desecration in Jaranwala.

The widespread outrage echoed through mosques across the country as religious leaders and scholars addressed Friday congregations. The call for unity and justice resonated as Ulama and Mashaykh from various regions of the country condemned the heinous act. Demanding swift justice, they reiterated that the perpetrators of the Jaranwala incident must face a speedy trial. Religious scholars, while speaking to the public during Friday sermons, firmly labeled those inciting violence as enemies of Islam and Pakistan.

The Jaranwala incident had deeply saddened and embarrassed the entire nation, with religious scholars asserting that it tarnished the image of Islam, Muslims, and Pakistan. Emphasizing the responsibility of safeguarding non-Muslims within a Muslim-majority state, Ulama and Mashaykh reminded that protection was a duty shared by the state and its Muslim citizens.

The shocking attack on the Christian community's sacred places and homes was strongly condemned, with religious leaders highlighting its contradiction to the Najran agreement of the Prophet Muhammad.

Leadership figures, including PUC

Chairman and IIHC President, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, played a central role in addressing Friday sermons. He announced that a delegation of Muslim and Christian leaders would journey to Jaranwala on Saturday, asserting, "We stand as plaintiffs of the Jaranwala tragic incident."

Moreover, he revealed plans for an upcoming interfaith harmony conference scheduled to be held in Islamabad next week. This conference aimed to devise a significant plan of action in response to the incident and to promote unity among diverse communities, he maintained.

It is noteworthy to mention here that PUC Chairman and IIHC President Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, addressed Friday sermon in Lahore, while Maulana Dr. Abu Bakr Siddique (Islamabad), Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid (Multan), Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid (Lahore), Maulana Asad Zakaria. (Karachi), Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Ubaidullah Gormani, Allama Tahirul Hasan (Faisalabad), Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Hanif Usmani (Sahiwal), Maulana Muhammad Asghar Khosa (Dera Ghazi Khan), Maulana Nauman Hasher, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan (Rawalpindi), Maulana Abu Bakr Sabri, (Islamabad), Maulana Anwarul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Abdul Malik Asif (Multan), Maulana Aslam Siddiqui, Maulana

Abdul Hakeem Athar, Qari Muhammad Aslam Qadri (Lahore), Maulana Muhammad Khurshid Nomani (Bahawalnagar), Maulana Abdullah Haqqani, Maulana Abdullah Rashidi (Qasur), Maulana Asim Shad, Maulana Abdul Waheed Farooqui (Narwal), Maulana Abu Bakr Hamza (Chakwal), Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman Abid, Maulana Amin-ul-Haq Ashrafi, Maulana Izhar-ul-Haq. Khalid, Sahibzada Hamza Tahirul Hasan (Faisalabad), Maulana Saadullah Ludhianwi (Toba Tek Singh), Maulana Anisur Rehman Baloch (Gujra), Maulana Abdul Rasheed (Hafizabad), Mufti Muhammad Umar Farooq (Khaniwal), Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Shah Hijazi. (Lodhran), Maulana Tanveer Ahmad (Bahawalpur), Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Makki, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Patafi (Muzaffargarh), Maulana Kaleemullah Muawiyah (Nankana), Maulana Azizur Rahman Muawiyah (Talagang), Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi (Rajapur), Maulana Saadullah Shafiq (Rahimyar Khan), Maulana Hussain Ahmed Darkhawasti (Karachi), Maulana Yasir Alvi (Samandari), Qari Abdul Rauf, Maulana Matloob Mahar (Bahalanger), Maulana Zubair Khatana (Gujranwala), Maulana Aqeel Zubiri (Sargodha), Qari Azizur Rahman (Layyah), Maulana Atif Iqbal (Kamalia) and others in their respective areas.

## NDMA advisory alerts departments concerned

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday issued an advisory to alert the national and provincial departments concerned to ensure proper measures to cope with any emergent situation as Sultej River attained high level flows that would persist for the next 24-48 hours.

The NDMA advisory underlined that as per the water flows data received from Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) and Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters (PCIW), the River Sultej has attained high level of flows at Ganda Singh Wala, whereas the flows would be reflected and passed on downstream to Sulemanki and Islam Headworks in next 48 to 76 hours.

In the light of the high flows and probable dangers and vulnerability of areas astride the River Sultej, the NDMA advised the Federal Flood Commission (FFC) to ensure implementation of elaborate coordination mechanism for preparedness and mitigation through management/ regulation of water reservoirs, barrages, headworks and irrigation canals.

"The measures must ensure desynchronized

releases from all reservoirs, regulating structures to preclude cumulative flooding in any regions. Plan immediate discharges from regulating structures to build capacity for likely heightened or increased flows," it said. The PCIW was also directed to ensure that flows and discharge data of eastern rivers was updated regularly for necessary planning and preparations. The Met Office and FFD were directed that during the forecasted period share 6-hourly weather forecasts to enable timely decision-making and coordinating response. Moreover, they would also share 3-hourly updates on river and nullah flows and reservoir levels to facilitate coordinated water management and regulation.

The d. Punjab Irrigation Department was also instructed to take all necessary measures to manage water flow and mitigate flood risks.

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab and respective district disaster management authorities (DDMAs) were directed to conduct extensive public awareness campaigns through multiple channels, including TV, broadcast, social, and print media etc., to ensure that vulnerable communities were well-informed about the

anticipated flood situation and necessary precautions. Moreover, they should also preposition required machinery, equipment, emergency supplies and personnel in high-risk areas, considering the forecasted severity of flooding.

The relevant authorities should also proactively maintain nullahs and storm water drains to ensure their proper functioning and prevent blockages that may exacerbate flooding. They should also ensure immediate stocking of basic commodities, including paramedics and medicine, especially in regions that were likely to get cut-off during flooding. However, the authorities should also activate early warning systems in flash flood-prone areas to promptly alert residents and facilitate their evacuation to safer locations and also strengthen coordination among all relevant departments and agencies to facilitate the timely sharing of information and resources during emergency situations.

The authorities concerned should also ensure widespread circulation of alerts and advisories, especially in local languages, to raise awareness and sensitize travelers and tourists and local communities in at-risk or vulnerable areas.

## Railways Minister vows to ensure passengers' safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Railways Captain (R) Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Friday vowed to ensure the safety of the passengers and the best facilities during train travels. The Minister shared the remarks after taking charge of his office said. Officials of the Ministry of Railways were present on the occasion.

Federal Secretary Railways Syed Mazhar Ali Shah briefed the Minister on the administrative and operational functions of the Railways.

He directed the Ministry staff to take all possible measures for the convenience of the passengers.

Shahid Tarar instructed the department concerned to conduct an audit and assessment regarding the safety of passengers and submit a report within seven days. The federal minister stated that Main Line-I is an important and strategic project for Pakistan that will revamp the railway sector and generate more revenue for the department.

## Parliament to continue its role in making Pakistan disaster resilient: Pervaiz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Friday said the Parliament of Pakistan would continue its role in making the country disaster resilient and climate adaptive for a sustainable and healthy future for the coming generations.

The Speaker National Assembly was addressing to the concluding ceremony of the third-day first ever Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023 (PEDRR-23).

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in his keynote address congratulated the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) for organising the important forum of

PEDRR-23. He also appreciated the experts, speakers and others for their valuable contributions shared at different seminars, and dialogues held during the Expo. He said the NDMA had rightly placed global focus on putting capacity building of vulnerable countries like Pakistan. "The country being among the top ten countries most vulnerable to climate change despite less than one percent of carbon emissions was similar to face the outcome of what that it had not done," he added.

The Speaker underscored that the monster monsoon floods of 2022 badly disrupted life in Pakistan whereas the international community was forthcoming in supporting the country. He added that the

already ailing economy of Pakistan could not sustain another disaster with inadequate capacity. The National Assembly Speaker said the country realised that national preparedness was more economic than financing post-disaster initiatives.

He said, "We must improve technical archiving and knowledge-based decision making for effective disaster management." Raja Ashraf mentioned that he was briefed on the NDMA efforts alongside other partners in shaping locally made national plans for disaster management and risk reduction. The Speaker mentioned that cloud bursts, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), torrential rains and heatwaves were beyond human control but to respond to it was in its capacity.

## HEC trains 25 scholars to serve as faculty under IPFP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Higher Education Commission (HEC), has successfully completed pre-service training of 5th cohort of National Faculty Development Programme (NFDP) for Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) Programme. In this connection, a ceremony was held to recognise the achievements of 25 fresh PhDs who have now become certified IPFP Fellows, having successfully undergone the comprehensive pre-service certification programme.

NFDP equips participants with essential tools encompassing teaching and learning, applied research, and professional practices. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, who was chief guest of the ceremony, extended his heartfelt congratulations to the participants of the successful completion of the training programme. Addressing the participants, he drew attention to Pakistan's ongoing challenges and underscored the pivotal role educated professionals play in contributing to the nation's progress. He encouraged the certified candidates to extend their impact beyond teaching by engaging in impactful research, fostering innovation, and nurturing critical thinking.

"In these testing times, the dedication to selflessly serve the nation holds immense significance. Your roles as researchers and educators play a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's future," Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed emphasized. During her keynote address,

Managing Director NAHE, Ms. Noor Amna Malik highlighted the rigorous training process, which lays strong emphasis on bridging the gap between theory and practice.

She underlined the integration of innovative methodologies, including micro-teaching, which empowers candidates to refine their teaching techniques through constructive feedback from resource persons, peers, and self-assessment. She also stressed the programme's dedication to supporting both emerging and established educational institutions in their growth. Ms. Noor Amna Malik remarked, "This ceremony signifies not an end, but the commencement of a new journey devoted to serving the nation."

NFDP is meticulously designed to prepare and certify fresh PhD holders for their forthcoming teaching roles within higher education institutions. This pre-service training imparts vital techniques and skill sets that will elevate their teaching practices in the future. The program facilitates a seamless transition from theoretical knowledge to effective practical implementation, with a special focus on employing impactful andragogical methods. The National Faculty Development Programme (NFDP), a cornerstone of the training, focuses on expediting the transfer of essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes across three fundamental dimensions of a successful faculty career: effective teaching and learning, research, and professional practices.

## Pakistan's national space policy should prioritize private sector participation in R&D

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a seminar on Friday demanded that the country's National Space Policy should prioritize private sector participation in research and development (R&D), and encourage commercial sector involvement.

"At the international level, the space sector is growing exponentially, with public-private partnerships (PPP) in R&D aimed at acquiring next-generation capabilities. To ensure the success of Pakistan's space programme, it is crucial for the national leadership to set goals, allocate resources, and develop a credible infrastructure," these were some of the key takeaways from the seminar titled 'Emerging Trends in Aerospace Power: Options for Pakistan' organised by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore.

Director National Security, CASS, Lahore, Air Commodore (R) Khalid Iqbal delivered the introductory remarks. His speech was followed by a keynote address by former Chairman Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), Major General (R) Ahmed Bilal, who highlighted the prevalent global aerospace trends. Associate Professor, Air University, Dr Ali Sarosh focused on the evolution of Space power in South Asia,

including its military and civil applications while Professor Dr Ahmed Saeed Minhas, DHA Suffa University elucidated on gaps in international Space law and viable developmental strategy for Pakistan's Space programme.

Following the guest speakers' remarks, an extensive question and answer session was held to delve into the depths of the topic.

The speakers said, "Aerospace power is the ability to use air and space capabilities to achieve wide-ranging civil and military objectives in economic, commercial and scientific domains. Pakistan stands at the threshold of numerous opportunities to capitalize on emerging trends like space exploration, satellite technology, unmanned aerial system, and electric propulsion of green aviation. The seminar focused on options for Pakistan regarding aerospace power."

President, CASS Lahore, Air Marshal (R) Asim Suleiman, in his concluding remarks, said that Pakistan should focus on space technologies, infrastructure, industrial, technological potential, and human resource. He further said that the national security strategy of a country recognizes the importance of maintaining access to space, considering that space-related technolo-

gies are crucial for determining a nation's military strategy.

The CASS Lahore President also said that Pakistan must integrate space-related services in the mainstream setups for better governance, efficient functioning, sustainable development, and social well-being.

The most important takeaways from the seminar were: A three pronged National strategy be pursued as the 'Way Forward': Firstly, ensure full scale applicability of available Aerospace capability and resources for socio-economic development and national security; Secondly, achieve self-sufficiency and indigenisation as far as possible in the short and medium term, meeting the basic needs over complete spectrum of Aerospace; and Thirdly, synergise the National effort for sustained growth of the Aerospace sector. The national space policy should be based on realistic objectives, considering ground realities, national ambitions, and the international environment. It should be a well-thought-out institutional mechanism that creates linkages between state-controlled and commercial activities, ensuring preservation of national priorities and safeguarding state interests. There is a need to rejuvenate the National Space Policy to generate a new vigour towards development of space capa-



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used to construct new lanes on Islamabad Expressway for smooth traffic flow.



Traffic accident kills 1, injures 12

HELMAND (Agencies): At least one person was killed, and 12 others were injured due to a road accident in Helmand province of Afghanistan, officials said on Friday. The incident occurred in the province's Kajaki district when two vehicles collided, as stated by Mawlawi Riyas, the spokesperson for the provincial administration. He added that the incident occurred due to the driver's reckless driving. Meanwhile, the injured people have taken to the hospital, and some of the injured were in critical condition.

Iran deported over 30,000 Afghans

ATLANTA (Pajhwok): Over 30,000 Afghan refugees had been sent back to Afghanistan in the past one month, according to Iranian security forces on Friday. Iranian media quoted Sardar Raza Shujaee, commander of the Iranian border forces in Sistan Balochistan province, saying that these illegal Afghans were sent back through Milek border crossing back to Afghanistan. "Foreigners should use legal means for coming or staying in Iran otherwise individuals entering Iran illegally would be sent back," he said.

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

# Female students call to reopen schools



KABUL (TOLONews): Female students and teachers said they are worried that nothing was said about schools on the second anniversary of the Islamic Emirate's takeover. Once again they emphasized their right to education and asked the current government to reopen academic institutions for girls as soon as possible. "Yesterday, I thought

that maybe schools, universities, and many other places that were closed would open but they didn't," said Marwa, a student. "We call on the government to reopen schools and universities for girls," said Najma, a student. Meanwhile, some students and teachers warn of the negative consequences of closing girls' schools and said that closing the gates

of schools will spread illiteracy in the country more than before. "There was some news in social media about reopening schools and universities for girls but it didn't happen, the closure of the schools is not beneficial for our country," said Fahima, a student. The question is why the plan to reopen schools and universities has not been

finalized after two years of Islamic Emirate rule. "We were waiting for their announcement (on the anniversary of Islamic Emirate rule) about reopening schools and universities for girls," said Fazil Malik, a Kabul resident. "We ask to reopen schools for girls because we need them in the teaching and medical department," said Rahmatullah, a Kabul resident. A number of women's rights activists have said that depriving women of learning will have a negative effect on the future of the country. "We are waiting for the reopening schools for girls, but they didn't open schools and they put more restrictions on women day by day," said Mahboba Saraj, a woman's rights activist. After the Islamic Emirate takeover, the Ministry of Education said that education would be allowed by creating a method for girls above the sixth grade, but in recent months, the Ministry of Education has not said anything new about the issue.

# Hanafi: Islamic Emirate established policy of neutrality'

KABUL (TOLONews): Second Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi said that the Islamic Emirate has established a policy of neutrality in Afghanistan. Speaking at a gathering held by the Shia Ulema in the Dasht-e-Barchi area of Kabul, Hanafi asked the world to interact positively in relations with the current Afghan government. "Friendship should be mutual. We interact with them and expect the same interaction and relations with all neighbors and countries in the region and beyond the region," he said. The official said that none of the attacks on educational institutions, madrasas, and public areas during the last 20 years were carried out by the Islamic Emirate. Hanafi called for the maintaining of national unity among different ethnic groups of the country. "In Ashura ceremonies, our educational centers, our mosques, our Takia-Khana (places of mourning), and other places of worship for Afghans, none of them were secured. Thousands of innocent people in Afghanistan were being



martyred every day. And they were saying that the Taliban did this. This is not in the culture of the Taliban," The 2nd Deputy Prime Minister said. "If there are differences and problems among Afghans, the ground will be open to occupation," said Najib Mujahid, Deputy Director General of Intelligence. The governor of Kabul, Qasim Khalid, said in the

gathering that there had been no kidnapping incidents in Kabul in the past five months. "Abduction has been reduced to zero in the past five months, we do not have any abduction cases at all," Khalid added. Meanwhile, a number of Shiite clerics welcomed that security had been provided over the last two years and demanded that the Jafari sect be recognized in the nation.

"Since both Shia sides adhere to the Jafari sect, there is no reason that another than sect should be applied to resolve the issues," said Abdul Qadir Alami, a Shiite cleric. The Islamic Emirate's officials reiterated that they will not permit any group to sow discord in the nation, saying that there is no difference between the nation's residents who are Sunni and Shia.

## Over 3,500 projects implemented in last year

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Economy reported the implementation of more than 3,500 projects in the health, agriculture, transportation, and energy sectors in the last year in the country. The ministry deputy said that more than one billion US dollars have been spent on these projects. "3,575 projects worth \$1.9 billion have been implemented in the fields of health, agriculture, food safety, transportation, and energy in the last year, which shows a bright and promising future in the economic field, and infrastructure," said Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy of the Ministry of Economy. In the meantime, Zabiullah Mujahid, the Islamic Emirate's spokesperson, said that the funding for carrying out development projects in the current solar year is more than that of the previous year. "This year we're considering further development plans. The plan includes building roads, dams, and other infrastructure in a number of industries, including agriculture. In comparison to the previous year, more funds will be spent, and there will be transparency," Mujahid



said. "Development projects have been chosen that will significantly benefit the nation, and, with their completion, income will also be obtained. That is, we have selected projects based on priorities and they are being implemented," said Ahmed Wali Haqmal, the spokesman of the Ministry of Finance. However, some economists place an emphasis on developing a suitable framework for obtaining foreign help as well as providing opportunities for large investment in the

nation in addition to domestic revenue. "We must build a correct framework so that foreign aid, which is unconditional, will flow to Afghanistan and, most significantly, the possibility of investment in Afghanistan will be made feasible," said Azarakhs Hafizi, an economist. "The government of Afghanistan has measured its budget based on its revenue. It has calculated how much revenue and expenses it has, and this results in a balance," said Sayed Masoud, another

economist. The Islamic Emirate is launching infrastructure projects and said supporting domestic production, increasing exports, mining, implementing reconstruction projects, and maintaining currency stability have been among the most important economic issues of the past two years. But international reports show that poverty has not yet been addressed in Afghanistan, and based on reports, more than 90% of Afghan people are facing poverty.

## 3.7 billion Afs allocated to work on water projects: MoEW

KABUL (TOLONews): Officials within the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW) said that 3.7 billion Afs has been allocated to implement 411 projects for water management in the country. The head of the water management of the ministry, Rafiullah Stanikzai, said that a major part of the

budget will be dedicated to Kamal Khan, Pashdan, Bakhshabad and Shah wa Aros, as well as repairing both sides of the Amu River. "The projects are varied. These projects have been categorized at a national level. In general, the implementation of these projects needs 10.2 billion Afs. We ask the budget

from the Finance Ministry but the ministry has allocated 3.7 billion Afs for the projects," he said. The head of the chief of staff of the ministry, Abdul Aziz Aziz, said that shortage of water has caused serious risks for the people. "Kabul city is at risk of shortage of water, and thus, our initial procedures are to

find a way for the re-use of water," he said. "Kabul electricity is the priority of the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW). We are focusing on the 500-volt power line from Turkmenistan, so that we will be able to complete the power line within one year," said Farhad Mahmoodi, an official.

## Red Cross set to end funding at 25 hospitals in Afghanistan



KABUL (Reuters): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is likely to end the financial running of 25 Afghan hospitals by the end of August due to funding constraints, a spokesperson told Reuters, amid growing concerns over a plunge in aid to Afghanistan. "Although we continue to engage with government ministries, donors, and organisations to find alternative sustainable support mechanisms for the hospital sector, the phase-out of the Hospital Program is expected to happen tentatively at the end of August," Diogo Alcantara, ICRC's spokesperson for Afghanistan, told Reuters on Thursday. "The ICRC does not have the mandate nor the resources to maintain a fully functioning public health-care sector in the longer term," Alcantara said. In April, ICRC said its governing board approved 430 million Swiss francs (\$475.30 million) in cost reductions over 2023 and early 2024 and a rolling back of operations in some locations as budgets for humanitarian aid were expected to decrease. "The financial difficulties the ICRC is facing have

sped up, in transparency with IEA (Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan) authorities, the expected return of the full responsibilities of the health services to the Ministry of Public Health," Alcantara said, referring to the Taliban administration. The program's end comes amid growing concerns over cuts to Afghanistan's humanitarian aid, two years after the Taliban took over and most other forms of international assistance, which formed the backbone of the economy, were halted. The Geneva-based organisation would continue its other Afghanistan health programs, including rehabilitation support for people with disabilities. A spokesman for the Taliban-run Afghan health ministry did not respond to request for comment. It was not clear how much was needed to pay for the operations, which fund salaries and other costs at many of Afghanistan's major hospitals serving millions of people, and if Taliban authorities could cover that amount from the fiscal budget. An Afghan finance ministry spokesman said this year's budget had been finalised, but not publicly

released. The hospitals have been supported by ICRC since a few months after foreign forces left in August 2021. Development funding was cut to Afghanistan as the Taliban - which has not formally been recognised by any country - took over the country. The sudden financial shock imperilled critical public services including health and education. The ICRC and other agencies including the U.N. stepped in to try to fill gaps. "The (ICRC) took this decision back then to save the healthcare system from collapsing due to the financial crises that Afghanistan was experiencing and because many development agencies and other organisations left the country while the ICRC stayed," Alcantara said. The ICRC hospital program had originally covered 33 hospitals, eight of which have already been phased out, paying for the salaries of over 10,000 health workers and some medical supplies. The hospitals provided thousands of beds and served areas encompassing more than 25 million people - over half the population. Neighbouring Pakistan is closely watching the

development, a senior government official told Reuters. Pakistan, a major destination for healthcare for Afghans, routinely has thousands of medical visa applications lodged with its embassy, officials said. "We are concerned about a further influx of medical patients," said the Pakistani official, who declined to be identified to speak openly about sensitive diplomatic issues. Pakistan's foreign office did not reply to request for comment. There is growing alarm over cuts to aid to Afghanistan, where the U.N. humanitarian plan for 2023 is only 25% funded, even after requested budget was downgraded from \$4.6 billion to \$3.2 billion. Diplomats and aid officials say concerns over Taliban restrictions on women alongside competing global humanitarian crises are causing donors to pull back on financial support. The Taliban has ordered most Afghan female aid staff not to work, though granted exemptions in health and education. Almost three-quarters of Afghanistan's population are now in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the aid agencies.

## IEA officials inaugurate construction of New Kabul City

KABUL (Pajhwok): The construction work of New Kabul City has kicked off after the contract signed between the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MoUDH) and Khawar Construction Company. Shaikh Noorulhaq Anwari, the Administrative Affairs General Director, said time has arrived when the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' (IEA)

should accelerate efforts for the economic development of the country. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, PMs economic affairs aid, said the New Kabul City would be built on modern style and all necessary facilities would be made available, he said the new city would help reduce congestion in Kabul City. Mawlawi Abdul Salaam Hanafi, PMs administra-

tive affairs aide, said all traders and investor had the responsibility to stand shoulder to shoulder by the IEA and rebuild Afghanistan. Shaikh Hamdullah Noumani said all the documents related to the area were strictly monitored and any kind of usurpation had been prevented. According to the MoUD the new Kabul

City is situated in the northern part of Kabul, the city would be built in Deh Sabz district and would also include some areas from Shakardarah, Qarababagh, Estalif, Kalakan districts. The project would be implemented in two phases: each phase would take 15 years. During the first phase 2,500 homes for over one million people would be built.





# Domki nominated as caretaker Balochistan CM

QUETTA (PPI): The parliamentary committee on Friday reached a consensus on the name of Ali Mardan Domki as the caretaker chief minister of the Balochistan province. In light of the committee's decision, the BA speaker has forwarded the name of Ali Mardan Domki to the Balochistan governor.

It may be mentioned here that CM Abdul Qadoos Bizenjo and opposition leader had first developed a consensus on the name of Ali Mardan Domki in their deliberations but somehow the notification for the appointment of the interim CM was held up. During Thursday's round of parleys among the members of the parliamentary committee, the deadlock persisted on

the nomination of the caretaker chief minister.

The agreement over the interim chief minister came during the second round of the parliamentary committee on Friday. The first meeting of the parliamentary committee formed by Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali for the appointment of caretaker chief minister ended without a result on Thursday night.

The panel formed for the selection of caretaker chief minister included Chief Minister Abdul Qaddus Bizenjo, Sardar Abdul Rahman Khetran, Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Muhammad Nawaz Kakar, Abdul Wahid Siddiqui, and Younis Zehri. Achakzai,

Zehri, Siddiqui, and Kakar participated in the meeting of the parliamentary committee called on Thursday night, but failed to reach a consensus. The committee discussed the names of Ali Hasan Zehri, Naseer Ahmed Bizenjo, Ali Mardan Domki, and Usman Badini for the caretaker chief minister slot.

Meanwhile, the nominated Chief Minister of Balochistan Ali Mardan Domki Friday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here.

The prime minister congratulated Ali Mardan Domki on his nomination for the top slot in Balochistan's caretaker setup and expressed good wishes for him.

## ECP halts NOC issuance for housing societies

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday banned the issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for new housing societies, making commission approval necessary even in cases of urgency.

The ECP's notification stated that while the caretaker government has the capability to manage routine operational emergencies, it is advisable to refrain from making significant policy decisions. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) notice highlights a growing concern – changes in land usage initiated by the provincial government across various districts. The issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) by deputy commissioners to multiple housing societies has begun to compromise vital green spaces and productive agricultural land.

This trend could potentially lead to disorderly and unplanned residential expansion, accompanied by possible corruption concerns in specific regions. The responsibility of devising an appropriate policy to tackle this challenge falls squarely on the shoulders of the elected government, bypassing the caretaker government.

Consequently, an immediate cessation of new No Objection Certificates (NOCs) issuance is urged, with a directive to communicate this decision to all deputy commissioners.

In instances where the caretaker government identifies pressing matters in this context or any other, they are expected to present a well-justified case for review and approval by the commission before any action is taken. Upholding the commission's legal mandate and guidelines is a fundamental expectation from the caretaker government as they fulfil their duties.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaz Solangi briefing media about the decisions taken in Federal Cabinet's first meeting.

## Sami Saeed assumes charge as caretaker Planning Minister

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Sami Saeed, a retired seasoned bureaucrat, has assumed charge as the caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, marking a significant development in the country's economic landscape.

He has an extensive experience in Planning, Development & Economic affairs. On arrival at the ministry, he was welcomed by the Secretary of Planning Syed Zafar Ali Shah and senior officials. Later, the minister chaired a meeting in which he was given a detailed briefing by the secretary about the functioning and responsibilities of the ministry and ongoing development and strategic initiatives of the ministry particularly the PSDP, Annual Development Plan, CPEC and SIFC.

While chairing the meeting, Sami Saeed said that all officers of the ministry should work for the development of the country with full dedication and hard work. The minister said that the implementation of public welfare projects should be ensured while special attention should be paid to the quality of the projects.

Highlighting the importance of education, he said that more attention should be given to increasing the quality of education in the country. As per the profile, Muhammad Sami Saeed joined the Civil Service of Pakistan (District Management Group/Pakistan Administrative Service) in 1980 and held important positions in government and international organizations.

He remained Executive Director on the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Cabinet Secretary to the Government of

## Jilani assumes charge as FM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs Jalil Abbas Jilani took the charge of his office on Friday. Foreign Minister Jilani, who had taken oath along with other cabinet members on Thursday, has an extensive expertise of foreign affairs. He served as foreign secretary in 2012-13, besides Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, European Union, Belgium, Luxembourg and Australia.

Meanwhile, talking to media, the minister 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.

Caretaker Minister for Interior Senator Sarfraz Bugti formally also assumed the charge of office on Friday. Secretary Interior Syed Ali Murtaza along with officials welcomed the 47th Interior Minister minister on his arrival at the ministry. He was given a guard of honour and then introduced to the senior officers of the ministry. Sarfraz Bugti was given a detailed briefing about the ministry, its functioning and the attached departments.

Pakistan and Principal Staff Officer to the Prime Minister.

He served in Punjab as Chairman Planning and Development Board, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Additional Chief Secretary and Secretary of Agriculture and Excise and Taxation Departments.

He held key positions in the Ministry of Finance, including Secretary of the National Finance Commission, Additional Secretary (Internal Finance and Banking), Joint Secretary (Provincial Finance and Development), Deputy Secretary (External Finance and International Financial Relations) and Additional Finance Secretary (Budget) in Punjab. He also performed duties as Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad and

Assistant Commissioner Khanewal.

Sami Saeed worked as Director on the Board of Directors of major banks and financial institutions, including United Bank, Allied Bank, Bank of Punjab and Agriculture Development Bank of Pakistan. Similarly, he represented the country in various bilateral negotiations and international conferences including the World Economic Forum 2007 in Davos, Switzerland as well as bilateral and multilateral negotiations As Executive Director on the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank, he paid official visits to many member countries around the world and interacted with quarters concerned at the highest level.

## Cabinet to be small, formed shortly: Sindh CM

KARACHI (PPI): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar said Friday that he would select a small cabinet for which he has started meetings and consultation, but the effort is to induct a cabinet at the earliest.

This he said on Friday while talking to the media at Mazar-e-Quaid. He said that he was grateful to Almighty Allah who gave him an opportunity to serve the people of the province for a short time. "I am keen to play my part to contribute to the realization of the dream of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah," he said.

To a question, the caretaker chief minister said that he has started his meetings to select his cabinet. "In the first phase a few names [for caretaker ministers] would be selected in the first phase and then the process would be completed in the second," he said

and added he was trying to select well-reputed people for his caretaker cabinet.

Replying to a question, Justice Baqar said that rule of law, conviction, and commitment were prerequisites for the improvement of the governance and the government system. How it would be achieved is the question to which he replied by following the constitution.

To a question about delaying the general election, Justice Baqar said that we should avoid being skeptical. "It is premature to develop such an argument let the process start," he said and added it was the responsibility of the election commission to determine to hold the general election, and the caretaker government was bound to facilitate them, but he assured that he would not be a part of any unconstitutional arrangement.

To another question, the caretaker CM denied having any information about initiating the accountability process in the Center and the provinces. "As a matter of fact, there should be the accountability of everyone, including me, you – the media, and the government servant but it must be done within the parameters of the constitution and by those institutions which have the authority," he said.

He said that accountability should not be conducted under malafide intentions. "During the 76 years of history of the country, the accountability process has remained counterproductive and such gimmicks did not produce results," he said. To a question, the chief minister said that the Ranipur incident was quite painful and shameful. He added that it must be investigated and prosecuted properly.

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### KUST ONLINE ADMISSION SCHEDULE FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Last date to apply for online admissions: **September 04, 2023 (Monday) up-to 4:30pm**

Scrutiny of Admission forms:	September 05, 2023 (Tuesday)
Display of General list (for queries) before Interview:	September 06, 2023 (Wednesday)
Interviews of the Eligible candidates & Interview marks uploading on Admission Portal	September 07-08, 2023 (Thursday, Friday)
Display of general list with Interview marks added (For Queries, if any)	September 11, 2023 (Monday)
Display of merit list:	September 12, 2023 (Tuesday)
Fee to be deposited:	September 12-15, 2023
<b>Commencement of classes:</b>	<b>September 18, 2023 (Monday)</b>

### Schedule of Internal Test to be held at KUST for Graduate Admission - Fall 2023

Last date to apply for the Internal 2nd Test:	<b>August 24, 2023 (Thursday)</b>
Test Date & Time:	<b>August 27, 2023 (Sunday) (9:30am)</b>
Result Announcement	<b>August 29, 2023 (Tuesday)</b>

### Venue for the Test: Iftikhar Auditorium / IBS (KUST)

Note: for the Test Registration: Please download challan form from KUST website ([www.kust.edu.pk](http://www.kust.edu.pk)). After depositing fee in the bank, the Candidates must submit the deposited fee challan in hard form to Admission office KUST & in soft form to be emailed ([admissions@kust.edu.pk](mailto:admissions@kust.edu.pk)) (upto 04:30pm Friday) August 25, 2023

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Designed by:  
Yasir Habib