

Shehbaz leaves for London

LAHORE (NNI): Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif has left for London from Lahore Airport Sunday. Two family members accompanied Shehbaz Sharif to London, informed sources have said. The former prime minister will reach London via Doha on Qatar Airways flight QR629. State Lounge of Lahore Airport was opened specially for Shehbaz Sharif at 7:30am.

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# Swear to God, I didn't sign Official Secrets, Army Amendments bills: President

ISLAMABAD (PPI): President Dr Arif Alvi said Sunday that he did not sign the Official Secrets Amendment Bill, 2023 and the Pakistan Army Amendment Bill, 2023 as he disagreed with these laws.

President Alvi shared a post on the X platform (formerly Twitter) in which he wrote: "As God is my witness, I did not sign Official Secrets Amendment Bill 2023 & Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2023 as I disagreed with these laws. I asked my staff to return the bills unsigned within stipulated time to make them ineffective. I confirmed from them many times that whether they have been returned & was assured that they were. However, I have found out today that my staff undermined my will and command. As Allah knows all, He will forgive IA. But I ask forgiveness from those who will be effected."

Yesterday, it was reported that President Arif Alvi 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.

The development came days after reports that the president had declined to sign

## Alvi throws it on his staff Law Ministry removes ambiguity created by President

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Law and Justice Ahmed Irfan Aslam on Sunday said that under Article 75 of the Constitution, a bill automatically becomes law if the President didn't approve or reject it within stipulated time period of ten days. He was addressing a press conference along with Caretaker Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi here.

The law minister said that the caretaker government has no political agenda and its mandate was also limited. He said that being the head of the federation, the president is revered in all of our hearts.

He said that "The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2023 was received by the presidency on August 2, while Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill reached there on August 8, after being passed by the two houses of the Parliament.

The caretaker law minister said that when a bill is sent to the President, he has two options: either to approve the bill or send it back to the Parliament with his

observations in writing. There is no third option under Article 75 of the Constitution, he said, adding that ten days of time period is fixed in the Constitution to exercise one of these options.

Ahmed Irfan Aslam said that the President has exercised these powers many times in the recent and distant past. The President gave observations in many laws and also sent back bills to the Parliament, he said. Before today, he said, no such situation has come before us that anything has returned from the presidency without the signatures of the President.

The law minister said that these two bills have not been received back from the President Office despite Article 75 of the Constitution clearly provides a period of ten days in order to avoid any political ambiguity. If the President does not exercise the authority within this time period, the bill is considered to be approved and automatically becomes law as per the constitution, he said.

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 cipher at the heart of PTI's claims about a US conspiracy to oust Imran Khan's government.

Since yesterday, several arrests have been made in Islamabad. PTI Vice President Shah Mehmood Qureshi, former federal min-

ister Asad Umar, former Member of National Assembly Wazir Ali, and human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari have been arrested. The National Assembly 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.



ISLAMABAD: Former Member of Balochistan Assembly Mir Saleem Khoso called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

# 11 labourers killed in North Waziristan bomb blast

SHAWAL (INP): Eleven laborers were killed in a bomb blast in a vehicle carrying laborers in Shawal tehsil of North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday.

Police said an explosion occurred in the vehicle near Gul Mirkot area. Three people went missing and two others suffered critical injuries. Shawal DSP Sherullah said as many as 16 workers were in the vehicle. He said the injured and bodies were shifted to a nearby hospital.

The hospital administration said the deceased were identified as Mubittullah, Sahab Noor, Jannatullah, Asadullah Khan, Mir Wali Khan, Maqbool Khan, Sher Zahid, Syed Manwar, Mohaid Ayaz, Muhammad Wali, and Gul Hussain while the injured were identified as Umar Zahid and Umar Ayaz.

Sources said the deceased belonged to South Waziristan, whose bodies had been shifted to their

native towns.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar Haq and caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi strongly condemned the bomb blast and expressed regret over the loss of precious lives.

CM KP condemns tragic explosion in Shawal: Strongly condemning the heart-wrenching incident in North Waziristan, Chief Minister (CM) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Muhammad Azam Khan on Sunday expressed his deep sorrow and unequivocal condemnation for the explosion that claimed the lives of 11 laborers in the Shawal area.

The CM denounced the heinous act of violence that resulted in the loss of innocent lives and disrupted the peace of the region. In this time of grief and shock, Azam Khan extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims.

He assured them that the government stood by them and would provide all necessary support during this difficult period. He said, "Our prayers are with the families who have lost their loved ones." "We share in their pain and are committed to assisting them in any way," he added. CM prayed for the departed souls and the early recovery of the injured and urged patience and strength for the bereaved families.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar on Sunday while expressing grief over loss of lives, strongly condemned a terrorist attack in North Waziristan. On social media platform X, the prime minister said "Heartbreaking to know about the terrorist attack in North Waziristan which claimed the lives of 11 innocent laborers". While strongly condemning the senseless act of violence, he further said that they stood in solidarity with the affected families.

## PTI's Asad Umar 'arrested' in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Former secretary-general of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Asad Umar has been taken into custody by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

The counter-terrorism wing of the FIA had registered the case against the former prime minister — who was ousted from office after a no-confidence motion in April last year — after ascertaining his deliberate involvement in misusing the classified document following a probe.

The former federal minister Asad Umar was taken into custody from Islamabad in cipher probe case. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was arrested from his residence in Islamabad.

PTI vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi was arrested in connection with the Cypher case and shifted to Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) headquarters. It is pertinent to mention here that Azam Khan, ex-principal secretary to the PTI chairman and former prime minister made startling revelations and claimed that the former PM used US cypher for his 'political gains' and to avert a no-confidence motion against him.

Khan, who had earlier been "missing" for months, suddenly appeared before the scene and made startling revelations about US cypher, while recording his statement under the CrPC 164 before a magistrate.

On September 28, last year, an alleged audio of ex-PM and his aide Azam Khan discussing US cypher, which the PTI chief claimed led to the ouster of his government, was leaked. In the alleged conversation, Azam Khan can be heard informing former prime minister Khan about the controversial diplomatic cable.

# 20 dead, 15 injured as bus burst into flames near Pindi Bhattian

HAFIZABAD (NNI): At least 20 people, including women and children, were burnt to death while 15 others sustained injuries in a collision between a passenger bus and a pick-up carrying diesel barrels on Faisalabad Motorway near Pindi Bhattian before dawn on Sunday.

The accident happened because the driver of the passenger bus fell asleep and his vehicle smashed into a pick-up that was carrying diesel drums. The bus suddenly caught fire. As a result, 20 passengers died and 15 sustained serious injuries.

Drivers of both the vehicles have also been killed in the accident.

The ill-fated bus, carrying about 40 passengers, was going to Islamabad from Karachi, said rescue officials. The injured have been admitted to Pindi Bhattian Hospital.

The fire engulfed the bus shortly after the collision, according to the District Police Officer Hafizabad Dr Fahad. He said most of the injured were in critical condition. Eyewitnesses said people from nearby area tried to pull the passengers out of the burning bus by smashing windows.

According to Rescue 1122, its teams reached the venue within five minutes. A National Highways and Motorways Police (NHMP) spokesman said at least 15 passengers were safely pulled out of the wreckage. He said IG NHMP Sultan Ali Khawaja is supervising the rescue and relief activities.

Khawaja also inquired after the

injured. He said short-circuiting was said to be the cause of fire in the bus.

The IG suspended the beat commander and entire night patrolling shift from service and ordered inquiry into the tragic incident.

The process of identifying the burnt passengers is still going on.

Among those who died in the accident, 6 members of the same family are also included, while those injured in the accident are from Karachi, Khairpur, Faisalabad, Jalalpur Bhattian, and Pindi Bhattian.

Hafizabad DSP Ahsan Zafar said that the passenger bus was burnt into ashes after crashing into a diesel vehicle. People nearby tried to pull the passengers out of the bus by breaking windows.

The accident happened around 4:30 in the morning while the fire was brought under control after the hectic effort of an hour.

A surviving passenger in the vehicle said that the bus driver was changed at Rahim Yar Khan while the petrol of the vehicle started leaking near the M3 toll plaza on Pindi Bhattian.

Meanwhile, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi expressed sorrow over the loss of precious human lives due to the fire in a passenger coach near Pindi Bhattian.

The chief minister expressed heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the families of the deceased. He also sought a report

on the tragic incident from the administration and the police. "The best treatment facilities should be provided to the injured," he directed. "The Punjab government equally shares the grief of the bereaved families," he stated.

President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday expressed his deep grief over loss of precious lives in a road accident, after a deadly fire burnt down a passenger bus near Pindi Bhattian.

The president expressed his sympathies with the bereaved families and prayed for the departed souls, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured passengers. Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the accident of a passenger coach coming from Karachi to Islamabad. In a statement, the minister expressed sympathy and condolences to the families of those who died in the tragic accident.

"The reasons should be determined so that such accidents can be avoided in the future," Solangi said.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear this loss with fortitude.

Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi also prayed for early recovery of the injured.

# Islamabad police arrest Imaan Mazari, ex-MNA Wazir Ali

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad police arrested human rights lawyer and daughter of former federal minister Shireen Mazari, Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir, and former Member of National Assembly Ali Wazir "for investigation".

The Islamabad police in their post on the X platform (formerly known as Twitter) wrote: "Islamabad Capital Police has arrested Ali Wazir and Iman Mazari. Both the accused were wanted by the Islamabad Police for investigation. All action will be taken in accordance with law.

"The news issued by the Public Relations Department of Islamabad Capital Police should be accepted as correct. No one is authorized to give a statement from a police station." Lawyer Imaan Mazari was earlier arrested from her house in Islamabad.

Imaan Mazari was arrested in a case registered against her at Tarnol police station under provisions 506-B, 186, 440, 148, and 149, police sources said.

It is to be noted here that Imaan Mazari delivered a speech at a rally of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement

(PTM) in Islamabad the other day. PTM leader Manzoor Pashteen was also nominated in the case registered at Tarnol police station.

In a tweet posted on the X platform in the wee hours of Sunday, Imaan wrote: "Unknown persons breaking down my home cameras banging gate jumped over."

Almost an hour later, Imaan's mother Shireen Mazari tweeted that policewomen and other people in plain clothes had broken into her house in Islamabad and taken away her daughter Imaan Mazari.

She said that the policewomen and people in plain clothes had also taken away the security cameras and her laptop and cell phone. "We asked who they had come for, but they just dragged Imaan out," she added. "They marched all over the house. My daughter was in her night clothes. She asked them to let her away, but they just dragged her away," she stated. While commenting on the arrest of her daughter, Shireen Mazari said that there were no warrants or a legal procedure. She termed the arrest an abduction and state fascism. "Remember, we are only two

women living in the house. Thus, it is an abduction."

After Imaan, the Federal Police also arrested former MNA and Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) leader Ali Wazir.

Former MNA Ali Wazir was arrested by a team of the Tarnol police station.

He was arrested on the charges of resisting police, staging a sit-in, and interfering with the government.

On June 19, security forces arrested PTM leader Ali Wazir at Dumdel check post in North Waziristan while he was travelling to Razmak from Miranshah. The FIA Cybercrime Circle Peshawar had started an inquiry against Hazir and PTM chief Manzoor Pashteen for allegedly using defamatory language and spreading propaganda against the institutions.

Yesterday, former foreign minister and Vice Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also arrested in Islamabad as part of the ongoing investigation into the cipher inquiry case by the Federal Investigation Agency.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam and Information Minister Murtaza Solangi addressing an important press conference at PID Media Center.





## Bilawal grieves over loss of lives in road mishap

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of lives in a motorway bus accident near Bhatiyar, Rawalpindi, here Sunday.

He said, "I am shocked to hear the news of the tragic accident." Bilawal said that his heart went out to the bereaved families, who had lost their loved ones in the accident. He said that the best medical treatment should be ensured for the injured and prayed for their speedy recovery.

The PPP chairman said that an investigation should be conducted to ascertain the causes of the accident.

He said that the government should play an active role to prevent such accidents in the future.

## Arrest of PPP workers' killers demanded

KARACHI (APP): General Secretary of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh chapter Senator Waqar Mehdi and President PPP Karachi Division Saeed Ghani have demanded the arrest of killers, involved in the killing of two local PPP workers. While condemning the killing of PPP workers in a communique here on Sunday, Waqar Mehdi demanded of the Sindh Caretaker Chief Minister to investigate the two incidents of the killings.

He said that the terrorists and their patrons were trying to disrupt the peace of the city under a conspiracy.

Saeed Ghani condemned the killing of Senior Vice President of PPP UC 31 Shaukat Hamad Baloch in Baldia Town Abidabad area and one another. He said that the two active local workers of PPP had been martyred in the last 4 days.

Meanwhile, The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd.) Maqbool Baqar while taking notice of the killing of PPP leader Shaukat Hamad in Baldia Town, has directed the Police to arrest the killer immediately. He had also sought a detailed report of the incident from the Additional IGP Karachi. The Caretaker CM directed to control snatching of mobile phones and other incidents in the city. Baqar said that the protection of the life and property of the citizens was the primary responsibility of the police.

## 72,330 citizens provided licensing services: CTO

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan Sunday said that traffic police provided licensing services to some 72,330 citizens during the last month while breaking all records in providing licensing services to the masses. The number of driving testing centers in the district have also been increased from 3 to 7 to facilitate the citizens, the CTO said.

He said that the mobile service vans were providing door-to-door licensing services to citizens. Moreover, licensing services was also being provided in colleges, universities and educational institutions through Traffic education Unit, he added.

# Alvi's action as a profound conspiracy against Pakistan: Memon

F.P Report

KARACHI: Former Minister for Information and leader of the People's Party, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that President Arif Alvi demonstrated that he prioritized the Tiger Force over Pakistan by cutting off his finger, seemingly attempting to be included in the list of martyrs. During a conversation with the media at the Karachi Press Club, Sharjeel Inam Memon questioned why Arif Alvi revealed this now. He viewed Alvi's action as a profound conspiracy against Pakistan.

Sharjeel Inam Memon further mentioned that Arif Alvi's historical role had been contentious, and his recent actions only reinforced that perception. He claimed that Alvi's tweet exhibited his lack of competence and revealed his attempt to harm Pakistan.

Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that due to a corruption case, Imran Khan is currently in jail, and he intends to take all possible measures to provide him with some form of relief.



He also emphasized that the elections will proceed as scheduled to ensure that democracy in the country continues on the correct path. He believes that each political party has a role to play in this process. Sharjeel Inam Memon expressed his sorrow over the Jaranwala incident, describing it as a tragic event. He believed that this incident was a well-orchestrated plot against Pakistan.

He conveyed the People's Party's support to the Christian community and assured minorities that the party stands united with them. Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that certain malicious actors often manipulate religion for their own agendas. He

reiterated that their faith promotes love, unity, and brotherhood.

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that the People's Party maintains close ties with national institutions and is committed to fostering unity among all. He highlighted that the People's Party is unique in its goal to unite people. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has also asserted that Pakistan is a nation for everyone. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the PPP strongly advocates for timely elections. He expressed confidence in the PPP's significant support in Sindh and hinted at a surprising outcome in Southern Punjab, the PPP will sweep across Pakistan.

## CM unhappy with Kahna hospital facilities

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi expressed strong dissatisfaction after observing poor conditions at Government Indus Hospital Kahna during a surprise visit on Sunday.

He criticized the staff for providing false information and noted issues like non-functioning air-conditioners, cleanliness problems, and blood stains on bedsheets. The patients expressed concerns about staff behaviour and delays in medical check-ups. Naqvi inspected various departments, contacted the health secretary and expressed disappointment at the hospital's state. The Commissioner Lahore division and Deputy Commissioner Lahore were also present.

**CM condemns bomb blast:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned a bomb blast in North Waziristan. Mohsin Naqvi has expressed sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives in the bomb blast. He stated, "We profoundly express our heartfelt sympathies and condolences with the families of deceased labourers and stand with them in this hour of grief."

Mohsin Naqvi prayed for an early recovery of the injured labourers.

**CM offers condolences over passengers' deaths:** Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has expressed sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives due to a fire in a passenger coach near Pindi Bhattian.

Mohsin Naqvi has expressed his heartfelt sympathies and condolences with the families of the deceased persons. He has sought a report from the administration and police on the incident and directed the

administration to provide best treatment facilities to the injured persons. He stated that the Punjab government equally shares grief of the heirs of deceased persons.

**CM reviews construction work at Akbar Chowk Flyover project:** Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday visited the under construction Akbar Chowk flyover project and reviewed progress being made on the construction work.

All piles and pile caps of Akbar Chowk flyover project have been completed. CM while directing to submit a report about the project on a daily basis asserted to complete the project by the mid of next month under any circumstance.

CM directed to improve the design of U-turn and ordered the construction of a model road from College Road to Akbar Chowk. He inspected the ongoing construction activities on the project and construction of roads.

CM directed to complete the construction work of roads surrounding the flyover as soon as possible, adding that the citizens will be provided transportation facilities with the completion of roads surrounding the project. The citizens will be given permanent relief from traffic bottlenecks with the completion of Akbar Chowk flyover project. Commissioner/DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Chief Engineer Israr Ahmed and Contractor while giving a briefing about the pace of work on the project apprised that work on 29 out of 31 pairs has been completed and work on transims and grids is ongoing. Around 32 out of 66 grids of the flyover have been completed.

## 26 dengue case reported in various Lahore areas

LAHORE (APP): Twenty-six new cases of dengue were reported in Lahore on Sunday while the anti-dengue squad destroyed larvae at 968 places in the province during ongoing surveillance.

According to Health Department sources, besides the dengue virus cases, 968 larvae cases were reported in the last 24 hours, with many patients under treatment in different

hospitals of the city. Various squads conducted surveillance at indoor and outdoor places to detect dengue larvae.

The Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department sources told APP that 26 new cases of dengue were reported in Lahore on Sunday including eight cases from Aziz Bhati Town, six from Allama Iqbal Town, two each from Shalimar,

Wahga, Ravi, Data Ganj Bakhsh Towns and four from other areas of the city.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lahore Rafia Haider is continuously paying surprise visits to check the performance of dengue teams after a fear of rise in dengue cases after rains. She reviewed the performance of dengue teams working in various areas and ordered strict action against ghost workers.



LAHORE: An artisan is deeply engrossed in creating intricate glass cutwork on the wall of the historic Anna Masjid.

## Nation remembers Rashid Minhas for his heroic legacy, undying courage

LAHORE (APP): The 52nd martyrdom anniversary of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, one of the youngest recipients of Nishan-e-Haider, was observed on Sunday across the country. He embraced martyrdom at Goth Ahmed Shah in Sujawal district on this day in 1971.

Lt. Gen. Naem Khalid Lodhi while talking to APP said that the defence of Pakistan is safeguarded by its venerable armed forces, which also monitor and watch the ideological frontiers of the motherland every moment. "At the time of need, sons of the valiant armed forces combated and defeated the cowardly enemy including the scourge of terrorism in a befitting manner," he added.

The brave armed forces and sons of the soil have a wide range of experience to deal with any aggression or the menace of terrorism and the entire world could learn from Pakistan how to cope with the enemy or terrorism, he said. He said that the nation, standing with its forces, displayed unanimous spirit in facing any challenge or enemy boldly and defeated them on all fronts. In fact, there have been rare examples of such extreme valour and courage in global military history which the Pakistani nation and its heroes and soldiers showcased at various occasions, Lodhi said.

A similar poignant story is of Rashid Minhas Shaheed, who after having joined the air force, was commissioned on March 13, 1971, in the 51st GD(P) Course.

He began training to become a pilot. On August 20 of that year, in the hour before noon, he was getting ready to take off in a T-33 jet trainer in Karachi, his second solo flight in that type of aircraft. Minhas was taxiing towards the runway when a Bengali instructor pilot, Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman, signalled him to stop and then climbed into the instructor's seat. The jet took off and

turned towards India.

Minhas radioed PAF Base Masroor with the message that he was being hijacked. The air controller requested that he resend his message, and he confirmed the hijacking. Later investigation showed that Rahman intended to defect to India to join his compatriots in the Bangladesh Liberation War, along with the jet trainer. In the air, Minhas struggled physically to wrest control from Rahman; each man tried to overpower the other through the mechanically linked flight controls. Some 32 miles (51 km) from the Indian border, the jet crashed near Thatta. Both men died.

Minhas was posthumously awarded Pakistan's top military honour, the Nishan-e-Haider, and became the youngest man and the only member of the Pakistan Air Force to win the award. Minhas's Pakistan military citation for the Nishan-e-Haider states that he "forced the aircraft to crash" in order to prevent Rahman from taking the jet to India. This is the official, popular and widely known version of how Minhas died. Yawar A. Mazhar, a writer for Pakistan Military Consortium, relayed in 2004 that he spoke to retired PAF Group Captain Cecil Chaudhry about Minhas, and that he learned more details not generally known to the public.

According to Mazhar, Chaudhry led the immediate task of investigating the wreckage and writing the accident report. Chaudhry told Mazhar that he found the jet had hit the ground nose first, instantly killing Minhas in the front seat. Rahman's body, however, was not in the jet and the canopy was missing.

Chaudhry searched the area and saw Rahman's body some distance behind the jet, the body found with severe abrasions from hitting the sand at a low angle and a high speed. Chaudhry thought that Minhas proba-

bly jettisoned the canopy at low altitude causing Rahman to be thrown from the cockpit because he was not strapped in.

Chaudhry felt that the jet was too close to the ground at that time, too far out of control for Minhas to be able to prevent the crash. On August 20, 2023, in various events, on his 52nd martyrdom anniversary, Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Services Chiefs have paid glowing tribute to Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed.

In a media release, the ISPR said Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas's martyrdom anniversary serves as a powerful reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by Armed Forces of Pakistan.

It said in the line of duty, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas lived up to great traditions of Pakistan Armed Forces in defending the motherland.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Air Force Directorate General Public Relations has released a short documentary to pay homage to youngest recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday also paid a rich tribute to the courage and sacrifice of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed. In a tweet today, the premier said observing the 52nd anniversary of martyrdom of Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) today, we as a nation salute his undying courage. His heroic act on 20 Aug 1971 preserved our national dignity and his legacy of valor remains undimmed.

Mahboob Ali, a retired PAF officer told APP that after his death, Minhas was honoured as a national hero. In his memory the Pakistan Air Force base at Kamra was renamed PAF Base Minhas, often called Minhas-Kamra.

## Professor Dr. Sardar Khan Vice Chancellor KUST nominated for Tamgh-i-Imtiaz

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The Cabinet Division Government of Pakistan has announced conferment of the Pakistan Civil Award Tamgha-i-Imtiaz by President of Pakistan to Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) in recognition to his contribution and excellence in the field of Environmental Sciences.

Prof. Dr. Sardar has been acknowledged with different award not only nationally but internationally for his excellence in the field of Environmental Sciences. Currently he is serving KUST as a Vice Chancellor. He is also looking after the affairs of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKU) as acting Vice Chancellor.

The KUST has raised the standard of Innovative Research and Quality education during the current tenure of Prof. Dr. Sardar as VC that has resulted in improving the university ranking not only nationally but internationally. Under his supervision KUST has been awarded "Best Financial Management" and "Best Quality Assurance" award by Government of Khyber Pkhtunkhwa.

A few months ago the fellowship of him was conferred by the President of PAS. Dr Khan has completed his PhD from the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing China under HEC PhD fellowships program for Basic Sciences in China. He was promoted to the rank of Professor in 2014.

Dr Khan has speciality in the field of Environmental and Food Chain Contamination and Health



Risk, Remediation of Contaminated Soil and Water, Biochar Application and its Environmental Benefits. He has done three Post doc from China related with organic waste resourcing and soil remediation and Biochar application for environmental and agronomic benefits. He has also been working as visiting/adjunct Professor in Hunan Agriculture University, and Chinese Academy of Sciences, China Since 2016. Prior to his service at KUST, Prof. Dr Sardar was chairman of the Department of Environmental Science and Director Advance Studies at University of Peshawar. He was also remained as a Chairman Department of Environmental Science and Director of the Directorate of Advanced Studies, University of Peshawar.

Dr. Khan is among the leading environmentalist in Pakistan and has published 174 research papers in the refereed international journals with total impact factor 833. Total citation of 12551 with h-index 54. He has also published 6 international book chapters. He has supervised 30 PhD scholars and 26 MPhil students. Two patents are approved by IPO-Pakistan (SI No. 143733 and

SI No. 143832), while another two are under review. In recognition to his research, academic and professional achievements, Dr. Khan has been awarded with several national and international awards, honors and commemoration certificates by various organizations including, PAS Gold Medal Award-2019, Young International Scientist award in 2011; Best University Teacher Award by HEC in 2008, Productive Scientists of Pakistan award by the Pakistan Council of Science and Technology; Eight times Research Productivity awards (2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010 of B, B, B, C, C, D, E and F categories, respectively) by the Pakistan Council of Science and Technology and High citation award by the Elsevier Publisher on the basis of high citation (more than 2000) of paper published in Environmental Pollution.

According to a ranking conducted by Stanford University (USA November 2020 and 2021), Dr. Khan was ranked among the top 2% highly cited scientists on the global level. He is also included in the list of productive scientists of Pakistan 2016 and 2017 on second position in the field of Earth and Environmental Sciences.

Besides teaching and research, Dr. Khan also made major contributions towards the promotion of academics, monitoring and management of environmental problems faced by the public during his 22 years of service. Dr. Khan is the members of different academic societies and has established collaborative linkages with different national and international institutions/Universities such as

Chinese Academy of Sciences, Arizona University, USA, Norwegian Geotechnical Institute, Oslo, Norway, University of East Anglia Norwich UK, Hunan Agriculture University, China. So far his several research students have visited different labs present in USA, Switzerland and China for their research work. In this way Dr. Khan is contributing a lot towards the educational and socio-economic uplift of the nation and country.

As far as the contribution of Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan as Vice Chancellor KUST is concerned, his leadership has impacted the academic uplift of the university not only nationally but internationally. Under his leadership, KUST received Quality Assurance Award from Higher Education Department (HED) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for maintaining the quality standards set for higher education. Also, KUST received Best Financial Management University award from Chancellor's Office under his dynamic leadership for effective and sustainable financial management practices in the university.

KUST has flourished academically because of his vision and actions in all the dimensions where a dozen market oriented programs started and new department(s) have been established offering admissions in BS, MS and PhD level programs with good research teaching and learning facilities for students and faculty members. The enrolment of the university has also increased to a good number because of his efforts for academic uplift of the university and currently the campus has more than 8000 registered students.



LAHORE: Customers are buying secondhand books from a roadside stall.





# Governor GB meets with Governor KP

— discusses joint work on tourism sector

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah reached Governor House Peshawar on his visit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and met Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali. Matters of mutual interest and other important issues were discussed in the meeting. In the meeting, the two governors discussed the promotion of tourism activities between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan and for the development of the tourism sector. It was also agreed to take joint measures to provide the best facilities. On this occasion, Governor Haji

Ghulam Ali said that Gilgit-Baltistan is an area rich in tourism and natural resources. The promotion of tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan and the northern regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will benefit the country's economy. He said Babu Sar top to Gilgit-Baltistan and all these areas are very attractive for tourists, there is a need to develop the tourism sector in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Ghulam Ali said. On this occasion Governor GB Syed Mehdi Shah thanked for the hospitality and said that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan are peace-

ful people and the crime rate here is also negligible. Gilgit and Skardu are very attractive places for domestic and foreign tourists. Providing facilities to tourists from Naran, Kaghan, Babusar Top to Gilgit-Baltistan will not only develop the tourism sector but will also have a profound positive impact on the country's economy. Apart from this, a ten-member delegation from Upper Karam district headed by Qari Afsar Khan also met the governor at the governor's house and apprised the governor about the problems faced by the people of the area, especial-

ly health, education and NADRA related problems. He assured the delegation of full cooperation to solve the problems. Meanwhile, the governor condemned the blast on the laborers' vehicle in Shawwal area of North Waziristan and expressed his deep sorrow over the death of 11 laborers as a result of the blast and condoled with the families of the victims. The governor has also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the bomb blast. He also prayed for the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with patience.



PESHAWAR: Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali during his visit Governor's House Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: Supporters of National Christian Party hold a demonstration condemning recent attack on Christian. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

## Energy projects proved to be game changer in economic stability: CEO

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Executive Officer, Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) Engineer Naeem Khan on Sunday said that the ongoing energy projects for the production of cheap hydropower in the province will be proved as game changer for the stability of the economy of province and to control the ongoing energy crisis in the country. Apart from the production of cheap electricity, the industrial sector would be developed in one hand while on the other hand, new employment opportunities will be available in the province. The damages caused to some parts of the energy projects in the district of Swat due to the disastrous floods in August last year and the importation of electrical equipment was stopped, there was a slight delay in the completion of

the projects, but now these projects are being completed rapidly while some are passing through the final stages of completion. He expressed these views while visiting various ongoing hydropower projects under the supervision of PEDO in Swat and Lower Dir districts. On this occasion, he was accompanied by a team of project directors of various projects. He went to Daral Khwar power plant swat of 36 MW where he reviewed the emergency safety arrangements and speed of work on flood protection for power plant and colony. He also issued necessary instructions to the authorities on slowness of work, after which he reviewed the construction of the colony at the site of Gabral Kalam 88 MW hydropower project and expressed satisfaction with the ongoing work of the project authorities to complete the ongoing work

before the scheduled time. Moreover, he went to the site of the ongoing 84 MW Gorkin Matilitan hydropower project in Swat district, where he urged the project authorities to speed up the work, saying that there is no doubt that due to the dilapidated condition of the road between Bahrain and Kalam, the project was delayed. Furthermore, difficulties are being faced in the supply of machinery and material, however, the contractor was insisted on transporting the goods through alternative small transport to complete the work more quickly. CEO PEDO, Engr. Naeem Khan also visited the 40.8MW Koto power plant in Lower Dir district where he met with a team of Chinese engineers, expressed concern over the problems faced in importing electro-mechanical equipment and the slow pace of work, urging the project authorities to speed up the work.

## Four injured in road accident in Warsak

PESHAWAR (APP): As many as four persons were injured in a road accident when a Chinchilla and Pick-Up head-on near Chahalgani Baba Warsak Road on Sunday, an official of Rescue 1122 said. As soon as the rescue

1122 control room received the information, the rescue ambulances were dispatched to the spot along with the medical team. Four people injured as a result of the collision, the Rescue 1122 officials said. The rescue personnel

reached the spot and immediately gave first aid to the injured and shifted them to the hospital. Those injured in the accident were identified as Ehtisham aged 48 years, Mahbub aged 43 years, Yousaf aged 24 years and Arsalan aged 27 years.

## Four alleged abductors arrested

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Police has arrested four alleged kidnappers while weapons from their possession in the premises of Badabheir police station, on Sunday. Police has conducted action on Frist Information Report filed by Amin Khan stated that Manzoor and Masood along with others had abducted him for ransom on gun point. Police also recovered two M4 rifles and two pistols from their possession.

Superintendent of Police Sadder sub division Malak Habib Khan took notice and directed DSP Badabheir Zia Ullah Khan to arrest the culprits as soon as possible. Station House Officer Badabheir Nasir Khattak along with police party arrested the alleged abductors after investigation in this regard. The alleged culprits identified as Manzoor, Masood, Arshad and Alamzeb while confessed their involvement in abduction of Amin Khan for ransom.

## Condolence reference held

PESHAWAR (APP): Leprosy TB Blindness Relief Association Pakistan here on Sunday organized a condolence reference to pay tribute to services of German Dr. Ruth Pfau who devoted fifty-six years of her life to fighting leprosy in Pakistan. The reference was held at Anwar Medical Center Dabgari that was attended by Chief of Association, Prof. Surgeon Muhammad Arif Khan, Professor Dr. Zakeen Ahmed, Professor Dr. Raheel Malik, Mullah Muhammad, Surgeon Dr. Attaullah Arif and other officials. The speakers highlighted the core services of Ruth Katherina Martha Pfau and said that millions of leprosy patients throughout the country were grateful to Dr Ruth Pfau who served humanity from 1960.

She established the first center for the treatment of leprosy patients in Karachi, after which 170 centers were established for free treatment and operations of such patients throughout the country to control this deadly disease.

## Annual uplift projects: LG KP releases half of grant

PESHAWAR (APP): After a long struggle, the Local Government Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released half the grant for annual development projects. According to the details issued by the finance department, the Finance Department has issued a grant of 19.55.88 to 27 TMEs of the Local Government Department as

11 million out of 26 million has been released for the purchase of bucket vehicles to Bannu and Swabi Municipalities Department. The grants were also given for Tehsil offices in Abbottabad, Swat, Bannu, Dera and Kohat and many other districts. The notification says that 5% of the fixed grant has been released for parks in Haripur, Kohat, Dir

Lower, Mardan, Chitral and Dir Upper, Municipalities Department. Out of 166 million rupees, 60 million rupees have been released for the purchase of sanitation vehicles in various districts, according to the Local Government Department. The ADP schemes of TMEs were stopped last year due to non-release of funds.

## AAC inspects foodstuff shops on Motorway Service area

PESHAWAR (APP): The Additional Assistant Commissioner, on special duty, Khaula Haqdar inspected the foodstuff shops in the Motorway Services Area and other markets to check the sale of expired and harmful items, cleanliness, checking the official price list and selling according to it. She imposed fines on several people for poor sanitation, violation of the official price list and issued

instructions to follow the rules of hygiene. Additional Assistant Commissioner Khaula Haqdar also visited various Basic Health Units (BHUs) and reviewed the cleanliness, provision of free medicines and medical facilities to the patients. She issued instructions to ensure the supply of free medicines besides good health facilities to the patients. The Additional Assistant Commissioner

checked the sales at the petrol pumps and agencies as per the gauge and official fixed rate, and imposed a fine on one agency and fined others for charging less gauge and higher rate. "I was given a task by DC Mardan Captain (Rtd) Abdul Rahman, to check the foodstuff, especially on Motorway services areas because of many complaints received by him," she said.



PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat awarding certificate to Shahab Khan Umarzai for his outstanding performance. — F.P. photo

## FC holds free medical camps

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Frontier Corps North arranged Free Medical Camps in Baizai and Safi areas of district Mohmand and in Malam Jabba, Swat in order to provide basic health

facilities to the locals. In the free medical camps a total of 1657 patients including 368 male, 436 female and 706 children were checked-up and given free medicines. Doctors and nursing staff

also provided awareness to prevent seasonal diseases. Local expressed happiness and said that Frontier Corps North frequently organise free medical camps which help locals to get medical facilities in door step.

## PIFD holds entry test

PESHAWAR (APP): An entrance test for admissions in undergraduate programmes of Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD) was held on Sunday.

PIFD undergraduate entrance test was conducted in Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and Islamabad. The entry test is a mandatory requirement for admission in undergraduate programmes. The written test has a weightage of fifty percent in the PIFD admission process. It is pertinent to mention here that PIFD is offering undergraduate programmes in Fashion Design, Fashion Marketing and Merchandising, Leather Accessories and Footwear, Furniture Design and Manufacture, Ceramic and Glass Design, Gems and Jewellery Design and Textile Design disciplines.

## Hot, humid likely in KP

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

However, it said that scattered rain-thunderstorm associated with gusty winds is likely to occur over Abbottabad, Haripur, Mansehra, Battagram, Torgar, Shanglea, Upper & Lower Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Mardan, Swabi and Nowshera districts. Isolated rain-thunderstorms associated with gusty winds are also likely to occur over Kohistan, Chitral, Bajaur, Mohmand, Charsadda, Peshawar, Khyber, Kohat and Hangu districts. During the last 24 hours hot and humid weather prevailed in most districts of the province. However, rain-thunderstorms occurred in Swat and Khyber districts. Rain recorded (in mm): Kalam 08 and Tirah Khyber Trace.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the KP were Peshawar 37/28, Chitral 35/19, Timergara 36/23, Dir 33/19, Mirkhani 38/16, Kalam 27/09, Drosch 37/23, Sidu Sharif 34/22, Pattan 38/27, Malam Jabba 22/14, Takht Bhai 36/27, Kakul 30/21, Balakot 35/21, Parachinar 31/15, Bannu 39/26, Cherat 28/16, D.I. Khan 40/29.

## Bringing 4.7m out of school children in KP under education net a gigantic task

PESHAWAR (APP): Where literacy rate is essential in bringing socio-economic uplift in a country and putting it on the path to development and prosperity, it also indicates the priorities of a particular government it set for the well-being of the masses. In a country like Pakistan where the population has crossed the psychological barrier of 240 million in May this year, and where there are an estimated 22.8 million out-of-school children, the education sector was in dire need of having more attention and resources by the authorities concerned. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)'s national socioeconomic registration census report 2021 revealed that 4.7 million children aged 5 to 16 years were out of school in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The breakup of the data informed that 1.38 million male and 1.38 million female students were out of school in KP, while 0.36

million male and 0.65 million were out of school in seven merged tribal districts owing to a lack of educational institutions, poverty and other socioeconomic barriers mostly caused by population explosion. The highest percentage of 77 percent was reported in Palas Kolai district followed by 70 percent in Upper Kohistan, 69 percent in Lower Kohistan, 61 in Torgar, 55 in Shanglea, 53 in Lakki Marwat and 51 percent each in Tank and Batagram districts. In erstwhile Fata, around 66 percent of children were out-of-school in North Waziristan, 63 percent in Bajaur, 61 in South Waziristan, 51 each in Mohmand and Khyber, and 47 percent each in Kurram and Orakzai. "I left education in childhood after the untimely death of my father due to blood cancer. After enormous financial problems, I started labour work to support my six sis-

ters and an ailing mother," said Faizur Rehman (18), a resident of Pabbi, Nowshera while tears rolling down over his cheeks. "My father wanted to see me as an engineer but the fortune overturned and I was left with no option but to enter the painstaking construction labour work to support my family," he added. Besides poverty and socioeconomic imbalances especially in rural areas, he said most of poor students left education due to the expensive cost of books and other education expenses. Muhammad Shahab Khan, Chief Planning Officer, Education Department KP told APP that bringing out of school children under education net was a big challenge. For bringing 300,000 children to schools in KP in the next three years billions of rupees were required including Rs2.10 billion for the provision of free uni-



forms, stationary and bags, Rs10.4 billion for the construction of 10,000 schools for the second shift program, and Rs6.7 billion for the establishment of 1,000 Alternate Learning Pathways (ALP), he informed. Moreover, Rs0.14 billion were required for distance learning programs including the establishment of digital studies and laboratories, FM education channels, Rs2.63 billion for the transformation of 5000 Early Childhood Education (ECE) rooms and Rs0.97

billion were needed for subsidized transport services for marginalized areas' Primary schools, he mentioned. Shahab Khan said 15,667 new schools were immediately required to enroll 300 such children (aged 5-9 years) per school by next academic year, adding ALP centres were initiated for old aged out-of-school children under which 58,000 such children were enrolled in 1692 centres established with assistance of UNICEF, USAID, Elementary Schools

Education Foundation, National Commission for Humans Development and Action to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education (ASPIRE) in the province. Besides the development of curriculum and textual material for primary school children, he said assessment tools were developed for ALP classes, while the ALP assessment mechanism policy was under review for approval. ECE programs were launched for the overall development of poor students by focusing on their languages and social-emotional competencies imperative for a smooth transition to kindergarten and under this initiative 1000 ECE classrooms were transformed into modern nurseries while 2773 ECE rooms were established. Besides the establishment of 100 ECE centres in Kurram and Orakzai with the assistance of UNICEF last year, he said 1600 ECE centres would be estab-

lished through GPE funding in the next five years while 100 ECE rooms would be set up through KP-HICP under which 250 were already established. Shahab said the ECE policy was ready for approval while teaching materials including teachers' guidebook and handbook for ECE mode of learning were also prepared, adding transformation of Katchi into ECE was in progress besides the completion of training of 790 master trainers and 425 teachers on ECE. The official said the voucher stipend program was launched to enroll talented out-of-school children in private schools. Besides the disbursement of Rs2.4 billion among female students with 80pc attendance in schools of underprivileged areas, Shahab said stipend programs for retention of poor students were launched yielding positive results. Ikhtlaq Ahmed, Chief Education Officer KP said

over 900,000 students including out-of-school children were enrolled last year in KP. He said stars of KP, and ETEA merit scholarships were launched to increase the students' enrollment and bring out-of-school children into the education net. Ms. Javeera, spokesperson of BISP KP said Rs1500 per three months were being provided to each boy student and Rs2000 to girls at the primary level, Rs2500 for boys and Rs3000 for girls at the secondary level, and Rs3500 for boys and Rs4000 per girl at higher secondary school level to facilitate poor students. Since the inception of BISP, she said over one million children were enrolled under BISP's Education Scholarship Program. Despite all these endeavors, there was still a lot to be done to boost the education sector and increase the literacy rate in Pakistan.





## In brief

### Two die due to toxic spray

**BAREWALA (APP):** Two kids were died while three other family members including parents fell unconscious as poisonous anti-mosquito spray spread in the room. According to details, Muhammad Kashif resident of F-block Vehari, sprayed anti-mosquito spray in the room at night and went to sleep with his wife and children after running air conditioner and locking the doors. The entire family went unconscious due to toxic spray spread in the room in which two innocent children 3 years old Hiba Kashif and Muhammad Jan lost their lives while Kashif his wife and a child M. Ali were taken to Nishtar hospital Multan due to critical condition where the condition of the child is said to be critical.

### Security guard's wife killed

**JARANWALA (INP):** A security guard's wife was killed in an accidental shooting in the City area of Jaranwala on Sunday. The police said that Shahamand, a security guard at a local factory, was cleaning his gun when he accidentally pulled the trigger. The bullet hit his wife, Saba Parveen, in the chest. She was rushed to the hospital but died on the way. The police have registered a case and are investigating the matter. The incident has highlighted the need for safety precautions when handling firearms. It is important to always keep guns unloaded and pointed in a safe direction when not in use. The police have also advised people to seek professional help if they are not comfortable handling firearms.

### 942 power pilferers held

**MULTAN (APP):** Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) have caught 942 power pilferers during separate operations launched throughout the South Punjab in current month so far, MEPCO official said on Sunday. MEPCO teams accompanying task forces raided different places in Multan, Vehari, Sahiwal, Rahimyar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalnagar, Khanewal, and Dera Ghazi Khan and detected theft of 14,26,000 electricity units. A sum of over Rs43.7 million fine was imposed on the pilferers while FIRs were registered against 27 of them over involvement in tampering with the body of meters, direct supply, installing loop in meters, slowing down meters, meter dead stop and meter screen wash.

### Three held for pilfering power

**SIALKOT (APP):** Three persons were caught for allegedly pilfering electricity from the main transmission lines in Sialkot district. On the report of Sub Division Officer Gepco, district police raided different areas of Sialkot district and caught Sadiq, Qamar Ilyas and Ali Hassan while pilfering electricity from the main transmission lines. Police have registered cases and started investigations.

### Drug peddler arrested

**MUZAFFARGARH (APP):** Police claimed to have raided against Inter-provincial drug peddler gang and arrested a drug peddler and recovered huge quantity of drugs worth millions of rupees from his possession. Additional SHO SO Afsar Shan Mehdi along with his team raided and stopped a vehicle coming from Ziarat. Police recovered 27600 grams hashish and 920 gramme ice during checking and arrested drug peddler Imranullah alias Ashraf.

# Governor visits riverside areas

**BAHAWALPUR (APP):** The Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman visited the riverside area of Mari Qasim Shah and Mochiwala to monitor the flood situation, here Sunday. Commissioner of Bahawalpur Division Dr Ehtesham Anwar, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Zaheer Anwar Jappa, and officers of relevant departments were also present. Governor Punjab said that all departments should take precautionary measures to protect the people from floods.

He said, "The district administration has been working to avoid floods since the first water flow of Sutlej." He said that all possible measures should be taken to maintain the strength of 30 levee dams in the region.

All government institutions should perform their duties to protect the life and property of the people from floods, he added.

"Divisional and district administrations have made

plans to deal with possible floods."

Dr Ehtesham Anwar said, "Rescue and relief camps have been established in the riverside areas."

"People living in the river area are being shifted to safe areas," he told. He said, "The survey of the livestock and the people living in riverside areas has been completed."

"Around 76,000 people have been shifted from the flood area to safe localities," Dr Ehtesham Anwar added.

## Tank Admin for ensuring availability of quality food

**D.I.KHAN (APP):** Additional Assistant Commissioner Tank Jamshed Alam Khan has said the administration was committed to extending relief to citizens by providing them quality food commodities at affordable prices.

He expressed these views during a visit to Tank bazaar which he paid on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Shoaib to take stock of hygienic conditions at eateries and check prices and quality of various food commodities at shops.

During the inspection, he take action against number of shopkeepers involved in use of sub-standard commodities.

He directed the shopkeepers to display price lists at prominent places of their shops and provide quality items at officially-prescribed rates.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, the additional assistant commissioner said that crackdown against profiteers would continue indiscriminately and no one would be allowed to take law into hands by fleecing citizens.

He also appealed to the public to register their complaints in his office so that timely action could be taken against violators.

### Funeral prayer of trainee constable offered in South Waziristan

The funeral prayer of under training Constable who died after being shot with his own gun at police training center (PTC) Hangu offered in Police Lines South Waziristan Upper.

According to police spokesman, trainee constable named Salman Khan belonged to South Waziristan Upper was died after being shot with his own gun while on duty at

PTC Hangu.

The funeral prayer was attended by DPO South Waziristan Upper Niaz Muhammad Khan, DSP Headquarters Noor Khan, Line Officer Tariq Nawaz, SP Investigation Tank Nasir Khan, DSP Rural Tank Chan Shah, SHO City Police Station Tank Abdul Ale Khan, PTC RI Hangu Intiaz Khan, DSP Security PTC Hangu Jan Alam Khan and a large number of police officials and family members.

The DPO laid floral wreaths on the coffin of the deceased officer and consoled with the bereaved family.

The collective prayers were offered for alleviation of deceased policemen's ranks.

Later, the body of the deceased constable was sent to his native village Janta South Waziristan for burial with full official protocol.

## 76,000 people evacuated from river areas

**BAHAWALPUR (APP):** Following the directions and forecast from Flood Forecast Division, the government departments concerned have evacuated over 76,000 people including men, women and children from areas lying near banks of Sutlej River passing through Bahawalpur division.

Official sources said that Sutlej River had received medium to high flood after India had released more water into the river.

A significant flood warning for Sutlej River issued by the Flood Forecast Division, Pakistan Meteorological Department,

Government said that according to the available information and hydro-meteorological conditions, Sutlej River at Ganda Singh Wala and downstream is likely to attain medium to high flood.

Commissioner, Bahawalpur Division, Ehtesham Anwar said that the divisional management was engaged round the clock to evacuate people to safe areas from the areas lying near the banks of Sutlej River which has received medium to high flood. "There is medium to high flood in Sutlej River and we have been continuing

efforts to evacuate people to safe areas from the villages lying near banks of Sutlej River passing through Bahawalnagar and Bahawalpur districts and other areas," he said.

He said that the government had also been providing facility to people to evacuate their cattle to safe areas in view of flood situation.

Meanwhile, official sources said that rescue and relief camps had been set up in areas lying near banks of Sutlej river so that emergency aid could be extended to people if they were affected by flood like situation.



CHINIOT: Workers busy in painting on boat at bank of River Chenab.

## Man and boy drown in separate incidents

**FAISALABAD (APP):** A young man and boy drowned in separate incidents in Faisalabad during past 12 hours.

According to the Rescue 1122 spokesman, 22-year-old Abid Zahoor of Chak No.623-GB jumped into

the River Ravi near Garh Fateh Shah when his rivals reportedly chased him to avenge an old enmity. As a result, he drowned. In other incident, a 10-year-old boy drowned while taking a bath in the Rakh Branch Canal near Rafhan Mill.

### PO nabbed from Dubai through Interpol

**DG KHAN (APP):** Police claimed to have arrested a proclaimed offender (PO) through Interpol from Dubai. Khan Muhammad s/o Ahmad Buksh had killed Ghulam Farid in 2020 over matrimonial issue and case was registered against him with Kot Mubarak police station and he fled away abroad. Inspector legal Asif Iqbal Rana under the directions of DPO DG Khan Hassan Afzal got issued the red warrant against the PO and arrested him from Dubai with the help of Interpol. DPO said that providing justice was top priority and added that scope against criminal gangs involved in murder, dacoity and other heinous crimes has been tightened and various teams formed for the arrest of the accused.

The Rescue 1122 fished out both bodies and handed them over to the area police while an investigation is ongoing, he added.

**Woman dies in gun accident:** A wife of a security guard was killed as a gun went off accidentally in the area of City Jaranwala police station.

A police spokesman said here on Sunday that Shahamand of Chak No.238-GB, who is a security guard in a local factory, was cleaning his gun when he pushed its trigger accidentally. As a result, a bullet hit his wife, Saba Parveen. The 45-year-old woman was rushed to hospital but she breathed her last on the way.

The police handed over the body to relatives for burial after completing formalities, he added.



FAISALABAD: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi talking to media after visiting Danish School Camp regarding incident Christian Colony Jaranwala.

### AMC holds student mental health mood

**ABBOTTABAD (INP):** The Psychiatry Department of Ayub Medical College (AMC) in collaboration with Socrates Society organized a Student Mental Health Conference in Abbottabad on Sunday.

The conference was attended by students from AMC and other medical colleges in the region. The aim of the conference was to prioritize the mental health and well-being of the students and to provide them a platform to openly discuss critical mental health issues.

Dean AMC Professor Dr. Omar Farooq and CEO Ayub Teaching Hospital (ATH) underscored the significance of addressing mental health concerns among students. They said that mental health is just as important as physical health, and that students should not hesitate to seek help if they are struggling with their mental health.

Former MPA Amina Sardar, Sardar Naveed Alam, Dr. Adil Saeed Qureshi, Noorullah Khattak, and Wahid Saraj played pivotal roles in organizing the conference by contributing to its useful execution.

The partners involved in organizing the conference expressed their satisfaction with its success, attributing it to the unwavering dedication of the organizing committee.

### Ministry officials visit UOS

**SIALKOT (APP):** A delegation of the Strategic Export Control Division from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited the University of Sialkot.

The delegation consisted of Rehman Akram (Director), Aown Arshad Gillani (Acting Director), Mussawir Ali Mirza (Assistant Director) and Memoona Nazir (Assistant Director). The Director of Campus and the team of USKT welcomed the members of the delegation on behalf of Vice Chancellor Rehman Younas.

The director (SECDIV) in his presentation elaborated on the need for a deep understanding of the sensitive matter of exporting strategic items and materials, which are prohibited.

He also deliberated on the related laws and rules. "SECDIV undertakes outreach visits to sensitize the relevant agencies/businesses and academia/research institutions on the laws and regulations related to strategic export controls in the light of directions laid in ICP guidelines," he added.

Participants learned crucial elements of export control on dual-use items, technology, materials, and equipment through this session.

### ACE arrests police driver on fake degree

**SARGODHA (APP):** The Anti Corruption Establishment (ACE) claimed to have arrested a police constable (driver), who had got a job in Punjab police as constable on a fake certificate of matriculation.

ACE sources said that Asad Abbas was recruited to Punjab police in 2018 on a fake degree. Upon receiving the information, the ACE investigated the case and busted him.

## Flood relief camps established

**MULTAN (INP):** The Livestock Department in Jalalpur Pirwala has established flood relief camps and is administering vaccinations to small and large ruminants and poultry in anticipation of the looming threat of floods along the Sutlej River.

Deputy Director Livestock Dr Jamshaid said that the department is leaving no stone unturned in safeguarding the region's animals. He said that teams of livestock experts are also engaging with cattle breeders to disseminate crucial information on flood prevention strategies.

Dr Jamshaid stressed the importance of vaccinations and urged cattle breeders to relocate their livestock to safer grounds before the flood. He also emphasized the need to secure adequate fodder and wheat hay supplies to sustain the animals through the crisis.

The Livestock Department is also taking steps to

mitigate the potential impact of harsh weather on livestock. These measures include implementing effective measures to shield cattle from the cold and wet weather. Dr Jamshaid said that the Livestock Department is committed to protecting the livelihoods of cattle breeders and minimizing the overall repercussions of the imminent flood on the region's precious livestock population.

The department has set up flood relief camps in various areas of Jalalpur Pirwala. These camps are equipped with essential supplies, such as vaccines, fodder, and hay. The camps are also staffed by livestock experts who can provide advice and assistance to cattle breeders.

### All rivers flowing in normal & low conditions, except River Sutlej

All rivers are flowing in normal and low conditions, except River Sutlej. According to details,

inflows from Indian side have reduced, resulting in a gradual decrease at Ganda Singh Wala. However, a rise is being seen at Sulemanki, while Islam headworks is currently stable.

It is further stated that Sulemanki will continue to experience rise over next 36 hours as the flows translate downstream the impact will be visible at Islam Headworks also during next 48 to 72 hours.

At the same time rescue operations in flood hit areas of district Kasur are at full swing to shift the stranded people to safer places. People trapped in the flood-water at Ganda Singh Wala have been shifted to safer locations.

Personnel of Pakistan Rangers are fully prepared along with their boats to protect people from flood in the River Sutlej. They are undertaking prompt actions to extend maximum help in saving people's lives and their belongings.

## Security arrangements of Churches finalized

**MULTAN (INP):** City Police Officer (CPO) Mansoor-ul-Haq Rana said that foolproof security arrangements were being ensured at churches to avoid any untoward incident.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that the best security arrangements have been made at churches to provide a peaceful environment for the Christian community to perform their religious activities.

He said that walk-through gates have been installed at entry points of the churches while lady police officials have also been deployed.

The city police officer added that all SDPOs and SHOs were monitoring the arrangements at churches in

their respective areas, however, he himself was monitoring the security arrangements.

He directed police officials to remain alert while performing security duty at churches. He urged them to keep vigil on suspicious persons and activities in the surroundings of the churches.

### 15 smoke emitting vehicles impounded

District administration has impounded 15 smoke emitting vehicles for causing environmental pollution and smog during a crackdown launched here on Sunday.

In line with special directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Omer Jahangir, the district Regional Transport Authority (RTA) under the supervision of

Secretary RTA Rana Mohsin launched a crackdown against smoke emitting vehicles causing environmental pollution and smog.

The team visited different areas of the district and checked various commercial vehicles.

The RTA team impounded 15 smoke emitting vehicles, arrested three drivers, imposed a fine of Rs 200,000 on owners of the vehicles over violations and registered six cases against violators of smog act.

The DC directed the officers concerned to take stern action against farmers involved in burning the remains of crops and brick kilns using old technology instead of latest zigzag technology.

## Police solve blind murder case

**SIALKOT (APP):** Sialkot police claimed to have solved a blind murder case and arrested an accused here on Sunday.

According to the police, Sufian of Kala Ghuman of Muradpur police station had been shot dead by an unidentified accused. The family members told the police that Sufyan had no enmity with anyone.

The mysterious murder created an atmosphere of fear in the area. DPO Sialkot Muhammad Hasan Iqbal taking notice of the tragic incident of blind murder, issued orders to the police team under the supervision of SP

Investigation Ziaullah to trace and arrest the accused.

SHO Muradpur police station Inspector Abdul Razzaq, on the instructions of SP Investigation Ziaullah, traced and arrested accused Faisal of Kakutchey Road. During the investigation, the accused revealed that Saira Bibi, the wife of the deceased, was also involved in the murder. When the police detained Saira Bibi, it was revealed that she had an affair with the accused and both wanted to get married.

Sufian had married Saira Bibi three years ago and

they had a one-year-old daughter. The police have completed the investigation on the basis of solid evidence and submitted the challan to the court.

### Four held with drugs, liquor:

District police claimed to have arrested four persons with narcotics and liquor.

Police arrested Owais with 10 liters of liquor during patrolling on Railway Road area while Kotli Loharan police detained Farooq with 1.540kg hashish and Saddar Pasrur police detained Abdullah with 5 liters of liquor and Afzal with 5 liters of liquor.

## WCCIS flays incident

**SIALKOT (APP):** Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) President Dr. Marian Nouman and the executive committee jointly condemned the Jaranwala incident where local churches were set ablaze by a mob.

In a statement, WCCIS President Dr. Marian Nouman said that the act of violence had drawn deep concern from the business community of Sialkot, highlighting the fragility of

communal harmony and the need for immediate action to maintain law and order.

The WCCIS President said that the incidents were against the teaching of Islam.

She said the WCCIS expressed their heartfelt condolences to the affected community and stressed that the incident was in sheer contradiction to the principles of tolerance, coexistence, and respect for all religious

beliefs that Pakistani society upholds

Dr. Mariam Nouman said that the WCCIS conveys a message of complete solidarity with its Christian brothers and sisters and we, together with the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), will raise strong voices with the government agencies to definitely bring those involved in this matter to justice and play our role in the protection of minorities.





## Taiwan says 42 warplane incursions after launch of China military drills

TAIPEI (AFP/APP): Taiwan said Saturday it had detected 42 warplane incursions into its air defence zone since China announced the launch of military drills.

"Since 0900 (UTC+8) today (Aug. 19), the R.O.C. Armed Forces detected 42 PLA aircraft," the island's Ministry of defence said in a statement.

Twenty-six of the warplanes involved crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, the ministry said.

Eight vessels also participated in the drills, which Chinese state media said were intended to simulate "real combat conditions".

"The National Army is... monitoring and using reconnaissance methods to strictly control (the situation)," Taiwan's defence ministry said, adding that it had dispatched aircraft and ships.

China announced earlier Saturday that it had "launched joint air and sea patrols and military exercises of the navy and air force around the island of Taiwan", according to state media outlet Xinhua.

The drills were conducted after Taiwan's Vice President William Lai made stopovers in the United States -



- in New York en route to Paraguay and in San Francisco when returning to Taipei.

China has ramped up pressure against Taiwan in the past year, sending near-daily warplanes incursions and vessels around the island.

It often lashes out at any diplomat-

ic action that appears to treat Taiwan as a sovereign nation.

In April, Beijing conducted three

days of military exercises simulating a blockade of the island in response to Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Taiwan's leader Tsai Ing-wen meeting in California.

## Morocco king at 60: diplomacy a priority as inequalities persist

RABAT (AFP/APP): Morocco's King Mohammed VI is set to celebrate his 60th birthday on Monday away from the public eye, as challenges abound almost a quarter century after he ascended the throne.

The monarch is credited with effectively maintaining stability in a volatile region -- in part through suppressing criticism -- as well as modernising the economy and pursuing assertive diplomacy.

But his efforts have fallen short in addressing the profound inequalities that continue to plague Moroccan society. In his latest speech on July 30, the king called for "achieving new milestones on the path of progress and creating projects of greater scope, worthy of the Moroccan people".

Since his coronation on July 23, 1999 following the death of his father Hassan II, the monarch has retained a firm grip on economic policy, foreign affairs, and defence and security in his North African nation.

"While his father was greatly present on the political stage, Mohammed VI's style is different. He prefers to silently steer the ship while controlling the levers of power," said political analyst Mohamed Chikher.

King Mohammed has led major infrastructure and business projects over the years. They include the Tanger Med industrial port, the gigantic Noor solar power plant and the Tangier-Casablanca high-speed rail line, alongside developing Morocco's automotive and aerospace industries, and more recently, so-called green hydrogen projects and the "Made in Morocco" label.

And in an effort to boost Moroccan soft power abroad, he took the initiative to partner with Spain and Portugal in a joint bid to host the 2030 FIFA World Cup.

On the international stage,

Mohammed VI has diversified partnerships that were once primarily focused on former colonial ruler France and other European countries, embracing a more prominent role on Morocco's continent since its return to the African Union in 2017.

Western Sahara has remained the king's top foreign policy priority, repeatedly dubbing the former Spanish colony under dispute as "the prism through which Morocco views its international environment".

Since 1975, a low-intensity conflict over the contested territory has pitted Rabat against Sahrawi separatists of the Algeria-backed Polisario Front. Morocco has secured Spain's support for an "autonomy plan" that would place the vast mineral-rich desert region under Rabat's sole sovereignty. The Polisario has for decades called for a UN-supervised referendum on self-determination.

In December 2020, the United States recognised Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara. Israel followed suit last month, deepening ties with Rabat and drawing backlash from Algiers.

While achieving diplomatic wins, Mohammed VI, once earning the nickname "king of the poor", has addressed societal inequalities at home at a sluggish pace.

Gaps between rich and poor, as well as urban and rural areas, continue to widen in today's Morocco.

A report commissioned in 2019 by Mohammed VI to find a "new development model" noted growing "inequalities", a "slow pace of reforms" and "resistance to change".

"The top 10 percent of the wealthiest Moroccans still hold 11 times more wealth than the bottom 10 percent," said the report.

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic coupled with inflation have

brought poverty rates in Morocco to levels last seen in 2014, according to the governmental High Commission for Planning. Morocco ranks low on the UN Human Development Index in education, literacy rates and gross income per capita.

Mohammed VI has still enjoyed broad popular support as the latest head of the Alawi dynasty that has ruled Morocco for centuries and is said to be descended from Islam's Prophet Mohammed.

Under his leadership, a long-awaited aid project for Morocco's most disadvantaged families is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

In 2004, the monarch greenlit the adoption of a family code aimed at boosting women's rights, though falling short of the full extent of activists' demands.

His regime, meanwhile, has been criticised for restricting freedom of expression by targeting and at times imprisoning opponents, journalists and dissenting internet users.

Tighter security measures under Mohammed VI -- also pursued in the name of counterterrorism efforts after May 2003 attacks that killed 33 people in Casablanca -- reversed a liberalisation push in the late days of Hassan II's reign.

While social media have given a platform to a variety of voices, traditional news outlets operate either under tight control or not at all.

Political opposition in the kingdom has been weakened or marginalised. "Moroccans remain highly controlled," historian Pierre Vermeren told AFP.

"This is the result of a series of external shocks and crises that have been such that economic expansion has hit a glass ceiling," he said, and "democratic transition remains but a promise".

## Ex-PM Thaksin to return to Thailand Tuesday: daughter

BANGKOK (AFP/APP): Thailand's former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra is set to return to the kingdom on Tuesday, the same day as a key parliamentary vote could end a political deadlock, his daughter said.

The 74-year-old billionaire was ousted in a 2006 military coup and has spent 15 years in self-exile.

Thaksin has long said he wanted to return home but faces multiple criminal charges that he says are politically motivated.

"On Tuesday, August 22, 9 am I will pick up my father Thaksin at Don Muang Airport," his daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra, who is one of the Pheu Thai Party's candidates for prime minister, said on Instagram.

His return will coincide with an afternoon vote on whether to approve Srettha Thavisin -- from the Thaksin-linked Pheu Thai Party -- as prime minister and end months of political uncertainty since a May general election.

To become premier, Srettha needs to muster a majority across the lower house of 500 elected MPs, and the 250-member senate that was handpicked by the kingdom's last junta.

The progressive Move Forward Party (MFP) won the most parliamentary seats in the election but the senate blocked its leader from becoming prime minister, after being spooked by a controversial policy to reform the kingdom's harsh royal

insult laws.

Pheu Thai came second in the race and has been trying to form a government.

While he's long been a divisive figure, political analysts don't expect Thaksin's presence to kick off protests.

"I think Thai people have moved on from Thaksin," Verapat Pariyawong, a political analyst, told AFP.

Verapat expects Thaksin will likely be taken to court upon arrival.

"His return means that he is confident that when he lands in Thailand he won't be a victim of political games and that the steps are there to make sure he is in a comfortable position," Verapat said. "The real question is

whether he will actually come back, And if yes, where did he get that assurance from?"

Thaksin said on social media days before the May election that he would return to Thailand "before my birthday" in July because he was getting old and wanted to spend time with his grandchildren.

He has lived in self-exile, mostly in Dubai, since 2008 and regularly addresses supporters on the Clubhouse social media platform using the alias Tony Woodsome.

Thaksin was convicted during his time abroad in four criminal cases, one of which has now passed the statute of limitations.

His sentences for the other three total 10 years in prison, while he is still under investigation in another case, and in his May message he said he was ready to face justice.

He has long maintained the cases were politically motivated.

Thaksin previously slated an August 10 return to Bangkok but postponed citing a medical appointment.

Political analyst Yuttaporn Issarachai said there had long been rumours about his return and still no guarantees it would happen this time.

"I give it a 50-50 chance," Yuttaporn told AFP, adding that his return might cause distress among the senators.

## 'We're all tired': Thousands of evacuees arrive in southern Canada

CALGARY (AFP/APP): Crystal Sangris barely slept for three days as wildfires threatened her hometown in northern Canada, and when she was ordered to evacuate, her anxiety turned to anguish. "I never, never thought that this day would come," she told AFP on Friday at Calgary airport, after she left her home in Yellowknife, a city of 20,000 people that is now surrounded by flames.

"I didn't want to leave home, I was tearing up," Sangris, of First Nations origin, told AFP.

The 33-year-old housewife was evacuated Friday along with her husband and three children on one of several flights that

landed in Calgary, more than 1,700 kilometers (1,050 miles) from the fires. Calgary's airport in the neighboring province of Alberta has become a reception center for the evacuees, in a massive operation without precedent in the region.

The fire is about 15 kilometers from Yellowknife and could reach the city over the weekend, authorities warned, especially as weather conditions hampered the work of firefighters. Evacuees are registered as soon as they land in Calgary's domestic flight terminal, some arriving with their pets.

Volunteers and local officials offer food and water before transferring them to nearby hotels serving as shelters for the displaced. "I am very stressed and overwhelmed, so is my whole entire family. We're all tired," said Sangris, as she waited for a bus with her family to take them to their assigned hotel. "My daughter is barely two years old. Everything is new to her, she doesn't understand what's going on. And my son, he's five, he's saying I want to go home," she said. "We're trying to make him understand that we can't go home and there's a very serious situation back home."

When authorities told her on Thursday to pre-

pare to evacuate, Sangris said she tried not to panic. "I wanted to stay strong for my children."

But nerves and fear got the better of her.

"I was tearing up. I didn't want my son to see me," she said.

When she decided to leave, she said she packed up her valuables, such as the first clothes her daughter wore after birth, photos of deceased relatives and pictures of her children at school. Although she said she is exhausted from the ordeal, she remained optimistic. "I'm just hoping that we all make it through this together and that we all go home safe and sound and that Yellowknife isn't burned down."



## The race to link our brains to computers is hotting up

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP/APP): Brain implants have long been trapped in the realm of science fiction, but a steady trickle of medical trials suggests the tiny devices could play a big part in humanity's future.

Billions of dollars are flowing into a clutch of specialist companies hunting for treatments for some of the most debilitating ailments. And pioneering studies have already yielded results.

In May, a Dutchman paralysed in a motorcycle accident regained the ability to walk thanks to implants that restored communication between his brain and spinal cord.

That experiment was one of several eye-catching trials that have helped spark a huge buzz around the industry.

In the decade to 2020, investors poured more than \$30 billion into neurotechnology more widely, according to UNESCO.

And the money has continued to flood in thanks, in part, to rapid improvements in artificial intelligence (AI), used by researchers to interpret the data from the implants. Tech titan Elon Musk has refocused some energy on his Neuralink firm after it received permission in May to test its implants on humans, helping it to raise \$280 million

in funding.

And other firms with less prominent bosses are proliferating, offering hope for sufferers of ailments from rare nerve diseases to severe epilepsy.

Synchron, a company formed more than a decade ago, raised \$75 million this year with backing from the likes of Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Amazon's Jeff Bezos.

The firm got permission from the US authorities in 2021 to test its implant, and has since rolled it out to nine people with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) -- the motor neurone disease that physicist Stephen Hawking suffered from. Its implant allows patients to use messaging apps or browse online using only eye movements and thoughts.

One of the big selling points is that, unlike other implants, it does not require invasive surgery.

The first goals of the Synchron test, said Dr David Putrino, who oversaw the medical trial at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, were to make sure the implant was safe and could monitor the brain over long periods.

On both fronts, he said, the trial had been a success.

Synchron founder Tom Oxley thinks the technology, known as brain-com-

puter interface (BCI), is now at a "turning point".

The industry must aim to make the implants widely accessible, he told AFP.

There are still pretty hefty impediments before that can happen, not least that the most powerful results often come from the most invasive implants.

For example, a patient in the US, Ian Burkhart, who was left paralysed from the neck down after a diving accident, told AFP that getting an implant that allowed him to control his arms and hands again was a "magical moment". But he was only ever able to do that in a lab and the implant, known as a Utah array, was far from comfortable.

"The brain doesn't like having stuff inside it," said Michael Platt, professor of neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania. "And so the immune system of the brain will attack these devices," he said of the Utah arrays.

As the implants get covered by cells, they are less able to transmit signals from the brain and they function less well.

Although far less advanced, some researchers are pinning their hopes on techniques that do not involve implants.

In May, scientists at the University of Texas at Austin said they had used

brain scans and AI modeling to glean "the gist" of what people were thinking.

The technique relied heavily on the GPT models developed by OpenAI, which are capable of analysing massive chunks of data increasingly quickly.

But such research is at the very earliest stage and involves patients spending as much as 16 hours each time in an MRI scanner.

While most players in the field are exclusively concerned with medical uses for neurotechnology, Musk is different.

The maverick tycoon is touting the possibility of telepathy, using the technology to store memories or to enable humans to continue their existence without their bodies.

"In the future you will be able to save and replay memories," he told a Neuralink event in 2020.

"You could potentially download them into a new body or into a robot body."

These claims remain far from reality but this has not stopped Musk from going even further. He sees implants as a way of enhancing humans -- a vital move, he thinks, if our species is to co-exist with superintelligent machines. "That might be the most important thing that a device like this achieves," he said.

## Five things to know about BRICS

JOHANNESBURG (AFP/APP): The BRICS countries, an acronym of the five members Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, meet for three days for a summit in Johannesburg starting Tuesday.

Representing 23 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and 42 percent of the world's population, they are seeking to dull Western economic domination in global affairs.

Here are some facts and figures about the BRICS

A group of emerging economies, it was formally launched in 2009 and it meets yearly at a summit hosted in rotation by one of the member countries.

The meetings aim to assert their position, particularly about the United States and the European Union.

It promotes the recognition of a multipolar global order with economic and political balance, to break away from organizations formed in the post-World War II era, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The bloc whose economic growth is mainly driven by China and India, is now open to expansion. Twenty-three candidates have applied to join the BRICS, and an almost similar number have expressed an interest - among them Argentina, Ethiopia, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

One of the attractions of the group is the New Development Bank, created in 2015 to offer an alternative to the World Bank and the IMF. The Shanghai-headquartered bank has since invested

\$30 billion in infrastructure development projects in member states and other developing economies.

Preparations for the summit saw diplomatic tensions rise on the global stage after host President Cyril Ramaphosa invited Russia's President Vladimir Putin who is the target of an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant over the war in Ukraine.

Following months of speculation, Pretoria finally said Putin will attend the summit via video link.

South Africa, whose ruling ANC party forged relations with Moscow during the Cold War, when the Soviet Union backed its fight against apartheid, has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The five countries account for 18 percent of

international trade, the majority of which is transacted in dollars. Critical of the Greenback's predominance in world trade, one of their goals is to free themselves from the dollar.

The bloc supports the increased use of members' national currencies for trade and the introduction of a common payment system in the long term.

Brazil and China earlier this year signed a bilateral agreement to settle their trade in their local currencies. A meeting of BRICS education ministers last month announced their intention to create their international university rankings.

Moscow believes that Russian universities are being excluded from existing international rankings for political reasons.

## Major hurricane heads toward northwest Mexico, California

CABO SAN LUCAS (AFP/APP): Mexico prepared Friday for a powerful Pacific hurricane that triggered a warning of "potentially catastrophic" flooding in a northwestern tourist region and the neighboring US state of California.

Hurricane Hilary threatened to bring strong winds, flash floods and "life-threatening" surf and rip current conditions, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

"We've already had to live through similar experiences. We know what can happen to us. We must be prepared with food, canned goods and candles," Marlen Hernandez, a 30-year-old

restaurant worker, told AFP. Hilary's maximum sustained winds reached about 145 miles (230 kilometers) an hour before slowing slightly on Friday, according to the NHC.

It was a Category Four hurricane -- the second-most powerful on the Saffir-Simpson scale of one to five. "Life-threatening and potentially catastrophic flooding" was likely over much of Baja California and southern California this weekend and early next week, the NHC warned.

Residents and workers in Cabo San Lucas put up protective boarding, laid sandbags and stored furniture in

preparation, as large waves crashed ashore.

Navy personnel were seen patrolling the beach in Cabo San Lucas -- a popular destination for both Mexican and foreign tourists. "We are a little scared and trying to stay positive," Katrina Morgan, a tourist from the United States, said in the Mexican resort of Cabo San Lucas on the Baja California peninsula.

Hilary was located about 285 miles southwest of Cabo San Lucas on the southern tip of Baja California, the NHC said. "On the forecast track, the center of Hilary will move close to the west

coast of the Baja California peninsula over the weekend and reach southern California by Sunday night," it forecast. A hurricane warning was issued for a stretch of coastline in Baja California from Punta Abreojos to Cabo San Quintin, and a hurricane watch north from there to Ensenada.

Across the border, an unusual tropical storm watch was in effect from the California/Mexico border to Point Mugu in Ventura County, as well as for Catalina Island, according to the NHC.

"Fluctuations in intensity are likely through tonight," it predicted.



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# Election saga and constitutional glitches

A panorama of an early election, a timely and transparent election, as well as credible polls that must be equally acceptable to all stakeholders and fall within the stipulated time frame categorically set by the constitution are the demands of all segments of the society, together with as, when and how it suits to vested political interests of each faction. The state institutions are in a race to cope up their constitutional task in due course of time, while political strategists, the commentators including civil society, think tanks and media anxiously peer at the events happening around them in the country. Thus, a flood of rumours and a propaganda of assumptions has created confusion and uncertainty regarding the upcoming polls, the aims and tenure of the caretaker rulers, while the ECP and the establishment play the role of Aunt Sally for critics and political activists from across the political spectrum.

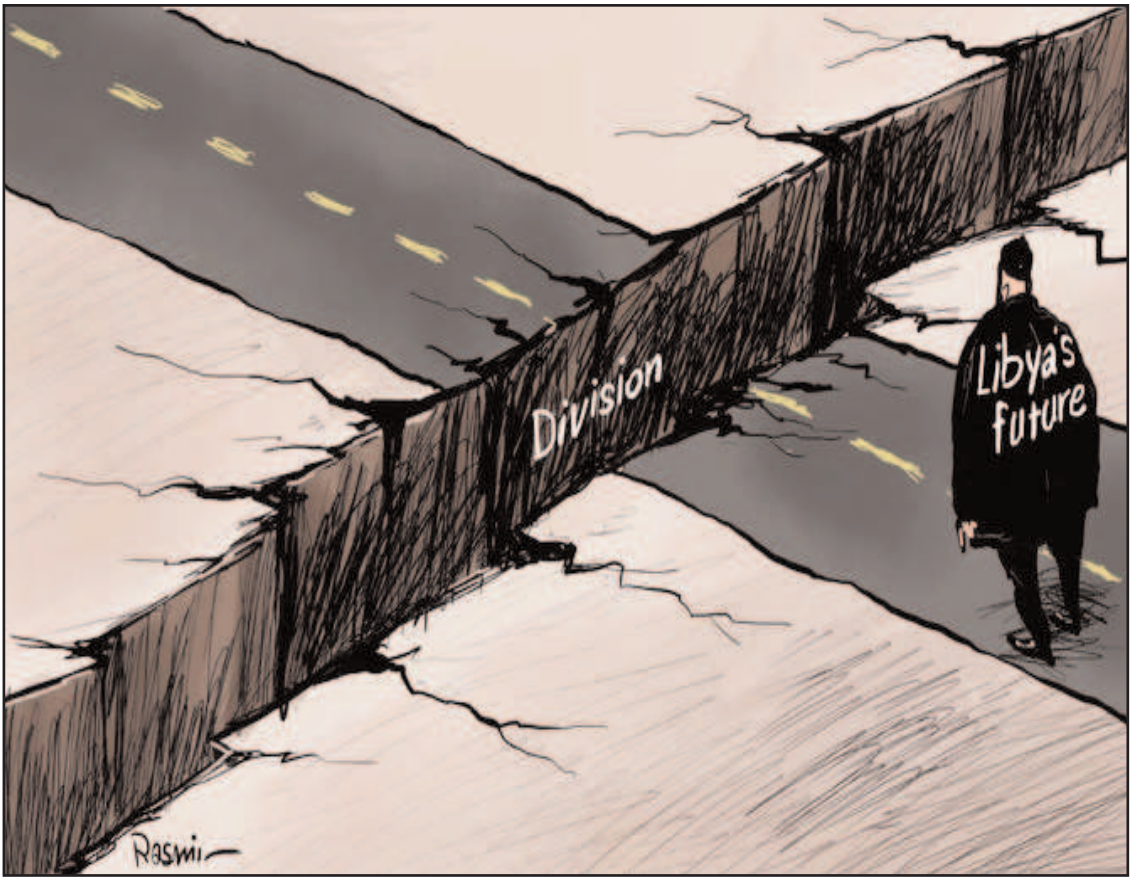
After the Council of Common Interests (CCI) approved the result of 2023 Digital Census about two week ago that made it mandatory for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold the next general election according to the fresh delimitation of the electoral constituencies. Over the past decade, significant increase has been noted in the population and numbers of voters in each electoral district, that would not only affect vote bank of every political groups but legally merits redrawing of administrative units including Municipal and metropolitan corporations as required by the law and similarly set new boundaries for electoral blocks, and constituencies for Provincial and National Assemblies in all federating units of the country including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. Apparently, that months-long exercise fell in a highly volatile political scenario ahead of a crucial election. The Article 224 of the Constitution binds the ECP to conduct general elections within 90 days after the dissolution of assembly prematurely, while Section 17 (2) of the Election Act calls for delimitation of the constituencies after every census officially declared. There might be legal implications of holding an election beyond stipulated period of 90 days, but there would also be constitutional issues along with political repercussions in the aftermath of general elections if some political groups raise objection to the conduct of a void polls that did not correspond to the ground realities. The situation really presents a unique challenging diegesis, that deserves across the board national consensus and unity among all contesting groups in good litter and spirit for broader national cause.

Historically, persistent political instability and an unceasing tussle between major political groups over the past years have badly spoiled the domestic political environment, thus a high level of trust deficit and antagonism reduced the scope for any intra-party dialogue and consensus on political and national issues. Multiple problems such as economic degradation, skyrocketing inflation and deteriorating law and order situations are the outcome of months long political unrest and prevailing uncertainty in the country. As the caretaker setup took over the ruins of the government, the ECP announced the schedule for delimitation of the Electoral constituencies that is almost a four months process and would surely delay the next election for 2-3 months. The Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the PPP have opposed the ECP and termed it as ill-intent and in contravention to the Constitution. Both political groups vowed to challenge the ECP's decision in the court so that the election process could be accomplished in due course of time in line with the provisions of the constitution.

The newly emerged situation has certain legal, political and constitutional aspects that warrants due care, immediate attention and timely redressal from the state to avoid any further crisis and any unforeseen situation in the future. While it becomes highly urgent for a state like Pakistan which has fallen victim to an acute political uncertainty and economic depletion in the past year. Recently, the Chairman Senate categorically backed the ECP decision while the Apex court also gave a salient endorsement to the electoral watchdog during a hearing of a previous case regarding incorrect delimitation of constituencies in Shikarpur District of Sindh. In the current scenario, there is a dire need of national consensus over the issue of election and the caretaker government must take the lead by calling a nationwide All Parties Conference to deliberate on the constitutional requirement and reservations of the civic groups regarding a delay in the election. So, all stakeholders take this issue as a constitutional need and a positive opportunity that will not only have a constructive impact on the result of the upcoming general election but surely will lead to a stable democratically elected Political government in the country.

## Important Notice

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# Israeli settler terrorism is increasingly fueled by government complicity

Yossi Mekelberg

The last thing you would expect of someone implicated in the killing of a young and innocent fellow human being is for him to have a constant grin on his face as he is brought into court for a hearing to decide whether his detention will be extended while police carry out further investigations.

But this is exactly what happened with Elisha Yered, a Jewish settler in the occupied West Bank who is implicated in the killing of 19-year-old Qosai Jammal Mi'tan during clashes between settlers and residents of the West Bank village of Burqa.

I must say that beyond the terrible loss of another young Palestinian life, once again at the hands of a group of settlers who have become a law unto themselves in the occupied West Bank, it was Yered's wide grin that said even more about this growing group of Jewish supremacists, who represent the most repulsive side of the already ugly Israeli oppression of millions of Palestinians.

Most people suspected of involvement in a killing, possibly a murder, tend to look somewhat reticent or worried about what will happen to them next. They might even show regret about being in a situation in which another person has lost their life, regardless of their own level of culpability. Some might even show some degree of remorse.

That might all sound almost too obvious — but wait a moment, because none of it applies when one belongs to this particular group of settlers, who are arrogant beyond comprehension, defined by their racism, and who believe that this part of the world belongs to them and them alone.

In their distorted versions of Judaism and Zionism, they believe Palestinians deserve no rights and probably should not be there at all. These settlers are also condescending to any Israelis who disagree with them, bluntly dismissing them as “traitors.”

The “settler grin,” which demonstrates a complete lack of sympathy or empathy for the suffering of other human beings, especially those who do not belong to their own ethnic or religious group, is also the smirk of someone who thinks that the Almighty is on his side and knows that his country, including its government and security forces, is entirely in the hands of himself and his fellow thugs.

While I would hasten to question whether any merciful divinity could possibly be on the side of these hoodlums, I sadly have to agree with them that most of their fellow Israelis either support them or pay no attention to their actions.

Even those who are appalled by them will not put the issue very high on their agenda, nor are they sufficiently bothered to protest against the daily acts of brutality by settlers against their Palestinian neighbors, despite vigorously campaigning to save their own precious democracy.

You are probably unfamiliar with the names Elisha Yered, the one with the intolerable grin, and

Yehiel Indore, but police suspect them of causing the death of Mi'tan, either on purpose or by negligence, a crime equivalent to murder without aggravating circumstances, as well as obstruction of justice. Several Palestinians were also arrested, suspected of assault and stone throwing during the clashes in which

that the Palestinians there were not armed and that should Israeli security forces intervene, they would do so on behalf of the settler perpetrators of this incident, not to protect the victims, whose lives were in danger while their property was being damaged.

The flagrancy and fre-

**But you should ask yourselves what a group of religious settlers was doing on a Friday evening, close to the start of Shabat, when they left their illegal outpost of Oz Zion armed, according to some accounts, with pistols and an M16 rifle, and headed for the fields of Burqa, if not to provoke a confrontation. They knew full well that the Palestinians there were not armed and that should Israeli security forces intervene, they would do so on behalf of the settler perpetrators of this incident, not to protect the victims, whose lives were in danger while their property was being damaged. The flagrancy and frequency of attacks such as this has led senior Israel Defense Forces commanders and Shin Bet security agency chief Ronen Bar to warn the public, and in this case also Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, that settler terrorism is further fueling Palestinian terrorism. In other words, settler violence has become a security threat to Israelis, too. But instead of supporting his security chiefs, Netanyahu preferred not to upset his ultra-right-wing coalition colleagues and remained silent. Meanwhile some members of his coalition embarked on a vitriolic attack against the security officials in the media, especially social media, accusing them of compromising Israel's security, knowing very well that as public servants they cannot respond to such accusations, at least not in public. Leading the pack was the ultra-nationalist religious fanatic and eight-times convict, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who described the provocateurs under police investigation as “heroes” who were defending themselves “from murder by Palestinians,” and therefore had his full backing. This government's chutzpah knows no limits. It is simply mind-blowing.**

Indore was badly injured.

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Leading the pack was the ultra-nationalist religious fanatic and eight-times convict, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who described the provocateurs under police investigation as “heroes” who were defending themselves “from murder by Palestinians,” and therefore had his full backing. This government's chutzpah knows no limits. It is simply mind-blowing.

It is time for those in Israel who still believe in peaceful coexistence and reconciliation with their Palestinian neighbors to remind Ben-Gvir, himself a settler, that even under Israeli law the so-called “Hilltop Youth” settler group has stolen Palestinian land while terrorizing Palestinians. It is about time that we stopped referring to their abhorrent activities as “settler violence” and instead call it out for what it is — terrorism, pure and simple.

The US State Department defines terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents.” It also describes it as an activity that “involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, property, or infrastructure; and (one that) appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion.” Can anyone dispute the fact that the actions of these particular settlers fall squarely under this definition?

This year we witnessed settlers descending first on the town of Hawara and then Turmus Aya, and committing what were nothing short of pogroms, acts of collective punishment inflicted on innocent Palestinians. And these are only two extreme examples of the hundreds of attacks on Palestinians this year alone. Politically motivated settler terrorism is not new, it has been going on for decades, but it has increased in its brazenness, intensity and magnitude, and more recently it has been happening with the explicit support of members of the Cabinet.

It is the responsibility of Israel's government and security forces to eradicate this contemptible behavior. It is for the courageous protesters who campaign for democracy to add this to their list of causes. And it is for the international community to get off the fence and ensure there is accountability for those who are responsible when innocent civilians are targeted by squads of terrorists, whether it is the culprits themselves or the authorities who permit it to happen — or worse, encourage it.

# EU continues to beef up its global sanctions policy

Andrew Hammond

One of the big surprises since Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been the depth and breadth of the EU's response, including 11 rounds of sanctions so far. However, the EU's sanctions policy now extends far beyond Moscow to include dozens of countries, as Brussels seeks to become a more powerful player on the world stage.

The countries currently under EU restrictive measures include not only the usual suspects such as the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Syria and Venezuela, but also a much wider collection of states in the Asia Pacific (including China and Myanmar), Africa and the Middle East (including Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen and Zimbabwe), and the Americas (including Haiti, Nicaragua and, perhaps most surprising, the US, a measure that relates to the extra-territorial application of American legislation). The list even includes some potential EU accession states, such as Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkiye.

While some of these sanctions have been in place for decades, the regime is not static. In fact, it is highly dynamic. The current list of sanctioned individuals alone currently runs to about 500 pages, with the list of sanctioned members of Al-Qaeda the longest for any single organization.

One example of the changing nature of the EU sanctions regime is illustrated by the fact that Brussels is starting to lay the groundwork to potentially impose the first restrictive measures on members of the junta that seized power in the key African state of Niger last month. The new military leaders have so far rejected international diplomatic efforts at mediation, and neighboring countries backing the armed takeover have called on the UN to prevent a military intervention threatened by other West African states.

Building on the growing geographical spread of its sanctions, a further sign of the EU's future intent is that the European Council recently agreed on a proposal for a new EU law to toughen up the sanctions regime by defining criminal offenses and penalties for those who violate it.

Actions that will be labeled as criminal include helping persons subject to restrictive measures to bypass an EU travel ban, trading in sanctioned goods, and involvement in transactions with states or entities that are subject to EU restrictive measures.

Under these proposals, violating or circumventing sanctions would be punishable criminal offenses punishable by prison sentences of up to five years and fines of up to 10 million (\$11 million). Companies that violate or circumvent sanctions would also be excluded from public tenders.

Sanctions are therefore a growing tool in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, through which it can intervene, where necessary, to prevent conflict or respond to current or emerging crises, such as the one in Niger at present. While many of these measures are adopted autonomously by the EU, some are mandated by the UN Security Council.

The goal is to bring about change in harmful policies or activities through four focal points: Promoting international peace and security, preventing conflicts, supporting democracy plus the rule of law and human rights, and defending the principles of international law.

Sanctions can target not only governments and individuals but also companies and organizations, such as Al-Qaeda, in four main ways: Weapons embargoes, travel bans, asset freezes,

and other economic measures such as restrictions on imports and exports.

While the 27 members of the EU are generally in agreement on sanctions policy, fissures do open from time to time. For example, Hungary used its veto power to dilute some recent restrictive measures by securing opt-outs for itself when it comes to the embargo on Russian oil.

Despite such occasional internal squabbles, one reason why EU sanctions have such international clout is that they are sometimes replicated by non-EU nations across Europe. For example, Switzerland this month adopted the EU's 11th package of sanctions against Moscow. This is one reason why Russia's ambassador to Switzerland, Sergei Garmonin, announced that Moscow would not accept any future Swiss-hosted peace summit on the future of Ukraine, as proposed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, on the grounds that Switzerland had lost its reputation for neutrality.

EU sanctions are also closely aligned with those of the UK, which now has its own independent, post-Brexit regime defined in legislation such as the 2018 Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act. The current UK regime is similar, but by no means identical, to the EU's, with nations such as Armenia and Azerbaijan on the UK's list but not the European one.

The proliferation of sanctions across different jurisdictions means that multinationals face a complex landscape of restrictive measures, not only within Europe but outside it, including the US, Australia, Canada and Japan, among other

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nations.

To be sure, it is the US sanctions regime that many companies around the world still pay the most attention to. This is due in part due to the primacy of the dollar in global trade and Washington's linking usage of the dollar to its sanction regime, plus the use of secondary sanctions that seek to impose obligations on non-US businesses even when there is no direct nexus with the US market.

However, the growing scope and force of the EU sanctions regime means that Europe is also increasingly being seen as a top-tier sanctions jurisdiction, internationally.

The next steps as part of this agenda will probably come from the next European Commission, which will be formed following the European Parliament elections in June 2024, and could include significant changes that redefine the role and impact of EU restrictive measures in an attempt to further strengthen the bloc's sanctions posture.



# Crown prince’s UK visit will benefit both kingdoms

Well-sourced leaks emerged from the British government late last week that an invitation to visit the UK had been offered to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman following a phone call between him and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Thursday.

There is little doubt that the visit will attract much divided comment, but let us be clear from the outset that such an opportunity is very much in the interest of the UK, and is the right call by Sunak and Foreign Secretary James Cleverly.

First, the Kingdom is demonstrably changing. The UK needs to understand this even more, and be engaged with it, and it is impossible to do so without the highest-level relationship with the principal driver of change, the crown prince.

To those in the UK unfamiliar with the present-day region, the pace of change might be difficult to grasp. It was well summed up in Thomas Friedman’s keynote article for The New York Times in June, contrasting today’s Saudi Arabia and Israel. “If you have not been to Saudi Arabia in the last five years, you may as well not have been there at all,” he wrote.

From the changing role of women in the workforce — 19 percent in 2018 to 37 percent now — and the liberalizing of social gatherings, to the technology required to shift from a carbon economy and deliver

Vision 2030, not just an inventory is required but also an understanding of the pathway and ideological milestones, including the hurdles.

UK business and sport has been ahead of the curve, from NEOM as a destination for some of Britain’s most innovative companies to the Premier

What will emerge from the talks with Iran, or with Israel? The UK has a profound interest in both. As a nuclear power and signatory to the Iran deal, the UK will support decreasing tension between Tehran and Riyadh, but will understandably be interested in the terms. On Israel, the UK should welcome the opportunity to draw decades of enmity to a close, and build a new economy in the region that fully and openly includes Israel. But it should also, from its wealth of history, do all it can to highlight the immense opportunity to close the painful chapter on Palestinian injustice, emphasizing that any “normalization” should galvanize all parties to finally deliver Palestinian statehood, and Israeli security and peace, for too many who have suffered for too long.

League and Newcastle United. It is not surprising that Downing Street recognizes this and wants to explore much more than a free trade deal.

Second, the region is changing fast. The gradual breaking down of a post-war order, from the time of debates in the UK about “East of Suez” to more recent US responses to events in Syria or attacks emanating from Yemen, has altered perceptions of

Alistair Burt

alliances and regional politics. The result has been a more self-assertive Gulf, not always easy partners, even with each other, as the rift in the GCC demonstrated, but appreciating that decisions about mutual security increasingly lie in their own hands to negoti-

ate and maintain. The UK has vital interests to protect, particularly in trade and defense, so for us not to be engaged with the regional power that is Saudi Arabia would be foolish. Equally, while regional diplomacy might no longer look over its shoulder to the UK as it once did, having the ear of a UN Security Council member, with its diplomatic, intelligence and military reach, suggests both sides

will gain from sharing ideas about “where next?”

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deliver Palestinian statehood, and Israeli security and peace, for too many who have suffered for too long. Third, the world is changing fast. States no longer need to measure themselves against the will of the West. There are others knocking at the door of our long-term friends, and it should no longer be a surprise to us that it is perfectly reasonable for them to act in their own interests, as we have always done. There are many reasons why all our friends in the Gulf, with whom we have stood close under many threats in the past, should continue to do so. But we need to be aware that China, Russia and other competitors will lose no time pursuing avenues should the UK not do so.

Good relationships are multi-faceted, and the best involve frankness in recognizing differences and challenges, as well as embracing mutual opportunity. The crown prince’s visit will not ignore human rights issues, under the long shadow of Jamal Khashoggi, on which the UK has been forceful, and those involved in the visit should expect this. But history, in not forgetting, also provides opportunities for a reset to face contemporary challenges, not least climate change and potential catastrophe.

There is no influence without engagement — onlookers should hope for, and encourage, a mutually successful visit.

# Turkiye-Syria normalization is no bed of roses

Sinem Cengiz

The Russia-led Turkiye-Syria normalization process stands as the most critical diplomatic initiative in the Middle East after the Chinese-brokered Saudi Arabia-Iran normalization attempt.

Although Damascus has engaged in efforts to normalize its relations with several Arab countries, Turkiye is a tough nut to crack as the path to rapprochement is full of mines for both sides.

The Turkish-Syrian engagement started last year thanks to Russian mediation. Following several intelligence-level contacts between the two countries, the first high-ranking engagement between Ankara and Damascus took place in December, when the Turkish, Russian and Syrian defense ministers met.

This normalization process took center stage a few weeks before the critical Turkish elections held in May. After a second meeting between the defense ministers — this time Iran was also included — in April, the first official meeting at the diplomatic level took place in May. For the first time since 2011, the Turkish and Syrian foreign ministers met in a summit that was held in Moscow to create a roadmap for Turkish-Syrian normalization.

During those two months, there was also strong pressure from Moscow to hold a meeting at the presidential level; however, the conditions on the ground were not ready for such negotiations at the table. This pushed Moscow to return to the defense-intelligence channel between the two countries, as it was crystal clear there were serious points of divergence between Ankara and Damascus related to the Turkish military presence in Syria, the fight against terrorism and the return of refugees.

Amid the slow pace of the Russian-initiated Turkish-Syrian rapprochement process, Damascus has recently escalated its harsh rhetoric toward Ankara, putting the process into a state of limbo. Syrian President Bashar Assad made it clear in an interview last week that the Turkiye-Syria normalization process had lost the momentum it gained before the May elections. Assad also rejected any meeting with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, arguing that he aims to use the normalization talks to legitimize the Turkish presence in Syria.

Ankara immediately — using the same tone — responded to Assad’s remarks, refusing any Turkish military withdrawal from the northern part of the war-torn country before securing its own national security.

In the meantime, the Syrian foreign minister, who recently attended a meeting in Cairo, reportedly asked for the support of the Arab countries against Turkiye. However, as Ankara has mended its relations with the Arab states, Syria’s request is unlikely to receive any positive responses. Moreover, having some tangible outcomes from the Turkish-Syrian normalization process is what the region’s countries seek, rather than any escalations between the two neighbors.

The harsh rhetoric from the Syrian side is not only

an indication of Damascus’ reluctance to mend ties with Ankara, but is also a sign of weakening Russian influence on Assad. In addition, the gradual acceptance of the Assad regime’s return to the Arab fold has given it the confidence to not make any concessions in the talks with Ankara, but rather drag its feet until the conditions turn in its favor. Damascus’ messages not only show a lack of trust in the process, but also that it aims to turn the process into a bargain, in which it hopes for the upper hand.

To proceed along the path of normalization, there are several variables that shape Turkiye and Syria’s motivations, which are both economic and political/security-based. The driving force behind Ankara’s approach is the aim to find tangible relief

Kurdish militias might take control again, posing a serious security threat to the Turkish state. Ankara wants an effective and specific mechanism to combat terrorism and this is only possible when its concerns are addressed by the Syrian regime, as well as by the US and Russia.

The US military last week deployed more reinforcements to its bases in northern Syria, in areas currently occupied by the Kurdish People’s Defense Units, which is considered a terrorist group by Ankara but which Washington describes as “partner forces.” Within this context, Ankara refuses to withdraw its troops because neither Washington nor Damascus are addressing its security concerns.

The third pressing issue for Ankara is to maintain the delicate relationship it has with Moscow, which is the key actor in settling on

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from the refugee burden. The repatriation of Syrian refugees was one of the pledges made by the Turkish leadership after the election victory. The solution for this issue is closely tied to the normalization process between Ankara and Damascus, but also the support of the regional states. In the past few weeks, Turkiye has increased the number of deportations, but there is still no concrete plan.

A second pressing issue for Turkiye is the Kurdish terrorism threat emanating from the northern part of Syria. This issue was the driving force behind Ankara’s deviation from its initial policy of seeking a change in the Syrian leadership. Turkiye’s current concern is that, if it withdraws from the areas it secured from the terrorist elements,

a draft roadmap for Turkiye and Syria. Given the closeness in Turkish-Russian ties and Russia’s influence over the Syrian regime, it was presumed that the course of the Turkiye-Syria detente would run in parallel to the rapid normalization efforts between Syria and the Arab states. However, this long-touted rapprochement has several variables and actors that put the interests of the two sides into conflict.

The rapprochement path is not a bed of roses but rather a minefield, and the status quo is fragile. So, despite Russian pressure and in light of the conditions set by each side, the Turkish-Syrian normalization is unlikely to proceed at a rapid pace, at least at the political level, although the security level is expected to continue.

# We need to make winter the new summer for our travel plans

Last week, hundreds of vacationers had to be evacuated from the resort island of Maui, in the US state of Hawaii, as wildfires raged across a large area in the west of the island, razing some places to the ground. This week, the focus is on Yellowknife in Canada, where another series of wildfires has also prompted a large-scale evacuation.

Less than a month ago, wildfires on the Greek island of Rhodes damaged two seaside resorts and numerous other areas, forcing more than 20,000 people to evacuate, many of them tourists.

Tourists in other vacation hot spots have faced other kinds of problems and dangers, including sizzling temperatures of more than 50 degrees Celsius, severe water shortages, and dried up lakes or rivers on which they had hoped to swim or participate in water sports. In addition, there was a lack of snow on many peaks.

The results of global warming, including spikes in average temperatures around the world and more frequent occurrences of extreme weather events, from droughts to flash floods, are playing havoc with tourism all around the world, but more so in Western nations.

For well over half a century, the tourism industry in the Western hemisphere has eagerly looked forward to the summer season, typically peaking in July and August, as its busiest time of the year. Hordes of tourists, mostly families with children, traditionally descend on destinations, be they beach or mountain resorts, at this time for their annual vacations, and stay there for several days, if not

weeks. For most tourists, especially those from colder climates, the idea is to relax and enjoy a bit of sun.

However, climate change is putting paid to this image of a traditional summer vacation. Thanks to rising temperatures over the past few years, thousands of holidaymakers have been caught up in extreme weather events such as sizzling cities, where daytime tempera-

tures can now exceed 45 C or even approach 50 C. This has been seen in southern Europe, most notably Spain, forcing tourists to spend their time sweating indoors rather than enjoying activities such as sunbathing at the beach, taking a dip in the ocean, or simply strolling around cities, shopping and seeing the sights.

All of these factors are playing havoc not only with the plans of tourists but also with the tourism industry,

enough for the company to absorb and still report a hefty profit, as the tourism industry continues to grow rapidly in the post-pandemic world.

This year does not portend well for the future.

Holidaymakers, travel firms, hotels, airlines and every other cog in the tourism machine, including theme-park operators and activities providers, will need to start planning for a world in which weather-related interruptions and

disruptions become more frequent, more severe and more prolonged.

The options to deal with the situation are limited. Most travelers remain bound to the July-August window for a family break, as governments are unlikely to turn school calendars upside down by moving the main annual break to another time of year just so that students and their families are able to enjoy a vacation.

The amount was small

One option for families might therefore be to seek out alternative destinations, preferably in cooler climates such as northern Europe or the Nordic nations, or in tropical nations where it is hot and humid for most of the year and where they would at least be protected from wildfires. But if opting for less-traditional, cooler destinations might be a choice for travelers, it is not an option for the tourism industries in traditional vacation hot spots in Europe and North America, where tens of billions of dollars have already been invested in the creation of comprehensive tourism infrastructures, including hotels, shopping malls, theme parks, activities and transportation networks, and where hundreds of millions of people are employed in the sector.

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enough for the company to absorb and still report a hefty profit, as the tourism industry continues to grow rapidly in the post-pandemic world.

This year does not portend well for the future.

Holidaymakers, travel firms, hotels, airlines and every other cog in the tourism machine, including theme-park operators and activities providers, will need to start planning for a world in which weather-related interruptions and

disruptions become more frequent, more severe and more prolonged.

The options to deal with the situation are limited. Most travelers remain bound to the July-August window for a family break, as governments are unlikely to turn school calendars upside down by moving the main annual break to another time of year just so that students and their families are able to enjoy a vacation.

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# China approves imports of Pakistani dried chillies

BEIJING (INP): The General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) has officially approved the import of dried chillies from Pakistan, marking a notable development in the trade relations between the two countries.

This decision, detailed in a protocol released on August 10, outlines the phytosanitary requirements for Pakistani chillies.

The approval specifically pertains to chillies from the *Capsicum annuum* L. plant, grown within Pakistan's borders. This move signifies the entry of these chillies into the

expansive Chinese market, as highlighted in the official announcement.

The protocol sets forth several conditions to ensure the quality and safety of the imported chillies. These include a robust regulatory framework, mandatory registration for chilli cultivation and processing establishments, pest control measures, and adherence to pre-export protocols.

Additionally, the packaging must meet specific standards, and the chillies will undergo inspection procedures both in Pakistan and upon their arrival in China.

Speaking to the China-Pakistan Agricultural and Industrial Information Platform (CPAIC), Xi Jianlong, a manager from CMEC group involved in Pakistan-China red chilli contract farming, shared insights on the recent development. "This announcement underscores the collaborative efforts between China and Pakistan.

The requirements aim to ensure traceability, crucial for maintaining quality and safety standards," Xi stated.

The manager also emphasized the potential this presents for businesses.

"Meeting these standards not only allows access to the Chinese market but also positions businesses competitively for other premium markets," he added.

Reflecting on the broader implications, the Chinese manager suggested that such developments could motivate other sectors in Pakistan to venture into international markets, capitalizing on the inherent quality and uniqueness of their produce.

It is also a boon for third-party service providers to help growers increase output and quality, he said.

# No progress in power sector despite rise in electricity tariff

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has stressed the need for overhauling the power sector through drastic measures, as there is no progress in this sector's financial position despite increase in electricity prices up to Rs51 per unit under the IMF's policy to remove inefficiencies, amidst escalating cost of line losses to a whopping level.

PIAF Chairman Faheem ur Rehman Saigol stated that the circular debt is projected to increase by another Rs545 billion by March 2024 despite a surge in electricity prices as foreign loans pegged with the so-called power sector reforms are limited to only increasing prices and ignore other critical issues. Pakistan eyes another loan of \$600 million from the World Bank for power sector reforms in the current fiscal year and the sector also remains in focus of the International Monetary Fund under a new \$3 billion standby arrangement.

Yet, there is no improvement in the sector's financial health despite increase in electricity prices up to Rs51 per unit under the IMF's policy of fiscalization of power sector inefficiencies, a strategy that has led to a massive change in priorities of the low middle-income groups just to pay their bills.

He said that in present scenario the energy efficiency and conservation are key measures used by countries across the globe to mitigate associated risks. However, in the case of Pakistan, both energy efficiency and conservation were generally treated as alien concepts. He noted that there was an urgent need for upgradation of energy efficiency and conservation standards and strict enforcement, besides replacement of inefficient appliances and consumer awareness for responsible use of energy were other key areas which should be identified for action as a national priority. He estimated that a dollar outflow of around \$ 1.25 billion could be potentially saved

annually through implementation of efficiency and conservation measures. He pointed out that the line losses ran as high as 9pc over and above the percentage allowed by NEPRA. He informed that theft and line losses should be addressed through advanced metering and cabling. Economy has been under adverse external conditions, due to spillovers from the war in Ukraine, and domestic challenges, including from accommodative policies that resulted in uneven growth. Steadfast implementation of corrective policies and reforms remain essential to regain macroeconomic stability, address imbalances and lay the foundation for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Efforts to strengthen the viability of the energy sector and reduce unsustainable losses are also essential. Further efforts to reduce poverty and protect the most vulnerable by enhancing targeted transfers are important, especially in the current high inflation environment.

He said that Pakistan, being a net importer of energy resources, was facing serious supply-side challenges, as the global price of crude oil and imported coal had witnessed a continuous rise, leading to a significant threat to country's energy security.

Faheem Saigol said that the sector needs to be deregulated in letter and spirit, as nothing can work unless the DISCOs are truly empowered and allowed to act independently. He pointed out that the power sector has been suffering from miss-governance, lack of DISCOs' competence and missing coordination between the generation and distribution systems.

The sector alone can drag the economy down to an abyss unless it is resolved. And for that to happen, nothing short of deregulation and privatization will work, as successive governments have used the energy sector for their political gains by taking decisions that have resulted in unabated rise of circular debt.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling vegetables on his stall at Sunday Bazaar Ahpara Market.

## 8th Colour & Chem Expo concludes

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan's 8th largest and exclusive two-day exhibition of dyes, chemicals & allied industry concluded here on Sunday.

A two-day workshop was held here on August 19-20 at the Lahore International Expo Centre. The title of this year's theme was "Transforming Challenges into Opportunities." Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) Chairman Fahimur Rehman Saigol and Pattern-in-Chief of PIAF and Businessmen Panel (BMP) Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar inaugurated the event on Saturday.

The exhibition was organised under the aegis of Event and Conference International Pvt. Ltd and Rainbow Group in collaboration with the Asia Dyestuff Industry Federation. The event was supported by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) and Punjab Dyes & Chemicals Merchants Association (PDCMA).

Convener and exhibition head Abdul Rahim Chughtai told APP that during the two-day moot, the event incorporated digital printing, textile printing & screen printing, equipment and machinery exhibition as well as a concurrent show.

He said that this year more than 200 local and foreign companies from China, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Germany, Turkey, the UAE and the UK participated in the expo.

## Smartphone shipment rised

BEIJING (APP): The foldable smartphone market has seen remarkable growth in China, with shipments jumping 173 percent year on year to reach 1.26 million units in the second quarter of 2023, according to an industry report.

In the first half of the year, the country shipped 2.27 million foldable phones, marking a 102-percent surge from the same period last year, said the global market research firm IDC.

Huawei has maintained its top position in the domestic foldable smartphone market with a market share of 43 percent in the second quarter of the year, while Vivo climbed to second place, occupying a market share of 19.7 percent.

# ICCI, CDA launch tree plantation drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman CDA Noorul Amin Mengal along with President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Director General (DG) of Environment Protection Agency Farzana Altaf Shah visited Islamabad's posh commercial center F-6 Markaz and launched a tree plantation drive from markets by planting a saplings in the Supermarket.

F-6 Markaz Traders Welfare Association President Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi, Secretary General Aqib Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan, Akhtar Abbasi, Malik Shabbir Awan, Imtiaz Abbasi, and others were also present on the occasion, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

Chairman CDA took a round of the market along with Chamber President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, DG of EPA Farzana Altaf Shah, and representatives of the Traders Association and reviewed the ongoing development works.

He issued instructions to the CDA officials to speed up the ongoing works and to advance other works as well. Talking on the occasion, he said, "The devel-

opment work will be reviewed by visiting other markets soon."

He also announced on the occasion that the Zero Point Bridge would be handed over to ICCI for its decoration and beautification.

He directed the Director Environment, CDA to carry out the plantation drive in the markets in collaboration with ICCI while he himself would visit the markets.

Speaking on the occasion, President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the chamber had earlier planted thousands of saplings in Islamabad in collaboration with CDA and this year too, ICCI in cooperation with CDA and concerned market associations, would carry out the plantation drive in the markets to make Islamabad greener and promote a healthy environment.

He said, "Along with planting new trees, a strategy should be made for proper maintenance of old trees so that they can be kept safe."

He said that to determine the age of old trees in Islamabad, tags should be placed on them and special arrangements should be

made for their proper maintenance so that they can be preserved for a long time.

He said that only 10-15 percent of the saplings survive while the rest are lost, so special attention should be paid to the care of the saplings.

He urged the representatives of the market associations to fully cooperate fully with CDA in the plantation drive to make Islamabad more beautiful.

Farzana Altaf Shah, Director General EPA, said, "There is a need to plant more trees to protect the cities from the harmful effects of climate change and it is commendable that the ICCI in promoting the tree plantation drive in the markets in collaboration with CDA and trade associations, which will make the environment of Islamabad healthier."

The President Supermarket Association Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi assured of full cooperation to make the plantation drive successful.

"There is a need to replace the old sewage lines in the markets as the old lines are no longer able to bear the load due to the increase in population and often get blocked," he stressed.

# China-Eurasia Expo in Urumqi: Pakistani mangoes become center of attraction

BEIJING (APP): The Pakistani Mango Festival showcased sweet and juicy mangoes, allowing a large number of visitors to savor the 'King of fruits' at the ongoing five-day China-Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo in Urumqi, the capital city of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China.

"Top Pakistani mango exporters are displaying different varieties of mango such as Sindhri, Chaunsa, and Anwar Ratol, among others," Commercial Counselor, Pakistan Embassy, Beijing, Ghulam Qadir said.

He believed, "The event is not only a treat for the taste buds but also symbolizes the strength of cultural exchanges and economic partnerships."

Ghulam Qadir remarked, "Pakistani mangoes hold a special place in Pakistan's agricultural landscape and cultural fab-

ric. They are renowned for their delectable taste and exquisite aroma, capturing the hearts of fruit enthusiasts globally."

About other Pakistani products, he said, "Visitors to the festival could explore stalls showcasing various Pakistani products, textiles, handicrafts, and more. This cultural exchange bridges gaps, facilitating cultural diplomacy and fostering relationships built on mutual respect and curiosity."

The commercial counselor informed, "On the invitation of the government of Urumqi, Senator Rana Mehmood Ul Hassan is leading a six-member delegation from the Senate of Pakistan. Additionally, 20 top mango exporters from Multan are participating in this expo."

Promoting the Silk Road Spirit, Strengthening Eurasian Cooperation is the theme of this year's expo, which covers an exhibition area

of 70,000 square meters.

Seven international organizations are participating in the expo, and it has also attracted over 1,300 businesses from 40 countries including Pakistan and regions, including 25 of the world's top 500 companies, according to the organizers of the event.

Numerous Pakistani exhibitors are showcasing the nation's cultural and traditional products.

A total of 33 trade and investment promotional activities will take place during the five-day event. On the sidelines of the expo, there will also be forums on topics such as regional economic cooperation.

The (China) Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo has been held three times since 2015, drawing over 3,700 businesses from 47 countries and regions to participate.

# Boosting investment, collaboration in furniture industry, PFC to visit Russia

ISLAMABAD (INP): A delegation of Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) led by its Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq will visit Russia instant month with the aim of exploring potential investment avenues, fostering joint ventures, and nurturing collaboration in the furniture industry.

Talking to a delegation of furniture exporters led by Chaudhary Araib which called him on Sunday, Mian

Kashif said, "This presents an opportune time for both countries to strengthen ties in various sectors, including the burgeoning furniture industry." He said, "As we delve into an era of globalization and increased cross-border cooperation, the furniture sector offers significant untapped potential for growth and mutual benefit."

The CEO PFC said, "This visit will encompass a comprehensive agenda that

includes business meetings, site visits to prominent furniture manufacturers, networking events, and interactive sessions with key stakeholders in the Russian furniture industry."

"The visit will provide an ideal platform for knowledge exchange, technological innovation sharing and partnership building," he added. Mian Kashif said, "PFC looks forward to the prospect of a successful col-

laboration that will mutually benefit the furniture industries of Pakistan and Russia."

"Russia's increasing demand for quality furniture creates an exciting landscape for collaboration. By leveraging the strengths of both countries, we can enhance product offerings, improve production efficiency, and explore novel design concepts that cater to diverse markets," he remarked.

# Unstable Rupee keeps damaging economy amid tough IMF conditions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has said that the unstable rupee value and its massive fall continued to damage the economy, as the local currency has hit a new all-time low mark against US dollar in the interbank market amidst rising energy cost and escalating markup rate owing to tough conditions of the International Monetary Fund, devaluing the rupee by 1.96pc or Rs3.82 against the US dollar in the interbank market.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that there was a complete breakdown of economic policy-making, as the country's

fiscal policy had become subservient to monetary and exchange rate policies. During the week, the rupee emerged as the worst performing currency in Asia in the wake of strengthening of the greenback globally and a surge in its demand in Pakistan.

Among all currencies, Pakistani rupee registered the largest decline of 26.6% in the past one year and the steepest drop of 22.3% in the first eight months of 2023.

He said that the monetary tightening and exchange rate depreciation resulted in higher inflation, public debt and debt servicing. The empirical evidence showed that the one percent monetary tightening hiked the inflationary pressure by 1.3 percent in the case of Pakistan, he added.

The FPCCI former president observed that besides increasing exports the caretaker government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market. He said that the IMF has continued to remain tough with Pakistan in the past to ensure its prerequisite conditions are implemented.

Anjum Nisar said that the country's economy nosedived partly due to external factors but majorly due to non-serious and poor domestic policy decisions and mismanagement of the economic managers, as the rupee saw yet another dramatic fall in just over a week, while the key interest rate have been escalated by the central bank to the record historic level of 22%, which will destroy

the economy completely.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar observed that it is very clear that IMF programs focus on stabilization and crisis management rather than growth-oriented policies that require structural reforms.

He stressed need for a revisit of government policies including the coordination exercise between the Ministry of Finance and SBP, as no independent economist could support the economic policies that are currently in place.

Thus the current untenable situation is due to a perceived policy of exchange rate manipulation and cannot be attributed entirely to the warnings of impending default or criticism of the handling of the economy.

He observed that coordinating fiscal and monetary policies may be beneficial yet with inflation attributed to administrative decisions in nearly all recent Monetary Policy Statements and the government unwilling to implement key reforms in the power sector and tax structure the SBP needs to be vigilant in ensuring market-based exchange rate policy and a positive discount rate while the Ministry needs to revisit its tax policy, utility pricing policy and of course continuing massive injections into loss-making state-owned entities.

The finance ministers in the past massively misjudged their capacity to get the International Monetary Fund to agree to phasing out the harsh upfront conditions that were agreed— a

miss-judgment that delayed the success of the mandatory quarterly reviews and thereby delayed the disbursement of the tranches on which rollovers by friendly countries as well as pledged new loans. Firms that decide to embark upon export-oriented manufacturing despite these adverse incentives face a further distortion.

The distortions in place in Pakistan are to a large extent the result of powerful insiders, albeit limited in number, who influence the policy making process to maximize their own benefits.

The notable decline in retail trading suggested that individual currency investors had returned to the market to park their savings in foreign currency in an attempt to avoid the

impact of further rupee depreciation, which will eat into their savings.

With the latest depreciation, the difference between exchange rates in the interbank and open markets remained widened at over 2.5% compared to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) recommended ceiling of 1.25%.

It proved recent speculations true that suggested that the rupee would come under a fresh round of depreciation, which had been due for some time, during the caretaker government.

Earlier, the PDM government artificially kept the currency stable around Rs288/\$ to save its political capital and left the job to be done during the interim setup.

The rupee has main-

tained its downturn despite some decline in petroleum prices in the international market owing to a weak global economic outlook, particularly for the world's second largest economy China.

He commented that the reopening of imports had mounted pressure on the rupee, as the demand for the US dollar has remained high to clear import backlog after the government lifted restrictions on imports to revive economic activities.

This one-off extra demand for the dollar to clear pent-up demand has piled pressure on the rupee. He, however, aired hope that the currency should settle in the range of Rs290-295/\$ immediately as he did not see further depreciation.





## In brief

## Shoukat wins Cycle Race

PESHAWAR (APP): Shoukat Ali wins Independence Day Cycle Race organized by Regional sports Department and Regional Cycling Association Hazara Region in which 20 athletes participated. President of the Region Professor Nasir Mehmood, Secretary Dr Shakir Hafeez, former DG Sports Tariq Mehmood, former Director ADA Syed Abrar Shah, Regional Sports Officer Ahmad Zaman, and a large number of fans were present on this occasion. Tariq Mehmood welcomed the guests while Arif Awan said, "Organizing positive activities is the need of the hour, and organizing positive activities increases the mental abilities of the youth and cycling is a sport that increases the fitness of the youth and increases their physical and mental abilities." Youth should participate in the sport of cycling to maintain maximum physical fitness, he stressed.

## Two more matches decided in tourney

KARACHI (APP): Two more matches were decided in the ongoing 8th Essa Lab Trophy Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament at the International Abdul Nasser Basketball Court. The tourney was being organized with the permission of KBBA, said a communique here on Sunday. In the first match, Jump Shooters Club defeated NN Warriors by 40-33 points. For Jump Shooters, Ahmed Ali scored 14 points, Haris Khan scored 10 points and Madani scored 5 points on behalf of Jump Shooters Club. In the second match, Karachi Basketball Club defeated NN Warriors by 65-49 points. On behalf of the winning team, Danyial Ahmed scored 16 points, Abdullah Imam scored 15 points, Haseeb Khokhar scored 12 points and Zain Chaudhary scored 10 points, while Talha Khan scored 15 points, Wasif Khan scored 15 points and Salim Subhani scored 10 points on behalf of the runner team. Aamir Sharif, Zahid Malik, and Ashraf Yahya acted as referees while Naam Ahmed, Mumtaz Ahmed, Rajkumar, and Michael Turner performed the duties of technical officials.

## Chapman denies NZ underestimated UAE

DUBAI (Agencies): New Zealand batter Mark Chapman denied they took the United Arab Emirates (UAE) lightly after their shock loss to the minnows in the second T20 International in Dubai on Saturday. After narrowly avoiding a defeat in the opener on Friday, the tourists managed a below-par 142-8, which the UAE chased down with 26 balls to spare to register their first victory against New Zealand in any format of the game. New Zealand were reeling at 65-5 in the 12th over before Chapman, who top-scored for his side with a breezy 63, lent some respectability to their score even though it was not enough in the end. The UAE captain Muhammad Waseem (55) and number four batter Asif Khan, who made a whirlwind 48, engineered a clinical chase to fashion their seven-wicket victory to level the series 1-1. "I think we've seen associate cricket is going from strength to strength," Chapman told reporters after the loss, denying lowering the guard against a team 13 rungs lower in the official rankings. "The T20 World Cup in Australia highlighted that with some associate nations turning over some test nations.

# Spain wins its first Women's World Cup title, beating England 1-0 in the final

SYDNEY (Agencies): Spain won the Women's World Cup for the first time in their history with skipper Olga Carmona sweeping in the only goal for a deserved 1-0 victory over England in Sunday's final.

In front of a crowd of nearly 76,000 at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Spain were the more accomplished side and had more chances, including missing a second-half penalty.

Spain's triumph is vindication for Jorge Vilda and the Spanish football federation, who stuck with the coach even after 15 players last year said they no longer wanted to represent their country under him.

England coach Sarina Wiegman, who has now suffered back-to-back defeats in the final, and her European champions can have few complaints.

Spain are the fifth team to lift the World Cup since the tournament began in 1991, joining outgoing champions the United States, Germany, Norway and Japan. In front of Spain's Queen Letizia, defender Carmona rampaged from left-back to thrash home the winner low and hard on 29 minutes.

"It was a really tough game, we knew it would be tricky, England have a great team, but I think it was our game," Carmona told Spanish national broadcasters La 1. "We had the feeling we were going to do it."

An emotional Millie Bright, skipper of the Lionesses, said her side had not been at their best as their dreams of a first World Cup melted away.

"Really proud of the team to come this far and to play in a World Cup final, not many players do that," she said.

"This is not it from us, we will



SYDNEY: Players of Spain celebrate the champion with teammates during award ceremony of the FIFA Women's World Cup.

bounce back I'm sure, but for now, it's

hard to take."

- Carmona sweeps in -

Wiegman resisted the temptation to recall Chelsea attacker Lauren James after her two-match ban and kept faith with the team that beat co-hosts Australia 3-1 in the semi-finals.

England had the first sniff of a chance but Lauren Hemp shot weakly

at goalkeeper Cata Coll.

There was little to choose between them in the opening exchanges before both teams had golden opportunities on the quarter-hour mark. Manchester City forward Hemp struck the bar with a curler that had Coll well beaten.

Spain went up the other end and should have scored but Salma Paralluelo -- in for Alexia Putellas --

missed the ball in the six-yard box.

Alba Redondo then hit a first-time strike straight at goalkeeper Mary Earps with the England goal gaping.

Spain, who had never won a knockout game at the Women's World Cup until this tournament and had lost 4-0 to Japan in the group phase, went ahead just before the half-hour mark.

Mariona Caldentey threaded an

inch-perfect pass for Carmona, who came flying unmarked down the left before lashing into the bottom corner.

Vilda, who recalled three of the 15 mutineers for the World Cup, did not even raise a smile on the sidelines. England looked uncharacteristically rattled and the 19-year-old Barcelona attacker Paralluelo, who was a constant threat, shaved the post with the last kick of the half.

- Hermoso's spot miss -

Wiegman, who suffered agony in the final four years ago when her Netherlands team lost 2-0 to the United States, made a double change at the break. James and Chloe Kelly replaced Rachel Daly and Alessia Russo as Wiegman switched from a back-five to a flat back-four.

But it was Spain who nearly doubled their lead soon after half-time, Caldentey dinking inside and forcing Earps to turn the ball around the post.

Hemp was booked for clipping Laia Codina as England's frustration mounted. Midfield schemer Aitana Bonmati, one of the players of the tournament and one of the three refuseniks recalled by Vilda, along with Caldentey, fired narrowly over Earps's bar.

With 20 minutes left, Spain were awarded a penalty after a long VAR review decided Keira Walsh had handled in the box.

But Jennifer Hermoso's penalty was weak and Earps saved comfortably to keep England hopes alive.

But despite 13 minutes of injury time, England rarely threatened and it was an assured Spain who held on comfortably, looking the more likely to score.

## World Cup schedule in flux again over security concerns for Pakistan match

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The schedule for 2023 World Cup might potentially undergo further adjustments as the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) has requested the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for revisions.

The focal point of this issue revolves around consecutive games at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal. On October 9, the stadium is slated to host a match between New Zealand and the Netherlands, followed immediately by the intense clash between Pakistan and Sri Lanka on the next day (October 10).

Report from The Indian Express highlight that the Hyderabad Police have

raised concerns about potential security challenges associated with hosting back-to-back matches, with particular emphasis on the high-profile Pakistan fixture.

To address these concerns, the HCA has formally approached the BCCI, requesting adjustments to the schedule of the two consecutive matches it is set to host.

These adjustments are being sought in response to security issues raised by local law enforcement.

Initially, the Pakistan-Sri Lanka match was scheduled for October 12, but the date was altered along with other eight fixtures being rescheduled, including Pakistan versus India game being moved a day earlier to October 14.

The logistics required for a single match are considerable, involving the deployment of around 3,000 police personnel. Furthermore, a substantial security presence is deemed necessary at the hotel accommodating the Pakistan team.

Insider sources reveal that the HCA was taken by surprise when the schedule was revised. Allegations have arisen that the BCCI's higher-ups made these alterations without prior consultation with local authorities.

Despite the impending ticket sales beginning on August 25, uncertainty surrounds whether the BCCI will accommodate the HCA's request for another schedule change.

## Kashif clinches Jashan-e-Azadi Snooker C'ship trophy

PESHAWAR (APP): Kahif Khan clinched the trophy of the Jashan-e-Azadi Snooker Championship trophy after defeating Sajjad Khan in the final played at Tey Tey Club, Gulbahar under the aegis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Snooker Association on Sunday.

Talking to APP, President KP Snooker Association Zulfiqar Ali Butt said that a total of 32 players from different snooker clubs participated in the Championship.

The final of the Championship was played between Kashif Khan and Sajjad Khan. Kashif Khan won 3-2 and won the trophy. On this occasion, Zulfiqar Ali Butt, who is also General Secretary of KP Olympics and President of KP Snooker, distributed trophies and prizes of Rs 30,000 to the players. He also thanked owner of the Tey Club Allauddin for holding the Independence Day Cup.

## Former test cricketer Naushad Ali passes away

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Zaka Ashraf, members of Management Committee, executives and employees of the Board on Sunday expressed their profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of former test cricketer Naushad Ali. He was 79.

In a message, the PCB chairman said: "On behalf of the PCB, I want to express my deepest condolences on the sad demise of Naushad Ali. We share the grief with his friends and family members and extend our deepest sympathies."

Naushad Ali, wicketkeeper-batter, played six test matches, all against New Zealand in 1965. He had served the PCB as the manager of the Pakistan men's team and also as a match referee.

## Novak Djokovic to face Carlos Alcaraz in Cincinnati Open final

CINCINNATI (Agencies): Novak Djokovic will have a chance to avenge his Wimbledon final defeat to Carlos Alcaraz when the pair meet in the Cincinnati Open final.

World number one Alcaraz saved match point before going on to beat Poland's Hubert Hurkacz 2-6 7-6 (7-4) 6-3 in Saturday's semi-final.

Then the world number two Djokovic overcame Germany's Alexander Zverev 7-6 (7-5) 7-5 to set up the Alcaraz match.

"It's the ultimate challenge at the moment for me," Djokovic said.

Spain's Alcaraz, 20, beat

the Serb in five sets in last month's Wimbledon final and has won two of their three meetings to date.

"It's a very good test prior to the US Open," Djokovic, 36, said. "Obviously different conditions. 'Now it's going to be the first encounter on a hard court."

"It's still facing the top player of the world now who is in form. It's the biggest challenge I could get, so I'm looking forward to it."

Alcaraz's victory over Hurkacz means he will be playing in his eighth final of 2023. He is also the youngest Cincinnati Open

finalist since a 19-year-old Pete Sampras in 1991.

At 36, Djokovic could become the oldest Cincinnati champion in the Open Era - Ken Rosewall was 35 when he won in 1970.

He has won the title twice previously, in 2018 and 2020.

Djokovic is playing in his first tournament on American soil since 2021 after missing last year's US Open and other tournaments because of his Covid vaccination status.

He will bid for a 24th Grand Slam title at the US Open, which gets under way on 28 August.

## Pak trio bag 3 medals in Asian Jr Squash C'ship



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani trio of Nauman Khan, Ahmad Rayyan Khalil, and Abdullah Nawaz bagged three medals in the Asian Junior Squash Individual Championship at Dalian, China.

Nauman Khan and Ahmad Rayyan both played

in the final of the U13 category. Nauman Khan beat Ahmad Rayyan with a game score of 9/11, 11/8, 6/11, 11/3, and 11/9 in the final, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

Nauman bagged a gold medal while Ahmad won a silver medal in the

championship. Meanwhile, Abdullah Nawaz grabbed a bronze medal in the U17 category.

President, Pakistan Squash Federation, the whole squash family, and squash lovers have congratulated the players on winning medals.

## Asia to launch Women's Champions League next year

SYDNEY (Agencies): An Asian women's Champions League will be launched next year, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced Sunday, without revealing details of prize money.

Preliminary rounds will kick off the competition in August 2024 with a 12-team group stage beginning in October, the AFC announced after a meeting of its women's football committee in Sydney just hours before the World Cup final.

Quarter-finals will be in March 2025 with a final planned for May that year -

- though the AFC said the dates were "tentative" and the calendar could be adjusted "where necessary".

For the first four editions, 12 sides will compete in three groups of four.

Matches will be played in a "centralised single round robin format in each group, with the top two and the two best third-placed sides advancing to the quarter-finals," said a statement.

Each participating member association will be allowed one entry from the 2024/25 to 2027/28 seasons with the direct slots for group stages determined by

their FIFA rankings.

The amount of prize money for the AFC women's champions league was not revealed. The AFC announced last week that the prize money for the men's Champions League will triple to \$12 million in 2024/25.

In a separate decision, it was agreed to shift the AFC Women's Asian Cup to non-FIFA World Cup odd years.

It means after the next Women's Asian Cup in 2026 the subsequent edition will be in 2029 instead of 2030.

## World Championships 2023 Katarina Johnson-Thompson leads before final heptathlon event

BUDAPEST (Agencies): Britain's Katarina Johnson-Thompson will begin the final event of the heptathlon in gold medal position at the World Championships in Budapest.

The 2019 champion overtook favourite Anna Hall in the long jump before a superb javelin personal best of 46.14m extended her overall lead to 26 points. Olympic and world silver medallist Anouk Vetter is second, with American Hall 43 points behind in third. Johnson-Thompson will go for gold in a tantalising 800m showdown at 17:00 BST.

The 30-year-old's 800m best, achieved when sealing her world title in Doha, is two minutes 7.26 seconds - more than 10 seconds faster than Vetter

but 4.29 secs slower than Hall's impressive 2:02.97. Johnson-Thompson's lead over Hall represents an advantage of about two and a half seconds. Meanwhile, British team-mates Dina Asher-Smith and Daryll Neita safely qualified from their 100m heats.

Asher-Smith, the 2019 200m champion and six-time world medallist, clocked 11.04 seconds behind American Brittany Brown (11.01) as the top two finished comfortably clear in qualifying for Monday's semi-finals. Neita ran 11.03 secs to follow expected medal contender Julian Alfred (10.99) over the line but teammate Imani-Lara Lansiquot, who ran under protest after a false start, later had her disqualification confirmed.

Five-time champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Shericka Jackson, Sha'Carri Richardson and Marie-Josée Ta Lou each progressed with victory in their heats in a wide-open event. Matthew Hudson-Smith was second to 400m world record holder Wayne van Niekerk in a season-best time of 44.69 secs, South Africa's two-time champion qualifying second fastest overall (44.57) for the semi-finals.

In the women's event, Victoria Ohuruogu and Ama Pipi both progressed with second-place finishes in their heats, clocking 50.60 and 50.81 respectively. Tade Ojora won his men's 110m hurdles heat in 13.32 secs, qualifying fifth fastest for the semi-finals.





## In brief

### President grieved over loss of lives

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday expressed his deep grief over loss of precious lives in a road accident, after a deadly fire burnt down a passengers bus near Pindi Bhattian. The president expressed his sympathies with the bereaved families and prayed for the departed souls, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured passengers. According to media reports, as many as 18 people, including women and children, were killed while 15 others sustained injuries after a passenger bus rammed into a pick-up carrying diesel drums near Pindi Bhattian on motorway. The ill fated bus was enroute to Islamabad from Karachi.

### Bugti grieves over traffic accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Safraz Bugti expressed his grief over the Bus accident on Sunday morning near Pindi Bhattian on M-4 Motorway. He prayed for the departed souls and expressed solidarity with the aggrieved families while he also prayed for the injured in the accident. According to the Motorway Police, a fire erupted in a bus enroute from Karachi to Islamabad carrying passengers when it caught fire at a distance of 7 kilometers from Pindi Bhattian. Spokesperson for the Motorway Police said in a statement that the fire broke out in the bus due to short-circuit. As per reports, at least 16 passengers were killed in the incident and 15 others were injured in the mishap."

### Anti-encroachment operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Murree administration has accelerated its ongoing anti-encroachment operation and taking strict action in accordance with the law against the rules violators. According to an administration spokesman, "The enforcement team has demolished several illegal constructions and removed encroachments on Express Highway under its ongoing grand operation launched on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi and Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman." The team also demolished illegal constructions at Minto Grill Second Cup in the Dana area. The Municipal Corporation Murree, Civil Defence, and police teams were taking part in operations. The operations were being conducted on a daily basis to demolish illegal constructions and remove encroachments in Murree. Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Murree Captain (r) Qasim Ijaz said that the operation would continue and strict action would be taken against the rules violators without any discrimination. Strict action would be taken against encroachers and building by-laws violators, Qasim Ijaz said adding, no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands.

### Churches security beefed up

RAWALPINDI (APP): The security of churches has been further beefed up here Sunday on the special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mehmood Hamdani. According to the police spokesman, Divisional Superintendents of Police, SDPOs and SHO's checked security at churches in their respective areas and briefed the police personnel deployed there. CPO Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani said that while ensuring the security of the people coming to the churches for worship, they should be treated with good manners.



ISLAMABAD: People are reading a newspaper displayed for sale by a shopkeeper at Abpara Market.

## Railways spends Rs1862 mln for rehabilitation of track between Kotri-Khanpur

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is spending Rs1862.84 million for the rehabilitation of 518 kilometres of track between Kotri-Khanpur under the project of Immediate Track Safety Works (ITSW-I).

Despite financial constraints, the management of Pakistan Railways is putting maximum efforts into improvement in infrastructure including tracks, bridges, stations etc, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

Under the project of rehabilitation of Karachi Port tracks, 24-kilometer tracks, 17 level crossings and seven bridges have been rehabilitated along with the replacement of turnouts. The official said that Railway Dry Ports at Lahore (Mughalpur), Badami Bagh and Azakhel have been upgraded.

He said under the Immediate Track Safety

Works (ITS W-II & IMTS W-III), the railway track between Tando Adam Khanpur covering 456 kilometers would be rehabilitated at a cost of Rs 4830.437 million and Rs 4875.461 million respectively by replacing the US components of the track by ensuring the safety of train operation. A PC-I amounting to Rs 4930.22 million for the rehabilitation of track machinery has been approved which would ensure quality of track maintenance work.

Meanwhile, 11 stations have been upgraded including Peshawar, Hassan Abdul, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Narowal, Nankana Sahib, Raiwind, Okara, Sahiwal, and Bahawalpur, under PSDP projects. "The project of upgradation of Main Line-I at a cost of \$6.683 billion has been negotiated with the Chinese side for completing the ML-I in two phases consisting of four

packages," he added.

About the assets of Pakistan Railways are mainly related to the track (11881 kilometres), rolling stock (15699), etc and most of these assets have lived their useful life.

Therefore, he said, "The department has taken several measures for efficient maintenance of these assets which included an increase in fiscal space for maintenance through transfer of pension, reduce utility bills through solarization, improving procurement management through prioritized procurement and an efficient fuel management system." He said, "The department is gradually shifting from manual to a mechanized track maintenance regime for enhanced productivity and quality while improved governance of the maintenance system through the introduction of IT-related interventions (ERP, etc) and provision of professional human resources are also among the top priorities."

## Operation against professional beggars

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a decisive move, Assistant Commissioners (ACs) and Magistrates have launched a robust crackdown against professional beggars within their respective jurisdictions. This proactive operation, aimed at curbing the prevalent issue, saw ACs apprehending a total of 48 individuals engaged in professional begging. The crackdown yielded noteworthy results across various areas. AC Shalimar successfully detained three beggars, while AC Secretariat took six beggars into custody from different parts of the Secretariat sub-division. In the Industrial Area, five beggars were promptly arrested and subsequently handed over to the police.

## SAPM Malik, EU Ambassador join efforts to strengthen Pak-EU relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis, Jawad Sohrab Malik, met with EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka at his house. Malik mentioned, having an amicable conversation about various matters, encompassing economic relations between Pakistan and the EU, we shared aspirations for regional security and stability cooperation.

In a tweet, Malik expressed joy in welcoming EU Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionka at his house. Malik mentioned, having an amicable conversation about various matters, encompassing economic relations between Pakistan and the EU, we shared aspirations for regional security and stability cooperation.

He stated that Pakistan receives a distinct incentive through the EU's GSP+ program to encourage sustainable development and good governance. A committed effort is underway to formulate a sturdy and lasting solution to tackle the challenges faced by Overseas Pakistanis in the EU. Jawad Sohrab, has been designated as the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis in the interim cabinet led by Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar.

Using his charitable arm, the Sohrab Foundation, Jawad Malik assists the most vulnerable parts of society. He was honored by the Pakistan Army for his relief contributions, earning national recognition. Since the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) coalition took control after Imran Khan's vote of no-confidence, Jawad Sohrab has worked alongside PM Sharif's cabinet on various assignments. He's been appointed as SAPM to enhance government governance, entrusted with key responsibilities related to government operations and special tasks designated by the PM.

Jawad Sohrab Malik comes from a prominent and respected business and political family in Pakistan, based in Islamabad. He is the nephew of Mohammed Mian Soomro, who has held positions such as Governor of Sindh, Chairman of the Senate, Prime Minister,

President of Pakistan, and Minister for Privatisation. Jawad Sohrab is also the grandson of the former Nazima of Jacobabad, Begum Saeeda Soomro. His mother, Maliha Malik, wields political influence in Jacobabad.

Jawad Sohrab Malik completed his legal studies in London, obtaining a law degree from the University of Cardiff. Following his education, he dedicated himself to his businesses, working to modernize and innovate. He has effectively overseen a thriving business presence spanning London, Pakistan, and Dubai.

Jawad Sohrab Malik's business ventures cover real estate, trading, and technology, among other areas. He splits his time between London and Islamabad, having established valuable international connections with American Congress members, British parliamentarians, global business leaders, Gulf royals, and political parties in Pakistan. He earned praise as a pandemic hero during Pakistan's Covid lockdown. On August 15, 2016, Fahad Malik, Jawad's brother and a British-Pakistani lawyer, was tragically murdered by a gang of criminals in the Shalimar area of Islamabad's F-10/3 police station.

Jawad Sohrab Malik spearheaded the quest for justice following the tragic loss of his brother, Barrister Fahad Malik. The London-educated lawyer was brutally murdered in August 2016 by a notorious gang involved in land grabbing in Islamabad. Despite numerous challenges and threats from powerful mafia groups, Jawad Sohrab fearlessly championed his brother's cause for justice. His efforts led to discussions about the murder in the UK Parliament and the influential UK Home Affairs Parliamentary Committee. The UK Home Secretary addressed the killing and called for justice on behalf of the family. Ultimately, all the perpetrators were sentenced to life imprisonment.

## Pakistan's journey towards digital transformation, & connectivity – MOITT at forefront

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an era when technology is transforming to the next level with each passing day, and nations are striving to surpass each other in this field, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MOITT) is playing a pivotal role in empowering Pakistan's digital future.

Through visionary policies and proactive measures, the MOITT is driving technological advancements and fostering enhanced connectivity across the country.

These efforts are not only shaping the nation's digital landscape but also positioning Pakistan as a dynamic player in the global tech arena.

In recent years, Pakistan's IT sector has undergone remarkable growth and development, making strides towards becoming a digital powerhouse in the region.

Recognizing the importance of digital transformation for economic progress, MOITT has been at the forefront for fostering a conducive ecosystem for businesses, investors, and innovators.

With a skilled workforce, growing digital infrastructure and proactive measures to strengthen cyber security, Pakistan is fast becoming an attractive destination for investment in IT-related ventures.

The MOITT has laid the groundwork for a flourishing startup ecosystem by establishing Incubation Centers across the country. These centers provide startups with essential resources, mentoring and support to foster innovation and growth.

To propel software development and IT-enabled services, the MOITT is setting up Software Technology Parks equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. These specialized zones create an enabling environment for technology companies to thrive, contributing to the IT export industry's substantial growth.

Meanwhile, Pakistan is also aiming to reduce its dependency on imports and create local employment opportunities by promoting mobile manufacturing and the government, through the MOITT, offers incentives and facilities to attract investment in this sector.

Recognizing the telecom sector's pivotal role in Pakistan's digital transformation, the MOITT prioritizes support for telecom companies in order to create an enabling environment for their operations and encourage further investments in expanding and enhancing the nation's telecom infrastructure. In an era marked by increasing cyber threats, the MOITT took significant strides to bolster Pakistan's cyber security posture. The federal cabinet of the last PML-N led coalition government approved the Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) Rule 2023, a comprehensive framework to address emerging cyber security risks at national and organizational levels.

The CERTs serve as frontline defenders against cyber incidents, enhancing the country's ability to manage and respond to cyber security threats. The Ministry of IT has also introduced a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution project with the primary goal of bolstering the security of NTC's data and servers. The system will be responsible for monitoring data and promptly notifying the relevant departments in case of any cyber attack. A ministry official highlighted the continuous efforts to modernize NTC in accordance with present-day requirements. He said in a significant move, the Ministry has launched "Beep Pakistan" the country's inaugural communication application.

Developed by the National Information Technology Board (NITB), this application aimed to enhance communication and opera-

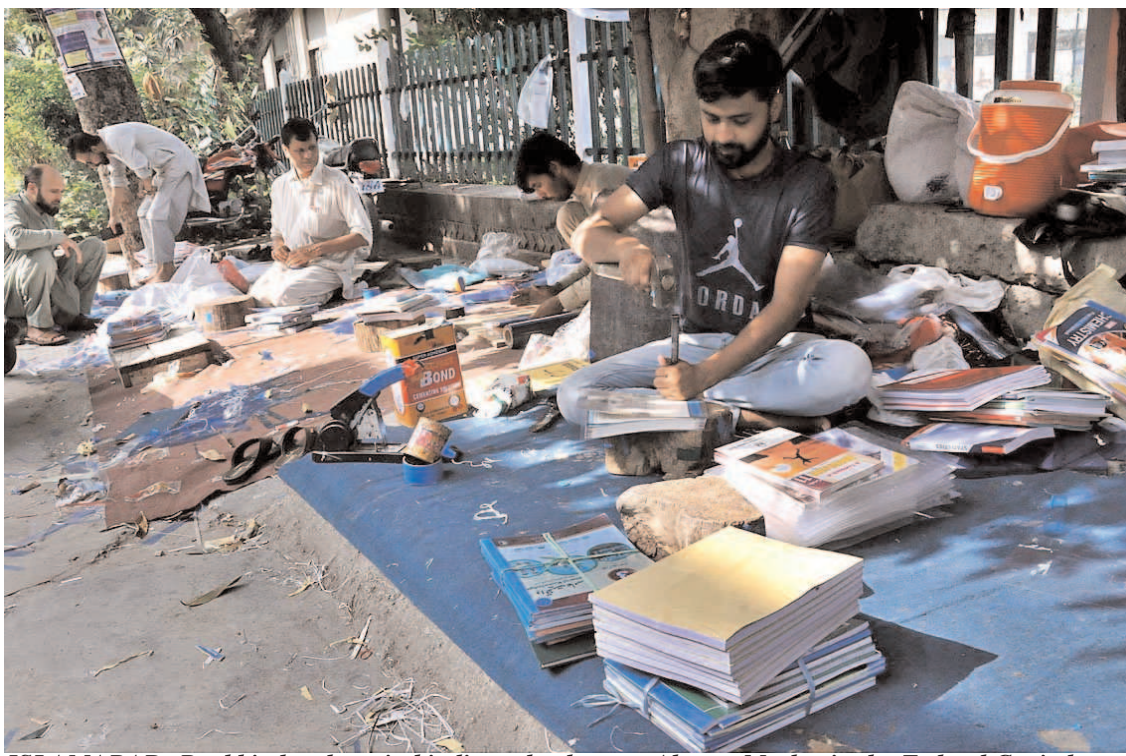
tional efficiency within government organizations, he said.

Further elaborating the software, the official said The Beep Pakistan application was equipped with features such as secure messaging, document sharing, rapid audio and video calls, and conference capabilities.

Following a one-month test phase, the application would be accessible to all government officers and officials, while upon successful integration and utilization at the governmental level, the application would be made available to general public after a year.

The primary objective of the Beep Pakistan application was to establish a secure and efficient platform for digital communication among government officials and employees, he added. The Ministry of IT is unwavering in its commitment to realize the vision of Digital Pakistan and under this vision, the Universal Service Fund (USF) has awarded a contract valued at approximately Rs. 6.78 billion to Ufone. This contract aims to provide high-speed mobile broadband services in the Sibbi district of Balochistan province and along Motorway M-8.

Two new projects have been launched to provide uninterrupted voice and 4G broadband data services in Balochistan. The first project, valued at Rs. 1.96 billion, seeks to empower around 34,000 individuals across 47 Mauzas in the Sibbi district. The second project, worth Rs. 4.82 billion, focuses on ensuring voice and 4G coverage across 478 km of previously underserved road segments along the M-8 motorway. These road segments traverse various districts, including Gwadar, Kech, Awaran, Khuzdar, and Jhal Magsi in Balochistan Province, as well as Kambar Shahdad Kot and Larkana in Sindh Province. According to official data, over the past five years, the USF has initiated 21 projects worth Rs. 27.12 billion under its high-speed broadband program.



ISLAMABAD: Bookbinders busy in binding a books near Abpara Market in the Federal Capital.

## Workplace Daycare Facilities A Crucial Need Echoes Across Organizations

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a world where the pursuit of balance is a universal aspiration, the evolving trends see more women assuming pivotal roles in contributing to household finances. Yet, a stark dilemma persists: a choice between career aspirations and unmet fundamental needs, such as access to onsite daycare facilities.

This demand, proclaimed as "vital" by the Institute of Women's Policy Research (based in Washington), brings into focus an often overlooked facet of the modern working woman's journey who navigate the complex maze of responsibilities.

Khawaja Saeed Abbas, a retired BPS-20 officer, reflects on the past, drawing from his extensive career at the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation spanning over 45 years. "Back in our times, women would take maternity leaves and never return," he muses, attributing this trend to the dearth of resources to facilitate their return. Today, women stand at crossroads, torn between nurturing their hard-earned careers and tending to their infants. The societal pressure to prioritize one over the other compounds this dilemma, painting women as irresponsible mothers when their focus extends beyond their children, given the scarcity of daycare facilities

throughout Pakistan.

In the words of Sammar Amin, a voice from an Islamabad-based think tank, the shortage of workspaces and the absence of dedicated daycare facilities force many female colleagues to relinquish their stable jobs after starting families. The need for change is undeniable, as antiquated assumptions that tether women solely to household and childcare responsibilities hold them back. Anum Hassan, a mother of two and senior Human Resource officer at a logistics services, vocalizes the challenges. "It's not a luxury, but a need," she asserted, emphasizing the emotional and professional toll when childcare safety is compromised.

The vulnerability of children under thirteen underscores the urgency for daycare provisions. The early years are marked by exploration, demanding a safe environment that is often absent, she remarked. Assad Anjum, a student of the Islamic International University raised by a single father, sharing his journey's trials said, the absence of daycare in his father's workplace left him grappling with an unmet need. Similarly, Amna Ilyas, a mother juggling a private firm job, also narrated her experience, unveiling how the absence of daycare facility transformed her joy as a new mother into a torment of conflicting responsibilities.



### Grapes exported to Russia

KABUL (Agencies): Officials from the Balkh Chamber of Commerce and Investment said 2,000 cartons of fresh grapes has been exported to Russia via the Hairatan border crossing in the norther province of Afghanistan. Asadullah Asadi, head of the chamber in Balkh said the grapes were sent overland. Asadi welcomed the increase in Afghanistan's exports to neighboring countries and expressed his satisfaction with the opportunities provided for economic growth of the country.

## The Frontier Post

Saffar 03, 1445 — Monday, August 21, 2023

### Military vehicles repaired

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

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

## Afghans abroad celebrate I.Day



KABUL (TOLOnews): Some Afghans living outside the country celebrated the 104th anniversary of Afghanistan's independence on 28 Asad by flying the country's tricolor flag. "Happy 104th anniversary of the independence of the country to all compatriots. Today is the day when our ancestors and elders stood up against the aggression of foreigners and defended their land," said Noor Ahmad, an Afghan citizen in Turkey. "We are celebrating today, when we got our independence from the Westerners and the British.

Today, we are proud to celebrate our Independence Day as Afghans, both inside and outside," said Ezatullah, an Afghan citizen in Turkey. Afghans said that the country's soil has been invaded by world powers several times throughout history, and they added that the country's independence is the result of their ancestors' struggles against the invasion of foreign powers. "Due to its geopolitical, geostrategic, and geoeconomic importance, Afghanistan has been repeatedly attacked by world powers such as the

British, Russians, and Americans, but these powers have been forced to leave Afghanistan after some time....," said Jamaluddin, an Afghan citizen in Turkey. One hundred and four years ago, Shah Amanullah rebelled against the British and finally gained Afghanistan's independence from the British. Although Afghanistan was never part of the British Empire, after the signing of the treaty between Afghanistan and England in 1919, Afghanistan gained its independence from Britain.

## 28 cases of Congo fever reported, three dead

KUNDUZ (Agencies): This year, Kunduz Province recorded 28 cases of Crimean-Congo fever, resulting in three deaths, according to the Kunduz Public Health Department. Najibullah Sahil, Director of Kunduz Public Health, has established a special department for treating Congo fever at the infectious diseases hospital, showcasing his commitment to public health. "We were fully prepared before the Congo fever [outbreak]; we activated the infectious disease hospital, and all services are free," said Sahil. "Whatever the patients need; medicines, food ... all these are free, so there are no problems, and people should not worry," he added.

Earlier, 36 instances of Crimean-Congo fever were reported in the western province of Herat, including five deaths. Meanwhile, previously in Takhar province, three cases of Congo fever were reported, one of which resulted in patient death. Congo fever, a viral disease, is commonly spread from animals to humans through ticks, particularly during slaughter. The main symptoms of the disease include fever, heartburn, diarrhoea, internal and external bleeding, neck discomfort, and eye pain. The virus can potentially trigger epidemics and is associated with a significant case fatality rate ranging from 10% to 40%. It can initiate outbreaks within hospitals and other healthcare facilities. Additionally, its treatment and prevention pose considerable challenges, elevating the risk of Congo fever outbreaks for public health services.

The US Centers for Disease Control recommend that individuals wear gloves and other protective equipment when butchering animals. It is crucial not to share blood and bodily fluids with animals or individuals displaying symptoms of illness.

## Islamic Emirate celebrates Afghan Independence Day

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Islamic Emirate's officials celebrated Afghanistan's 104th anniversary of independence. Several members of the current government attended an event marking Afghanistan's independence held in the Islamic Emirate's Ministry of Defense.

Participants at the event emphasized the country's unity, preservation of its independence, and interaction with the world. "The world is now trying to interact with the Islamic Emirate, because the world has come to the understanding that without interaction with the Islamic Emirate, there is no solution for them," said Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the political deputy PM. "Neighboring countries or some other countries cannot tolerate the conquests of Afghanistan in the past two years," said Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the deputy PM for economic affairs. Speaking at the event, the acting defense and interior ministers described the day as an important day in Afghanistan's history. "We are attempting to protect Afghanistan from any other challenges. We assure the nation that, God willing, with all our strength, we will try to prevent Afghanistan from returning to the darkness of war and misery," said Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, acting Defense Minister.



defeated in the last century and with the blessing of this nation and the role of scholars have been given to us by God," said Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting Interior Minister. Other officials of the Islamic Emirate stressed the need to preserve the independence of the country. "Not only us, but a new generation is emerging, who should be educated because we won't be around to see it, and they should think that this freedom should be preserved. The next generation is expected to protect their independence and freedom via education, higher education, religious education, and contemporary schools," Shahabuddin Delawar, the acting minister of

mines and petroleum noted. Hamid Karzai, the former president of Afghanistan, in his congratulatory message on Afghanistan's Independence Day once again asked the current government to reopen schools and universities for girls. Karzai expressed his wish that "all the people of the country... do not hesitate to make any effort in the education of their children, both boys and girls." In the meantime, residents have also shared a variety of comments on the nation's independence day on social media. King Amanullah Khan, who led Afghanistan to independence from the United Kingdom in 1919, was the third son of his father, Amir Habibullah Khan, who was also the

Emir of Afghanistan. He was born on June 1, 1892, in Paghman district of Kabul. He was the sovereign head of the Kingdom of Afghanistan from 1919 to 1929. He was the first Afghan ruler who gave liberty to women, allowed them to attend school and attempted to modernize Afghanistan before a popular uprising led him to flee to British-controlled India in 1929. King Amanullah Khan, who ruled for over a decade, ultimately passed away on April 25, 1960, from liver illness, in a hospital in Zürich, Switzerland. His body was transferred to Afghanistan's city of Jalalabad, where he was buried close to his father Amir Habibullah Khan's tomb.

## Three development projects implemented

NANGARHAR (Agencies): Local authorities on Saturday announced the completion of three development projects in Nangarhar province, providing locals with access to irrigation water and transportation facilities. These projects include the construction of four kilometers of roads, the cleaning of 1,400 meters of irrigation canals, and the construction of a

retaining wall in the Kot district of Nangarhar province. The director of the Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department of Nangarhar, Mawlawi Qesmatullah Mubarez told BNA that the development of these projects has made it simpler to carry passenger and commercial motorcades, in addition to supplying water to hundreds of acres of agriculture and

saving the destruction of multiple dwellings and farmlands from potential floods. These projects were constructed for three million Afghans provided by DAKAR and UNDP organizations. Villagers in the Kot district expressed their happiness with the efforts of the Islamic Emirate for the development efforts in their region.

## Kidnapped person rescued, four criminals killed in operation



PAGHMAN (Agencies): The Ministry of Interior has confirmed four kidnappers were killed during an operation in Paghman district of Kabul province on Saturday night. The ministry said in a statement that the operation by special units was launched at 9:45 p.m. on Saturday in Pusht Badam

area of Paghman district. According to the statement, the kidnappers had abducted a citizen named Mohammad Amin three days ago. The hostage was saved as a result of the operation. The Ministry of Interior said the security forces suffered no casualties in the operation.

## Afghan businessmen participated in South Asia-China Expo

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that 50 Afghan businessmen, led by a delegation from the chamber, participated in the 7th South Asia-China Import and Export Exhibition. "In the exhibition section of this conference, about 50 Afghan businessmen have booths to display Afghan products and services in the exhibition, and a delegation from the Chamber of Commerce and Investment has also participated in the conference and exhibition," said Khan Mohammad Sarfraz, an official of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment. Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the political deputy PM, said at the opening ceremony of the exhibition that holding such exhibitions can bring the countries of the region closer together. "Organizing such exhibitions can bring regional countries closer together and increase trade opportunities. Governments are responsible for the progress of their people's economy," said Mawlawi Abdul Kabir. The political deputy PM who



spoke online at the opening ceremony of the exhibition, also emphasized creating facilities for foreign investors inside the country. "Economic and trade relations between Afghanistan and China are at a good level and both sides are trying to develop these relations. Two years ago, on August 15, when political changes occurred in Afghanistan, China was one of the

first countries to which we were able to start exporting pine nuts," said Mawlawi Abdul Kabir. China is one of the countries that kept its embassy in Kabul open after the takeover of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan and also signed some commercial contracts with the current government, including for oil extraction in the Amu Darya area.

## Break With Britain By King Amanullah Started New Era

KABUL (TOLOnews): After the liberation of Afghanistan from British rule, Afghanistan entered a new era. The war against the British began on May 3, 1919, in the provinces of Nangarhar, Paktia, and Kandahar. According to some analysts, even though at that time the soldiers of the Shah did not have much military equipment, their ambition led to a political agreement between the then-royal system and Britain. "Afghanistan had 12,000 troops, and in front of the British, together with the Indian and Bengali forces, they had nearly 150,000 soldiers, and along with these British, they had cannons and airplanes to bombard us," said Aminullah Ehsan, a political analyst. "Kandahar front, Paktia front, and Nangarhar front were among the fronts that fought against the British, Saleh Mohammad Khan was acwar commander on the Nangarhar front and Nader Khan in Paktia," said Wahid Taqat, a military issues analyst. In those days, the First World War ended, and Shah Amanullah started to build the freedom of Afghanistan by motivating the citizens of the country. "I think that the two strategies that Amanullah

Khan took were the strategy of pressure and negotiation, and the policy of pressure made the British accept the ceasefire, and the second was the strategy of negotiation, on the basis of which many negotiations took place," said Jawed Mohman, a lecturer. On the 6th of May, Britain declared war on Afghanistan, and British India (The British Raj was the rule of the British Crown on the Indian sub-continent) military forces were mobilized, and they bombarded Jalalabad and Kabul. The war, which is also known as the War of Independence, was the last military battle between Afghanistan and Britain at that time, and finally, on June 3, 1919, a ceasefire was requested, and a delegation led by Ali Ahmad Khan from Afghanistan and Hamilton Grant from Britain at that time negotiated in Rawalpindi and on August 8, 1919, the Treaty of Rawalpindi was signed. "All the British politicians at that time had come to the conclusion that they should protect the remaining Britain and rule over it and think about rebuilding... Britain was too weak at that time," said Fayaz Safi, analyst. After that, on November 22, 1921, the Treaty of Rawalpindi, or the Third

Anglo-Afghan War, was signed in Kabul, and the treaty guaranteed the internal and external independence of Afghanistan, and Britain recognized the independence of Afghanistan. King Amanullah's reforms following his trip to Asia, Europe Following a six-month trip of several Asian and European nations, King Amanullah Khan came up with a number of reform plans. Amanullah Khan's reform programs included cultural, social, political, and economic issues, but the implementation of some of them at that time sparked reactions. On December 10, 1927, King Amanullah Khan embarked on a six-month tour to many Asian, European, and African nations. During this period, he learned about the cultures and politics of other nations. After his journey, the king started his reform programs, which included the following: approving the creation of the cabinet of ministers, the council of government and courts, political rights of citizens, freedom of expression and the press, housing immunity, and confidentiality of official letters. "The constitution of the Amanullah was unique for

speech, individual freedom, development, and excellence; as a result, he tried very hard to hastily match Europe. However, due to Afghan society's backwards nature, it was impossible," said Abdul Shukur Dadras, a lawyer. The first constitution, drafted under King Amanullah, contained seventy-three articles that for the first time outlined the roles and responsibilities of the royal monarchy. The main parts of these reforms included the creation of the cabinet of ministers, the council of government and courts, political rights of citizens, freedom of expression and the press, housing immunity, and confidentiality of official letters. "The constitution of the Amanullah was unique for

its period and location. All the basic issues of the citizens' rights were mentioned there, and all the issues were reflected there," said Abdul Shukur Dadras, a lawyer. According to some researchers, King Amanullah Khan's implementation of these projects failed because the people were not prepared to embrace them. "First of all, Amanullah Khan's early and rushed implementation of reforms in Afghanistan, which were incompatible with the culture and society of Afghanistan at that time, resulted in the formation of uprisings and armed rebellions against his government," said Hekmatullah Mirzada, a university lecturer. After returning from a

trip to Europe, Queen Soraya, the wife of King Amanullah Khan, appeared in Kabul without a hijab for the first time, and the King encouraged other Afghan women to follow her path. The declaration of the hijab's removal and the appearance of the king's wife without one was a symbolic move that not only hampered reform efforts but also seriously questioned the legitimacy of the Amani system in a traditional community. Afghanistan had significant reforms and advancements under the rule of King Amanullah, who is regarded as a progressive king. Amanullah Khan was the first Afghan leader who changed his title from Amir to King. Remembering King Amanullah Khan's economic reforms King Amanullah Khan launched a number of economic reforms after gaining Afghanistan's independence from Britain. During the era of King Amanullah Khan, economic initiatives included imposing tariffs on imports, raising taxes, introducing the budget, designating the Afghani as the new currency, and creating a national bank. However, Afghanistan has not yet become financially independent and con-

tinues to rely on foreign aid. "He imposed taxes, increasing tariffs, without measuring its consequences, like how much should the tax be, and when it should be collected, that is why it caused social uprisings," said Asif Nang, an economist. "During this time, the level of revenue increased, and at one point, 180 million Kabul rupees in GDP was collected, of which about a third was spent on preventative measures," said Nematullah Bizhan, an international relations analyst. According to economists, the Amani era's economic reforms were more beneficial than social reforms; the budget was first introduced in 1922, and the Afghani was introduced as a new monetary unit in 1923. The National Bank was established in 1928 during this period, and the banking industry in the nation saw remarkable growth. "More attention was devoted to infrastructure during the era of King Amanullah Khan, which is regarded as a time of economic stability. For instance, a railway was built for the first time during this time. For the first time, flights started which was connecting Kabul-Tashkent and Kandahar.

Additionally, banks and schools were constructed," said Abdul Nasir Reshtia, an economist. In the more than a century after the nation gained its independence, certain improvements to the economy have been made, but none of them have been fundamental, and the economy continues to face difficulties, analysts said. According to the Ministry of Economy, major obstacles to the nation's economic independence include a lack of security, unstable infrastructure, and a lack of a theoretical framework for the economy. "Afghanistan has lacked an economic infrastructure so far, Afghanistan wasn't able to have stable security so far, and in a society where there is no security, a stable economy will not be formed," said Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy of the Ministry of Economy. After the start of the elected governments in 2002, the economic system of the country was chosen as the market economy system, and despite the billions of dollars pouring into the country during this earlier period, now Afghanistan is a country dependent on foreign aid with a weak economy and very little economic growth.





# Jaranwala incident investigation PUC, Church of Pakistan announce 24-member committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC) and Church of Pakistan on Sunday jointly established a 24-member committee in a concerted effort to address the tragic incident in Jaranwala, foster interfaith and interdenominational unity, and quell extremist narratives.

Co-chaired by PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and Church of Pakistan President Bishop Azad Marshal, the committee comprises diverse leaders including Bishop Aleem Anwar, Bishop Arshad Joseph, Muswar Abbasi, Pastor Immanuel Khokhar, Zaheer Abbas, Pastor Shahzad Gul, Pastor Immanuel Lorraine, Bishop Leoradic Paul, Bishop Alvin Samorel, Mishaal Samorel, Sahil Advocate, Pir Naqibur Rehman, Sahibzada Hassan Haseebur Rehman, Maulana Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Allama Arif Wahidi, Allama Tahirul Hasan, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Maulana Muhammad Aslam

Siddiqui, Farzd Islam, Sardar Ajmal Advocate, Sajid Iqbal Advocate and other dignitaries.

Ashrafi emphasized during a media interaction that building a peaceful and resilient Pakistan required active participation from all segments of society. He stressed the inclusion of leaders from various religions in the 24-member committee, bridging the gap between Muslim and Christian leaders. "We must strive to cultivate tolerance, respect, and patience in our society and reject any attempts to exploit religion for personal or political gains," he added. He further noted that concerted efforts would be made across all levels to discourage illegal actions under the guise of blasphemy or religious insult.

Ashrafi said the PUC had pledged to provide assistance to the young victims of the Jaranwala incident, announcing their commitment to organize arrangements for the affected girls' dowries as part of their ongoing support efforts.

## Christians pray among rubble of ransacked church for first Sunday service since Jaranwala incident

JARANWALA (Agencies): Christians in Punjab's Jaranwala sat among the rubble of one of their ransacked churches for the first Sunday service since a mob rampaged through their neighbourhood.

Several of their homes churches were vandalised in the hours-long riot on Wednesday, after allegations that a copy of the Holy Quran was desecrated spread through the city.

Some are sheltering at a government school or staying with relatives while the local government has promised to rebuild them.

Hundreds of Christians fled the violence in Jaranwala, many unable to return yet — their houses gutted and broken contents strewn across the street.

On Sunday, around 200 Christians sat in chairs set up in a narrow alley alongside the main Salvation

Army Church — its cross still missing after being ripped down by the crowds.

"We used to come here without any fear but today we need the police," 29-year-old housewife Nosheen Farman, who cannot yet return to her burned home, told AFP.

"We did not bring our children, the ones who we teach that they must come to church."

A choir girl sang alongside a tabla player, as dozens of security personnel guarded the area.

The crowds joined their hands together in prayer, except to occasionally wipe their eyes. Many of the attendees had come from surrounding cities to show support. While the church was too damaged to host the service, Christians entered in small groups to survey the blackened windows and

## PAF pays tribute to Rashid Minhas Shaheed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Directorate General Public Relations has released a short documentary to pay homage to the country's valiant son and the youngest recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed on his 52nd martyrdom anniversary.

Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed was born on February 17, 1951. Having a dream of defending the aerial frontiers of the motherland, he got a commission on March 14, 1971, in the 51st GD (P) course. He was later posted to No 2 Squadron stationed at Masroor for an Operational Conversion Course, where he was destined for sublime heights by Almighty Allah, a PAF news release said.

On August 20, 1971, an unforgettable saga of bravery was crafted with his ultimate sacrifice.

On this fateful day, Rashid vanquished the iniquitous intentions of his instructor pilot Flight Lieutenant Mati-ur-Rahman, who tried to hijack his training jet T-33 towards India.

Rashid battled to take back the aircraft's controls and finally preferred to crash the plane before it could cross the border. The brave son of soil accepted to sacrifice his life but didn't allow the country's dignity to be tarnished.

In recognition of Rashid Minhas's supreme sacrifice and indelible courage, the Government of Pakistan awarded him with the highest gallantry award Nishan-e-Haider. He will always be remembered as an icon of bravery & sacrifice and will remain a beacon for our future generations.

Earlier the Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) and Services Chiefs paid glowing tribute to Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on his 52nd Shahadat Anniversary. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas is the youngest recipient of Nishan-e-Haider, who embraced Shahadat (martyrdom) at Goth Ahmed Shah, Sujawal on August 1971.

## Siraj indicates to go to SC against ECP

LAHORE (NNI): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Chief Sirajul Haq indicated to go to Supreme Court of Pakistan against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for not announcing the election's date.

Addressing a press conference, Sirajul Haq said that even to date the Election Commission has not announced the date of the elections and this act of the Commission is a violation of the constitution.

Siraj also demanded the Election Commission to conduct transparent elections alleging that the previous governments used the Election Commission only for their own interests. Sirajul Haq alleged that PDM and PPP conspired to postpone the election adding the Election Commission should reconsider its decision and announce immediate elections, the caretaker government should conduct transparent elections instead of jumping around.



SARGODHA: A view of burned bus after incidence while twenty people were killed when a passenger bus caught fire after being smashed into a pick-up carrying diesel drums at Motorway near Pindi Bhattian.

# Punjab govt announces Rs 2m for affected families of Jaranwala incident

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi approved Rs 2 million for the owners of the houses being set ablaze in the Jaranwala incident.

Mohsin Naqvi revealed that the financial assistance cheques would be handed over to the affected people within 48 hours.

CM apprised that construction and restoration of two church houses of Jaranwala was completed and opened for prayers while construction and restoration of other church houses will soon be completed with the consent of Christian community.

CM stated that the real purpose of coming here was to equally share the grief of the Christian community.

A special prayer was made in the church for the integrity, stability, progress, prosperity of the people, and for unity and solidarity of the country and the nation.

CM Mohsin Naqvi while addressing the Christian community in Jaranwala church stated that "it is our promise that justice will definitely be provided and the whole team was

unanimously approved the grant of financial assistance of Rs 2 million for the owners of the houses being set ablaze in the Jaranwala incident.

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CM Mohsin Naqvi while addressing the Christian community in Jaranwala church stated that "it is our promise that justice will definitely be provided and the whole team was

working for the provision of justice. Two churches have been restored 100%.

Mohsin Naqvi highlighted that the religion of Islam also teaches us tolerance. The letter written by the Holy Prophet SAW to the Christian community has been published in all newspapers today.

CM Mohsin Naqvi along with the Provincial Ministers visited the relief camp being established for the affected Christian families at Danish School Jaranwala. He met the affected Christian families, consoled them and assured them provision of justice. He talked with the Christian families and listened to their problems.

Later, CM Mohsin Naqvi reached Jamia Masjid Sabri in Jaranwala and met with the Members of Peace Committee, Ulama-e-Karam of all schools of thought and with notable personalities belonging to other religions and lauded the efforts of the Members of Peace Committee for maintaining peace after Jaranwala incident.

# PTI decide to move SC over President Alvi's tweet on key bills

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) decided to move Supreme Court (SC) over President Arif Alvi's tweet on key bills.

As per details, the PTI spokesperson said that the President's tweet revealed the violations of constitution committed in last 16 months. The spokesperson stated that Parliament, ECP and the entire state machinery have been turned against the constitution and the unconstitutional caretaker governments in KP and Punjab are also the outcome of this mindset.

President is the symbol

of the federation and signing a bill against his will is shameful and unacceptable. The response came after President Dr. Arif Alvi denied signing Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023. Arif Alvi took to X, formerly known as Twitter, Arif Alvi said God is his witness that he did not sign Official Secrets Amendment Bill 2023 & Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2023 as he disagreed with these laws.

"I asked my staff to return the bills unsigned

within the stipulated time to make them ineffective. I confirmed with them many times whether they have been returned & was assured that they were. However, I have found out today that my staff undermined my will and command. As Allah knows all. He will forgive IA. But I ask forgiveness from those who will be affected," Arif said in his post on X. On Saturday, it was reported that President Arif Alvi signed the Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill, 2023, and Pakistan Army Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

## Court grants one-day physical remand of Qureshi

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pronouncing a reserved verdict, a court in Islamabad on Sunday granted to the police one-day physical remand of former foreign minister and PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi in a cypher case.

Duty Magistrate Ihtesham Alam also ordered the police to produce Qureshi tomorrow.

Qureshi was picked up from his Islamabad residence shortly after addressing a press conference against delay in the general elections. Qureshi was nabbed in connection with a diplomatic cypher at the heart of PTI's claim about a US conspiracy to remove Imran Khan from power.

The PTI chief made the claim about cypher and conspiracy in March 2022, but later retracted it partially, saying it was General Qamar Javed Bajwa and not the USA that had hatched the conspiracy.

Earlier this month, when the contents of the cypher were published by The Intercept, the government booked Imran Khan under the Official Secrets Act for leaking the cypher.

Qureshi told the press conference that the PTI was going to challenge the Council of Common Interests's (CCI) decision to hold next general elections under fresh delimitations; meaning thereby that elections would now be delayed until February. PTI vice chairman said that elections could not be postponed beyond the 90-day period mandated in the constitution and if that happened the party would approach the Supreme Court.

Qureshi also urged Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial to take suo motu notice.

Qureshi also denied reports of 'differences within the PTI', saying "no one can replace party chief Imran Khan".

Former foreign minister termed the reports of differences within PTI's core committee 'false' and said a media group was trying to spread confusion among the party's ranks. "There is no truth to such reports, no one is replacing Imran Khan," the PTI vice chairman said categorically.

# PPP, PML-N demand for Alvi's resignation after not signing bills

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) sought the resignation of President Arif Alvi after the latter admitted not having signed two significant bills pertaining to the army and secrets laws.

Unexpectedly, President Alvi stated that he did not enact the legislation modifying the Official Secrets Act and the Pakistan Army Act because he "disagreed with these laws."

In a tweet on the social networking site X, formerly known as Twitter, Alvi claimed to have instructed his office workers to return the bills unsigned within the allotted period in order to render them "ineffective."

"I confirmed from them many times that whether they have been returned and was assured that they were. However, I have found out today that my staff undermined my

will and command. As Allah knows all, He will forgive Insha'Allah. But I ask forgiveness from those who will be effected," the president said. The Army Act Amendment Bill and the Official Secrets Act were both passed by the National Assembly and the Senate, and President Alvi signed both of them into law on Saturday, according to a report. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief was arrested shortly after the bill was approved and meanwhile, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the party's senior leader, was detained at his home in the evening, and this morning, reports said Asad Umar had also been detained in connection with the matter.

Faisal Karim Kundi, a spokesman for the PPP, responded by calling the incident 'unfortunate' and lamenting the fact that the president apologised "24 hours after it was reported

on the media that he did."

"In my opinion, such a person is unfit to hold the office and he is unaware of what is taking place and unaware of his by-passers," the PPP leader claimed.

Vice President of PPP Sherry Rehman stated in a statement that the revelation casts doubt on Alvi's capacity to serve as president. Rehman questioned, "Is he trying to say that someone else signed the bills under from under his nose? If so, the president should resign."

Ishaq Dar, a PML-N leader and former finance minister, called Alvi's statement "unbelievable" and demanded his resignation in a post on the social media platform X. According to the Ministry of Law and Justice's statement, a measure is forwarded to the president pursuant to Article 75 of the Constitution, who has the choice of approving it or returning it with reservations.

# Putin visits generals leading Ukraine offensive in south Russia: Kremlin

MOSCOW (AFP/APP): Russian President Vladimir Putin held a meeting with the commander of Moscow's Ukraine offensive in an army HQ in the southern Russia city of Rostov-on-Don, the Kremlin said.

Moscow gave no details on when the meeting took place but footage released by state media indicated it was at night.

The Russian leader met the generals after the US approved the transfer of Dutch and Danish F-16s to Kyiv.

"Vladimir Putin held a meeting at the headquarters of the special military operation group in Rostov-on-Don," the Kremlin said in a statement. "The head of state listened to briefings by the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov, commanders of directions and other senior officers of the group." The RIA Novosti news agency published a video of the Russian leader, wearing a suit, stepping out of a jeep in the dark and being greeted by Gerasimov, in military attire, with a handshake.

It also showed Putin chairing a meeting with high ranking army chiefs. Rostov-on-Don -- a city in

southern Russia close to Ukraine -- has become an operational hub for Russian forces in Ukraine. It was also the scene of a dramatic armed mutiny by Wagner mercenaries in June, which saw them briefly take over the army HQ in Rostov, before halting their rebellion. Gerasimov, who Wagner wanted to unseat, has been rarely seen in public since. Putin rarely travels to areas near the Russian offensive in Ukraine.

**Russians who fled mobilisation cautiously return home:** Ivan Nesterov, a well-built fitness trainer, came back to Russia six months after fleeing the mobilisation that propped up Russian forces fighting in Ukraine last fall. Like Nesterov, some of the hundreds of thousands of Russian men who left the country to avoid being sent to the front lines have returned, despite the lingering threat of a new draft.

"When I landed back in Moscow, I felt incredibly relieved, no matter what the consequences might be," the 35-year-old told AFP.

He left a few days after the Kremlin announced a mobilisation in September last year, "feeling a mix of

emotions including panic". As flights out of Russia quickly sold out, he found a seat on a plane to the Ural mountains before taking a bus to Siberia and driving to Kazakhstan.

Like the other former Soviet republics that Russians can enter without a visa, Kazakhstan saw a massive influx of Russian men after mobilisation was announced.

When Nesterov finally crossed the border into Kazakhstan, "the very first emotion was: freedom."

"I can say openly anything that I think and I will not be imprisoned for it," he remembered thinking.

Nesterov, who never dared to join an opposition demonstration or write critical posts on social media, saw his departure as an alternative way to protest. "I wanted to finally break away from the system," he said.

While he was in exile, his older sister was detained by the police for wearing a yellow hat and blue scarf - the colours of the Ukrainian flag.

Accused of resisting police orders, she left Russia to avoid falling victim to the repression that has accelerated since the beginning of the conflict.