

**NAB summons Buzdar**  
ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Saturday summoned former Punjab chief minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, who is facing allegations of accumulating assets beyond his known sources of income, awarding contracts to favourites, exporting wheat abroad and making illegal appointments, on August 30, 2023. Last time Buzdar had appeared before the NAB team was on May 2, 2023.

@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIX

No. 211

Regd. No. 241

SAFAR 02 1445 -- SUNDAY, AUGUST 20 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq.

## Qureshi arrested from his residence in Islamabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was arrested again, the party claimed on Saturday.

According to PTI's official Twitter account, Shah Mahmood Qureshi was arrested by a heavy contingent of police from his residence in Islamabad. According to the party, the former foreign minister was being transferred to Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Headquarters.

According to details, Qureshi was arrested by FIA in the lost cipher case in which he was also nominated along with PTI chairman Imran Khan. He was summoned by the FIA for the investigation but he could not appear before the FIA. His arrest came a day after the news emerged of PTI's effort led by Qureshi to apprise the foreign countries' envoys and gain their support against the recent crack-down against the party and its leadership.

Earlier on Saturday, Qureshi addressed a press conference in the federal capital to denounce the crack-down of police on his party and condemned the high-handedness of police for confiscating houses, businesses and properties of party leader Usman Dar in Sialkot. He also negated any notion that there was any change in the leadership was discussed during the core committee meetings and reposed his full confidence in PTI chairman Imran Khan's leadership.

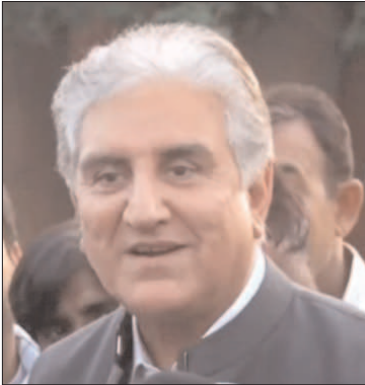
Qureshi's arrest comes a little over

two months after his release in a case pertaining to May 9 protests, which erupted following the arrest of party chairman Imran Khan in a graft case. He was taken into custody on May 11 by the Islamabad police on multiple charges, including "inciting violent protests".

On May 18, the Islamabad High Court had ordered the former foreign minister's release. However, his release was delayed due to his apparent reluctance to provide an undertaking to refrain from engaging in "unruly" protests. When Qureshi was finally set free on May 23, he was again taken into custody by Punjab police from outside Adiala Jail after his detention orders were issued by the Rawalpindi deputy commissioner. He was eventually released on June 6 after Lahore High Court's Rawalpindi bench ordered his immediate release and set aside his detention orders.

PTI Secretary General Ayub condemned Qureshi's arrest, saying: "Had hoped that the reign of lawlessness would have ended after the exit of the fascist PDM government, but it appears that this caretaker government wants to break the records of their predecessor fascist government." PTI leader Farrukh Habib claimed Qureshi was arrested for "expressing the party's position in a press conference and for attending a tea of foreign ambassadors recently".

Without naming anyone, he added: "They want to ... silence all voices by any means. The protection of personal freedom given in the Constitution of Pakistan has been abolished, the



Constitution has been suspended." In his condemnation, former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa finance minister Taimur Jhagra questioned: "Is it a coincidence that Qureshi was arrested after a press conference of the right sort, that presented his party's stance? Is it a coincidence that just earlier today, rumours had been deliberately circulated that there were differences between Qureshi and Ayub? ... Is it that despite every attempt, PTI has not broken and continues to stand firmly behind Imran Khan?"

Saying that Qureshi had been "available and collaborating with the judicial system and investigation agencies in all cases", Jhagra demanded the PTI vice chairman's immediate release. "The law should not be made a joke," he said. PTI's Zulfi Bukhari also maintained that Qureshi was "arrested for doing a press conference and re-affirming the PTI's stance against all tyranny and pre-poll rigging that is going on currently in Pakistan".

## Justice Shah calls for deferment of 184(3) cases until decision on Act

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Top court Judge Mansoor Ali Shah urged Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial to put off hearing on all cases falling under Article 184(3) until a final verdict is issued on the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act, 2023. The law passed by parliament earlier this year aims to curtail the powers of the country's top judge.

He said this in a two-page note issued following the hearing of the petition challenging the amendments to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) law. "Even though we have been hearing this case since 19 July 2022 but after the 46th hearing of the case held on 16 March 2023, the Parliament enacted the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 ("Act") on 21 April 2023 which, inter alia, requires under Section 3 that the Bench for hearing petitions under Article 184(3) of the Constitution is to be constituted by a Committee comprising of the Chief Justice of Pakistan and two next most senior Judges of the Court," the judge said in the note.

Justice Shah said section 4 provides that any case involving the interpretation of constitutional provision is to be heard by a bench com-

prising at least five judges. The next hearing in this case after the promulgation of the Act was scheduled to be held on May 16, the judge added. "Before the said hearing, I apprised the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan of my reservations to continue with hearing the case by the present Bench (as expressed in this note). The case was therefore simply adjourned on that date."

Justice Shah said as per his understanding the present case would be taken up for further hearing only after the constitutionality of the procedure act is finally decided by the apex court. However, this case has been fixed for hearing today (Saturday), and there is no date of hearing fixed in the other case that will determine the constitutionality of the Act, the judge said. Justice Shah said the practice and procedure act being a procedural law also applies to pending cases under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, including the present one.

"I am aware that the operation of the Act has been suspended by an eight-member Bench of this Court. It is, however, clear that the suspension order of the eight-member Bench is an interim measure. If ultimately the Court upholds the constitutional

validity of the Act, which is an equally possible outcome with that of the possible decision of its constitutional invalidity, the Act would take effect from the date of its enforcement, not from the date of decision of the Court."

In case the act is held to be valid, the decision of this bench, which is not constituted as per the procedure prescribed and strength of judges required under the act, in the present matter, may arguably be "coram non iudice and thus a nullity in the eye of law". The judge further said: "In order to avoid such an anomaly, I was of the view that the cases under Article 184(3) of the Constitution should not be heard till the 1 which was suspended by this Court on 13.04.2023 when it was still a Bill."

"[...] or if some urgency requires that a case under Article 184(3) of the Constitution must be heard, it would be prudent and appropriate if it is heard by a Full Court Bench," the judge opined. "I, therefore, made a request today to the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan on the Bench to constitute a Full Court Bench, for hearing the present case, which I hope his lordship would consider earnestly."

## Justice Isa show solidarity with Christian community

FAISALABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice Designate Qazi Faez Isa on Saturday visited Jaranwala to meet and express solidarity with the Christian community after violent attacks on their houses and churches over alleged blasphemy allegations.

On August 16, a crowd vandalised several churches and set scores of houses on fire in Jaranwala town of the industrial district of Faisalabad after clerics made announcements in mosques inciting the mob to attack the Christian community under allegations of blasphemy. Paramilitary troops were called in to handle the violence and bring the situation under control,

according to a government order seen by media. The attack sparked outrage on social media and among political and religious figures in Pakistan, who condemned the incident, saying that there was no room for such extreme behaviour. The Supreme Court's judge arrived in Jaranwala with his wife and visited the Christian colony. Justice Isa reviewed the situation of the houses and churches that were attacked earlier this week.

"Three days have passed since the incident and the streets are still not clean," said Justice Isa while expressing displeasure with the deputy commissioner and directing him to get the

streets cleaned immediately. Expressing regret over the incident, the senior puisne judge met the victims, assuring them of all-out support. He told the Christian community that they have equal rights as everyone else, adding that all citizens are equal.

Speaking to the Christian victims, Justice Isa said that it was the duty of Muslims to catch the perpetrators if churches are attacked. He added that Christians have equal rights to build a church as Muslims have to build a mosque. During his visit, the judge and his wife also provided financial assistance to the victims and distributed food packages among them.

### KP Governor takes oath from caretaker cabinet

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali took oath from the caretaker provincial cabinet in a ceremony held at Governor House on Saturday.

The provincial cabinet includes 9 ministers, including Syed Masood Shah, Feroz Jamal Shah, Justice Retd Irshad Qaiser, Ahmad Rasool Bangash, Asif Rafiq, Dr. Najeebullah, Dr. Muhammad Qasim Jan, Justice Retired Rashid Hussain Shah, Syed Amir Abdullah took oath of the Caretaker Ministers.

Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan was also present at the Jirga Hall of the Governor House Peshawar. Besides IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and officers were also present at the swearing-in ceremony.

Earlier, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali received the Chief Minister and other members of his cabinet soon after their arrival at the Governor House.

### Two terrorists killed in Bara

F.P. Report

BARA: Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation on reported presence of terrorists in general area Bara, Khyber District and killed two terrorists.

During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists and resultantly two terrorists were sent to hell, said a press release issued by ISPR on Saturday. The killed terrorists remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as killing of innocent citizens.

Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

### Sindh's cabinet members take oath

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Saturday administered the oath to the 10-member caretaker cabinet of Sindh province. The caretaker chief minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqir short-listed the names of his caretaker ministers yesterday.

He was in attendance as the ceremony was marked by a sense of solemnity and responsibility, as the caretaker government assumes the mantle of leadership during the interim period. The ceremony commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Chief Secretary, Acting Inspector General (IG), Provincial Secretaries, and family members of the caretaker ministers were present at the event, creating an atmosphere of unity and shared purpose. The members of the caretaker cabinet include retired Brigadier Haris Nawaz, Mohammad Younas Dagha, Muhammad Mubeen Jumani, Dr. Saad Niaz, Khuda Bux Murri, Dr. Raana Hussain, Dr. Junaid Ali Shah, Umar Soomro, Ishwar Lal, and Arshad Wali.

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### Nawaz summons party leaders

LONDON (Agencies): PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has summoned the party leadership of Lahore to London, whereas former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif is also likely to travel to London today (Sunday).

Media reports said that Saif Ul Malook Khokhar and President Youth Wing Lahore Malik Faisal will leave for London tomorrow and will present a report to Nawaz Sharif on organisational structure of Punjab capital.

## Govt to ensure reforms in power, energy sectors: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Saturday said that the government would ensure the implementation of reforms in the power and energy sectors of the country.

He was talking to Caretaker Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister said that reforms in the energy and power sectors of the country were critical to national economic stability and development. He also extended his good wishes and congratulations to Muhammad Ali on assuming the responsibilities.

**Caretaker govt committed to financial prudence:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar said that in the midst of economic challenges, their unwavering

commitment to financial prudence stood strong.

In a post on social media platform X, the prime minister said, "From vendors to lawyers, farmers to engineers, artists to doctors, and every other segment of the society, their contribution propels the Pakistani Dream." "Together, with this diverse support, we are journeying towards a brighter and more prosperous future for our nation," he added.

The post also carried a short video clip of an address by the caretaker prime minister to the cabinet members, regarding financial discipline, during a maiden meeting held on Friday.

**PM visits Sarfraz Domki in hospital:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Saturday here visited former provincial minister Mir Sarfraz Chakar Domki in a hospital to inquire after his health. The prime

minister prayed for his early recovery and health.

Meanwhile, the Chief Secretary (CS) of Sindh Dr Fakhre-e-Alam Irfan called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar. During the meeting, the prime minister extended his good wishes to the CS and expressed the hope that he would discharge his responsibilities diligently, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release issued here.

**Senator Muzaffar felicitates PM on assuming office:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here held a meeting with Senator Muzaffar Hussain Shah.

Senator Muzaffar congratulated him on assuming the office of prime minister and expressed best wishes for him.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here held a meeting with former provincial minister Haji Muhammad Khan.

## President signs Army Act, Official Secrets Amend Bills

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): President Arif Alvi has signed the Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 into law. Both the bills, passed by the National Assembly and the Sindh, were forwarded to the president by the previous government of Shehbaz Sharif.

It may be mentioned here that the development came days after reports that the president had declined to sign over a dozen bills and sent back to the parliament for review. The changes in the Official Secrets Act and the Army Act will likely affect the PTI leaders and supporters who face a string of cases for their alleged involvement in the May 9 violence. The FIA this week had

registered a new case against PTI chairman under Section 5 of the Official Secrets Act. He is being accused of leaking the diplomatic cypher at the heart of PTI's claims about a US conspiracy to oust Imran Khan's government. The National Assembly has passed the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 on Monday last after making some alterations to the original draft — just like the Senate had a day earlier.

The original draft empowered intelligence agencies to arrest suspects or conduct searches without warrants. This clause was dropped in the final version of the bill. Another change was made to clause 5 of the bill, which earlier stated: "[A] person may be presumed to have been in com-

munication with enemy or a foreign agent if he has, either within or without Pakistan visited the address of a foreign agent or consorted or associated with enemy or a foreign agent..."

The National Assembly had passed the Army Act (Amendment) Bill on July 31. The amended law proposed up to five years in jail for those who disclose sensitive information pertaining to the security of the country or the military. The bill also proposed introducing Section 26-B, which forbids any person subject to the Army Act from engaging in any kind of political activity for two years from the date of their "retirement, release, resignation, discharge, removal or dismissal from the service".

## Sutlej river swells to 'alarming level'

LAHORE (Agencies): Several parts of Punjab are bracing themselves for a likely flood as the Sutlej River has swelled to an alarming level. The situation has been depicted by Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi who claimed that all-out efforts would be made to prevent damage and losses due to flood "unprecedented in 35 years" in the river.

The Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) said the river was at an "extremely high flood level" at Ganda Singh Wala. At Sulemanki Headworks, the river is anticipated to attain a "high to very high flood level" in the next 24 hours (Saturday-Sunday). Similarly, the Islam Headworks is expected to witness a high flood level from Aug 22. Sharing a post at X, Naqvi said "278,000 cusecs of water" is moving towards the Ganda Singh border in Kasur. He said the government was closely monitoring the situation.

"Visited flood-affected areas and relief camps today. Appreciation for district administration, Rescue 1122, Police, and Irrigation teams for their 24/7 efforts over the past 3 days. "This flood is unprecedented in 35 years, but our teams are on the ground, dedicated to securing and helping our people. Insha Allah, we'll get through this together," the chief minister resolved. He later told journalists that

10 to 12 feet floodwater had entered several villages in Kasur and thousands of people had been evacuated. He said the residents would be shifted to relatively safe places by imposing Section 144.

He said the Lahore commissioner and officials of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) were on the alert and would ensure rescue and relief operation. The PDMA on Friday issued a letter to the deputy commissioners of districts along the Sutlej to announce through mosques in rural areas close to rivers and canals the flood situation. It said reinforcement was being provided to discourage crossing rivers and drains and there was a need to limit the movement of "snakes and other dangerous animals" to ensure public safety. It urged the public to cooperate with the administration.

A few days earlier, the authorities warned that the water level in the Sutlej River was constantly rising as India released 100,000 cusecs of water into the river. New Delhi also issued an urgent warning letter to Pakistan. "Around 100,000 cusecs of water has entered Pakistan via Ferozepur Barrage," according to the letter which added that another 190,000 cusecs was travelling towards Ferozepur from Harikhe Barrage. The Kasur district

administration issued a warning for Ganda Singh Wala as Sutlej River was in a low flood, a PDMA spokesman said back then. A moderate to high-level flood was likely in Ganda Singh Wala over the next 24 hours, the spokesman said, explaining that India was scheduled to release more water until Aug 20. Okara, Kasur, Pakpattan, Bahawalnagar, Vehari, Lodhran, Multan and Bahawalpur are likely to be hit by the flood in Sutlej.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department had predicted rain with strong winds and thunderstorm in the country. It said the weather would remain hot and humid in most plain areas of the country, while there was a possibility of rain with strong winds and thunder in North-Eastern Punjab, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and adjacent hilly areas. Gujranwala, Sialkot, Narowal, Murree and Galliat may experience rain with strong winds and thunderstorms. Heavy rain with thunderstorm has been predicted in Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Peshawar and Kohat. Hot and humid weather and dusty winds are likely to prevail in most parts of Sindh while Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are expected to remain partly cloudy apart from strong winds and thundershowers.





# CM observes inaugural ceremony of expansion block at Children's Hospital

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi oversaw the inauguration of the Emergency Expansion Block and Shelter at Children's Hospital on Saturday.

The event was graced by young patients Maah Noor and nine-year-old Muhammad Qamar Javed, who despite their thalassaemia affliction, symbolically inaugurated the project by cutting the ceremonial ribbon. The formal inauguration of the Children's Hospital Shelter was conducted by pharmacist Dr. Aqeela Iqbal. Notably, the Emergency Expansion Project at the Children's Hospital was a collaborative effort involving Islamic Aid Pakistan. The extensive Children's Hospital Emergency Expansion Project is designed to accommodate a total of 200 beds, providing critical healthcare services to the region. The initial phase of the expansion has established a fully functional ward with 38 beds.

During his visit, Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi meticulously inspected various hospital facilities including the ORS room, isolation wards, and radiology departments. He also took time to assess specially designed facilities, such as the accessible toilets for children with special needs. Impressed by the construction standards of the Children's Hospital Emergency Expansion Block, the Chief Minister also personally examined the residential rooms. He engaged with resident parents, discussing the range of facilities available to them. Given the prominence of patients from Afghanistan

and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, many of the parents were residing within the hospital's accommodations. Noteworthy individuals under treatment included children from Afghanistan such as Mohammad Naseer, Aamir Hussain, Saraj from Lucky Marwat, and Saifullah from Batgram. Their parents praised the exceptional quality of treatment provided at Punjab's Children's Hospital.

The Chief Minister engaged in detailed discussions with parents about the quality of accommodation and food facilities, demonstrating his dedication to their welfare. Additionally, Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi visited the under-construction site of the Children's University

project located behind the hospital.

He was informed that the University's completion is anticipated by 2025, with a four-story building set to cater to educational needs. Displaying his commitment to expeditious progress, the Chief Minister directed collaboration with generous individuals to expedite the completion of Children's University. He conveyed his gratitude to Islamic Aid's Chairman, Mahmoud al-Hasan, through a telephonic call from London.

The event was attended by various provincial ministers, including Aamir Mir and Dr. Javed Akram, along with secretaries of health and information, Deputy Commissioner Lahore, and other dignitaries.

## PPP demands ECP to hold elections within 90 days

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan to hold general elections within 90 days as per the Constitution.

Provincial president PPP Sindh Senator Nisar Khuhro along with party leaders Senator Waqar Mehdi and Saeed Ghani while addressing a press conference on Saturday urged the Election Commission of Pakistan to reconsider the decision to complete delimitation process by December and said holding general election within 90 days was a constitutional requirement.

According to the Constitution, the Election Commission is bound to hold the elections within 90 days after dissolution of assemblies before completing 5 years term. Nisar Khuhro said and added that Pakistan cannot afford delay in elections.

PPP leaders demanded the Election Commission and the Chief Election Commissioner to review the decision regarding the duration of delimitation of constituencies and hold elections on time.

Senator Khuhro said Assemblies were dissolved two days prior to give 90 days time to ECP for completing delimitation process therefore Chief Election Commissioner must take initiative for holding election as per constitution.

He said that new voter lists should be made under the new census, while there is no need for changes in the constituencies.

On this occasion, Pakistan Democratic Party's leader Bisharat Mirza along with his party colleagues announced participation in Pakistan People's Party.

# Hafiz Naeem should wait four years for 'Mayoral position'

KARACHI (NNI): Murtaza Wahab, the Mayor of Karachi, stated that Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, President of Jamat-e-Islami, Karachi Chapter, should wait the next four years for the 'mayoral position'.

While talking to the media, Mayor Karachi, Murtaza Wahab said that Hafiz Naeemur Rehman should cooperate with the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) for the

betterment of the city.

Murtaza Wahab emphasized that the development work should be done with efficiency and completed within the appointed tenure. He recalls the PTI chairman's statement in which the former prime minister promised to build roads around the Gujjar Nala, but he left the office without fulfilling his promise.

Murtaza Wahab mentioned that the Karachi

Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) is actively working for the maintenance of parks as well. He believes that the government owned parks should be accessible free of cost for the public.

Mayor Karachi stated, "We need to change our mindset, we [PPP] got criticize if we discuss to operate parks under public-private partnerships," he further added that, "We are not disloyal; we will work for

the betterment of this city."

Furthermore, Murtaza Wahab expressed concern about the theft of manholes, lights, and park grills. He pointed out that although people capture these incidents on video, they often fail to report them to police.

He urged the citizens to report the theft incident to the police, instead of making videos of the incidents.



## Corrigendum

**Revamping EOBI Applications and Database**  
**For strengthening the social security system operated by the Institution**  
**Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI)**

It is hereby informed that the date of submission of tender documents, called through PPRA Website as well as print media, vide PID(K)369-D/23 dated 04.08.2023 in the following Newspapers has been extended upto 31.08.2023, at 11:00 hours;


The News  
Dawn,  
Jang  
Express  
Baluchistan Express  
Frontier Post  
Kawish

Now Technical Bids, on the subject matter will be opened on 31.8.2023 at 11.30 am, at the same address.

In the same advertisement, following change is made in the eligibility criteria to create a healthy competition.

iv. The bidder should at least have an average annual revenue of Rs. 300 million during the last five fiscal years".

**Director (General Administration Department)**  
**EOBI Head Office, 190/B/1, P.E.C.H.S Block # 2,**  
**Near Blue Ribbon Bakery, Off Shara-e-Faisal, Karachi,**  
**PID(K) 553/23 Tel No: 012-99225397**



## NATIONAL HIGHWAYS & MOTORWAYS POLICE

### PROCUREMENT NOTICE (PN)

**No. Engine Oil File/Lines HQ/M-1/23/136**  
**Dated: 04-08-2023**

| S No. | Description  | Quantity  |
|-------|--|-----------|
| 1     | Multi-Grade Engine Oil for Petrol Engine SAE (10W40)     | 2500 Ltrs |
| 2     | Multi-Grade Engine Oil for Diesel Engine API CF-4(20W50) | 3000 Ltrs |

- The National Highways & Motorway Police has reserved Funds for the procurement planned for FY 2023-24. The NHMP intends to apply part of the proceeds of this Fund to cover eligible payments under the contract for the procurement
- "Procurement of Lubricants"
- The National Highways & Motorway Police invites sealed bids from eligible Manufacturer/Supplier for the supply of lubricants.
- Single Stage Two Envelop Bidding Procedure** of Principal Method of Procurement (i.e. Open Competitive Bidding) will be used by adopting **Least Cost Based Selection (LCBS) Technique** for the subject procurement, in line with the Public Procurement Rules, 2004 and any Regulations, Regulatory Guides, Procurement Guidelines or Instructions issued by the Authority (from time to time).
- All Proposals must be accompanied by a Bid Security mentioned below **on or before 11:00 Hours on 14-09-2023**. The Bids will be opened publicly on the same day at 12:00 Hours in the presence of Bidder's representatives who choose to attend the opening session to be held at office of the DSP/CPO Lines Headquarter, M-1, ANBAR SWABI.
- Bidding documents are available at office of the DSP / CPO Lines HQ, Sector M-1, ANBAR SWABI, during office hours before the closing date.
- In case opening date(s) is declared as a Public Holiday by the Government, the next working date shall be deemed to be the date for submission and opening of tender(s) at the same time and place.
- The original bid (as prescribed in Bid Data Sheet of the Bidding Document) in accordance with the provisions of Rule 36(b) of Public Procurement Rules, 2004 and terms and condition defined in the bidding document must be delivered at the address mentioned below **on or before 11:00 Hours on 14-09-2023**. The Bids will be opened publicly on the same day at 12:00 Hours in the presence of Bidder's representatives who choose to attend the opening session to be held at office of the DSP/CPO Lines Headquarter, M-1, ANBAR SWABI.

**DSP/CPO Lines Headquarter** PID(P) 327/23  
**Secretary Purchase Committee**  
**NHMP, M-1, ANBAR SWABI**  
**Tele # 0938-490022 & Email: m1lineshq@gmail.com**



## 2024 FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR PROGRAM



The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) invites applications for the 2024 Fulbright Scholar Program. This program funds up to 12 months of lectureship, post-doctoral research, or a combination of the two at a U.S. college or university. Persons selected are expected to share information about Pakistani society and culture with students, colleagues, and community groups in the United States. On returning to Pakistan, Fulbright scholars are expected to make a significant contribution to Pakistan's development and share their U.S. experiences with students, colleagues, and community groups in Pakistan. Priority is given to faculty researchers in early stages of their careers (2-7years) from the completion of their Ph.D. or terminal degree.

**Grant Benefits**  
The grant funds airfare, an incidental research allowance, a living stipend, and health insurance. The program also funds one accompanying dependent. USEFP will assist with visa application process.

**How to Apply?**

- Application form and instructions are available at [www.usefp.org](http://www.usefp.org)
- All application materials including references must be submitted online by **Wednesday, September 20, 2023.**
- This is an online application; paper application will not be accepted.

Plagiarism, fraudulent publications, or other misrepresentation will lead to disqualification at any stage of the program.

**For more information, please email**  
**[scholar@usefp.org](mailto:scholar@usefp.org) or call us at 051-8431300**

**Women, people with disabilities, and individuals from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan, Balochistan, Northern Sindh and Southern Punjab are highly encouraged to apply.**

## CTD claims arresting 13 terrorists

LAHORE (PPI): Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on Saturday claimed to have apprehended 13 terrorists including three main commanders of Daesh.

CTD conducted an intelligence-based operation in various districts of Punjab including Lahore, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Chiniot, Kasur, Multan, and Mandi Bahaudin. According to a statement by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) Spokesman, the arrested terrorist was planning dangerous activities.

During the operation, a substantial cache of arms and ammunitions including explosive materials, detonators, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), fuses, and a substantial amount of cash, was recovered from the apprehended terrorists.

The CTD launched a thorough investigation into the matter, filing cases against the detained individuals. It is worth mentioning here that during the combating operation this week in Lahore, the CTD reported arrested 34 suspects while a total of 4,113 individuals were interrogated during the process.


## Malaysian CG calls on Sindh Governor

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, on Saturday, stressed on the need of expansion of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Malaysia particularly in fields of education, health and science and technology.

He expressed the views while talking to Consul General of Malaysia Herman Hardynata Bin Ahmad who called on Sindh Governor here at Governor House Karachi.

Pakistan-Malaysia relations, measures to further enhance the bilateral ties, exchange of delegations in various sectors and other issues of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting.

Governor Sindh speaking at the occasion said that relations of Pakistan and Malaysia spanned over many decades and both the countries were linked in the eternal bond of Islamic brotherhood.



## PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

### OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A PART OF PCAA'S PROFESSIONAL TEAM

#### SITUATION VACANT NOTICE NO. 19/2023

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority requires services of **local residents (domicile holders)** of Quetta and Gwadar to fill the following vacant posts on **contract basis** where selection will be made purely on suitability and merit:-

| Post                    | No. of Seat (s)  | Prescribed Criteria  | Pay   | Contract Period               | Age Limit  |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Bird Shooter<br>(SG-01) | Nine (09)<br>(07 for New Gwadar International Airport and 02 for Quetta International Airport) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum Matric</li> <li>Valid Arm License with three (03) years' Experience of Arms handling</li> <li>Retired Army / Armed forces personnel well conversant in use of small Guns</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lump Sum Pay Package shall be offered equivalent to Gross Pay Staff Group - I (SG-01)</li> <li>05% annual increment shall be applicable on Lump Sum Pay Package</li> </ul> | Three (03) Years (extendable) | Maximum 45 years of age<br>(including all age relaxations) |

**Application Procedure:**

- All applicants are required to read the detailed terms of reference available on CAA Website.
- Interested candidates are required to fill & submit online Job Application Form available at [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk) within fifteen (15) days from the date of this advertisement.
- Candidates will be required to upload scanned copies of **domicile, matriculation** and **CNIC** while applying for the job.
- In case a candidate does not upload the above documents with the online application form, **his/her application will be rejected.**
- All the interested candidates must read the Terms of Reference (TOR) mentioned in this advertisement before applying for the post.

**Terms of Reference**

- Candidates not fulfilling the above requirements or submitting incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Test / Interviews will be held at Quetta and Gwadar Airports for which separate notices will be issued (depending on the number of candidates).
- The candidates to be called for the interview have to produce original documents for necessary verification while appearing for the interview.
- No TA / DA is admissible for Test / Interview.
- Candidates using external influence or giving wrong information will be disqualified.
- Appointment will be subject to CAA's standards and medical fitness test.
- Government servants / employees of autonomous bodies including CAA employees will be required to submit NOC from current employer at the time of interview.
- Application received after due date will not be considered / entertained.
- In case, any educational document is found fake/bogus at any stage, the services of selected candidate will be terminated immediately and he/she will be blacklisted in future.
- CAA encourages equal employment opportunity to women and people belonging to minorities.
- CAA reserves the right to cancel the partial or whole recruitment process at any stage.

ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCE  
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TERMINAL-I, JINNAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, KARACHI  
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PID(K) 540/23



## Better planning, Better urban life



## Public Notice



### To solicit suggestions, opinions and complaints on the Master Plan 2042 of the twin cities of Mingora-Saidu Sharif, District Swat and Chitral City, District Lower Chitral

The Land Use and Building Control Authority, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has taken a significant step towards enhancing the future planning and development of the twin cities of Mingora-Saidu Sharif, District Swat, and Chitral City, District Lower Chitral, by formulating comprehensive Master Plans. The authority aims to address critical issues such as clean drinking water, sanitation, stormwater drainage, affordable housing, public transport, urban public spaces, parks, and playgrounds. The newly devised Master Plans serve as a strategic blueprint to tackle pressing urban challenges and pave the way for sustainable growth. These plans not only focus on infrastructural improvements but also prioritize the preservation of agricultural lands encircling the cities. Furthermore, the plans underscore the significance of conserving cultural heritage, fostering sustainable tourism to boost the local economy, and generating employment opportunities through the establishment of industries and trade centres. In collaboration with the District Administration, line departments and through the engagement of well qualified and experienced professionals from M/S PEPAC and Associates, the Urban Policy Unit, has developed comprehensive and forward-looking Master Plans for these mountainous cities. The aim is to harness the expertise of experienced consultants to ensure that the plans are well-informed and tailored to meet the unique needs of each city. The Urban Policy Unit encourages active participation from all concerned stakeholders to refine and enrich these Master Plans. Government bodies, semi-government organizations, non-government organizations, public and private institutions, civil society organizations, local political representatives, and the general public are all invited to contribute their valuable insights. Suggestions, comments, recommendations, and grievances can be submitted via mail, email, phone, or WhatsApp within 15 days of the publication of this advertisement. For more details and to participate in this transformative endeavor, please visit the Urban Policy Unit's official website at [www.urbanpolicyunit.gkp.pk](http://www.urbanpolicyunit.gkp.pk). The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, through the Land Use and Building Control Authority, is committed to fostering holistic development and prosperity in these cities. By soliciting input from a diverse range of stakeholders, the authority aims to create Master Plans that truly resonate with the aspirations of the people and set the stage for a vibrant and thriving urban landscape.

All relevant suggestions and feedback received during this engagement period will be thoughtfully reviewed and integrated into the final Master Plan 2042 for the twin cities of Mingora-Saidu Sharif, District Swat, and Chitral City, District Lower Chitral. This collaborative effort ensures that the plans accurately reflect the aspirations and needs of the community, thus charting a path towards a more prosperous and sustainable future.

### Contact for more details

**Adnan Salim**  
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Urban Policy Unit, P & DD  
Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



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# Shah Farman announces withdrawal from electoral politics

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Shah Farman on Saturday announced his withdrawal from electoral politics. In a video statement, the former Governor said that there is a conspiracy against him within the party, and he will hand over his constituency to party workers. He further mentioned that none of his family members will participate in the elections. Shah Farman revealed that baseless allegations of betrayal were imposed on him including two other leaders during a core committee meeting. He clarified that the core committee accused him, Shaukat Yousafzai, and Faisal Salim, even though Yousafzai and Salim are not members



of the core committee. Shah Farman highlighted that some leaders focused on personal gains and financial accumulation after coming into power, despite the hard work of party workers to achieve governance. In his recorded statement, Shah Farman refrained from naming individuals but indicated that money

laundering occurred during the government's tenure, involving prominent leaders who were also implicated in the alleged conspiracy against him. He expressed his intention to expose such leaders and emphasized that everyone is aware of who accumulated how much wealth, even going as far as purchasing houses in Europe and the UK. Shah Farman clarified that politics is not his family's profession, nor is it their source of income. Hence, he is leaving his constituency vacant for party workers. He also emphasized that his brothers and children have no intention of contesting elections. Former Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Farman called upon PTI leaders to vacate their constituencies for party workers.



PESHAWAR: Qabail Awami Party leader Azam Khan addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

## Chief Khateeb KP condemns incident F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Khateeb of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maulana Muhammad Tayyab Quraishi, stated that attacking minorities is an un-Islamic act of violence. He strongly condemned the recent attacks on churches and homes of Christian brethren in Jaranwala, Faisalabad, Punjab. The Chief Khateeb called upon the Pakistani government to ensure the security and protection of all religious sects and minorities. He emphasized that places of worship such as churches, temples, and gurdwaras are equally sacred, akin to mosques. Chief Khateeb expressed his intention to visit the Saint John Church in Peshawar, accompanied by leaders from various Muslim sects, to stand in solidarity. During the visit, he plans to meet with Bishop of Peshawar, Mr. Peter Sarfaraz Humphrey. Chief khateeb and the both side religious leaders will address a press conference in the vicinity of saint john's church on 21 August 1:00 PM to express the Islamic teaching about the safety of minorities.

# Excise Dept hit by mega scam involving distribution of seized luxury vehicles

PESHAWAR (INP): A big scam has been unearthed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday where the Excise Department director-general has allegedly distributed at least 80 seized vehicles worth billions of rupees among his own people. According to media reports, during the stint of the interim KP government, the Excise DG Akmal Khattak allegedly distributed dozens of non-custom paid vehicles including luxury cars seized by the department among his own kith and kin by bypassing the provincial allotment committee. Under the Excise Seizure and Disposal Rules 2015, the seized vehicle has to be deposited in the provincial warehouse within 24 hours. Once the investigation is complete and the offence is proven, the vehicle is confiscated by the government. The confiscated vehicles can be used by the Excise Department in operational duties, according to the rules. The remaining vehicles have to be sent to the administration department so that the provincial government could auction them. The seized vehicles are used by the provincial government after permission is granted by the allotment committee headed by the Excise Secretary. But dozens of vehicles were distributed illegally by bypassing the provincial allotment committee. DG Excise Akmal Khattak allegedly distributed the seized vehicles among his friends. The chief secretary and the chief minister also seem helpless before the Excise DG who allegedly has got appointed SHOs of several police stations in exchange of thousands of rupees monthly. Sources revealed that the DG has also allegedly received millions of rupees in bribes from the smugglers of non-custom paid vehicles in Mardan, Swabi, and Nowshera.

# FIA Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar take major action

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Director FIA Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar raided Chowk Yadgar and arrested the alleged accused involved in smuggling of dollars here on Saturday. Talking to media men, 60300 dollars and Rs. 1.2 million were recovered from the possession of the accused. The alleged accused was involved in the illegal exchange of hundi and currency, FIA spokesman said. The accused was doing money changer business without license, said FIA spokesman. The alleged accused Tahir Jan was arrested from Chowk Yadgar area of Peshawar, the official said. The accused could not satisfy the authorities regarding the exported currency, FIA spokesman said. The accused's mobile phone was seized, FIA said. The accused's mobile phone will be sent for forensics, he said, adding, a case has been registered against the accused under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act.



PESHAWAR: Members of newly elected cabinet of Niazi Cloth Market in a group with vice president of Tajar Insaf Haji Yaseen Khan. — F.P. photo

## Police seized drugs in operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Police seized large quantities of drugs in a major operation in the jurisdiction of the Sarband Police Station from a residential house, an official of the Police told media men on Saturday. Police arrested two suspects belonging to an inter-provincial drug smuggling network. The arrested accused are brothers, who belong to Khyber district, the Police said. The official said that 47 kg of hashish and 6 kg of opium were recovered during a raid on a residential house with the help of Ladies Police. The arrested accused Fayaz and Abdul Rehman are involved in smuggling drugs to other cities after collecting them. Police registered a case against the alleged accused and started further investigation, the Police confirmed.

# Traffic police imposes heavy fines against violators



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The City Traffic Police Peshawar on the instructions of Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan, imposed fines on 5,200 people last week for using fancy number plates,

unregistered vehicles and black glasses. The Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan and City Traffic Police Peshawar has taken actions against those using vehicles without number plates and tinted glasses in different sectors of the city, a press release issued by

spokesman of the city traffic police, Shahab Khan on Saturday. He informed that actions were taken against 962 people for using fancy number plates, black glasses and fancy number plates were removed from vehicles and fines were imposed on the

violators. He while quoting Qamar Hayat Khan as saying that Peshawar City Traffic Police will use all its powers to ensure the implementation of laws, while strict legal action will be taken against violators. He further said that the use of black glasses and the driving of vehicles without number plates are prohibited, against which the Peshawar City Traffic Police is on alert and no one will be treated lightly because the law is the same for everyone. He further said that the citizens should cooperate with the traffic police and prove that they are patriotic Pakistanis by obeying the traffic rules. Mr Shahab further added the actions against violators of traffic rules and regulations is underway in parts of the city and they will face actions for violating rules. He also appealed general public to extend their cooperation to traffic police to ensure smooth flow of traffic in the city.

# KP Center of Excellence Countering Violent Extremism holds international conference

## 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 IMSciences, 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 posed by extremism effectively. During the international conference, Mr. Faisal Kareem Kundi of the Pakistan Peoples Party 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. Mr. Khalid Kauser, Executive Director of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), based in Geneva, participated in the conference, expressing his support and collaboration. A memorandum of understanding was also signed between GCERF 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 over-

due 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 heaven for history lovers

## Ali Sheikh

PESHAWAR: Peshawar, one of the oldest living cities in the world, has a rich history dating back to ancient times. The city has been an important center of trade and culture for centuries, and its historical gates have played a significant role in its development. The Frontier Post in this article will bring some of the most famous historical sites of Peshawar city. **Bab-e-Khyber:** Also known as the Khyber Gate, it is one of the most iconic gates of Peshawar. Situated at the entrance of the Khyber Pass, it has histori-

cally served as a gateway to the Indian subcontinent from Central Asia. The gate has witnessed the passage of numerous conquerors, traders, and travelers throughout history. **Gor Khatri:** Located in the old city of Peshawar, Gor Khatri is an ancient gateway that dates back to the Buddhist era. It is believed to have been built by the Kushan Empire and served as a meeting place for Buddhist monks. The name is derived from the words "Gor" meaning grave and "Khatri" meaning a raised platform, as it is situated near ancient Buddhist stupas and graves. **Sethi House:** The historic Sethi House complex, belonged to a wealthy merchant family in the 19th century. The features intricate woodwork and architectural details, representing the Mughal and Sikh architectural styles. It is a significant example of the city's cultural heritage. **Lahori Gate:** Located in the walled city of Peshawar, Lahori Gate is one of the main entrances to the old city. It is named after the city of Lahore and was historically used by travelers coming from that direction. The gate showcases a blend of Mughal and British architectural influences. **Sirki Gate:** Situated near the famous Qissa Khwani Bazaar, Sirki Gate is another historic entrance to the old city. It is named after the nearby Sirki Bazaar, known for its traditional circus performances during the Mughal era. The gate is adorned with beautiful tile work and showcases the city's cultural heritage. **Bala Hisar Fort:** Situated on a hilltop overlooking Peshawar, Bala Hisar Fort has a history that dates back to the 2nd century BC. The fort has witnessed the rule of various dynasties, including the Greeks, Buddhists, Mughals, Sikhs, and British. It offers panoramic views of the city and houses several historical buildings within its walls. **Cunningham Clock Tower (Ghanta Ghar):** Erected in 1900, the Cunningham Clock Tower is a prominent landmark in Peshawar. It was built in honor of Sir George Cunningham, the British Governor of the North-West Frontier Province. The tower features a blend of Victorian and Mughal architectural styles. Now it is commonly known as Ghanta Ghar. **Mahabat Khan Mosque:** Built in the 17th century during the Mughal era, the Mahabat Khan Mosque is an architectural masterpiece. It is known for its intricate frescoes, beautiful marble work, and a large courtyard. The mosque is still used for daily prayers and attracts visitors with its stunning craftsmanship.







## In brief

### Mother, son electrocuted F.P. Report

**TAKHTBHAI:** A woman and her son were electrocuted to death in inside their home in Umarabad area of Takhtbai tehsil, on Saturday. Rescue-1122 told that the victims were identified as wife of Abdul Wahad and her 10-years old son named Naveed. They said that the incident took place when both the deceased touched uncovered wires of electricity-fan. The rescue-1122 personnel told that they rushed to the spot soon after getting information about the incident. While providing CPR to restore breathing and heart-beating of both mother and son and shifted them to Takhtbhai tehsil Headquarter hospital where the doctors declared them as dead.

### Wheelchairs distributed F.P. Report

**BARA:** Al-Khidmat Foundation distributed as many as 25 wheelchairs among deserving special persons with disability in Tehsil Bara on Saturday. In this connection a simple moot under the auspice of Al-Khidmat Foundation Khyber in local press club that was attended by General Secretary of the Foundation Said Shah Afridi, district Naib Ameer of Jamat-e-Islami Shah Faisal Afridi, Awal Gul Afridi, Dr Janbaz Afridi, members of the civil society besides scores of local disable persons. Speaking on the occasion Said Shah Afridi and others said that it was the motto of the Al-Khidmat Foundation to serve the needy round the clock and ease hardships being faced by the disabled persons. It is our target not to remain a single special person without having a wheelchair and in near future all the disabled persons in Khyber will get the facility, they vowed. At the end, wheelchairs were distributed to twenty five special persons. Disabled persons and their relatives thanked the Foundation for granting them the facility and said it would assist them to become useful citizens of the society.

### Police arrested wanted criminal F.P. Report

**KOHAT:** Kohat Police has arrested a criminal involved in several serious crimes, said SHO Fazal Muhammad Khan during the blockade at City Gate Kohat on Saturday. Baseer, the son of Intiaz resident of Bannu currently living in Sabzi Mandi area, who is in custody, was wanted by the Peshawar Police in connection with vegetable market robbery, and other serious crimes. The arrested accused has been transferred to City police station for further legal action.

### 2 girls shot dead in Balochistan

**QUETTA (INP):** Two girls were shot dead by unknown assailants in Goth Faiz Bakhsh area of Bolan, police confirmed on Saturday. The victims, aged 18 and 22, were identified as Fatima and Ayesha. They were cousins and had no enmity with anyone. Police said the motive behind the killings was not yet clear. They have registered a case and are investigating. The bodies of the girls were shifted to the civil hospital Dhadar for autopsy. The incident has caused widespread anger and grief in the area. People are demanding that the killers be brought to justice. The police have assured that they will do everything possible to find the killers and bring them to justice.



QUETTA: Chairman of Pakistan Milli Tehreek Syed Agha Rabbani addressing a press conference.

## Madaklast: A beautiful valley of Chitral

**CHITRAL (APP):** Known for lush green valleys, snow-clad mountains peaks and primitive history, Madaklast is beautiful valley awaiting government patronage to build its infrastructure imperative to promote ecotourism and adventure sports in the picturesque town of Lower Chitral district.

Surrounded by Chirpine and Deodar forest of Upper Dir and Chitral district, Madaklast valley attract visitors' attention after entering to Chitral through famous Lower Top in the Hindukash mountains range. "Madaklast carried a unique tourism, archeological and cultural significance that always remained centre of attraction for tourists due to its nearby three famous historic valleys and famous Kalash culture," said Bakhtzada Khan, senior research officer of ar archaeology and tourism department while talking to APP.

He said the history of Madaklast was as old as the history of Chitral. In 18th century, he said about seven to 12 people migrated to Chitral from Northern parts of subcontinent (now Pakistan) for trade and establish their base camps in various places for residence and finally settled in Madaklast. "I had visited many tourists sites in the world including Pakistan

but Madaklast natural beauty was beyond ones' imagination," said Manzoorul Haq, former Ambassador of Pakistan while talking to APP.

While staying at Madaklast, he said that a visitor could easily explore the three famous Kalasha valleys including Bumburet (Mumuret), Rumbur and Biri (Birir) that take tourists in lap of serenity before return back in a day long trip. He said Kalash culture was a unique identity of Chitral that draw tourists from across the country and world.

Manzoor said the underrated Madaklast could prove the best winter sports destinations due to its trekking and snowfall features. Manzoor underlined the need of improvement of roads infrastructure and showcasing Madaklast's mesmerizing natural beauty through digital and social media to bolster rural economy and promote adventure tourism here.

He said these hidden treasures requires to be projected through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other digital media tools with small videos to take the country's out of existing economic challenges. Omair Khattak, General Manager Investment, Tourism Authority Govt of KP said that Madaklast

would become a hub of tourism and adventure sports after construction of a cable car between it and Kumrat of Dir Upper.

The proposed Kumrat-Madaklast cable car would be constructed with an estimated cost of USD 200 million with assistance of the World Bank, he said. The 16 kilometers long cable car would have 5,280 meters height with facilities of a base station at Kumrat, intermediate stops stations and car parking plazas for 500 vehicles," he said, adding base station hotels, mosques, hydro plants, walking tracks and final station at Madaklast would be built for facilitation of tourists.

He said feasibility studies of the mega project has been started and would be completed in eight years. The development of infrastructure and construction of access roads besides additional aspects such as waste management would also be evaluated and roads to be ensured.

The cable car project on completion would attract an estimated 1.2 million domestic and international tourists annually to Malakand division. He said the project would make the entire KP especially Madaklast and Kumrat Valleys as hub of adventure sports and mountains tourism.

## PTI plays raid on City Mayor's residence Shafi Ullah

**MINGORA:** Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa spokesman Barrister Saif has said that the Swat administration should act sensibly and stop retaliatory actions against PTI workers, registering sedition cases against those who raise the national flag and Pakistan Zindabad slogans in their hands is beyond comprehension. It seems that PTI workers have raised slogans of 'Pakistan Zindabad' not in Swat but in occupied Kashmir.

Swat administration and the caretaker government are targeting the PTI in Swat with vengeance, the raid on the house of former MPA Fazal Hakeem Khan and being unnecessarily bullied Mayor Mingora city Shahid Ali Khan.

He said that Swat is the stronghold of PTI and its masses have great love and devotion towards Imran Khan and PTI, which is clear evidence of thousands of people taking to the streets on August 14 and expressing love for Pakistan, but unfortunately at the behest of the caretaker government, the district administration registered sedition cases against PTI workers who took to the streets on August 14. On the occasion of independence, the nation raised slogans of Pakistan Zindabad with the flag in their hands.

This action of the administration shows that PTI workers have raised slogans with the national flag not in Pakistan but in occupied Kashmir.

## Urs to start from 23rd

**MULTAN (INP):** Three days celebrations of 784th Urs Hazrat Bahauddin Zakaria Multani will start from August 23. There would be a public holiday across the district on last day of urs (Friday).

The district administration has started the arrangements for the Urs under the directions of DC Umer Jehangir. The DC said that exemplary arrangements would be ensured for the devotees. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting of the district departments held at his office here on Saturday. CPO Mansoor-ul-Haq Rana and Additional Deputy Commissioner General Abida Fareed also participated in the meeting.

## Residents protest against price hike in petroleum products

### F.P. Report

**LARKANA:** The locals and political activists of different parties took the streets against increase in prices of petrol and diesel in neighbor-hood Khaliq Colony.

The protestors displayed placards and banners were raised on which the slogans of disallowing the increase in the prices of petrol and diesel and end inflation were written. That on the call of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Ameer Siraj-ul-Haq, protests are being held in Larkana like the whole country against petrol and other inflation. First, the PDMA government, who did not understand the people at all, while the people have been forced to commit suicide due to inflation, they demanded an immediate reduction in petrol and other inflationary rates, other governments.

A protest demonstration was held in front of the press club against the non-provision of facilities by SPAF in Larkana Degree College. The BSc and MA degree from Hek is two years, while the college management is extending it to four years, which is a complete injustice, while

illegally asking the students to obtain pass certificates and other certificates in the college.

On the other hand, Jai Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (Jasqam) staged a protest in front of the press club for the recovery of the kidnapped girl Priya Kumari. Addressing the meeting, Central Cultural Secretary of Chasqam Athar Ali Soomro, Azizur Rehman, Nader Solangi and others said that there is a limit to oppression and persecution. The girl Priya Kumari was abducted and there is no trace of it till now. On the one hand, the Sindh government is in a deep sleep.

While the residents of Banbhu Khan Korkani village of Khairpur Meris district in Larkana along with Mazhar Ali, Muhammad Yusuf and Abdul Razzaq Korkani protested in front of the Larkana Press Club against the alleged occupation of the agricultural land by protestors who are addressed to However, he said that our agricultural land is in the name of our grandfather Saiful Korkani in the village of Kahom Khan Kalhoro of Kangri Tehsil, which has been allegedly occupied by the influential Bakhtiar

Korkani, Zahid Korkani and others. But the above-mentioned people are threatening to kill us, so we appeal to the higher authorities of our Sindh government for justice and security.

**Residents protested against land occupation:** The residents of Bero Chandio, a suburb of Larkana district, along with an elderly woman, protested in front of the press club against the alleged occupation of agricultural land by influential people. Liaquat Ali and others protested and said that the influential people of the area, Khadim Chandio, Wahid Ali Mukhtiar and others have allegedly occupied our agricultural land armed with weapons.

It is avoiding arresting the mentioned influential persons. When we have filed a case against these persons in the sessions court through a lawyer, the influential persons are threatening to kill us, while the police have arrested these persons. He appealed to the DIG Larkana and said that legal action should be taken against the influential people and protection should be given to save lives.

## Tarar: Nawaz put country on socio-economic uplift track

### F.P. Report

**HAFIZABAD:** Ex-Federal Minister and leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Saira Afzal Tarar has said that PMLN government always take people friendly measures whenever it come into power while PTI government ruined government entities in its regime and set record of corruption and nepotism in the country.

She expressed these views while talking to a delegation of farmers led by the Ex-Chairman Union Council Sagar Kalan Khizar Hayat Chatha at her residence in Kolo Tarar, on Thursday. She said that PMLN was improved performance of government

institutions to provide maxim relief to the people and all basic healthcare facilities were available in the hospital while due to poor governance and anti-people policies, the condition of government institution was worsened even medicines were not available in the hospitals.

Former Minister said that Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was taken farmers friendly measures and provided thousand subsidize tractors to farmers for not only increase per acre agriculture yield but also to improve socio-economic condition of growers. She said that outgoing Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif was also

provide tractors on cheaper prices and less mark up to farmers through Agriculture Development Bank in the country.

Ex federal minister said that PTI government was appointed ineligible officers as Deputy Commissioner and other posts to mint money and all departments were given to officers on contract. She also said that performance of Municipal Committees would be improved and strict monitoring was being made to the Municipal Committees. She further said that corruption from registry branch Hafizabad would also be eliminated soon and rights of people would be protected.



QUETTA: A vendor selling mosquito net along his roadside setup.

## Badminton Hall on verge of collapse

### F.P. Report

**MARDAN:** The Badminton Hall built at a cost of 15 million rupees in Hatian in Takhtbhai area was blown away by the wind cracks also started appearing in the floor made by using poor material.

According to the details, a badminton hall was constructed four years ago at a huge cost of 15 million rupees in the sports complex located in Hatian, Takhtbhai Tehsil while the rest of the roof is in danger of collapsing at any time.

Apart from this, cracks also started appearing in the floor made of poor material and hard board. When we tried to get the position of the concerned authorities of Hatian Sports Complex in this regard, they refrained from giving a position in this regard.

**Buddhist monks visits religious sites:** Buddhists from Korea visited the archaeological site in Takhtbhai area of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and also performed their religious ritu-

als for some time. According to the details, the followers of the 19-member delegation from Korea were interested in archeology and examined various places.

Pilgrims praised the government of Pakistan for protecting these archeological sites and said that it clearly shows the religious brotherhood between the two countries. It should be noted that these archeological monuments of Takhtbhai are located on the top of the mountain and these monuments are about two thousand years old when the Buddhist religious leader Anushka stayed here. This place of Takhtbhai has been an important center for Buddhists for some seven hundred years.

**Two held in infant abduction:** A newborn baby who was abducted from Mardan Medical Complex (MMC) Hospital recovered and 2 persons including the accused woman were arrested. The accused woman had no children.

According to the details, a burqa-clad woman kidnapped a newborn baby from the Gynecology Unit of MMC Hospital yesterday. The case of kidnapping a newborn baby in broad daylight was a challenge for the police. DPO Najib Ur Rehman formed a special team under the supervision of ASP Sheikh Maltoon Circle Resham Jahangir and SHO Sheikh Maltoon Bakhtzada Khan along with other officers and assigned the target of safe recovery of the child and arrest of the accused.

Under the supervision of ASP, the abducted newborn baby was recovered from Charghulia area late at night and all the accused were arrested. According to police sources, the accused woman had no children. ASP Sheikh Maltoon handed over the newborn baby to its mother and grandmother expressed happiness on the arrival of the baby give prayers DPO Najib Ur Rehman Bhagvi, ASP Resham Jahangir SHO Bakhtzada and all other forces.

## Motorcyclist killed in road accident

**SARGODHA (INP):** A 44-year-old man was killed in a collision between a car and a motorcycle near 110-SB under the jurisdiction of Laxian Police station in Sargodha on Saturday.

According to rescue authorities, the deceased, identified as Muhammad Haamid, was travelling to Sargodha on his motorcycle when a speeding car hit him. He died on the spot.

The driver of the car fled the scene after the accident. Police have registered a case and are investigating. The spokesperson appealed to the people to follow traffic rules and avoid speeding. He also urged drivers to be more careful and aware of their surroundings.

**DTA impounds 13 vehicles with illegal gas cylinders:** The District Transport Authority (DTA) in Sargodha has launched a crackdown on vehicles fitted with illegal gas cylinders. A raiding team on Saturday impounded 13 vehicles that were found to be violating the cylinder law.

The spokesperson for the DTA said that the crackdown would continue on a daily basis without any discrimination. He urged the motorists to ensure that their vehicles are fitted with legal gas cylinders to avoid legal action.

The use of illegal gas cylinders is a serious safety hazard. These cylinders are often not properly maintained and can explode, causing serious injuries or death. The DTA's crackdown is a welcome step to ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians.

### Health teams seal three medical stores:

Sargodha health teams, in a crackdown against illegal practitioners, sealed three medical stores on Saturday. The teams, led by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sargodha Dr. Asad Aslam, raided several stores and inspected Muhammad Altaf Clinic, Muhammad Naeem Akhtar Medical Store, and Muhammad Akram Mian Clinic. The teams sealed all three stores for violating regulations. The teams also sent a challan to the Punjab Healthcare Commission for further action.

Dr. Asad Aslam said that the crackdown against illegal practitioners would continue and that no one would be allowed to violate the law. He urged the citizens to cooperate with the health teams in this regard. The sealing of the three medical stores is a major victory for the health department and will send a strong message to other illegal practitioners. It is hoped that this will deter people from engaging in illegal medical practices.

**Man killed, child injured in knife attack:** An old man was killed and a child was injured as some unidentified outlaws attacked at them with knives here at Chak no.52 ML under the jurisdiction of Darya Khan Police station, here on Saturday.

Police spokesperson said that Abdul Hamid (76) was sleeping at his home along with his grandson Husnain (9) when all of sudden three unidentified outlaws entered into the house and killed Abdul Hamid with knives while his Grandson sustained severe injuries.

## Urgent need for reforms in education system and exorbitant fees

### Syeda Kiran Rizvi

**THE current education landscape is in dire need of reform to ensure equal access to quality education for all, regardless of their financial backgrounds.**

It is disheartening to witness a growing disparity between those who can afford the skyrocketing fees and those who are left struggling to meet the financial demands. Education is a fundamental right that should not be compromised due to financial constraints. It is imperative that policymakers and educational institutions come together to devise sustainable solutions that address this pressing issue.

High fees not only limit opportunities for aspiring students but also contribute to a vicious cycle of debt and financial stress. We risk losing out on the potential talents of individuals who are deterred by the burden of these fees, which can ultimately

impact our society's progress and development.

In light of these challenges, I urge the relevant authorities to consider the following measures:

**Transparency in Fee Structures:** Educational institutions should be transparent about their fee structures, ensuring that students and parents understand how their funds are being allocated.

**Merit-Based Scholarships and Financial Aid:** Encourage the establishment of robust merit-based scholarships and financial aid programs to support deserving students who excel academically or show exceptional talent.

**Collaboration with Industry:** Foster partnerships between educational institutions and industries to create opportunities for students to gain practical experience and potentially offset their educational expenses.

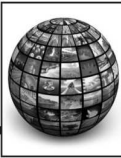
**Government Intervention:** Governments should actively engage in regulating and monitoring educational fees, ensuring they remain reasonable and justifiable.

**Online and Open Educational Resources:** Promote the utilization of online and open educational resources, which can help reduce the cost of textbooks and learning materials.

**Inclusive Policies:** Develop policies that promote inclusivity and diversity in educational institutions, allowing students from all walks of life to access quality education.

As a concerned citizen, I believe that it is our collective responsibility to address these issues and advocate for meaningful change. By working together, we can create a more equitable and affordable education system that empowers all individuals to pursue their dreams and contribute to our society's growth.





## UN flays recent gang attacks in Haiti



SAN JUAN (AP): UN human rights officials denounced what they called the “extreme brutality” of gangs in Haiti, with thousands fleeing several neighborhoods in the country’s capital this week amid a surge in violence.

The killings have intensified in recent weeks as a reconnaissance mission from Kenya composed of nearly a dozen senior police officers was expected to arrive in Haiti, Kenyan media reported. The eastern African country has offered to lead an international force to help Haiti’s understaffed and under-resourced police department quell gang violence, with only about 10,000 officers for the Caribbean nation’s more than 11 million people.

Deputy Inspector General of Administration Police Noor Gabow, who is leading the Kenyan mission, did not return a message seeking comment. Earlier this month, the US said it would introduce a UN Security Council resolution that would authorize Kenya to lead a multinational police force and provide 1,000 officers. No timetable for the resolution has been given.

Kenya’s announcement raised concerns, given that its police force has been criticized for alleged

killings and torture. A former police officer considered to be Haiti’s most powerful gang leader warned he would fight any foreign armed force if it committed any abuses. From January 1 until Aug. 15, more than 2,400 people in Haiti were reported killed, more than 950 kidnapped and another 902 injured, according to Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Among those killed this week is a local municipal representative, his wife and child, she said. Shamdasani noted that the Grand Ravine gang began attacking several neighborhoods last week, killing some people for supporting a violent uprising by civilians that targets suspected gang members. Since late April to mid-August, more than 350 people have been lynched as part of the movement dubbed “bwa kale.” Among them are 310 alleged gang members, 46 members of the public and a police officer, she said.

Haiti’s National Police forced the gang out of one area, Shamdasani said. “However, the situation remains extremely insecure as the police subsequently withdrew and gang members are still operating in

surrounding areas,” she said. The violence forced some 5,000 people to flee their homes this week. They joined more than 200,000 others who have done the same since last year, with many staying in makeshift and extremely unsanitary shelters.

Overall, at least 15 people were killed from Aug. 13-16 during the attack by the Grand Ravine gang, including two police officers and two children, according to the Center for Analysis and Research on Human Rights, a Haitian nonprofit. More than two dozen homes also were torched, the group said. Jerry Chandler, Haiti’s civil protection director, held a press conference to provide limited details on those affected by the recent surge in violence. “Unfortunately, the Civil Protection cannot for the moment draw up an exhaustive assessment because we do not have access to the areas,” he said.

Chandler added that the government is distributing water and hot meals to those displaced. Haitian gangs have grown more powerful since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, and they are estimated to now control up to 80% of the capital of Port-au-Prince.

## US, allies flay assault on UN peacekeepers

PARIS (Agencies): The US, France and United Kingdom condemned the assault on United Nations (UN) peacekeepers by Turkish Cypriot forces, calling the attacks a “serious crime under international law.”

“We condemn the assaults against UN Peacekeepers and damage to UN vehicles by personnel of the Turkish Cypriot side this morning,” the embassies said in a joint statement. “Threats to the safety of UN Peacekeepers and damage to UN property constitute a serious crime under international law.” The UN, in a statement, said peacekeepers stood in the way of work crews building a road to connect the village of Arsos — in the Turkish Cypriot north — with the mixed Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot village of Pyla, located inside of the buffer zone. It is also near the area where Cyprus’s internationally recognized government sits, according to the Associated Press.

The group of Turkish Cypriot personnel in response reportedly punched and kicked the peacekeepers, and damaged vehicles belonging to them, according to the UN. The road, if constructed, would bypass a checkpoint on the northern fringe of a British military base and allow Turkish Cypriots direct access to Pyla.

The three countries urged authorities to stop the construction and to respect the mandated authority the UNFICYP — the organization of peacekeepers — has in the area. In their statement, the three countries called the assaults “completely unacceptable” and undermining of the UN’s ability to “fulfill its peace-keeping mandate.”

## North Korea scrambled warplanes

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea’s military said it had scrambled warplanes after a US reconnaissance aircraft intruded into its economic zone off its east coast, state news agency KCNA reported.

The incident, which occurred, was “a dangerous military provocation” and North Korea was considering measures to deter future incursions, an unnamed spokesperson of the General Staff of the Korean People’s Army said in the report.

The incident came ahead of a summit of the United States, South Korea and Japan. A South Korean lawmaker, citing that country’s intelligence agency, said that North Korea may launch an intercontinental ballistic missile or take other military action to protest the meeting. President Joe Biden will meet at Camp David in Maryland with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, hoping to tighten ties between Seoul and Tokyo amid nuclear threats from North Korea and at a time when China’s regional influence is growing.

## FEMA has paid out more than \$5.6m to Maui survivors

NEW YORK (AP): The Federal Emergency Management Agency said it has approved more than \$5.6 million in assistance to nearly 2,000 households in Maui so far as the federal government tries to help survivors of the devastating wildfires.

The White House and FEMA approved a one-time payment of \$700 per household for needs like clothing, food, or transportation. The agency will also pay to put survivors up in hotels and motels and says it has paid out \$1.6 million in rental assistance as. The amounts are expected to grow significantly, Estimates are that thousands of buildings were damaged or destroyed in the fire, which consumed much of historic community of Lahaina. In the wake of the Northern California wildfire in 2018, which decimated the city of Paradise, FEMA paid out \$238 million in assistance.

FEMA said that it will open a disaster recovery center in Maui in order to better and more quickly facilitate the distribution of aid. Survivors need to register with FEMA to be eligible for the payout and other assistance. Roughly 4,400 Hawaii fire survivors have applied for so-called critical

need assistance afternoon, according to Jeremy M. Edwards, press secretary for FEMA.

Longer-term aid that could amount to thousands or tens of thousands of dollars will likely come with documentation requirements. Besides the hotel and motel programs and rental assistance, FEMA is offering Hawaii fire survivors home repair and personal property reimbursements and other needs that may not be covered by insurance, Edwards said. “FEMA is committed to ensuring all disaster survivors receive every dollar of disaster assistance for which they are legally eligible,” he said.

Karen Clark & Company, a prominent disaster and risk modeling company, estimates that more than 2,200 buildings were damaged or destroyed by fire with a total of more than 3,000 buildings damaged by fire or smoke or both. The risk firm calculates that the fire in Lahaina caused about \$3.2 billion in insured property losses. The Small Business Administration, an independent agency of the US government that provides support to entrepreneurs and small businesses, is urging businesses and non-profits

affected by the wildfires in Maui to apply for low-interest federal disaster loans.

Businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations in that region can borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory and other business assets. The loans can also be used to make improvements to prevent future disaster damage.

“We’re committed to providing federal disaster loans swiftly and efficiently, with a customer-centric approach to help businesses and communities recover and rebuild,” said SBA administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman. In addition, disaster loans up to \$500,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate. And homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$100,000 to repair or replace damaged or destroyed personal property, including personal vehicles. Interest rates can be as low as 4% for businesses, 2.375% for private nonprofit organizations and 2.5% for homeowners and renters with terms up to 30 years.

## Tigray crisis: Deaths from starvation after aid halted

TIGRAY (BBC): At least 1,400 people have starved to death in Ethiopia’s northern Tigray since food aid was suspended because it was being stolen, an official has said. The UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) and the US’s leading aid agency halted food aid to Tigray about four months ago. A subsequent investigation by Tigrayan authorities found that almost 500 people were involved in the theft, the official told the BBC.

Tigray was hit by a brutal conflict in 2020, causing famine-like conditions. The conflict ended last November after the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) signed a peace deal brokered by the African Union (AU). Eritrean troops fought in the conflict on the side of the Ethiopian army.

For much of the war the region was under blockade, which largely halted humanitarian aid. AU envoy, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, said around 600,000 people died in the two-year conflict. Researchers put the hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths down to fighting, starvation and lack of health care.

WFP and USAid rallied to assist some six million Tigrayans, but announced a “pause” in food aid after discovering in April that their donations were being diverted to local markets. They did not say who was behind the diversion. “We simply could not turn a blind eye to the criminal activity and continue to deliver,” a WFP spokesperson told the BBC this week.

The BBC has seen food with emblems of aid agencies such as the WFP and USAid on packaging at markets in cities and towns in Tigray, including the capital, Mekelle. However, it is unclear whether the food aid was corruptly “diverted” or whether it had been sold to market owners by aid recipients who were in desperate need of cash. WFP and USAid also announced a suspension of food aid to the rest of Ethiopia in June.

USAid is the country’s largest food donor, helping millions of people struggling because of conflict, drought and the high cost of living. A leaked memo by an independent donor group, quoted by several media outlets in June, said there had been a “co-ordinated and criminal scheme” apparently orchestrated by federal and regional government entities, with military units across the country benefiting.

Ethiopia’s government has said it is investigating the allegations, but its

findings have not yet been released. Ethiopia’s army has denied its troops benefited from any stolen food aid. The Tigray interim government’s commissioner for disaster risk management, Gebrehiwet Gebrezgabher, told the BBC that since food aid had been halted, 1,411 people had starved to death in three zones alone - the east, north-west and south-east.

Data from Tigray’s other three zones had not yet been collated, and the death toll would prove to be much higher once this was done, Dr Gebrehiwet said. He added that 492 suspects were under investigation, and 198 had so far been charged for their alleged involvement in the scam.

Among the suspects were government officials, staff of non-governmental organisations, co-ordinators at camps built for people displaced by conflict, and “partners who are distributors of the food aid”, Dr Gebrehiwet said. “Business people, especially those who own food store and mills, are also involved,” he added, pointing out that their investigation had almost concluded. The BBC visited Shire, one of the biggest towns in Tigray, to see the effects of hunger.

An anaemic mother of three, Mebrhit Hailay, said she was now forced to beg because of a lack of food. “Most days, we eat injera [a pancake-like fermented bread] with salt. The doctors advise me to have a balanced diet, but from where do I get it?” the 28-year-old said. Her two children, aged five and two-and-a-half years, looked thin, their eyes sunken and their bony limbs stuck out from their clothes.

If lucky, they ate one meal a day, but on other days they went to bed hungry, Ms Mebrhit said. Ms Mebrhit was heavily pregnant when the BBC met her. A few days later, she told the BBC she had given birth to a baby girl who, fortunately, was healthy. At the local hospital, nurse Kibra Mebrahtu said that many mothers could not breastfeed because of hunger, and “many children are near death when they are brought to this hospital”.

“We lost four this month only. The effects of the conflict, lack of food, lack of transport, are quite evident,” she said. The BBC saw eight-year-old Rahel Tewelde, with ribs exposed, at the hospital. She weighed only 10kg (22lb), the weight of an average one-year-old. Her mother, Hiwet Lebas, said she believed that corruption led to the suspension of food aid.

“Had it been distributed properly, it wouldn’t have stopped,” she said. In

June, USAid said it would resume food aid only when it was “confident that assistance will reach the intended vulnerable populations”. The WFP spokesperson said the agency was speeding up efforts to resume food aid. It had, in fact, started distributing a limited amount of food in some areas to test stringent new measures being put in place to “make sure food will not fall into the wrong hands again”.

“WFP is deeply concerned about the impact any pause in assistance may have on the lives of the families it assists. Therefore, we’re putting every practical safeguard in place to ensure food assistance reaches and is used by the intended beneficiaries,” the spokesperson added.

## UN suspends services in Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP): The UN agency for Palestinian refugees says it has decided to suspend all of its services in Lebanon’s largest refugee camp in protest against the presence of gunmen in its facilities.

UNRWA’s decision went into effect shortly at the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp near the southern port city of Sidon. Services will resume Saturday, UNRWA said. Days of street battles took place in the camp between the Fatah group of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and two Islamic militant groups, Jund al Sham and Shabab al Muslim. The clashes broke out on July 30, after Fatah accused its rivals of shooting dead a senior Fatah military official.

The fighting killed at least 13 people, injured dozens and caused millions of dollars’ of damage in the camp, according to UNRWA officials. Lebanese security forces don’t operate inside the refugee camps, where security is in the hands of Palestinian factions who often compete for clout.

UNRWA said in its statement that armed fighters are still present in its facilities, including schools. It added that UNRWA reiterates its call on armed actors to immediately vacate its facilities, “to ensure unimpeded delivery of much-needed assistance to refugees.” UNRWA said it “does not tolerate actions that breach the inviolability and neutrality of its installations.” It added that schools are unlikely to be available for 3,200 children at the start of the new school year given repeated violations and significant damage reported.

## Chinese president to meet African leaders

PRETORIA (Reuters): Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet African heads of state on the sidelines of the BRICS summit next week “to advance China-Africa cooperation in the new era”, China’s ambassador to South Africa said.

The meeting will take place, the last day of the three-day summit, Chen Xiaodong told a briefing. The day has been set aside for events involving the more than 70 countries invited as “friends” of the BRICS bloc, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Xi will pay a state visit to South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa in Pretoria and later travel to Johannesburg for the sum-

mit, in what will be his fifth trip to South Africa since he became president in 2013. China’s interactions with African leaders will follow last month’s Russia-Africa summit in St Petersburg, where Russian President Vladimir Putin held court with the 17 African heads of state who attended out of the 54 African countries invited.

Chen said Xi and African leaders will draw up a blueprint for cooperation to create jobs and improve livelihoods in Africa. “The initiatives will be in line with the needs of Africa’s economic restructuring and upgrading,” he said.

Senegalese president Macky Sall, the current chair of the Forum for China Africa Cooperation,

African Union chair and Comoros President Azali Assoumani, and representatives from Africa’s eight regional economic communities will attend. It is not clear yet how many heads of state will attend the Aug. 22-24 BRICS summit, but South African officials said more than 70 had been invited.

While China has been actively pushing for the group’s expansion, its members have differed on the criteria for new member states. Between 2000 and 2020, Chinese lenders, mostly state-owned banks, agreed to lend \$160 billion to African countries, according to Boston University, and Chinese companies have also invested heavily in mining on the continent.

## Robert Mnangagwa - Zimbabwe’s ‘crocodile’ who wants another bite

HARARE (BBC): When Robert Mugabe was ousted as Zimbabwe’s president in 2017, his replacement, Emmerson Mnangagwa promised a new start for his country’s people. But as President Mnangagwa seeks re-election at the polls later this month, Zimbabweans are grappling with the same problems - high inflation, poverty and a climate of fear.

The Zanu-PF leader, who is rarely seen without a scarf in the colours of Zimbabwe’s flag around his neck, brushes such criticism aside, saying the nation will be “lost” if it fails to back him - his supporters pointing to a mining boom and other foreign investments during his time in office. Known as “the crocodile” because of his political cunning, he came to power after a military takeover and mass demonstrations forced Mr Mugabe, long-time leader and Mr Mnangagwa’s former mentor, to resign.

The military revolt was sparked by Mr Mugabe sacking Mr Mnangagwa as his vice-president. Mr Mnangagwa, who lived up to his nickname and snapped back, may have unseated Zimbabwe’s only ruler, but he is also associated with some of the worst atrocities committed under the ruling party since independence in 1980. Some of his former comrades in the liberation struggle used to describe him as a “very cruel man”. But his children see him as a principled, if

unemotional, man. His daughter, Farai Mlotshwa - a property developer and the eldest of his nine children by two wives - once described him as a “softie”.

And as he sought to woo foreign investors and dispel his ruthless reputation in 2018, he told the BBC: “I am as soft as wool. I am a very soft person in life.” The exact year of Mr Mnangagwa’s birth is not known - but he is thought to be 80. Born in the central region of Zvishavane, he is a Karanga - the largest clan of Zimbabwe’s majority Shona community.

Long before he came to power, he was seen as “the architect of the commercial activities of Zanu-PF”, a 2001 United Nations report said. Despite his money-raising role, Mr Mnangagwa, a lawyer who grew up in Zambia, has a fearsome reputation that was cemented after independence during the civil war that broke out in the 1980s between Mr Mugabe’s Zanu party and the Zapu party of Joshua Nkomo. As national security minister, he was in charge of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), which worked hand in glove with the army to suppress Zapu.

Thousands of civilians - mainly ethnic Ndebeles, seen as Zapu supporters - were killed in a campaign known as Gukurahundi, before the two parties merged to form Zanu-PF. Mr Mnangagwa has denied any role in

the massacres. As president he has tried to broach reconciliation. Some have felt his comments glib given the deep wounds in Matabeleland, but an initiative to allow exhumations and reburials has been agreed.

Elsewhere, he still enjoys the support of many of the war veterans who led the campaign of violence against white farmers and the opposition from 2000. They remember him as one of the men who, following his military training in China and Egypt, directed the fight for independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Mr Mnangagwa’s official profile says he was the victim of state torture after being arrested by the white-minority government in the former Rhodesia in 1965, when the “crocodile gang” he led helped blow up a train near Fort Victoria (now Masvingo). He spent 10 years in prison.

A close friend of Mr Mnangagwa, who did not want to be named, once said: “He has scars from that period... perhaps that explains why he is indifferent. Horrible things happened to him when he was young.” His ruthlessness resurfaced during the 2000 parliamentary campaign in Kwekwe Central when opposition candidate Blessing Chebundo defeated Mr Mnangagwa.

During a bitter campaign, Mr Chebundo escaped death by a whisker when the Zanu-PF youths who had abducted him and doused him with

petrol were unable to light a match. Eight years later Mr Mnangagwa reportedly masterminded Zanu-PF’s response to Mr Mugabe losing the first round of the presidential election to long-time rival Morgan Tsvangirai.

The military and state security organisations unleashed a campaign of violence against opposition supporters, leaving hundreds dead and forcing thousands from their homes. Mr Tsvangirai then pulled out of the second round and Mr Mugabe was re-elected.

Mr Mnangagwa was seen as Mr Mugabe’s right-hand man - that is until the former first lady Grace Mugabe became politically ambitious and tried to edge him out. Their rivalry took a bizarre turn when he fell ill in 2017 at a political rally led by Mr Mugabe and had to be airlifted to South Africa. His supporters suggested that a rival group within Zanu-PF had poisoned him and appeared to blame ice cream from Mrs Mugabe’s dairy firm.

Mr Mnangagwa referenced this plot himself and also blamed a group linked to the former first lady for an explosion at a Zanu-PF rally in Zimbabwe’s second city Bulawayo, in which two people died. Their rivalry has continued - and when Mr Mugabe died in 2019, President Mnangagwa wanted him interred at the national Heroes Acre burial ground, but Mrs Mugabe refused.

But his overtures on the economic front have been welcomed by some businesses. In 2017, Zimbabwe’s GDP was \$17.5bn (£13.7bn) and has since averaged at \$25.31bn. The government has also attracted hundreds of millions of dollars in investment, mainly in mining. For example, platinum giant Zimplats will invest \$1.8bn over the next 10 years, following negotiations with government.

With the largest lithium reserves in Africa, the government also hopes to profit from world demand for the key component in batteries - and last month a Chinese firm opened up a lithium processing plant in Goromonzi. The president’s supporters are confident about his place in the history books, with the government renaming 10 streets Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa Rd in a 2019 project to honour African icons rather than British ones.

But critics say most changes introduced by President Mnangagwa have not benefited the ordinary Zimbabwean. Zimbabwe had one of the highest inflation rates in the world last month - prices in July had rocketed by 101.3% since the previous year. Unemployment also remains rife, with only 25% of Zimbabweans holding formal jobs.

His vow to guarantee human rights appears hollow, with little changing in this regard since Mr Mugabe’s departure. Critics continue to be arrested

and taken to court for insulting the president - an offence punishable by one year in jail or a fine or both. A man in Harare was charged in April after allegedly being overheard by a policeman saying that Mr Mnangagwa would lose the next election.

Members of opposition party the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) have also been convicted in the run-up to the vote on what they describe as fabricated charges aimed at weakening the party. The party says the police have banned several of its meetings since July, and nearly 100 gatherings since it was formed in January last year. This week 40 CCC members, including an parliamentary candidate, were arrested while campaigning in the capital Harare - and remain in custody. The recent killing of a CCC backer, allegedly by Zanu-PF supporters, further raised concerns about rights. Mr Mugabe’s removal raised hopes that Zimbabwe would rebuild its relationship with the West. Under Mr Mnangagwa, the country has applied to be readmitted to the Commonwealth. Mr Mugabe’s government pulled Zimbabwe out in 2003 after the nation was suspended for human rights violations. “Zimbabwe had made progress in its journey to re-join the Commonwealth family”, with an encouraging assessment visit last year, a Commonwealth Secretariat spokesperson told the BBC.



The Frontier Post

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Peshawar.

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# Rising extremism and role of the State

**PAKISTANI** investigators have claimed to detect alleged involvement of the Indian spy agency in hatching and materializing the unfortunate incident in Pakistan's Northern city of Jaranwala, during which a violent mob attacked Christian locality, burnt churches and damaged public property on August 17. According to the Police, the authorities have found concrete evidence about a well-planned conspiracy to spread Muslim-Christian riots and sow the seeds of a permanent discord and hatred among the Muslims and their Christians fellow citizens in the country. The Police has identified two foreign agents who intentionally threw away the pieces of paper having written derogatory remarks about poise personalities along with the names and cell numbers of some members of local christian community that were used to incite violence in the local population against Chrisitan minority. Later, both agents played pivotal roles in igniting Churches and destroying private properties to accomplish their task assigned by their handlers. Police claimed that it was a deep conspiracy by India to divert global attention from its atrocities in Occupied Kashmir.

Historically, religious extremism and social intolerance have grown unprecedentedly over the past years and now they have taken deep roots in Pakistani society. There had been recurrent incidents of discrimination, hate speech, and violence against religious minorities including Christian, Hindus, Sikhs etc. in the name of religious supremacy, blasphemy or desecration of Islam and Quran, that violent mobs played the self assumed role of judge and jury by ruthlessly killing innocent people, vandalizing their homes and demolishing places of worship without sorting any explanation, seeking any clarification, without using available legal precedence, without taking any credence from religious clerics or legal opinion from law experts. Thus a hencious trend of rigid behaviors and extremist actions had stemmed up in the society, that prompted unbelievable and shocking attitude of the public such as a refusal to polio vaccination of the children, attack on polio teams, opposition to girls education, levelling charges of sedition and blasphemy for political reasons and declaring opponents of infidelity become customary that did not exist in our society in the past.

That said pattern of lawlessness and religious wilderness had not been seen in any Muslim nation and the rest of the world except Pakistan, which became a recurrent tragedy and a stigma for Islam and Pakistan. Similarly, discrimination on ethnic, sectarian, and religious grounds is common while personal grudges and monetary benefits are often met out through accusations of blasphemy, and mob violence. Dozens of incidents of religious and sectarian vandalism occur each year across the country but the state and institutions of Pakistan including Parliament, Judiciary, Police, civic groups and religious dynasties did not feel the gravity of the issue and were often restricted to mere condemnation of the subject events and press statements.

The conduct of the Punjab Police during and after the horrific incident was utterly biased, and regretful. The Police force neither attempted to disperse violent mobs, nor tried to protect innocent and unarmed civilians from Christian minority. Police played the role of a common spectator throughout the episode and now came up with a story of foreign conspiracy hatched by the worst enemy to avert global attention from the worst human rights situation in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. In fact, it was a decades old lame excuse of the Pakistani establishment who often coverup its professional negligence through blame games and fake stories. The Police and LEAs must tell the public why they failed to forecast the enemy's plan and who pulled their hands back from protecting minorities, guarding their homes and sacred places. Pakistani state institutions must not play with sensitive religious issues but must uphold their constitutional role that demands maintenance of law and order at all costs and transparent investigations and award of punishment to real perpetrators along with enforcement of strict measures to avoid recurrences of such incidents in the future.

Over the decades, Pakistani politicians and religious leaders blatantly used religion cards for political purposes that not only radicalized the society but gave birth to extremism and intolerance in the country. Neither our political leadership nor military strategists could assess the full extent and gravity of the problem of extremism that led to the spread of terrorism. As of today, countless political, ethnic, and religious extremist pressure groups have emerged in the country that often use their street power to challenge the writ of the state and pressurize the government in administrative, constitutional, and policy matters in pursuit of cheap popularity. The Pakistani nation has faced irreparable loss due to the rising trend of extremism, hate crimes and racism. It is high time that our political and religious leadership feel it's responsibility to combat hate speech, religious bigotry and interfaith antagonism so this nation become a peaceful and livable place for all its inhabitants without any discrimination of cast, colour and creed. Because all Pakistanis have equal citizenry rights and equal privileges in Quaid-e-Azam's Pakistan.

## Important Notice

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# China and Russia have achieved naval success off Alaska - where the US Navy has no bases

Tom Sharpe

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

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

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

Task two is more interesting - preparing for what happens when task one fails. Operating warships together is much harder than Hollywood would have you believe and needs constant practice.

Gathering in one place in formation for a photo is one thing: learning how to fight together is something else entirely. The network required to make ships capable of fighting together extends well beyond the platforms themselves. Intelligence systems, logistics, communications, orders, rules of engagement, all require a high degree of commonality and understanding to work. Nato ships have an advantage here as by and large they all operate using the same rule books but even then it can take days to get everyone on the same comms. Basicly there are two reasons why navies gather and operate together like this, both simple - to influence (task one) and to prepare to fight (task two).

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its foothold in the High North, a part of the world where conflict at some point feels inevitable despite Nato's increasing strength there: every Arctic nation except Russia will soon be in Nato. It's rich in oil and gas and 29 per cent of Alaska is covered by glaciers. The Aleutian Islands, stretching some 1200 miles out to the west, are home to the Cobra Dane radar station, the US's first line of defence against ballistic missile attack. Though Alaska's population density is such that if it was Manhattan there would be just 16 people there, it is nonetheless one of the most populated places in the High North. Alaska matters.

The Aleutian islands are relevant here as the Chinese-Russian gathering took place near them rather than mainland Alaska. Legally, the implications are the same: as a practical matter they are not. If the Isles of Scilly stretched halfway across the Atlantic, our response to Russian warships operating there would be different to them anchoring in the Moray Firth. But what is the right response? The US Navy sent four destroyers this time - which has been met with general approval. The decision to send a single coastguard cutter last September to intercept seven Russian and Chinese warships was not. The appropriate level of response is a hard one as it entirely depends on your philosophical stance. In 2016, conversations in the British Ministry of Defence around the Russian carrier Kuznetsov heading home through the Channel ranged from 'let it go - don't stoke their propaganda machine' to 'let's get everything out of the door and give them a show of strength'. Where you personally sit on this continuum will determine what you think is the right response. Often these philosophical debates resolve themselves when

they meet the cold reality of available resources. In this case, the US Navy having four destroyers available for short notice retasking is impressive. Also, it's not all about navy vs navy - having the intelligence, surveillance apparatus and aircraft in place to detect and track ships and then message to say you are doing both, is just as important.

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

# Price of food the priority for the Global South

Zaid M. Belbagi

**B**ACK in the spring, a year after the start of the war in Ukraine, global commodities received attention for their marked resilience and adaptability despite the extraordinary circumstances. The conflict had initially sent food, gas and oil prices soaring, but they eventually stabilized.

Last week, as the Russia-Africa Summit was held in St. Petersburg, attention fell on Russia once again following its withdrawal from the grain deal that had allowed almost 33 million tons of agricultural products to leave Ukraine. With certain African and Arab countries bearing the brunt of these spikes, the weaponization of food security is once again at the forefront of policy considerations.

There could be no conflict between two countries more critical to food security than Russia and Ukraine.

As two of the world's top agricultural producers, both are key exporters to Arab and African countries. With Russia the largest wheat exporter in the world and Ukraine the fifth-largest, the two countries play a pivotal role in the global food supply chain. Last year's grain deal allowed critical supplies to leave Ukraine's blockaded ports. But since Russia backed out, wheat prices have begun climbing again, reigniting fears about the impact on grain-importing economies that are already struggling and on developing economies buckling under the weight of inflation.

The grain deal had allowed prices to fall by as much as 35 percent. However, as Moscow warned that it would consider all ships sailing in the Black Sea region as potential military targets, there is the risk of another food supply crisis. Its announcement has had a knock-on effect on oilseed, corn and soya bean prices. There has also been turbulence in other commodities sectors, with the Indian government banning the export of non-basmati rice shortly after. Given that rice is often a direct replacement for grain products, India's decision was indicative of the stress that the conflict continues to create in terms of food security. India's decision, seen as export protectionism by the International Monetary Fund and the UN, comes at a time when international organizations are trying to avoid a global food crisis. Though the issue is global, there is a particularly African slant to President Vladimir Putin's decision. Pulling out of the deal has allowed Russia to realign its relationships in Africa, making African countries even more dependent on its grain (it already accounts for more than 50 percent of wheat imports to the continent). Accusing the West of complicating Russian grain deliveries and receiving the lion's share of its produce, Putin has offered free grain to African states in an effort to politicize the issue.

With Russia not participating in this month's BRICS summit, Africa is a central part of its diplomat-

ic strategy to engage further with the Global South. Amid a perceived and actual US retreat from certain spheres of influence, Russia sees an opening in Africa from which it can benefit, especially as its interactions with the developed world have become complicated owing to international sanctions. All the Arab North African countries bar Tunisia sent head of state representation to the summit, indicating Russia's importance to their food security. Egypt, which faces chronic food security challenges, struggles to meet its domestic wheat demands. The Cairo government, which subsidizes 350 million loaves of bread per day, is aware that the collapse of the Black Sea Grain Initiative could have a serious effect on its economy, further politicizing an already very sensitive issue.

As one of the world's largest importers of rice, Egypt is caught in a vice-like grip, with the potential for a massive impact on the affordability of basic commodities for the Egyptian people. Last summer, Egypt signed a \$500 million loan agreement with the World Bank in order to help finance its grain imports. This is a situation that is mirrored elsewhere in the Arab world, where economies have already been battered by the pandemic and with local agriculture facing more frequent droughts. Such countries are ill-placed to cope with commodity shocks. The impact of Russia's decision on global commodity prices is likely to outweigh its new initiative for Africa, which was announced in St. Petersburg. Its efforts to increase its diplomatic clout in Africa are limited in scope given that the grain issue comes amid Russian trade being only half of what was previously promised and a fraction of the continent's trade with China and the EU. The Wagner Group has, in recent years, been the long arm of the Russian security services on the continent, but the standing of Moscow in Africa was negatively impacted by Wagner's attempted coup in June. It is little surprise, therefore, that Russia has been too distracted to deliver on its commitments made at the 2019 Russia-African Summit. That may be why only 17 African heads of state attended last week's summit.

While Russia's Africa strategy seemed promising in 2019, its current role in the global food security crisis is negatively impacting its aspirations of continental influence. The confluence of external factors creating food stress in the developing world is limiting the ability of governments to engage in new diplomatic activities and alliance structures that risk exposing them to further economic worries. Criticisms of African countries in St. Petersburg, coupled with calls to resolve the conflict, though not overly robust, were telling in their candor. Food prices will continue to take precedence for the governments of the Global South.

# Workers' anxiety the price of world's growing reliance on AI

Mohamed Chebaro

**I**NCREASINGLY, one hears people talking about progress, digital transformation, faster turnaround times for tasks and faster research, as data is reviewed by artificial intelligence-enhanced software, with humans simply aiding the machine to speedily accomplish more. But what is the price? And what is the purpose if, one day, we get the machine to replace a whole bunch of jobs? Maybe money, and more profit, will increasingly mean human well-being matters less.

In this age of algorithms and machine learning, the new buzzword is AI. But this artificial intelligence risks becoming too artificial when it impacts people's livelihoods and they start to feel that their jobs could be made redundant, with the tasks they used to do now being done by a machine.

At all the meetings we attend, whether professional or personal, there is always a reference to machine learning, AI or

how this has made someone rely on an AI tool of some sort to draft an email, write a code or collate material that previously took days. Yes, the technology is growing fast and it is making it harder for many of us to be certain about the future of our skills and our professional role, bringing doubts about whether we will have a source of income if our job is likely to be taken over by a machine. So far, I have not had any sleepless nights, but others have been feeling anxious. The tidal wave of AI, which is still yet to hit the mainstream on a global scale, is already threatening to take over many professions. As a result, it has been generating deep anxiety, with many workers fearful that their jobs will be swept away, denying them their income and bread-winning ability.

The launch of tools like ChatGPT last November has seen the tech giants competing to provide new technology that is capable of handling complex tasks on command. This has marked a turning point and

started to transform the workplace, but also our job security and the future of many companies. Humans who work as legal assistants, programmers, accountants, financial advisers or even graphic designers and maybe actors could soon struggle to compete. This has led analysts at Goldman Sachs to predict, in a study published in March, that generative AI is likely to impact, if not eliminate, at least 300 million jobs in the next 10 years. Generative AI tools can quickly create human-like prose, computer code, articles and expert insight into whatever topic it is given the essential keywords from which to start. This has led an increasing number of people to start working to change their careers, but some have also been succumbing to all types of anxiety and stress due to their uncertain future.

Therapists, especially in the Global North, have been witnessing an increased level of anxiety,

as "anything new and unknown is anxiety-producing," Clare Gustavson, a therapist in New York, told US media last week. Her patients have shared concerns about AI, as "the technology has been growing so fast, it is hard to gain sure footing." Therapists have relayed information about professionals in the entertainment sector who are worried about the wider usage of AI in film and television production, meaning human assets could be replaced. Graphic animators and art designers are not faring any better, as software infused with AI has been producing graphics and animation that rival those designed and created by human hands, and in a fraction of the time.

In the regulation-light digital realm that we live in, the anxiety of individuals is also slowly seeping into corporate boardrooms. A Reuters/Ipsos poll found that, as an increasing number of employees are turning to

ChatGPT to complete basic tasks, many employers, including Microsoft and Google, want to curb its use as concerns have been raised over intellectual property and strategy leaks. Some 28 percent of respondents to the online poll said that they regularly use ChatGPT at work, while 22 percent said their employers explicitly allow such external tools. Also, 25 percent of the respondents said they did not know the policy in their firms, while only 10 percent said that their bosses have explicitly banned the use of external AI tools. The anxiety among firms centers on the security of the data. While everybody has been benefiting from speedy, open-source and free AI tool assistance, it seems the information is not completely secure and can seep out, according to tech security experts. Reviewers from other companies may read the generated chat or similar AI tools could reproduce the data it absorbed, creating potential risks for sensitive information.

This digital age is no

better than any previous transition witnessed by humans in their long history. We often hear about regulation and accountability as a means to control the new tools, provide certainty and reduce anxiety. But when governments everywhere have been playing catch-up with slippery tech giants - which have already made the world reliant on their products and could, with a few touches of various buttons, bring the world to a standstill if they were pressured to succumb to anything more than lighter rules and regulation that favor their businesses - then there are reasons to be anxious.

And it seems that heightened anxiety among many employees and employers will become the norm, as many will continue to blindly use the free AI services with little or no knowledge of the implications for the future. Meanwhile, governments will continue to grapple with various priorities that aim to encourage innovation but at an unknown price for society.



# A plague of coups plunges Africa’s Sahel into anarchy

**H**ARDLY a single state across Africa's vast Sahel region has escaped the curse of coups in recent years. With Niger the latest victim of this pandemic of military mutinies, destabilization of this obscure state will have profound consequences for Africa and global security. Just a few weeks ago, an African security analyst contextualized Niger to me as a "precarious success story."

In neighboring Mali, Burkina Faso and northeastern Nigeria, extremist groups have been expanding across vast swaths of territory - yet Niger, meanwhile, witnessed a marked decline in significant terrorist activity. President Mohammed Bazoum was voted into office just two years ago in Niger's widely celebrated first peaceful, democratic transfer of power since independence in 1960.

Next door in Mali, two coups in quick succession around 2021 fundamentally destabilized the country, bringing forth a pro-Russia regime that demanded the withdrawal of all Western counterterrorism forces. This was, predictably, a disaster, as Daesh and Al-Qaeda flooded into the gigantic vacuum created by the departure of the foreign troops. Civilian and military deaths have soared, amid hundreds of reported security incidents every month. In the aftermath of Mali's coups, Russia's Wagner Group mercenaries made matters 100 times worse by perpetrating horrific massacres, which drove communities into the terrorists' open arms. A further 2022 coup in Burkina Faso enabled extremists to take de facto control of about 40 percent of the country. As recently as 2021, Daesh's Sahel branch was ramping up its activity in Niger, building up a substantial presence among tribes within the country's western Tillaberi region, a stone's throw from the capital, Niamey. The plurality of extremist groups - including Boko Haram and Daesh - to the eastern Lake Chad

region threatened to entrap the country from both sides within a terrorist pincer grip.

Yet, with major security gains throughout 2022, Niger increasingly resembled a regional oasis of stability, particularly as Western forces relocated there from Mali. Over a thousand US troops have been stationed in Niger, alongside 1,500 French soldiers, with major American drone bases in Niamey and Agadez. The EU has allocated 500 million (\$550 million) in aid since 2021. Niger constituted the cornerstone of the West's Sahel strategy; not just due to counterterrorism, but also as a vital node for restricting northward flows of migrants. The West is now threatening to fully freeze aid and cooperation if Bazoum and democracy are not restored. But coup leader Gen. Abdourahmane Tiani - having declared himself president - does not look to be going anywhere. "Our economic and security partnership with Niger - which is significant, hundreds of millions of dollars - depends on the continuation of the democratic governance and constitutional order that has been disrupted by the actions in the last few days," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken declared.

Meanwhile, the vultures are circling over Niger, with its rich uranium reserves. Western pressure could simply drive the new regime into Moscow's welcoming embrace. Senior Russian figures praised the coup and coup supporters jubilantly waved Russian flags in the streets of Niamey. Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin - who has recent personal expertise in staging coups - eulogized that "what happened in Niger represents the struggle of Niger's people against colonizers, who tried to impose their own rules." Prigozhin's online trolls have long been pumping out polarizing anti-Western social media propaganda throughout the Sahel. Sudan, meanwhile, was plunged into catastrophic bloodshed after the paramilitary

Baria Alamuddin

Rapid Support Forces in April staged its own attempted power grab, purging the regular military from most of Khartoum. The RSF concurrently embarked on a genocidal campaign against rival Darfur tribes, giving rise to levels of death and destruction comparable to the horrific zenith of the post-2003 Darfur conflict.

Despite the mediation efforts of Saudi Arabia and others, the two Sudanese sides appear hell-bent on continuing to fight each other, with Wagner and other parties reputedly adding fuel to the fire by funneling arms to the RSF. The vast influx of refugees into fragile neighboring Chad poses a further threat to regional stability. As The New York Times noted, the Niger coup "toppled the final domino in a band across the girth of Africa, from Guinea in the west to Sudan in the east, now controlled by juntas that came to power in a coup - all but one in the past two years." These represent profound setbacks for regionwide governance and security. Africa has witnessed 98 successful coups since 1952.

Even in states where semi-legitimate governing powers are present in national capitals, the Sahara-straddling Sahel region hosts unimaginably large ungoverned spaces; offering optimum conditions for terrorist and anti-state forces to establish themselves. The only factor preventing the likes of Daesh, Boko Haram or Al-Qaeda seizing these immense regions is the fact that these rival extremists are usually too busy fighting each other. The worst thing the world could do now is throw up its hands and decide that the Sahel coup belt's plenitude of crises is too vast to address. Just as Osama bin Laden established training camps for plotting attacks against the West in remote Afghanistan and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi centered his caliphate on the twin capitals of Raqqa and Mosul, the consolidation of a Sahel-wide extremist superstate is possibly only a matter of time. Opening the

region's floodgates for mass migration would have similarly immense global ramifications. Brutal cuts to Western aid for the world's poorest states and Russia's on-off blockade of Ukrainian grain have further worsened this region's plight. As China's population falls and India's birth rate decelerates, Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Congo will become the demographic behemoths of the 21st century. The young people from these regions will become a significant portion of the global workforce, as the continent's population nearly doubles to about 2.5 billion by 2050, at which point more than half of Africa's citizens will be under 25 years old.

If these young people are to be an asset rather than a burden, these rapidly growing countries will need assistance in sustainably expanding their economies and providing world-class education. Continent-wide economic growth, at around 3 percent, remains way too sluggish to even begin lifting these nations out of poverty - despite Africa's immense mineral and agricultural resources. For Sahel states, the distances are too impossibly vast and the resources too thinly spread for much of this strategically crucial yet desperately impoverished region to ever enjoy stability without copious and sustained international support, cultivating effective governance, facilitating long-term stability and conferring modern amenities upon far-flung, long-forgotten communities so that they do not seek succor from bloodthirsty terrorists. Meanwhile, climate change and over-farming cause millions of hectares of Sahel territories to be progressively lost to inexorable desertification. Demographics dictate that this is to be an Africa-led 21st century. Yet it is up to the international community whether fragile Sahel states will constitute a bountiful breadbasket for exporting resources or a broken basket case for exporting terrorism and instability.

Arab News

# A key lesson from the Niger crisis

**A "coup belt" now extends across the African continent, running along the Sahel region that bisects north and sub-Saharan Africa. On 10 August, Niger, where the democratically elected president was deposed by a military junta, became the last link that completed the corridor of countries run by coupsters. It is the ninth coup or attempted power grab in west and central Africa since 2020.**

Nesrine Malik

This might appear at first glance as a retrenchment, the thrusting of African countries back into military rule and weak democratic cultures, with a dash of Russian mischief to complete the picture of a fragile region at the whim of local strongmen and meddling. The reality is much more complicated, and perhaps even oddly hopeful.

Let's first address that which is not entirely true. Much has been made of Russian intervention in the region, primarily through the activities of the Wagner group. Wagner, in terms of troop deployment, is indeed present in Africa, but only concentrated in a few countries: Central African Republic, Mali and Libya. The rest of Wagner's active military presence is fluid and inconsistent in loyalty, as mercenary deployment often is: providing support, arms and training to governments and insurgencies alike. The organisation's main concern appears to be a sort of economic piracy, forging partnerships with local militias and governments to extract and skim off the yield of natural resources: gold in Sudan, oil in Libya, diamonds and uranium in Central African Republic.

To achieve these ends, Wagner deploys not just firepower and manpower, but nestles within the soft power of the Russian state. All Eyes on Wagner, a project that tracks the outfit's activities through open source information and witness accounts, told me that Wagner is assisted by the Russian non-profit organisation the Foundation for National Values Protection, which claims to monitor perceptions of government among the citizenry so as to better shape and "get a feel" for what works in certain countries. The result is that Wagner is skilled in the sort of propaganda and targeted local outreach that portrays it as the representative of benign foreign powers, a contrast to the US and ex-colonial European forces. "A gift from Yevgeny Prigozhin" is how food parcels of rice, sugar and lentils distributed to poor people are labelled. Two weeks ago, Putin proposed to liberate African countries from neocolonialism. In Niger, pro-coup demonstrators assembled waving Russian flags and chanting "down with France".

This is not to understate Wagner's and by extension Russia's influence, but these are enablers, rather than causes, of the spate of coups since 2020. And their presence galvanises US attention and diplomatic scrambling, further establishing the impression that these coups are somehow proxy skirmishes for power on the part of foreign regimes, obscuring the real dynamics on the ground.

That perspective of Africa as merely a weak link in the global security chain has also overemphasised Islamic terrorism in the Sahel as a contributing factor.

The presence of jihadist groups in the region has historically elicited a classically narrow militarised response from western powers that have deployed troops in Niger and greater west Africa. But this provides no solution for, or understanding of, the fact that increased terrorist activity, like the coups themselves, is a symptom of demographic and economic trends across the region rather than a primary trigger for democratic instability.

Which brings us to the varied reasons behind these coups. Unsettling as they are to foreign interests, they are, for the most part, hyperlocal and a long time coming. Weak states, strong military and paramilitary forces, the climate crisis that has disrupted ways of living and a demographic bulge that has resulted in large populations of young people with poor economic prospects, all combine to empower government takeover and sow widespread despair and a sense of loss of agency that young, charismatic strongmen can exploit. It is easy to collapse these reasons into the fatalistic conclusion that parts of Africa that share these patterns are simply condemned to cycles of violence. But often these structural problems sit alongside homegrown efforts to build and nurture democracy that endure, despite the challenges.

Niger itself was a good news story, with its now deposed president coming to power in a democratic election in 2021 that was Niger's first peaceful transition of power since independence, one that successfully saw off a coup attempt before the president took office. In Sudan, on the far east of the coup belt, a popular uprising against Omar al-Bashir's 30-year dictatorship agitated so hard for civilian governance that a 2021 coup was launched to forestall that popular demand and proceeded to cut off Sudan from the rest of the world and hobble its economy, before plunging the country into war between different military factions. The

result is the hopeful prospect, even though it may not seem like it, of coups no longer being allowed to pass as business as usual on the continent. There is a realisation among heads of state and regional organisations that democratic governments must be encouraged - the normalisation of overthrowing democratically elected governments by force creates a contagion effect and is disruptive to all of the continent's prospects.

As it stands, the airspace of Libya in the north of Africa, Niger in the west and Sudan in the east is closed to commercial flights, creating a triangle that cargo and passenger traffic must thread. Over the past three months, air traffic into Africa from Europe has been forced to recalibrate flight paths twice, as countries became unsafe to fly over. The stakes are high, no longer just when it comes to security, but economic stability. The outcome of these continent-wide risks is that the Niger coup has drawn a response from Ecowas (the Economic Community of West African States), which is unprecedented. The organisation has threatened military action if the coup is not reversed. A meeting to thrash out details of that on Saturday was cancelled. But the threat, and the resolutely strong censure, remain. Last week, after the coupsters refused to stand down, hoping that Ecowas would blink first, west African leaders activated standby forces, with President Bola Tinubu of Nigeria warning that "no option is taken off the tables".

"If we don't do it," he said, "no one else will do it for us" - a clear-eyed declaration that Moscow, Washington, Paris and London have nothing to offer African countries and that their concerns for democracy ring hollow as they do little but pursue narrow interests in the region. It is "an unavoidable reality", writes veteran Africa correspondent Howard French, that "Africans will ultimately make or break their continent's geopolitical landscape - and foreign interlopers, however muscle-bound they may appear, are ultimately fated to play a secondary role."

Amid stale cold war framings, western military calculations about jihadist contagion and fretting about loss of influence on the part of ex-colonial powers, Niger's coup and those that preceded it may in fact plot a path to a future in which it finally becomes clear that Africa's stability will not be forged in the Pentagon or on heated analysis panels on cable news, but on its own terms and through its own mechanisms, once it faces its worst fears and opts for self-preservation.

# Only a hostile environment can stop illegal migration

**THOSE who believed that Brexit would see the UK "take back control" continue to look in despair as the country's borders remain porous and insecure. The ongoing small-boats emergency on the English south coast has made a complete mockery of our so-called national sovereignty over immigration and asylum policy.**

Rakib Ehsan

For the fact that this scale of illegal migration fuels labour exploitation, undermines social cohesion and poses a threat to public order.

While the Government has sought to shore up our borders through the Illegal Migration Act, there needs to be a truly national effort to dismantle people-smuggling networks, as well as punishing exploitative bosses who employ illegal migrants and unscrupulous landlords who house them in overcrowded properties. There needs to be a fostering of a genuinely hostile environment for those who are contributing towards the UK's illegal immigration crisis. As it stands, an individual may be sent to prison for five years and pay a large fine if that person is found guilty of employing someone who he/she knew or had "reasonable cause to believe" did not have the right to work in the UK. This fine can be up to £20,000 per illegal worker. But the Government should look to introduce much stronger penalties for those who fail to comply with the law on right-to-work checks and knowingly employ illegal migrants while making

handsome profits by paying them a pittance. This form of labour exploitation undermines the integrity of the British market economy - one where social responsibility is an integral part of mainstream business activity. Moreover, like the case of employing illegal workers, one can be sent to jail for 5 years or receive a fine for renting property (in England) to someone who he/she knew or had "reasonable cause to believe" did not have the right to rent in the UK. The amount for a first-time penalty for a lodger in a private household is a meagre £80 (which rises to £1,000 for tenants in rented accommodation). Both the potential prison sentences and penalties for such misdemeanours should be toughened as a matter of urgency. This is not "anti-landlord" - it is about tackling criminal activity in the rental market. By empowering its law-enforcement authorities and introducing stiffer punishments, the UK can create a truly hostile environment for those who benefit from the illegal immigration ecosystem, especially people-smuggling networks, exploitative bosses, and crooked landlords.

# Aussie leaders must raise their voice to free Assange

**UNLIKE his predecessor Scott Morrison, incumbent Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has been urging the Joe Biden administration to drop the charges against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who has been confined in the maximum security Belmarsh Prison in London since April 2019 while Washington seeks his extradition to the United States.**

But Albanese's efforts were rejected on July 29 by visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who said that Assange is accused of "very serious criminal conduct" for publishing classified US military documents in 2010 after US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning leaked them to WikiLeaks. Assange is facing 17 charges under the US Espionage Act and could be sentenced to as many as 175 years in a US maximum security prison if he is extradited to the US. The WikiLeaks founder lost his appeal in June against the extradition, triggering an outcry among his supporters around the world. On Tuesday, asserting that his

government stands firm against the US and its prosecution, Albanese said "this has gone on for too long", adding that "enough is enough". However, his remarks are far from being strong enough. Amnesty International's message, for example, is much stronger. It said that the "authorities in the USA must drop the espionage and all other charges against Julian Assange". The London-based group said "the US government's unrelenting pursuit of Julian Assange for having published disclosed documents that included possible war crimes committed by the US military is nothing short of a full-scale assault on the right to freedom of expression", strong words that Albanese and Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong dare not use in front of US officials. Wong only said that Australia wants the charges "brought to a conclusion", a very ambiguous message.

The US military cables released by WikiLeaks detailed war crimes committed by the US administration in the Guantanamo detention

center. Iraq and Afghanistan, including the killing of civilians and two Reuters reporters and the CIA engaging in torture and rendition. Worse, Yahoo News reported in 2021 that the CIA under then director Mike Pompeo had discussed abducting and assassinating Assange in 2017 while he was in asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London. The Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists has launched a campaign, calling on the US government to drop all charges against Assange and allowing him to return home to be with his wife and children.

The IFJ warned against the dire implications of the US' actions on press freedom, emphasizing that the punishment of Manning, who collaborated with Assange in releasing the US documents, was commuted by former US president Barack Obama. A point to be noted is that none of WikiLeaks' media partners has been charged in any US administration's legal proceeding. The editors and publishers of the media partners of WikiLeaks,

including The Guardian, The New York Times, Le Monde, Der Spiegel and El Pais, wrote an open letter last year calling on the US to end its prosecution of Assange. A group of Democratic lawmakers, including Rashida Tlaib of Michigan sent a letter in April to US Attorney General Merrick Garland, urging him to drop all charges against Assange.

Albanese and Wong could also learn from Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who described the arrest of Assange as "an attack on freedom of expression" way back in 2010 during his last term in office. And during his visit to London in May, Lula denounced the lack of concerted efforts to free Assange, saying "the guy is in prison because he denounced wrongdoing" and "the press doesn't do anything in defense of this journalist, I can't understand it". Lula is right. It is shameful that most Western mainstream media outlets and Western politicians have not shown the guts to support Assange despite their hypocritical rhetoric on press freedom.

The China Daily

Chen Weihua





# ICCI calls for addressing issues of hotel industry to facilitate its growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Vice Chairman of Pakistan Hotels Association Mian Akram Farid visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) here Saturday and discussed the key issues of the hotel industry with ICCI Office Bearers for their redress.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI said that the government should address the key issues of the hotel industry to facilitate its better growth that would enable it to create more jobs.

He said that the hotel industry is an important source of revenue generation for the country, while 5 to 6 million people are associated with the hotel industry.

He said that since 1990s,

no new big hotel chain has come to Pakistan due to lack of a national tourism policy and a consistent policy framework from the government for the hotel industry.

He said that the government can generate more revenue by creating a favourable environment for this industry and solving its major issues.

Mian Akram Farid stressed that the government should abolish the import/regulatory duty on the import of machinery and other items for the hotel industry as these duties have increased the cost of doing business manifold.

He said that according to the current market rate, the land prices have increased many times while imposition of various taxes and levies on the hotel industry

has created further problems.

He said that the bulk of the capital is spent on the purchase of land for hotels and stressed that the land should be provided this industry at government rates.

He further said that the 22 percent enhanced interest rate should also be reduced. He said that the high electricity and gas tariffs have also greatly increased the cost of doing business for this industry and emphasized that these high utility tariffs should be rationalized.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI urged that immediate action should be taken against the illegal guesthouses running in the federal capital.

He said that earlier the CDA had closed the guest houses established in the

residential areas of Islamabad, but now again the guest houses have cropped up in the residential sectors of Islamabad. Apart from this, residential apartments are also being used as gatehouses and they are not paying taxes.

Engr. Azharul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, said that the hotel industry was not given any relief in the last budget. He said that due to credit sales, hotel owners are paying sales tax and bed tax.

He demanded that the government should immediately abolish bed tax at the federal and provincial levels so that the industry can survive.

He said that the government should consider reducing the federal and provincial sales tax on hotels to 10 percent to reduce its problems.



BEIJING: A Pakistani vendor displaying cloths at his stall in 7th China-South Asia Exposition and the 27th China Kunming Import and Export Fair.

## SCCI flays Jaranwala incident

SIALKOT (APP): President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCC) Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President (SVP) Wahub Jahangir, Vice President (VP) Amer Majeed Sheikh and Executive Committee members have strongly condemned the recent incident taking place in Jaranwala on August 16, 2023, in which churches and houses of Christian community members were set ablaze by a mob.

The shocking act of violence caused deep concerns among the business community of Sialkot, they said and stressed the need for immediate action to maintain law and order in the province.

The SCCI office-bearers expressed solidarity with the affected community, saying that the incident was in sheer contradiction to the principles of tolerance, coexistence and respect for all religious beliefs that Pakistani society upholds.

The called upon the federal government, the Punjab government and the law-enforcers to take stern action against the culprits.

## Football team members visit SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): The Street Child Team of the Muslim Hands NGO, which won the second position in the Youth Largest Football Tournament, Norway Cup 2023, visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Saturday.

SCCI Vice President Amer Majeed welcomed the team members. An event was jointly held by the SCCI and the Muslim Hands NGO to encourage the runner-up team. The SCCI vice president congratulated all players of the team and paid tribute to Muslim Hands, team management and players.

Country Director Muslim Hands Ziaul Noor thanked SCCI VP Amer Majeed Sheikh, Chairman AirSial Fazal Jilani, former chairman Sialkot International Airport Limited Khawaja Masood Akhar and Sialkot business community.

## AirAsia launches ‘piso sale’

MANILA (Agencies): Manila: Netizens went into a tizzy after AirAsia Philippines announced Friday a renewed ‘Piso Sale’ with airfares as low as one peso (Php1 = about \$0.018) for domestic flights.

# Pakistani handicrafts in hot demand at Kunming expo

BEIJING (INP): Pakistani handicrafts in hot demand at the 7th China-South Asia Exposition and the 27th China Kunming Import and Export Fair that kicked off this week in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan Province.

The five-day expo invited substantial impetus for fast-growing trade and business relations between China and South Asian countries.

“China-South Asia Exposition is the biggest expo in Yunnan province. We’ve been participating in this expo for a couple of years, exhibiting carpets and scarves.

This year, as Covid-19 has finished, more exhib-

itors and visitors are coming here,” said Muzaffar, a Pakistani exhibitor, according to Gwadar Pro. This year, around 300 Pakistanis participate in the expo, among which there are more than 60 exhibitors and 40 delegates and others.

Pakistani jade, leather jacket, football, and brass ornament are attracting a lot of Chinese buyers.

“Pakistani traditional handicrafts, including brass and wooden furniture, are very popular among Chinese customers, which always sales fast on the expo,” said another Pakistani exhibitor from Sialkot who has been doing business in China for decades.

This is the first time he participates in the China-South Asia Expo. He brought leather jackets and footballs to the event.

“The exhibitors can get long-term business opportunities through participating in the exhibition, which is more important than sales volume. I have met many new business partners here.”

A Cambodian exhibitor told Gwadar Pro that she added a lot of WeChat contacts at the expo. “WeChat makes sales easy. I can contact Chinese customers and post the introduction of my products with the moment function. We usually send goods through international logistics.”

# PBF hopes interim govt to improve fiscal indicators

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) has expressed the optimism that the interim federal government would help improve fiscal indicators of the country.

Forum’s Vice President Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad told the media here on Saturday that, in a letter to the caretaker prime minister, the PBF hoped that he would focus on economic revival, besides paying attention to uplift of deprived areas of Pakistan.

Ahmad Jawad said that Pak Rupee depreciated by Rs 163 against the US dollar during the last five years, which had adverse effects on the common man’s living, businesses and manufacturing sector, besides imports and exports

of the country.

He opposed free float policy on currency, initiated by the last parliament, as it resulted in unprecedented decline of rupee against the US dollar.

Since 1947 until 1988, Ahmad Jawad cited, Pakistan approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) four times; however, from 1989 onwards, successive governments had made it a custom to get an IMF package instead of reducing their expenses.

He claimed that no government had ever paid a serious heed to revival of agriculture sector or work on small and medium enterprises to make them more viable to transform the country’s economy in the

long run. Thus, instead of building the capacity to pay back loans, the government continued to borrow to service the previous loans.

This situation demanded effective steps to stabilise the Pak Rupee besides ending market speculations. “As we believe that the real exchange rate of the US dollar against the Pak Rupee is less than Rs 200, and for all practical reasons, the current depreciation cycle is the direct result of speculative trading, lack of regulatory oversight and mismanagement of the forex market,” he asserted.

The PBF vice president urged the interim government to stabilise the currency to propel the economic activity.

# \$1b textile products exported

ISLAMABAD (APP): Textile exports reached \$1,311.659 million during the first month of the current financial year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

Textile exports showed a decline of 11.44 percent from \$1,481.173 million during the same month of last year (July 2022-23).

The textile commodities that contributed in trade growth included cotton yarn the exports of which increased by 35.96 percent to \$97,031 million during the July 2023 as compared to the exports of \$71.365 million last July year.

The other commodities that witnessed growth in trade included tents, canvas and tarpulin, the exports of

which grew by 9.02 percent to \$9,523 million from \$8,735 million whereas the export of cotton carded rose by 100 percent to \$0.209 million.

The textile commodities that witnessed negative growth in trade included cotton cloth, the exports of which declined by 22.56 percent, from \$181.985 million to \$140.936 million.

Likewise, the exports of knitwear also went down by 16.13, from \$434.642 million to \$364.541 million, bed wear by 14.60 percent, from \$253.988 million to \$216.910 million, towels by 2.93 percent, from \$74.965 million to \$72.766 million and ready made garments by 9.80 percent, from

\$304.571 million to \$274.733 million.

The exports of art, silk and synthetic textile also went down by 16.18 percent from \$31.218 million to \$26.167 million, made up article (excluding towels and bedwear) decreased by 7.54 percent from \$55.199 million from \$51.039.

The exports of all other textile materials decreased by 10.13 percent from \$60.041 million to \$53.961 million.

Meanwhile, on month-on-month basis the textile exports from the country declined by 10.89 percent during the month of July 2023 as compared to the exports of \$1471.976 million recorded in June 2023, the PBS data revealed.

# Stocks mixed as investors digest high US yields, China challenges

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stocks saw a mixed day of trading Friday as investors contemplated the prospect that interest rates could remain higher for longer and on concerns over China’s economy.

Stocks on Wall Street finished largely flat as investors snapped up more attractive government bonds with higher yields.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished up slightly, while the S&P was flat and the Nasdaq fell.

Meanwhile, the yield on the 10-year US Treasury note eased off highs seen earlier this week, when it was briefly flirting with a new 15-year high.

“There are a lot of investors looking at the yields and they are starting to get very attractive,” financial advisor Tom Cahill from Ventura Wealth Management told AFP.

“They are stepping in to do some buying of the bonds and of course that drives down yields -- and

that’s better for stocks,” he added.

In the eurozone, Paris and Frankfurt ended the week in the red.

In London, the FTSE 100 also closed lower, as a wet July dampened UK retail sales, which fell more than expected last month, official data showed.

Traders have been spooked after minutes from the US central bank’s July meeting hinted that further increases in borrowing costs could lie ahead, as policymakers grapple with inflation. While inflation in the United States has come down sharply in recent months, it remains above the Fed’s long-term target of two percent.

Some decision-makers at the Fed have suggested its two percent goal can only be achieved and maintained by pushing interest rates higher.

Fed chief Jerome Powell’s speech at next week’s annual Jackson Hole economic symposium in Wyoming will be closely followed for clues about the bank’s plans.

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

Investors are also keeping an eye on China, where authorities are struggling to get a grip on the economy as its recovery from Covid peters out.

And the property crisis is also back in the headlines.

On Thursday, Chinese property giant Evergrande Group 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, another

major Chinese developer, said there were “major uncertainties in the redemption of corporate bonds,” suggesting it could default on a bond payment next month.

There are now concerns about property firms 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 had 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.”



RAWALPINDI: Workers off-loading bundles of sugarcane from a delivery truck at Fruit Market.

## Dollar falls after data showing euro area inflation slowing

NEW YORK (APP): The US dollar slid on Friday after euro area inflation showed marginal signs of slowing. The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major peers, was down 0.18% to 103.3831 in late trading.

According to a report published by the statistical office of the European Union early Friday, the euro area annual inflation rate was 5.3 percent in July, down from 5.5 percent in June. A year earlier, the rate was 8.9 percent.

European Union annual inflation was 6.1 percent in

July this year, down from 6.4 percent in June. A year earlier, the rate was 9.8 percent.

The British Office for National Statistics said Friday that British sales volumes at supermarkets fell 2.6 percent in July after a rise in June, which was more than economists expected.

The expectation of higher British rates in the coming months is underpinning the British pound and is driving British government bond yields ever higher.

In late New York trading, the euro rose to 1.0878

US dollars from 1.0857 dollars in the previous session, and the British pound rose to 1.2740 US dollars from 1.2728 dollars in the previous session.

The US dollar bought 145.2980 Japanese yen, lower than 146.0890 Japanese yen of the previous session. The US dollar rose to 0.8824 Swiss francs from 0.8797 Swiss francs, and it decreased to 1.3545 Canadian dollars from 1.3546 Canadian dollars.

The US dollar was up to 10.9709 Swedish krona from 10.9363 Swedish krona.

also encouraging companies listed on the tech-heavy Star Board to buy back shares. The securities regulator said late Friday it will slash handling fees in stock transactions and study extending trading hours for equities and bonds.

The moves complemented the People’s Bank of China’s surprise interest rate cut this week, which was the biggest reduction since 2020, and its most

forceful yuan fixing guidance ever on Friday.

So far, the measures have yet to buoy the markets. A gauge of Hong Kong-listed Chinese stocks was on course for a third-straight week of losses. The Hang Seng Index is down more than 8 per cent this year, ranking among the biggest global losers. The gauge entered into a bear market on Friday. While the yuan eked out marginal ga-

ins against the dollar Friday morning, it has fallen more than 5 per cent this year.

Rattled by dismal economic data, deflation fears, a weakening housing market and a crisis in the shadow lending sector, the mainland financial markets are facing the possibility of a vicious cycle of capital outflows.

Foreign investors were net sellers of Chinese stocks Friday, capping a

record streak of outflows.

“Debt strains from property developers and local-government financing vehicles are spreading across China’s economy,” Gav-eekal Research analyst Xiaoxi Zhang wrote in a note dated August 16.

Other investors stress a more positive longer-term view. Focusing on China’s problems may be backward-looking at this point as the time may be ripe to

look for stock opportunities given declines in valuations, Joshua Crabb, head of Asia Pacific equities at Robeco Hong Kong, said in a Bloomberg Television interview.

Among other things, Crabb is expecting further stimulus to bolster consumption. Other items to watch in Beijing’s toolkit include a cut in the stamp duty on stock trading, lifting of foreign investment

caps and relaxation of equity trading rules.

The announcements on cutting stock handling fees and consideration to extend trading hours “may help smooth out some of the financial market volatility and lower transactional costs, but do not address the core issues of lack of confidence and economic momentum,” said Marvin Chen, a strategist at Bloomberg Intelligence.





## In brief

## Football team visit SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): The Street Child Team of the Muslim Hands NGO, which won the second position in the Youth Largest Football Tournament, Norway Cup 2023, visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Saturday. SCCI Vice President Amer Majeed welcomed the team members. An event was jointly held by the SCCI and the Muslim Hands NGO to encourage the runner-up team. The SCCI vice president congratulated all players of the team and paid tribute to Muslim Hands, team management and players. Country Director Muslim Hands Ziaul Noor thanked SCCI VP Amer Majeed Sheikh, Chairman AirSial Fazal Jilani, former chairman Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL) Khawaja Masood Akhtar and Sialkot business community.

## Entrepreneur's role for promoting cricket

ISLAMABAD (APP): Shahid Ahmad Khan, Member President's Advisory Committee on the Arts, the US Administration, has lauded the role of Pakistani entrepreneur Kamran Awan, the owner of New York Warriors in promoting cricket in the US. He was talking after the New York Warriors bagged its first win in the US Masters T10 League that started on Saturday at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, according to information received here. The global T10 league has come to the US after creating stir in UAE, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. The latest format of cricket is fast catching up in the US as well. Shahid Khan expressed his confidence that the cricket would hold a strong ground in the US and termed the US Masters T10 as the impetus. He said that cricket was too close to the hearts of Pakistanis. He added that Kamran's decision to pick a team in the US Masters T10 League was a testimony of the great American dream as well as a strong initiative to introduce Pakistani culture in the US. He said "being the Advisor to the Biden administration, I see a lot of potential in the US to embrace different cultures and cricket being one of them. "We will extend our utmost support to such initiatives that bring people from different cultures together." He said that such initiatives were necessary for people to people understandings and connect. New York Warriors squad including Mibah Ul Haq, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Muhammad Razaq and Sohail Khan was considered to be the most favorite team of the league that would conclude on August 28.

## Johnson-Thompson fourth early on in Budapest

B U D A P E S T (Agencies): Britain's Katarina Johnson-Thompson is fourth after the first two events of the heptathlon in the first session of the 2023 World Athletics Championships. The 2019 champion was sixth in her 100m hurdles heat in 13.50 seconds, then recorded 1.86m in the high jump - the joint best effort of all competitors. That leaves the 30-year-old on 2,104 points, 41 adrift of leader Anna Hall. Laura Muir was among three Britons to progress in the 1500m, but Jazmin Sawyers exited the long jump early. Having been hampered by injury in the run-up to the championships in Budapest, European indoor champion Sawyers managed only 6.41m in the qualification round and finished 22nd, with the top 12 progressing.

## Sweden beat Australia to end third at WC

BRISBANE (Agencies): Kosovare Asllani's stunning second-half strike sealed victory for Sweden as they beat Australia to finish third at the Women's World Cup.

She rifled in a shot from the edge of the area to add to Fridolina Rolfö's first-half penalty as Sweden won the bronze medal match for the second World Cup in succession. Despite the defeat, this represents co-hosts Australia's best ever World Cup finish but the Matildas were unable to end on a high.

Rolfö's penalty gave Peter Gerhardsson's side the lead after a video assistant referee (VAR) check confirmed that Claire Hunt had clipped Stina Blackstenius in the box after 26 minutes.

And on the hour mark, Blackstenius played a superb square ball to Asllani, who stroked in a first-time shot to double their lead. "It was an incredibly important match and the final 10 minutes were really tough," said Sweden coach Peter Gerhardsson.

"So when that final whis-

tle went and we had won, there was a great sense of relief and it was a wonderful feeling. "It's great to win a match of this magnitude - there's been a lot of attention paid to this tournament back in Sweden."

Australia capture the nation's imagination

The Matildas' achievement in finishing fourth cannot be understated in a country where football is not the number one sport.

Their 3-1 semi-final defeat by England was the most watched TV event in Australian history with 11.15 million viewers tuning in. But they seemed deflated on Saturday and put in a tired performance, with even their talisman Sam Kerr struggling to make an impact on the game - in fact, she had the fewest touches of any player on the pitch in the first half.

Their best chances fell to Hayley Raso and Clare Polkinghorne, but they were both denied by Sweden goalkeeper Zecira Musovic. "We wanted to have some hardware to take home, it wasn't to be," said captain

Kerr. "We've proved to the world - and also within Australia - that we are a footballing nation."

Australia, who had only ever reached the quarter-finals once previously, in 2015, were the first hosts to reach the semi-finals since United States in 2003.

Their efforts in this tournament have certainly captured the hearts of the fans in green and gold and the hope will be that that leaves a lasting legacy.

"We have a massive amount of work to do now to capitalise on this," said Australia's coach Tony Gustavsson. "Now there needs to be long-term investment to really make sure we really benefit from this crossroads moment in women's football in this country."

Sweden win bronze again

Sweden have plenty of experience of playing in the third-fourth place match, having reached the semi-finals on five occasions but only making the final once - in 2003, when they were beaten by Germany.



BRISBANE: Sweden players celebrate with their third place medals following their sides victory in the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023 Third Place Match match.

And they dominated the game to win bronze for a fourth time. They were already on top before Rolfö beat the dive of Australia keeper Mackenzie Arnold with a

well-placed penalty into the bottom left corner to give them the lead. And Asllani's super strike secured victory in a game of a few clear cut chances. It has been another fine

tournament for the Scandinavians who topped their group with maximum points before knocking out defending champions the United States in the last 16.

An impressive victory

over Japan followed, but their failure to successfully negotiate a semi-final once again after their dramatic exit at the hands of Spain, will be their lasting memory of this tournament.

## No Ramiz Raja in Asia Cup 2023 commentary panel



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain and renowned commentator Ramiz Raja was left out of the star-studded commentary panel for the upcoming Asia Cup 2023, scheduled to commence on August 30.

The official broadcaster of this year's Asia Cup on Friday announced the commentary panel which featured Pakistan's Bazid Khan, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis and Aamer Sohail.

The commentary panel further features prominent names like Ravi Shastri, Andy Flower and Matthew Hayden.

Notably, the former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ramiz Raja, who returned to commentary after an almost two-year hiatus during Pakistan's two-match away Test series against Sri Lanka last month, was not named in the panel.

Soon after assuming the charge of the PCB chairman, Ramiz took a break from the commentary and remained involved in running the affairs of the cricketing body till his ouster in December 2022.

Despite his ouster, Ramiz Raja did not immediately return to the commentary role and missed the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) and the home series against New Zealand.

**Commentary panel for Asia Cup 2023:**

Ravi Shastri, Wasim Akram, Gautam Gambhir, Harbhajan Singh, Waqar Younis, Andy Flower, Marvan Atapattu, Irfan Pathan, Matthew Hayden, Sanjay Bangar, Aamer Sohail, Piyyush Chawla, Dominic Cork, Sanjay Manjrekar, Deep Dasgupta, Mohammad Kaif, Bazid Khan, Aditya Tare and Rajat Bhatia.

This year's Asia Cup will kick off with host Pakistan taking on Nepal in the curtain raiser on August 30 in Multan. Pakistan will host a total of four matches including a Super 4s fixture.

India's group stage matches including the anticipated clash against Pakistan, scheduled on

September 2, will be held in Kandy while the rest of the Super 4s matches, including the final will be played in Colombo.

The arch-rivals Pakistan and India will come face to face again on September 10 in Colombo if both manage to qualify for the Super 4s.

Like the previous edition, the Asia Cup schedule holds a possibility of treating the cricket fans with a maximum of three Pakistan-India matches in a single tournament if both arch-rivals, in a first, simultaneously qualify for the final.

The upcoming edition of the Asia Cup features six teams, divided into two groups, the top two teams from each group will then qualify for the Super 4s. The continental event will run from August 31 to September 17.

Hosts Pakistan are placed in the same group as arch-rivals India and Nepal while the other group includes defending champions and co-hosts Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

The Asia Cup 2023 will be played in the ODI format and will serve as an opportunity for the Asian teams to bolster their preparations for the upcoming ICC Men's World Cup.



## Arshad hopeful to bag gold at World Athletics Championship

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's premier javelin thrower and Commonwealth Games and Islamic Games champion Arshad Nadeem on Friday was highly optimistic of a bright performance during his crucial stint in the upcoming World Championship in Hungary.

Arshad along with his coach Salman Butt will leave for Hungary in the wee hours of August 20 (Saturday night) to feature in the event. The javelin throw qualifying round will be held on August 25 with the final to be conducted on August 27.

This is the third time that the Olympian Arshad will be featuring in the World Championship. During a chat with this correspondent just before his training session here at the Punjab Stadium on Friday, the confident-looking Arshad said that he feels well and is hopeful to click.

"I am feeling well and InshaAllah will try to achieve the desired result," Arshad told media. He said if he is able to achieve his best throw then he can pull off gold in Hungary. "If I am able to achieve my personal best throw then it may get a gold InshaAllah," Arshad said.

Arshad is also happy with the way he was looked after by the PSB Coaching Centre Lahore administration and his coach Salman Butt. "I have been looked after well here," Arshad said. This will be after one long year when Arshad will be competing in the international circuit.

But Arshad said he is used to it. "I also featured in the World Championship in the US last year after a long gap of one year. I hope I will deliver in Hungary and the nation should pray for me," Arshad said.

Arshad shot to fame when he finished fifth in the Tokyo Olympics, a feat that changed the entire life of the athlete. It not only fetched him fame and wealth but also transformed his personality.

Arshad then also finished fifth in the World Championship in the US last year. Soon afterward he recorded his best throw of 90.18 metre in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham which is also a record throw of the quadrennial event.

He then underwent elbow and left knee surgery in London, took time in his rehab and returned to competitive field in May in the 34th National Games in Quetta. Although he failed to show his fitness there he managed a gold for his department WAPDA. In this event he received a heavy blow when he injured his right knee which later forced him to skip the Asian Championship held in Bangkok recently.

## Adviser to CM Punjab Wahab Riaz acknowledges feats of Pakistani jockeys

LAHORE (APP): Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs Wahab Riaz has acknowledged the incredible accomplishments of Pakistani jockeys who made the country proud in the 1000 km most toughest Mongol Derby horse race and Pakistan Street Child Team that secured the silver medal at Norway Cup.

He showered praise on jockeys here at a meet up in the presence of large number of media persons at National Hockey Stadium on Saturday. Wahab Riaz congratulated both the teams on their overwhelming performance. "It was the first time that Pakistan riders participated in the Mongol Derby race which is rated as the world's most difficult racing event".

He said four Pakistani jockeys covered a distance of 1,000 kilometers through rugged terrains. "Among them, Moazzam Hayat secured the fifth position while Dr Fahad Jamil, Dr Umar Hayat and Umair Qaimkhani jointly achieved

the seventh position". He said that Pakistan riders exhibited excellent performance and emerged as the top position holders among all the teams. "Indeed, it is a remarkable accomplishment and a proud moment for the entire nation, he added.

He said Pakistani youth are very talented. All the medal winners in international sports competitions are our heroes and it is our responsibility to honour and encourage our heroes. "Pakistan has been blessed with amazing talent in all fields. I congratulate all the participants of Mongolian derby and street child team stars for unique feats".

Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports said that a meeting of participants of Mongolian derby and street child team stars with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi will be arranged where Caretaker Chief Minister will also give prize money to these heroes.

Wahab Riaz also gave appreciation certificates to

Mongolian Derby riders and players and officials of street child football team including Asad Nasir, Adeel, Shahmeer Sharif, Abdul Wahab, Tufail Khan, Obaidullah Khan, M Ali, Abid Ali, M Abdullah, Sahil Gul, Saud Ahmed, Faisal Ahmed, Ali Asif, Ahmed Raza Khan, Team coach M Rasheed, officials Awaiz, Zia un Noor, Zeeshan Ehsan, Asif Mehmood Rathore, Rehan Tahir and Qamar Ata.

It may be noted here that the Pakistan Street Child Team participated at Norway Cup played from July 29 to August 5, 2023 in Oslo, Norway. Pakistan's vice-captain Asad Nasir was adjudged the best player of the grand football event.

It was the fourth participation of the Pakistan Street Child Football team in Street Child events. Pakistani players clinched bronze medal in Brazil in 2014, silver medal in Russia in 2018, silver medal in Qatar in 2022 and silver medal in Norway in 2023.

## Ten-man Liverpool beat Bournemouth, Brighton go top of Premier League



LONDON (Agencies): Liverpool shrugged off a red card for Alexis Mac Allister on his Anfield debut to beat Bournemouth 3-1 on Saturday as Brighton thrashed Wolves 4-1 to go top of the Premier League.

Bournemouth had lost 9-0 on their visit to Anfield a year ago but could not have wished for a better start.

The Cherries had the ball in the net within seconds but Jaidon Anthony's tap-in was ruled out for offside.

Trent Alexander-Arnold's move into a midfield role resulted in a strong finish to a disappointing season for Liverpool last term, but he was guilty of giving the ball away for Antoine Semenyo's opener after only three minutes.

Liverpool needed some inspiration to kickstart their season after a 1-1 draw at Chelsea last weekend.

Luis Diaz provided it as he flicked up Diogo Jota's cross and then acrobatically fired an overhead kick into the bottom corner.

Jürgen Klopp's men led nine minutes before Salah needed a second opportunity to tap in the rebound after Neto had saved his penalty. The Egyptian has now failed to score three of his last five penalties, including one when Bournemouth

won the last meeting between the sides in March.

However, Salah's strike was enough to edge him ahead of Steven Gerrard as Liverpool's fifth highest scorer of all time on 187.

The momentum could have swung back Bournemouth's way when Mac Allister was harshly shown a straight red card for leading with his studs on Ryan Christie, despite minimal contact with the Scotland international.

But the 10 men added to their lead within four minutes when Jota pounced after Neto could only palm Dominik Szoboszlai's effort into his path.

Japan captain Wataru Endo was then introduced after Liverpool finally landed a defensive midfielder on Friday after losing out on Moises Caicedo and Romeo Lavia to Chelsea.

Seagulls soar - Brighton banked a British record transfer fee that could rise to £115 million for Caicedo on Monday. But the Seagulls continue to soar under Roberto De Zerbi despite seeing their best players picked off by the Premier League's elite.

Kaoru Mitoma may be the next big-money departure and the Japanese international opened the

scoring in stunning style at Molineux as he slalomed past four Wolves defenders before producing a classy finish. Wolves had thoroughly outplayed Manchester United despite losing 1-0 at Old Trafford on Monday.

But they had no answer to Brighton's speed of passing and movement as the visitors scored three times in the first 10 minutes of the second half.

Mitoma teed up Pervis Estupinan to smash home for 2-0 before Solly March scored twice from Julio Enciso assists.

Wolves pulled a goal back through Hwang Hee-chan, but a chastening afternoon for Gary O'Neil's men wiped away the optimism surrounding their performance at United.

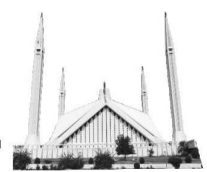
Brentford are also making light of the absence of the suspended Ivan Toney as they won 3-0 at Fulham.

Yoane Wissa pounced on an error from Issa Diop to open the scoring just before half-time. Bryan Mbeumo doubled the Bees' lead from the penalty spot after Fulham captain Tim Ream was sent off for a second yellow card.

Mbeumo then rounded off the scoring in stoppage time to lift Brentford up to second. Tottenham aim to get the Ange Postecoglou reign up and running later when they host Manchester United in their first home game since the departure of Harry Kane.

Champions Manchester City are in action at 1900GMT when they host a Newcastle side that began the day on top after a 5-1 thrashing of Aston Villa on the opening weekend of the season.





## In brief

### Two Chinese burnt gas explosion

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Two Chinese nationals suffered severe burn injuries as a result of gas leakage blast that hit their house in F 6/3 in Islamabad, police said Saturday. Reportedly, the explosion ripped through the house of two Chinese in Islamabad. They were severely burnt in the incident and were immediately taken to the PAF Hospital in the federal capital. According to preliminary reports, the blast was caused by gas leakage in their house.

### Student gang raped by class fellow

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A female student of a private university was gang raped by four men and continued to be blackmailed by them over her rape video afterwards in Islamabad's Shahzad Town area. Police on Saturday registered a case against the accused on the complaint of the victim girl. According to the victim girl, one of her university male class fellows and his three friends gang raped her. The accused also made a video of the whole incident of her gang rape and then started blackmailing her for six months. The accused would often extract jewellery and cash from the girl after blackmailing her over the video. The victim further told the police that the accused made her rape video viral on social media after she refused to go with them out of the city. Police registered a case against accused Adnan, Bilal Zaman, Waleed and Sheikh Adil.

### Five netted for carrying illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested five illegal arm holders and recovered arms, ammunition from their possession during operation here on Saturday. According to police spokesman, Ganjmandi Police held Asim Khan and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession. Similarly, Westridge Police nabbed Muhammad Naseer and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his custody and same police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Kamal Khan. While, Naseerabad police recovered 01 pistol 30-bore from Muhammad Waqas. Following operation, Taxila police recovered 01 pistol 30-bore from Muhammad Shafqat. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs appreciated the performance of police team and said that strict action will be taken against those possessing illegal weapons.

### Two terrorists killed

RAWALPINDI (NNI): On night 18/19 August 2023, security forces conducted an Intelligence Based Operation on reported presence of terrorists in general area Bara, Khyber District. During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists and resolutely two terrorists were killed. The killed terrorists remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as killing of innocent citizens. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

# Sherry urges elections within timeframe

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Pakistan People's Party Vice President Sherry Rehman has urged the election commission to hold general elections within the constitutional timeframe after dissolution of assemblies.

"We were anticipating the election date, not the delimitation's schedule from the electoral body. Any delay in the elections would further contribute to political uncertainty and instability in the country, which is something we cannot afford," Sherry Rehman said in a statement on Saturday. "Recent announcement by the Election Commission, suggesting that the delimitation of constituencies according to the

new census will take four months", former federal minister said. "It is a matter of concern and disappointment. The Election Commission should reconsider its decision in light of the constitutional mandate," Rehman said. "The early dissolution of the assemblies was aimed at providing ample time to the Election Commission of Pakistan for the preparations. PPP had endorsed elections under new census in the Council of Common Interests (CCI) meeting because it was agreed that existing seats would remain unchanged, ensuring no unnecessary postponement of elections," Senator

Rehman said in a statement. PPP leader said that the current national and provincial seats remain unaltered, the delimitation should proceed swiftly, ideally allowing the election to take place within a 90-day timeframe." She demanded that the election commission duly announce the election date in accordance with the provisions of Article 224 of the constitution. Our constitution binds the ECP to conduct general elections within 90 days of dissolution of assemblies. However, there is no constitutional requirement for conducting delimitation," Sherry concluded.

## Sheikh Rashid doubts over holding polls within 90 days

RAWALPINDI (PPI) Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Saturday raised doubts over holding the elections within 90 days. The former interior minister said that it is an important question that when and how the elections would be held in the country. It is clearly written in the constitution that elections would be held within 90 days after the dissolution of National Assembly.

Taking to social media website X (formerly Twitter), the veteran politician said that the petition of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) in the

apex court regarding elections is very important. The Election Commission has already made it clear that it would accept the decision of the apex court related to the elections, he added. "The constitutional amendment is mandatory to raise the number of seats in National Assembly and the ECP is also very well aware of it," Rashid said. He added that Shehbaz Sharif's government made legislation only for personal interests during his last 15 days in the government. It seems that the outgoing Chief Justice of Pakistan may give some important

decisions during his last few days in the coveted office. The AML chief was of the view that half of the Senate would fall vacant on March 11 at midnight after the retirement of Senators. It is constitutional obligation to hold elections before March 11 otherwise a constitutional crisis would emerge, he added. The seasoned politician said that two caretaker Chief Ministers voted in the meeting of Council of Common Interest (CCI) and therefore there are question marks over the decisions of CCI.

## SSP operation holds 'Khuli Kutchery'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Faisal Saleem under the Punjab government's open door policy, held a 'Khuli Kutchery' at Police Lines Headquarters, here Saturday to address the grievances of the people. According to a police spokesman, the SSP Operations issued directives to the relevant officers to take action and submit a detailed report on the complaints submitted by the citizens in 'Khuli Kutchery'.

The SSP on the complaints of the citizens also sought a report from In charge Complaint Cell about ineffective action by relevant Police Officers.

He said, "Negligence on the part of the relevant officials would not be tolerated at any cost." The SSP, on the occasion, said the 'Khuli Kutchery' were being held to provide the citizens immediate relief and addressed their complaints. "Besides this, "It also helped improve standards of policing," he added.

## Degrees awarded to over 600 students

ISLAMABAD (INP): Iqra University Islamabad H-9 Campus held its Degree Awarding Ceremony at the Jinnah Convention Center on August 19, 2023. The event celebrated the achievements of 600 graduates who completed their studies with dedication. The Chief Guest, Professor Dr. Anis Ahmad, Vice Chancellor of Riphah University, delivered an insightful address on the challenges and opportunities graduates face in a globalized world. His message echoed with wisdom, "After graduation, now you are entering the world with enormous challenges. The real life has started now. You are in a time when the media has brainwashed you to leave the country which has caused an enormous amount of brain drain. Allah has given you the 3rd largest reservoir with enormous resources and a population that has a lot to offer. Your country needs you." He commended Mr. Ibrahim Khan, Chairman of Iqra University Islamabad Campus, for their outstanding contributions. The graduates, including 4 PhD holders, 24 Master's graduates, and 24 Gold Medalists, represented excellence in fields such as Business Administration, Computing and Technology, Social Sciences, Fashion and Design, and Media Studies. Parents, educators, and university officials also joined in celebrating their success. Dr. Waseem Qazi, Vice Chancellor of Iqra University, congratulated the graduates and emphasized the university's mission to nurture critical thinking and civic responsibility. He highlighted Iqra University's achievements that "In its 2 decades of establishment, we have achieved significant milestones, particularly by achieving the number 1 rank among business universities of the country by the Higher Education Commission and concurrently being ranked number 1 for the past 1 decade by Charter Inspection and Evaluation Committee (CIEC). And the fact that today we have graduated more than 15,000 students. What's more, we have graduated more than 10,000 women. Let that sink in. 30,000 leaders educated. 30,000 lives transformed."



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmad Bugti in a meeting with the Saudi Ambassador H.E Nawaf Bin Said Al Malk. —APP Photo

## ANF officers visits Safe City Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) officers visited Safe City Islamabad, a police public relations officer said.

He said that a delegation of ANF officers visited Safe City Islamabad and was briefed about the Centralized System, Command and Control Center, data hub unit and the functioning and benefits of modern technology. Safe City Islamabad is playing a vital role in various sections, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pukar-15" helpline.

Safe City Islamabad's modern technology-enabled cameras are playing a crucial role in the city's security, crime prevention and protection of citizens' lives and property. After assuming the charge Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, extended the coverage of the Safe City Project to different areas of the city and installed 900 more cameras.

The Safe City services have been integrated with important commercial centers, buildings, metro bus stations, shopping malls, and private housing societies across the city. Facial recognition cameras have been installed on the city's entry and exit points, which play a significant role in identifying suspicious elements.

Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) officers met with the Capital Police Officer (CPO) Safe City. They expressed their appreciation for the modern technological system implemented by the Islamabad Capital Police, noting its impressive effectiveness. During the meeting, the Anti-Narcotics Force officials sought guidance and assistance in implementing a similar modern technical system for their own operations. The CPO Safe City assured the officers of full cooperation and support, pledging to assist in the organization and implementation of the advanced technical system for the Anti-Narcotics Force.

## Caretaker interior minister bans issuance of new arms licences

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The caretaker government placed a ban on the issuance of arms licences, officials said Saturday.

The order was passed by the caretaker interior minister Sarfraz Bugti soon after formally assuming charge of his office. During the meeting, senior officials briefed the minister about the Ministry of Interior and its attached departments.

The minister vowed to tackle the challenge of terrorism and ensure the security of state and its citizens. We will frame a strategy for the protection of lives, rights, and properties of all citizens regardless of their religious or ethnic identity, he said.

Bugti further said that the protection of every citizen is

the responsibility of the state. "Every citizen has the right to move in the country", he said, adding that no group will be allowed to resort to violence.

It is pertinent to mention here that weeks before the end of the coalition government term, the lawmakers in the National Assembly on several occasions had strongly protested over the delay in the issuance of arms licences and the non-cooperative attitude of the bureaucracy in this regard.

### Saudi Ambassador felicitates Sarfraz Bugti

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Malki on

Saturday congratulated caretaker interior minister Sarfraz Bugti for his nomination in the caretaker setup.

Excellency Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Malki called on the caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti in his office and discussed issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations.

Sarfraz Bugti said that Pakistan and Saudia Arabia enjoyed very historic cordial relations and the people of Pakistan attached special affections with Khadmain Harmain Shareefain. The minister also appreciated the role of Excellency Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Malki in strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries.

## Popular folk singer Attaullah Esakhelvi turns 72

ISLAMABAD (APP): Popular singer and folk icon Attaullah Khan Esakhelvi turned 72 on Saturday.

Born on August 19, 1951, in Esakhel, district Mianwali, Attaullah developed an interest in music as a child, but music was strictly forbidden in his home. Disillusioned by ban on singing, he left home and continued his training and performed at local villages where his songs were recorded on audio cassettes by his fans.

In 1972, Esakhelvi was invited to perform on Radio Pakistan, Bahawalpur and performed on the television show Neelam Ghar in 1973. Later he was invited by a music company in Faisalabad to record folk songs in its studio and recorded four albums in one recording session. The albums were released at the end of 1977 and became

national bestsellers.

In 1980, Esakhelvi performed in the United Kingdom for the first time. It was also his first concert abroad. His albums were eventually released in the UK under various labels. Since then he has never seen back and has recorded more than 50,000 songs in seven languages.

Attaullah's name entered the Guinness Book of World Records in 1994 for the highest number of audio albums released. Most of his songs had lyrics in easy diction on themes like death, sorrow, pain, deception and love.

Some of the popular tracks from his hit albums include 'O Dil Torr Ke Hansti Ho Mera' are 'Tujhe Bhulana To Chaha', 'Mujhko Ye Teri Bewafai Maar Dalegi', 'Bedardi Se Pyar Ka Sahara Na Mila', 'Acha sila diya tune mere pyar ka' and

"Mujhko Dafna Kar Woh Jab Wapis Jayenge."

The songs "Pyar naal sahi, ghusse naal vekh leya kar", "Qameez tedi kali", "Mahi Wasse Mera", "Ni Oontaan Wale Tur Jaan Gei" and "Raataan", "Petar Barayee Sona Banran Amlan Naal", Sachi dash we dhola kal kion nahi aaya", Kal O kaun si tere naal" are some of Attaullah's smash hit songs.

For his lyrics, he selects poetry by Farooq Rokhri, Malik Sona Khan, Munawar Ali Malik, Farooq Rokhri, and several little-known poets from Mianwali District. The Government of Pakistan awarded him the Pride of Performance Award in 1991. On March 23, 2019, he was awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz by the President of Pakistan. He also received a lifetime achievement award from Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain.

## Federal govt notifies transfers, postings of secretaries, officers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal government Friday notified transfers and postings of secretaries and high ranking officers working in various ministries and departments.

The Establishment Division issued notifications for the following postings and transfers of officers: Kamran Ali Afzal, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Director General, Civil Services Academy, Lahore, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Cabinet Division.

Sajid Baloch, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary, Cabinet Division, was transferred and posted as Special Secretary, Cabinet Division.

Muhammad Abdullah Khan Sumbal, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary (In charge), Science and Technology Division, was transferred and posted as Additional Secretary (In charge), Interior Division.

Hasan Nasir Jamy, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Secretary, Water Resources Division, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Information Technology and Telecommunication Division.

Momin Agha, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary (In charge), Industries and Production Division, was transferred and posted as Additional Secretary (In charge), Petroleum Division.

Capt. (Retd.) Muhammad Mahmood, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary (In charge), Petroleum Division, was transferred and posted as Additional Secretary (In charge), National Food Security and Research Division.

Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as OSD, Establishment Division, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Housing and Works Division. Syed Asif Hyder Shah, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as OSD, Establishment Division, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Climate Change Division.

Allah Dino Khawaja, a BS-22 officer of Police Service of Pakistan, presently serving as Commandant, National Police Academy (NPA), under Interior Division, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Human Rights Division. Humaira Ahmad, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently

awaiting posting in Establishment Division, was transferred and posted as Secretary, National Heritage and Culture Division.

Syed Ali Murtaza, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Secretary, Interior Division, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Water Resources Division.

Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam Irfan, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Secretary, Housing and Works Division, was transferred and posted as Chief Secretary, Government of Sindh.

Dawood Muhammad Bareach, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Division, was transferred and his services were placed at the disposal of Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, for further posting as Chief Secretary, Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, under Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Division.

Shakeel Qadir Khan, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary, Power Division, was transferred and posted as Chief Secretary, Government of Balochistan.

Capt. (Retd.) Muhammad

Anwar ul Haq, a BS-20 (Acting Charge) officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently at the disposal of Capital Development Authority, was transferred and posted as Chief Commissioner, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Islamabad, under Interior Division.

Ali Raza Bhutta, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Secretary, Human Rights Division, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Science and Technology Division.

Ms Sarah Saeed, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Special Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, was transferred and posted as Special Secretary, Commerce Division.

Eazaz Aslam Dar, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Special Secretary, Cabinet Division, was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Navid Ahmed Shaikh, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Secretary, Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Musaddiq Ahmed Khan, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan

Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary (In charge), Climate Change Division was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Chief Secretary, Government of Sindh was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Muhammad Usman Chachar, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Chief Secretary, Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, under Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Abdul Aziz Uqaili, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Chief Secretary, Government of Balochistan, was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Yawar Hussain, a BS-20 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Director General, Immigration and Passports, under Interior Division, was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Capt. (Retd.) Noor-ul-Amin Mengal, a BS-21 officer of

Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Chief Commissioner, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), under Interior Division, was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Mustafa Kamal Kazi, a BS-20 officer of Ex-PCS, Government of Sindh, presently posted as Joint Secretary (BS-20) National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Islamabad, was transferred and posted as Director General, Immigration and Passports, Islamabad, on deputation basis.

Dr. Iram Anjum Khan, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Audit and Accounts Service (PA&AS), presently posted as Additional Auditor General-1, Office of the Auditor General of Pakistan, Islamabad, was transferred and posted as Secretary, Maritime Affairs Division.

Ms. Fareena Mazhar, a BS-22 officer of Inland Revenue Service (IRS), presently posted as Secretary, National Heritage and Culture Division, was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.

Abdul Ghufuran Memon, a BS-22 officer of Pakistan Audit and Accounts Service (PA&AS), presently posted as Secretary, Maritime Affairs Division, was transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division.



Iran deported 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. 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.

One killed in road accident

BADAKHSHAN (Xinhua/APP): A traveler has been confirmed dead and four others were injured as a car overturned in north Afghanistan's Badakhshan province on Friday, a traffic police official Yar Mohammad said Saturday. The accident occurred in Yawan District of Badakhshan province on Friday evening when a car turned turtle due to reckless driving, killing one on the spot and injuring four others, Mohammad added.

Karzai calls for reopening girls' schools for true independence

KABUL (Khaama Press): On Afghanistan's 104th independence anniversary, former President Hamid Karzai urged the Taliban administration to reopen girls' schools and universities, emphasizing that true independence requires educational access for all. Karzai said about the critical role of knowledge and stressed that achieving peace, stability, development, and independence requires acquiring knowledge. Karzai urged all to educate their children, including girls. He called on the Taliban to open schools for girls and promote nation-

wide education for true independence. "I wish all the people of our country to spare no effort in educating their children, including both boys and girls. On this historic day, I once again ask the Taliban administration to open the gates of schools and universities to girls as soon as possible and to provide education for everyone throughout the country so that by salvaging from dependence on others, we will gain independence in its real sense and own a self-reliant country," Karzai said. The former president emphasized that overcom-

ing challenges and achieving peace demands bolstering national unity, enhancing harmony, and promptly initiating intra-Afghan talks. He believes these steps are essential for resolving issues and establishing lasting stability within the country. Nonetheless, this marks the second consecutive year in which the Taliban has enforced severe limitations on women's rights, encompassing the prohibition of educational pursuits, the curtailment of employment opportunities, and stringent restrictions on their presence in public domains.

90% of Panjshir mining revenues to be used in reconstruction: Delawar



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum Shahabuddin Delawar says no fundamental projects have been launched in Afghanistan's Panjshir province over the last two decades to improve the economic condition of the people of this province. On a trip to Panjshir, Delawar in a meeting with local officials and some residents of this province said that based on the survey conducted by the ministry, it has been determined that there are 700 gemstone mines in this

province, of which 300 mines have been given mining licenses. According to him, 10 percent of the revenues of these mines will be used in the national budget and the remaining 90 percent will be used in the reconstruction of Panjshir province. "Panjshir needs to have canals and Panjshir water should be used for Panjshir, and roads should be built in this province," said Delawar. "Inshallah, the big mines are also in Panjshir, we want it to be given to the

contract as soon as possible. Social services should be provided through mines for Panjshir province," he added. Meanwhile, he also added that the government is trying to provide economic growth and development in the country by signing mining contracts, and emphasized that if the world acts quickly on the recognition of the Islamic Emirate, Afghanistan will soon curb the economic crisis. In addition, Mohammad Agha Hakim, Panjshir's governor, said that there is a need to implement more public benefit projects to rebuild this province and improve the living conditions of the people of this province. Agha Hakim expressed his satisfaction with the ministry's initiatives in the field of Panjshir emerald mining and also emphasized the extraction of other mines of this province, especially the iron mine.

Kankor exam helds without girls' participation



KABUL (TOLONews): The last round of the current solar year's university entrance exam (Kankor) was held in Kabul, but without the participation of girls. The National Examination Authority (NEXA) said that the entrance exam was held in Kabul for one day and fifteen thousand graduates of the twelfth grade participated in the exam. "The exam successfully ended and no problems occurred. This year, many facilities were provided unlike previous years," said Abdul Baqi Haqqani, head of NEXA. "The benefit is that a student's speciality is determined when he graduates from school, before arriving at the university," said Husama Aziz, chancellor of Kabul University. According to Abdul Baqi Haqqani, this year's university entrance exam was arranged for convenience, and 100,000 students took it in four rounds. "In the Kabul exam that started today, we have fifteen thousand participants, and this process is going on for one day," he said.

The exam's takers expressed their sadness that girls were not permitted to take the test this year. "Education is the right of men and women. Girls should also be educated. We want schools and universities to be opened for girls," Mohammad Ismail, a participant, told a TOLONews reporter. The National Examination Authority (NEXA) officials have stressed that they will classify the entrance test into three sections -- medical, social, and scientific -- in the coming years.

Canada needs diplomatic presence in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): A former Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan believes it's time for diplomats to return to Kabul and deal with the Islamic Emirate. Arif Lalani told CTV News Canada never should have left, but stayed to address concerns on the ground. Lalani served as Canada's ambassador to Afghanistan from 2007 to 2008, and was also previ-

ously Canada's top diplomat in Jordan, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates. "I think withdrawing your forces and then negotiating is not a good strategy," Lalani said. "If we left because of our own security, we should demand that our security is protected and we should be back on the ground." On restrictions facing girls, Lalani said that the

West is "not acting urgently enough" for lifting the restrictions. Lalani however believes Canada would be able to do much more for Afghans if it established diplomatic ties with the Islamic Emirate and used things like humanitarian assistance as leverage. "There are no good easy answers in Afghanistan, but it's time for us to take some tough decisions," he said.

IEA believes in cooperation with China

KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting PM's Political Aide Mawlawi Abdul Kabir said the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' (IEA) believed on multi-dimensional cooperation, including the Belt and Road Project, with China and was ready to provide necessary facilities for foreign investment, according to a statement. Mawlawi Abdul Kabir made the remarks while addressing China and South Asia Cooperation meeting through video link, the Afghanistan Embassy in Beijing said. He termed the IEA policy economic oriented and said gathering like the China-South Asia could promote cooperation and coordination between the regional countries. "The IEA believe on multi-dimensional cooperation with China, including the Belt and Road Project, and it was ready to provide all facilities to foreign investors," he said. Belt and Road Project is implemented in 65 countries and it included the construction of road networks, railway truck, ports and industrial parks. Kabir said that Afghanistan was not a threat to the regional countries and added IEA believed on cordial neighbourhood, mutual respect and not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. He said time was set for the implementation of mega economic projects in Afghanistan and the country was bestowed with great geo strategic location as far as the regional connectivity is concerned.

IEA has more than 400,000 security forces: Deputy PM

KABUL (Agencies): Abdulsalam Hanafi, the administrative deputy prime minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, on Saturday, claimed that the IEA has more than 400,000 security force members between the ministries of defense and interior and the intelligence agency. Hanafi revealed this during a ceremony to celebrate the 104th anniversary of Afghanistan's independence from Britain. He emphasized that the Islamic Emirate wants healthy relations with all the countries of the region, but does not allow interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. "We do not want to interfere in the internal affairs of any country. Of course, respect and relationships come from both sides. If someone intervenes, then we consider it our right to reciprocate," Hanafi said. Meanwhile, the Acting Minister of National Defense Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid said the Islamic Emirate will not allow Afghanistan to suffer war and insecurity again. He expressed hope that peace and stability and the ruling system in the country will last. Deputy PM for Political Affairs Abdul Kabir reiterated that the world has no



choice but to interact with the Islamic Emirate. "The politics of the world is moving in a positive direction. The world is now trying to extend the hand of interaction towards the Islamic Emirate because the world understands that there is no other solution without interacting with the Islamic Emirate. The security of the world and the region depends on the security of Afghanistan. If the world wants Afghanistan to be safe and not get harmed by Afghanistan, the Islamic Emirate has done it and can do it," Kabir said. In the meantime, the Acting Minister of Interior Affairs Sirajuddin Haqqani said that the Islamic Emirate has adhered to the commitments it made in Doha, but the world is creating problems for Afghans with various excuses. "The world should no longer abuse and coerce the

Afghans, but opt for healthy interaction," he said. The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs also criticized the British post-colonial government and said that the one who made sacrifices in order to gain freedom did not gain power. He said that Afghanistan was headed towards faithlessness, and although it was apparently free, it was still intellectually under the influence of outsiders.

IEA marks 104th anniversary of Afghanistan's independence from Britain

KABUL (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) in a statement on Saturday congratulated the nation on the occasion of 104th anniversary of independence from Britain and emphasized on healthy relations with countries in the region and the world based on Islamic Sharia. The statement said that the nation of Afghanistan considers it a "great honor" that it has driven out three empires from its soil in a century. "With the help of Allah, the defeat of British colonialism at the hands of the Afghans, followed by the defeat of the Red Army and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and later the defeat of the American and NATO forces showed that Afghanistan is an uncon-



querable country, its people are strong, united Muslims and they love independence," the statement said. The Islamic Emirate has also stated that the people of Afghanistan "have always been oppressed and have never intended to harm other countries and nations, but unfortunately, other superpowers have violated their rights and freedoms, which have not been successful, rather they (Afghans) have made the invaders regret their actions with the help of Almighty Allah." The Islamic Emirate reiterated that it is committed to protecting its religious values, belief, thought and culture, "which were obtained by the unparalleled sacrifices of our Mujahid predecessors and

Almond yield declines by whopping 60% in Samangan

AIBAK (Pajhwok): The Agriculture Department of northern Samangan province says almond yield recorded a whopping 60 percent decrease compared to last year's harvest, with growers and traders complaining about lack of buyers. Eng Khalil Karimi, an official of the agriculture department, told Pajhwok Afghan News that climate change and cold wave last winter badly damaged almond trees and decreased the harvest of almond. He also cited lack of farmers' interest as one of the reasons behind the decrease in almond yield, saying many gardeners had turned to cultivating asafetida. Based on Karimi's information, almond orchards are spread over 5,124,000 hectares of land in Samangan province and a total of 1,900 tons of almonds were obtained from these orchards this year while last year's yield reached 4,600 tons. At the same time, gardeners and traders in Samangan complain about the lack of almond market in the province. Zabiullah, an almond trader, said every year he used to transfer Samangan almonds to other provinces because they had a good market, but this year compared to the previous year, despite insufficient production of almonds in the province, the dried fruit had no good market. He recalled last year, seven kilograms of almonds were sold for 2,200 afghanis and this year the same amount sold for 1,400 to 1,500 afghanis. Naqibullah, one of the gardeners in Samangan, also said that last year he harvested 2,100 kilograms of almonds from his orchard, but this year the yield declined to only 20kg due to extreme cold weather last winter and the freezing of trees. Haji Mohammad Sadiq, a gardener in Hazrat Sultan district, was also not satisfied with his almond harvest this year. He said last year his garden produced satisfactory yield, but this year he got nothing. The decrease in almond yield and the lack of a suitable market for its sale have discouraged gardeners who are worried about the future of the famous product of the province.

To avoid illegal migration, youth seek jobs

KABUL (Pajhwok): Instead of unlawful migration to Iran and different European countries, Afghan youth want employment opportunities at home. On a sizzling summer day, some youth were seen the Company area of Kabul, planning to go to western Nimroz province and then cross into Iran illegally. They gathered in Kabul from different provinces in a desperate attempt to make it to Iran through smuggling routes. Economic woes and rising unemployment in the country have forced them to run the risk of embarking on such journeys. Pajhwok Afghan News interviewed four of them. They were asked about reasons for illegal migration. Naqibullah, a resident of Kabul, wanted to travel to Nimroz before stealing into Iran, Iraq and finally into Turkey. He said 80 percent of youth resorted to going to foreign countries because of poverty and unemployment. Their aim was to make it big in other countries, he added. Naqibullah, holding a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, speaks English fluently. He served as a teacher at different courses and also ran a photo studio prior to the political change in the country, he recalled. While trying to travel to European countries, he urged the creation of an inclusive government in the country. He also asked IEA to create jobs inside the country. Qais Ahmad, hailing from the Chahar Bolak district of northern Balkh province, was also in Kabul along with his 17 villagers. They all want to migrate to Iran. "There are no employment opportunities in Afghanistan. We want to travel to other countries because there is no guarantee of our future here. My two brothers are also accompanying us. We are a group of 17 youth trying to migrate to Iran because of poverty other hardships," Ahmad continued. A graduate from the Teacher Training Centre, he had a shop and then worked as a taxi driver for a while. Now he wants to travel to Iran. He said: "I did not say goodbye to my family, which was upset when I came to Kabul. I phoned to tell them about my trip." Like other youth, he also demanded the creation of employment opportunities in Afghanistan. Idrees is another youth from northern Kunduz province, seeking to find his way to Iran and then to Turkey. He recalled: "I once attempted to go through illegal routes. I suffered many difficulties and couldn't find anything to eat for six days." He complained his family did not have any breadwinner. Idrees also called for the gov-

ernment to provide youth with employment. Alam Ahmad Muradi from Kunduz, too, plans going to Iran in search of work and making money. Shahenshah, a transport company representative, confirmed many youth purchased tickets daily for traveling to Nimroz. Shah explained only ten percent of buses left for Kandahar, five percent for Herat and the rest leave for Nimroz. Referring to increasing migration levels, he warned continuation of the current situation could be harmful to the country. But Samiullah Ibrahim, speaking for the Ministry of Works and Social Affairs, told Pajhwok labour unions employers' associations had held their first meeting and efforts were ongoing to create job opportunities. He said the Ministry of Works and Social Affairs (MoWSA) used all available resources to address the unemployment issue. He added the problem in Afghanistan was that workers did not have the necessary skills and techniques, and the ministry provided them technical and vocational training. However UNOCHA reported on Thursday that many Afghan refugees tended to return home from Pakistan and Iran due to rising living costs there and improved security in Afghanistan.





**KARACHI:** Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani along with senators talking to media persons after laying wreath at Mazar-e-Quaid.

## ‘Polls to be held on time after delimitation process’

### E.P. Report

**KARACHI:** Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Saturday affirmed that next general elections would be conducted on time immediately after the completion of delimitation process on the basis of new census.

Talking to media at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he said that PDM coalition government was consisted of almost all the political parties that had taken decisions in this regard. The previous coalition government in the Council of Common Interests, also granted approval to the census 2023 being cognizant of the constitutional requirement of delimitation of electoral constituencies on the basis of new census data, he recalled adding that now Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would carry out delimitation of constituencies on fresh census data.

As soon as delimitation exercise is completed, the ECP would announce the date for next general election, he maintained reiterating that next general election would take place and on the right time as the ECP would conduct the elections and the nation should remain contented.

The Upper House of the parliament is present as the representative of all the federating units of Pakistan and it will continue working to ensure the rights of all the four provinces of the country during the tenure of the caretaker government, Sanjrani stated. Senate is a constitutional body and it does not have executive authority but senators as representatives of the people were effectively rais-

ing their voice on the issues concerning the country and the nation while as chairman of the Upper House he was also playing his role, the Senate Chairman said.

Responding to a query on the election of the President, the Chairman Senate said that though the tenure of the incumbent president was being completed on September 09, 2023, the constitution provides for continuity of the outgoing president till the election of the new president.

He added that following the general election in the country, the electoral college for the presidential election would come into being with the formation of National and provincial assemblies and the election for the next president would also be conducted subsequently as well.

## Pak desirous of cordial ties with world: FM

### E.P. Report

**ISLAMABAD:** Caretaker Minister for Foreign Affairs Jalil Abbas Jilani has said that Pakistan is desirous of having cordial relations with entire international community including China, the United States, European Union, Turkiye and Arab countries.

Jalil Abbas Jilani said they wanted to strengthen their economic relations with these countries as well. Replying to a question about China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the Minister said he is proud of being a signatory of the CPEC in May 2013 during the Chinese Prime Minister's visit to Pakistan.

He said CPEC is a major flagship programme of the economic development of the country, and we have completed many development projects under the CPEC during the past ten years. Jalil Abbas Jilani said the next phase of CPEC will also be quite significant for Pakistan and accelerating pace of work on projects being carried out under the CPEC in IT, Agriculture, Railways, and in other sectors while utilizing Chinese expertise will be our foremost priority.

The Caretaker Foreign Minister said we need to further improve our economic policy with focus on improving economic ties with all the countries including regional, and other major important countries.

## Massive increase in flour prices at Utility Stores

**ISLAMABAD (PPI):** The Caretaker Government has massively increased the flour prices at Utility Stores across Pakistan, according to a report on Saturday. As per details, the price of 20kg flour bag has increased by Rs1544 whereas the 10kg has been hiked by Rs772 in Utility Stores.

After the increase, the 20kg flour price has reached from Rs1296 to Rs2840 whereas the 10kg bag price has been jacked up to Rs1420. Earlier, the 20kg flour bag price was jacked up to Rs2,900 in the open market of the provincial capital of Punjab. As per details, the price of 40kg wheat bag has crossed Rs4,800 in the open market after an increase of Rs50.

Due to the increase in the wheat price, the 20kg bag of flour was sold by shopkeepers at Rs2,930 while the 10kg bag is being sold at Rs1,470 in Lahore. Punjab secretary good said his team is monitoring the activities of the ‘wheat mafia’ and the crackdown is underway by the deputy commissioners and the commissioners across the province.

It is important to mention here that Flour prices in Karachi scaled a new peak of Rs3200 per 20-kilogram bag. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 1kg of flour in Karachi costs Rs320, more than the price of the commodity in Islamabad and Punjab. The data shows that Karachi witnessed a surge of Rs200 in the price of a 20kg bag of flour, increasing the rates to Rs3,200. Meanwhile, in Hyderabad, the 20kg bag was available at Rs3,040 after an increase of Rs140.

# Missing persons’ cases: PHC shouldn’t adjourn for more two days

### Humayun Khan

**PESHAWAR:** Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan observed that missing persons/enforced disappearance cases shouldn’t be adjourned more than two days because the court is aware of the sufferings of victims’ families in this regard.

Chief Justice observed during writ petition of Abdul Samad regarding missing of his brother named Abdul Rehman since 17th June from the premises of Khazana police station.

The counsel Shabbir Hussain Gigyani advocate argued that Abdul Rehman whereabouts is still unknown to his family since his disappearance from 17th June. However, Chief Justice PHC Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan ordered the government to reply submission and remarked that the time has gone when enforcement disappearance/missing persons’ cases were adjourned for months.

The Chief Justice further observed that families of enforced disappeared/missing persons are passing miserable condition because missing of someone’s brother, father and son can’t bearable while adjourned further hearing till 21st August.

PHC’s divisional bench comprising of Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Fazal Subhan stopped Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from harassment of tribesmen residents of Parang Ghar area of Mohmand tribal district while issued notice FIA in this regard.

Barrister Waqar and Nasir Naeem Umarmkheli argued that Bakht Jan along with 19 other tribesmen has challenged compensation provided of their lands acquired for establishment Mohmand Dam in reference pleaded that value of the property is evaluated at lower prices. In the meantime, FIA

## Delimitation of constituencies, probable delay in elections

### E.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** A writ has been filed at Peshawar High Court (PHC) challenging Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) notification regarding delimitation of constituencies which will cause delay in holding general election within 90 days as stated in the press statement. The writ petition is filed by Naeem Ahmad Khattak Advocate stating that on 17th August 2023 ECP has issued notification arguing that the constitution of constituencies is continued which will be completed in December 2023.

ECP notification further stated that due to delimitation holding of General Election within 90 can’t be possible, the writ petition stated. The petition argued that holding election within 90 days after the dissolution of assembly is a constitutional responsibility of ECP. The Chief Election Commissioner, ECP’s members and Secretary of Supreme Judicial Council have been made respondents in the writ petition.

The writ argued that ECP notification is unconstitutional and illegal as well as contradictory with Supreme Court of Pakistan’s decisions. Supreme Court has declared that holding election within 90 days is constitutional responsibility and several factors are involved in sabotaging the constitutional process while argued for declaring ECP’s notification null and void, the writ petition stated.

**PHC grants interim bail to Anwar Zeb:** PHC’s Justice Syed Arshad Ali has granted interim bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf former provincial minister Anwar Zeb in case for violation of section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and ordered to appear before competent court on 4th September.

The counsel Muhammad Adil advocate argued that former minister participated in a rally regarding Independence Day celebration while charged for violation Section 144 imposed in the premises. Additional Advocate Danyal Chamkani objected to the bail plea and argued that the petitioner should approach Session Court Bajaur for relief while PHC has ordered Anwar Zeb to appear before competent court on 4th September and dispose-off the petition.

has initiated inquiry by pleading that alleged embezzlement has been made in the land acquisition process and owners didn’t obtain compensation, the counsel argued.

The counsel argued that the petitioners are land owners and FIA’s Inquiry Officer summoned tribesmen while compelling them to sit for multiple hours in the premises but didn’t record their statements. FIA harassing petitioners to obtain statements of their own choice, the counsel added.

The counsel argued that the petitioners had obtained compensation of lands and added that the reward is below the market value of the property. The petitioners are appearing before FIA but the Inquiry Officer didn’t record statements of the applicants, the counsel added. PHC’s divisional bench comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Fazal Subhan stopped FIA from harassment of tribesmen and adjourned further hearing.

## Murtaza Solangi visits media houses, NPC

### E.P. Report

**ISLAMABAD:** Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi visited multiple media houses and the National Press Club (NPC)

on Saturday to discuss matters of mutual interest with the journalist community.

The visit marked the formal commencement of his duties in his newly assumed position as the Interim Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Solangi expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome he received from the media community upon his appointment, acknowledging the support, prayers, and well-wishes extended by his friends and colleagues in the media industry.

During his visits, Minister Solangi visited the offices of leading publications including Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, The Nation, and Ausaf, along with news networks such as

Dunya News, Sama News, 24 News, ARY News, Express News, Suno News, Hum News and Dawn News. In these interactions, he expressed gratitude for the affection shown by his well-wishers.

Addressing the journalist community, Murtaza Solangi underscored the critical role of the Election Commission in upholding the democratic process by ensuring free and fair elections. He assured the caretaker government’s complete backing in facilitating the commission in the discharge of its constitutional duties.

The minister highlighted the prevailing challenge of forging a national consensus on significant national matters. He lamented the transformation of political disagreements into personal animosity, stressing the need for rectifying this trend and fostering unity among diverse segments of society.

Murtaza Solangi further emphasized the necessity of combating the growing intolerance within society. He said the Ministry of Information, in collaboration with the media, would strive to provide the public with accurate and comprehensive information about the prevailing situation.

"As a representative of the journalist community, our foremost priority is to create an enabling professional environment and safeguard the rights of journalists," Solangi maintained. He expressed his regret over the unfortunate incident involving senior journalist and anchor Kamran Yusuf, stating that the Punjab government was taking steps to apprehend the culprits who robbed him. The minister also offered his condolences over the demise of the father of senior journalist Shehbaz Rana and brother of senior journalist Sanaullah Khan.

## Hassan handed over to mily for trial: Police

**LAHORE (INP):** Hassan Khan Niazi, a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and the nephew of former prime minister Imran Khan, has been handed over to the military for a trial, police said Saturday.

According to media reports, police said that Hassaan Niazi has been handed over to the military in the case related to the attack on Jinnah House on May 9. Earlier, the Punjab Police had sought the custody of Hassaan Niazi, wanted in May 9 Jinnah House attack from Quetta police.

The nephew of former Prime Minister Imran Khan was arrested late Sunday night (August 13) in Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Hassan Niazi, a lawyer by profession, was arrested from a friend’s house after hiding for days to avoid arrest.

## Two Israelis killed

**WEST BANK (Agencies):** Two Israelis have been shot dead south of Nablus in the occupied West Bank by a suspected Palestinian gunman. Israel’s ambulance service said two men – ages 60 and 29 – were shot near the Palestinian village of Huwara. Paramedics said the two people were targeted inside a carwash.

"Both were unconscious and had sustained gunshot wounds to their bodies," a spokesperson for the ambulance service said. The Israeli army spokesperson for Arabic media, Avichay Adraee, confirmed two Israelis had been killed. The official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported the Israeli army closed key entrances to the main northern West Bank city of Nablus, and soldiers were forcing businesses to close as they searched for the suspect.

In the area, "there has been an intensified military presence for a year now. Huwara has been a flash-point of a lot of tension. We’ve seen, a month ago, Israeli settlers rampaging through Huwara during the night, burning Palestinian homes," said Al Jazeera’s Nida Ibrahim, reporting from Bethlehem.

Hamas spokesman Abdul Latif al-Qanou said the attack was the "result of the resistance’s continuous promise to defend our people and respond to the crimes of the occupation". The situation in the West Bank has been particularly volatile over the past 15 months with stepped-up deadly Israeli raids and rampages by Jewish settlers on Palestinian villages.

## China mily drills send ‘stern warning’ to Taiwan

**BEIJING (Agencies):** China has launched air and sea military exercises around Taiwan to send a "stern warning" to separatist forces on the island following a recent visit by Taiwan’s Vice President William Lai to the United States. Taiwan responded on Saturday saying the drills highlighted Beijing’s "militaristic mentality" and that combat aircraft, naval ships and land-based missile systems had been tasked with monitoring Chinese forces.

The People’s Liberation Army’s Eastern Theatre Command, which has responsibility for the area around Taiwan, said in a brief statement earlier on Saturday that it was carrying out joint naval and air combat readiness patrols around Taiwan. The eastern command said the exercises focused on ship-aircraft coordination to test seizing control of air and sea space, and to test combat capabilities.

"The patrols and exercises serve as a stern warning to the collusion of 'Taiwan independence' separatists with foreign elements and their provocations," a spokesperson for the eastern command told China’s

state-run Xinhua news. State broadcaster CCTV reported that missile-equipped vessels and fighter jets were involved in the operation and that units worked together to simulate the surrounding of Taiwan.

Taiwan’s defence ministry quickly condemned the drills, saying it had deployed appropriate forces to respond and had the ability, determination and confidence to ensure national security. "The launch of the military exercise this time not only does not help peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait but also highlights [China’s] militaristic mentality," the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry later reported that 42 Chinese aircraft and eight ships were involved in the drills, and 26 aircraft had crossed the median line which separates the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and previously stood as an unofficial border between the two sides. Taiwan combat aircraft, land-based missile systems and naval vessels have been deployed to monitor the drills, the defence ministry said on social media. Taiwan’s Vice President Lai, the frontrunner to be Taiwan’s next president at

elections in January, returned from the US on Friday, where he had stopped over on his way to and from an official state visit to Paraguay. Taiwanese officials and analysts had said China was likely to conduct military exercises this week near the island in response, using Lai’s transit through the US as a pretext to intimidate Taiwanese voters ahead of next year’s presidential election and make them "fear war". China’s foreign ministry issued a statement to coincide with Lai’s arrival in the US, saying it was opposed to any form of a visit by "Taiwan independence separatists" to the US.

"Lai stubbornly adheres to the separatist position of Taiwan independence and is a troublemaker through and through," the ministry said. Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu on Saturday said it was up to Taiwan’s citizens to decide on their upcoming elections, "not the bully next door", responding to Chinese military drills. "China should hold its own elections; I’m sure its people would be thrilled," he wrote on the social media platform X, previously known as Twitter.